



ERITREAN COMMUNITY FESTIVAL SHINES IN CANADA

From August 5 to 7, the Eritrean community in Canada illuminated Toronto with a graceful and vibrant festival, held under the theme “Heroic Feat Anchored on Cohesive Bonds.”

The festival drew a multitude of Eritrean nationals from diverse Canadian cities, creating an atmosphere of unity and celebration. Designed to engage all age groups, the event featured an array of programs tailored especially for children and young individuals.

Mr. Temesgen Haileab,

Chairman of the Holiday Coordinating Committee in Toronto, expressed deep gratitude to those who contributed to the success of the gathering. He emphasized that the unity and harmony among citizens, communities, and organizations are the true essence of Eritrean community festivals.

This spirited celebration, driven by the dedication of Eritrean nationals, underscores their unbreakable bond with their homeland. Mr. Temesgen praised the participants for their fervent

engagement in the national holiday festivities.

Participants echoed their commitment to further involvement in national affairs, reflecting the strong ties that connect Eritrean communities across the globe.

MICRO-CREDIT AND SAVING PROGRAM IN TESENEY SUB-ZONE

The micro-credit and saving program in Teseney sub-zone organized six months activity assessment meeting on 5 August.

Reporting at the meeting, Mr. Tadesse Mebrahtu, head of the office in the sub-zone, pointed out that the program strives to benefit citizens living in the remote areas in general and women in particular, and that in this year alone over 8 million Nakfa loan has been distributed to 661 customers.

Mr. Tadesse went on to say that the program has the presence in 51 administrative areas and 200 villages in the sub-zone and has distributed over 45 million Nakfa loan to 12 thousand 410 customers and has collected over 16 million Nakfa from the customers.

Mr. Tafla Asmerom, Acting General Manager of the Program on his part expressed satisfaction for almost all the beneficiaries are benefiting from the program in improving their livelihoods.

Micro-credit and saving program is a government institution that was established in 1996.

POLICE PERSONNEL LEAD ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION THROUGH TREE PLANTING INITIATIVE

A remarkable tree-planting campaign took root on August 10th within the scenic expanse of the May-Dimnet area, orchestrated by the dedicated officers from the Central Region and Headquarters Office.

This collaborative endeavor showcased the collective zeal of approximately 270 police personnel who ardently nurtured the earth with the addition of nearly 2,000 saplings, as confirmed by Lt. Colonel Haile Berhe during his address to Erina.

Lt. Colonel Haile Berhe not only elucidated the significance of this harmonious endeavor but also extended his heartfelt gratitude towards each participant for contributing their efforts to this noble cause. Their collective action spoke volumes about their commitment to the environment and community.

Unified in their intent, all divisions of the police force are poised to actively engage in parallel initiatives, ensuring that the planted trees receive meticulous care and nurturing. The organizers of this inspiring campaign have pledged their unwavering dedication to upholding the well-being of these saplings as they gradually transform into flourishing symbols of environmental restoration.



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SUCCESSFULLY CONTAINS DESERT LOCUST INFESTATION

The Ministry of Agriculture has confirmed that the desert locust infestation, which emerged in the Northern Red Sea, Southern, and Central Regions in July 2023, has been effectively brought under control. This information was shared in a report released by the Ministry's Public Relations Office.

Mr. Tesfit Gerezghier, Head of the Crop Development Division and Coordinator of Desert Locust Control Operations in the Northern Red Sea Region, highlighted that untimely rainfall in the eastern lowlands facilitated widespread locust breeding across the Red Sea coastal areas, subsequently leading to their migration to the Southern and Central Regions.

Representing the Migratory Pests Control Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Efriem Aron reported that a total of 2300 hectares of land were affected across the three regions. He emphasized that the coordinated

efforts of approximately 1800 individuals, including experts and members of the Eritrean Defense Forces, successfully contained the locust infestation without causing significant damage to crops.

Ms. Haymanot Embaye, Head of the Plant Protection Unit in the Central Region, acknowledged that several instances of locust swarming occurred in the Central Region. She confirmed that appropriate control measures

were promptly executed.

The residents of Adi-Qe, situated in the Central Region, expressed appreciation for the swift response and effective locust control actions taken by the Ministry of Agriculture.

In conclusion, the Ministry urged all stakeholders to remain vigilant in anticipation of potential locust swarms originating from neighboring countries.



Ensuring Child Growth and Development Through Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding

Lwam kahsay

World Breastfeeding Week was observed on 5 August at Bet-Mekae Community Hospital in Asmara under the theme "Ensure growth and development of children with complementary feeding and continuous breast feeding." In Eritrea, breastfeeding week is extended to cover the entire month of August during which breastfeeding and the consumption of standardized complementary feeding are promoted.

In his opening address at

the ceremony held at Bet-Mekae Community Hospital to mark the commencement of World Breastfeeding Week, Dr. Andeberhan Tesfatsion, director general of the Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health (MoH), said that the purpose of 'breastfeeding week' is to raise the community's awareness about the importance of breastfeeding and complementary feeding. He added that breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition for babies and can help protect them against some short-term and long-term diseases and is good for the health of mothers. He

ceremony, breastfeeding provides children with hydration, comfort, profound connection, high quality nutrition and protection against disease, shielding them from the worst emergency conditions. The practice has been described by some breastfeeding women as empowering and healing.

Breastfeeding also has important implications for maternal mental health, physical health and caregiving capacity, as well as long-term child development and educational attainment. It is a human right, and both mothers and their children have the right to get support that enables them to breastfeed. As part of its efforts to guarantee citizens' health, the government is working to promote breastfeeding by setting a strategy of counseling, a lifesaving intervention taken by the MoH. The strategy, which helps communities to make behavioral change regarding breastfeeding, involves counselling pregnant women at health centers and clinics before and after delivery. It also emphasizes the importance of giving effective and regular support to breastfeeding mothers by families, employers and other organizations.

importance of eating nutritious food for the development of children.

UNICEF Representative in Eritrea, Dr. Samuel Mawunganidze, on his part, applauded the government's overall efforts to enhance children's health through breastfeeding and supplemental nutrition.

As part of the activities organized on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Week, a general knowledge contest of mothers was held regarding breastfeeding while Fiorina Cultural Group entertained the audience. In addition to the events held in Asmara, various activities were held in all the six

regions on the occasion of World Breastfeeding Week. In particular, health education emphasizing the benefits of breastfeeding was given at healthcare facilities all over the country targeting communities, in general, and pregnant women, in particular.

World Breast Feeding Week is being observed for the 31st time at the international level and for the 26th time in Eritrea. The week is used as a platform to call on the world community to act together to promote breastfeeding. A study in 2018 by the MoH found that 98% of Eritrean mothers breastfeed their children, which is encouraging, but the goal is to raise the number.



noted that breastfeeding boosts the baby's immunity and the purpose of the campaign is to encourage mothers not to give any kind of supplements or formula milk for infants under six months.

Complementary feeding refers to the food given to babies in addition to breast milk. It is meant to complement breast milk for the rapidly growing and active babies once they reach six months of age. Complementary food provides additional nutrients and energy needed for better physical growth, brain development and health of a baby. Once a baby turns six months, it should be given complementary feeding in sufficient amount along with breast milk until the baby is at least two years.

The most commonly used complementary food for babies in Eritrea is what is commonly known as D-M-K (which is made of mainly cereals and legumes), and the MoH is working with its partners to standardize it.

As it was highlighted at the

According to the World Health Organization, breastfeeding is one of the main interventions that helps reduce under-five mortality, potentially averting 823,000 deaths annually in the world. Maternal, infant, and young child nutrition (MIYCN) is important for the short and long term health and well-being of women and children, families, and communities as well as for economic development. A woman has the right to good nutrition as a person herself and in her role as a mother; her nutritional status from pre-pregnancy onwards is a major determinant of a child's lifelong nutritional status.

An estimated 78 million babies, or three in five, are not breastfed within the first hour of life, putting them at higher risk of death and diseases and making them less likely to continue breastfeeding.

Mr. Semere Amlesom, Director General of Agricultural Extension at the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), said that the MoA is making encouraging efforts in producing nutritious food and emphasized the

From Social Media



Ministry of Marine Resources, Eritrea
@MoMR_ERITREA

Eritrean Marine Resources Facts:
The world oceans and seas host seven species of [#marineturtles](#) and Five of them are known to exist in the [#Eritrean](#) waters: [#Loggerhead](#), [#Green](#), [#Hawksbill](#), [#OliveRidley](#) and [#Leatherback](#).



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Ministry of Marine Resources, Eritrea
@MoMR_ERITREA

Eritrean Marine Resources Facts:
Country coastline: 3300 km
Mainland coastline: 1350 km
Islands coastline: 1950 km
Islands and Islets: above 354
Territorial waters area: 55,000 km²
Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): 120,000 km²
Watersheds linked with the coast: 44,000 km²

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Development

Education in Selea Sub-zone: From Makeshift to Regular Schools

Kesete Ghebrehiwet

The communities of Selea sub-zone, which are mainly made up of Bedawiet (who make up the majority) and Tigre ethnic groups, have been able to have access to education only in post-independence Eritrea. They played a significant role in the armed struggle for independence, and the sub-zone was one of the most disadvantaged areas of the country prior to Independence due to the protracted war of liberation.

Remarkable progress has been made in terms of the improvement of educational facilities in all administrative areas of Selea sub-zone. Border patrolling units in the area, in particular, have contributed a lot toward the mobilization of the communities in efforts to improve access to education. The border patrolling units in the sub-zone, for instance, built a total of eight schools in four administrative areas and assigned teachers to ensure their smooth running.

As part of the overall efforts to improve the livelihood of the communities, classes began to be offered in makeshift schools before they were relocated when regular classrooms were constructed. Communities in Selea sub-zone now have access to junior and secondary schools. More and more children are being enrolled in schools with an ever-increasing effort of teachers and border patrolling units in the sub-zone. This is a major step forward in the education sector.

The overall efforts in the past four years have shown significant progress in the expansion of schools. As a result, Debesata, Merbebaib, Baden-Legite, and Hamokta are among the administrative areas of Selea sub-zone that have access to viable education services.

More and more schools have been built in the sub-zone. Lieutenant Kerar Saleh Kerar,



head of the patrolling units, said that the number of students that are motivated to study has been increasing owing to the educational material assistance given by the Government.

Regrouping villages in the sub-zone and making the residents aware of the benefits of educational services was not an easy task. The provision of potable water and other social services had to be realized prior to convincing the communities to send their children to school, and the progress is still at a

preliminary stage. But more achievements are expected with an expansion of the social services.

The students are provided with accommodation to be encouraged to focus on their education, and teachers have been assigned to the schools by the Ministry of Education while members of the Eritrean Defense Forces have also been volunteering as teachers in some circumstances.

Eritrea's education policy strictly adheres to the principle

of mother tongue education at primary schools, secondary school students in the sub-zone have been assigned as primary school teachers while there have been moments some schools in remote areas couldn't find sufficient number of teachers who speak the Bidawiet language.

There has been a determination to ensure that the communities in

to become self-sufficient at all academic levels.

Progress has been made in terms of regular schools in the sub-zone while adult literacy programs, targeting mainly women, has shown encouraging outcomes. The community of Rekeb administrative area are mainly made up of Bedawiet and Tigre ethnic groups and efforts are often made to give classes in two languages as much as possible.

Their close attachment to the struggle for independence and the EPLF has made the community of Rekeb administrative area aware of the benefits of education, and the eagerness with which they reacted to the opening of schools is much stronger than that of the communities in the remotest parts of Selea sub-zone.

The campaigns to attract more students to be enrolled at the schools have been so successful that the number of female students in the sub-zone has increased.

Healthcare services have been given to communities in remote areas with the help of foot medics to enable students to pursue their education with ease. Selea Healthcare Center has, in this regard, been making a remarkable contribution.

The resettlement of scattered villages into one area has been speeding up the implementation of development programs that include the building of schools and other infrastructure to provide other social services. Boarding schools have also been built to ensure students from distant areas have access to education.

Border patrolling units in the sub-zone have been working on all development undertakings in the sub-zone. Lieutenant Kerar said that members of the defense forces have been involved in the renovation of residential houses. When their problems of residential houses were solved, the parents have been motivated to send their children to school.

The communities in Selea sub-zone are very keen to bring about change for a better tomorrow, and the great leap from makeshift to regular schools will trigger more developments and help improve the living standards of the communities of Selea sub-zone.





If a meteorite were to hit Asmara, where would I go? Fiat Tagliero



Natnael Afeworky

She laughed fanatically at my reply. ‘Why on earth would you come here?’ she asked me still laughing. I replied, ‘Well, it’s a plane...so, I’d start it and fly away from the meteorite.’ Her laugh must have echoed all the way back to Roma. I too laughed at the thought of a building flying away. We laughed, God knows for how long, until we couldn’t breathe anymore. She called me crazy and slid her hand back to mine and asked me to tell her about the building. I then started being nerdy and began to tell her about the building. Thankfully and weirdly, she seemed interested and listened to me patiently. I started off with who built it....

Guiseppe Pettazzi.

I said, ‘Before I bore you with the details I must say that Fiat Tagliero is unlike any other structure that has been built in Asmara. Period! It is pure genius.’

She laughed at my excitement and said, ‘Do carry on!’ ‘It was built in 1938, and, as you can see, it imitates the streamlined and dynamic form of an aeroplane which emphasizes the myth of speed and the machine that was so dear to the Futurists.’ I

said and added, ‘With such bold stylistic references that celebrate modern transport and travel, this building must be considered one of Africa’s finest examples of Futurist architecture. Don’t you think so?’

She replied, ‘Well, when you put it that way, I guess so.’

I continued and said, ‘Look at the 30-meter span cantilevered concrete wings that hang literally unsupported.’

‘Unsupported!’ I shouted. She roared with laughter.

‘Imagine that 15-meter long concrete cantilever hanging above you without any pillar to keep it still. It’s beyond magnificent!’ I remarked to maintain my composure after I had shouted.

She then asked me in a curious tone, ‘You said it was built in 1938. Do you mean to tell me that they allowed the construction of this building in the absence of sufficient technological advancement?’

I replied, ‘It is actually rumored that the incredible architect of the Fiat, Pettazzi, had to actually hold the hesitant builder, who was tasked to remove the wooden pillars, at

gun point in order to prove that his calculations were correct.’ She gasped with shock, but I continued. ‘No one, not even the municipality at that time imagined it to be successful; they had reservations about the structural integrity or mathematical viability of the building. So, in order for the building to be approved, Pettazzi had to include pillars propping up the wings when formally submitting his design. And at the end when he removed the wooden pillars, he did succeed with his calculation and for 85 years now the wings remain horizontal.’

She remarked, ‘Genius!’

We stared at it for a little more while in the middle of the street to take in its remarkable features -- the central section of the building which is composed of numerous visually striking stepped elements, along with the tall flagpoles, the wrap around windows on the ground and first floors, and the ample space for typographic advertising, not to mention the incredible cantilevered wings which were designed to provide ample shade for those working below. These features make the building the most interesting and eccentric structure. But, to the left, Nakfa house, a prominent building, is erected and dwarfs the fiat tagliero service station and reduces the area around it to a disorienting small space. And from a certain perspective, especially when viewed from across the street, it seems to block the imaginary flight of the Fiat.

We absorbed a bit more of the sight and carried on with our walk. I walked her home still managing to hold her hand, which was beyond a delight. I said my farewells and proceeded to walk back to my home. On the way back, I reminisced on the night’s delights -- the movie (an

experience which I deemed to be extraordinary), the walk, the holding of hands, and Fiat. Yes, Fiat, a marvel

indeed. ‘I could write a poem for its beauty and genius.’ I thought. And I came up with ‘a Ballad for Tagliero.’

A Ballad for Tagliero

What sight is this I witness before me?

A shrine for the creatures of sky, I dare say

Sprung from genius, to show marvel

How apt it’s to stand with grace all day

O’ look at its wings, so marvelous
Unattached to anything, hanging in solitude

Brilliant, indeed, how this bird presents itself

Peering it seems to reach an altitude

Left me to stand all day to brood and drool

A fool I appear as I view and admire

So immaculate it is, never frivolous

Meticulous, indeed, deeming me to desire

A thing so precious made of stone

With glass rounding about its form
And flags reigning about with pride

I declare thee a specimen outside the norm

I look to my right, there stood a man in awe

He cries out, what a sight to be seen

Indeed it is, I said with glee

And made a plea stating to glide in it I am keen

O’ what makes this a wonder, I wonder!

Is it its facade of curves or wings of concrete?

To what does this sight, Fiat Tagliero

Cause me to stand enthralled, I repeat

Is it its thought or its truth?

In truth it ought to be stationary

Yet oddly it seems to be moving, no flying

And fly it did in the imaginary out of ordinary

I look to my left, there stands its neighbor

A shadow, Humongous it is beyond measure

To diminish and hinder the flight of the Tagliero

But never mind, it remains a treasure



SpotLight

Festival Eritrea: Eritrea's Cultural Bonanza

Natnael Yebio W.

After a brief hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Eritrea Festival will be back in full swing this week. Prior to the pandemic, the Eritrean Festival used to be held annually in the last week of July and the first week of August inside the Asmara Expo ground for seven days and nights. The festival area is a location to witness the culture, tradition, music, and dance of all ethnic groups in Eritrea.

The festival which will be officially opened tomorrow will be attended by visitors from all walks of life. As this is a unique occasion for fostering national unity and the sole location will be embracing the culture, tradition, music, and dance of all nine ethnic groups in Eritrea, it is a must-visit event during the summer.

Kids wait for it with enthusiasm, Inventors toil for it the whole year, regional administrations prepare for it for the better half of the year, and tourists flock to Eritrea just because of it.

As a kid as each summer approached, besides having to play soccer and not do homework, the Eritrean festival was among the many other things we looked forward to. The festival gives you a sense of belonging, home is usually where you most feel comfortable and the Expo ground for seven days of summer is to a great extent, home to all nine Eritrean ethnic groups, inventors, different institutions, national associations, and many others who are eager to show their ethnic groups trait and in the process prove the harmony Eritrea possess.

In a world characterized by religious segregation and interethnic conflicts, Eritreans, despite their diversity, have managed to live in harmony for hundreds of years. The multi-ethnicity Eritrean society reflects different languages and cultures and as diverse as it may be, it is as harmonious as its marine biodiversity. The festival brings all aspects of the Eritrean natural, cultural, historical, and archaeological heritages to one place so all Eritreans, from home and abroad, can enjoy them in the

spirit of unity and fervent patriotic feelings.

All six administrative zones accordingly are set in a regional pavilion of their own, decorated in all their splendor with images, exhibitions, and cultural programs. Each of the administrative regions which are homes to all ethnic groups, on top of their lifestyles and cultural shows, present their core historical and natural endowments. One needs only to visit a regional pavilion to learn everything there is to know about that particular region.

Outside the regional pavilions' the scene is entirely different. Replicas of houses and tents of all Eritrean nationalities and their living patterns can be visited. Proudly presenting their lifestyles, women crouch by open fires cooking or churning milk in goat skin leather bags as men tend after farming tools. Each group also has its own group of performers who play and sing all day long.

Tigre women swing their braided hair, while Afar women dance with curved knives. The Rashaida girls in their finely embroidered traditional dresses welcome visitors to their huts, while youngsters from the Bilen group concentrate on the sword dance. The impressive dance styles of the Hidareb and Kunama should not be missed, last but not least Tigrigna ethnic group play their famous long pipes, as women and youngsters with peculiar haircuts perform the typical round dance.

Speaking of haircuts and hairdos, all nine ethnic groups have different hairstyles that differ from age to age and gender to gender. It is quite remarkable the significant meaning each haircut has within a specific age, sex, and ethnic group.

This national festival, which one foreign visitor once rightly called Eritrea's cultural bonanza, provides a ground not only for interaction between local communities but also for encouraging the articulation of local cultural traditions in terms of national integration.

Festival Eritrea which traces its roots to the early 1980s during the years of the armed struggle for

liberation has had an enormous impact on Eritrean heritage conservation and national identity formation, while it has become a model influence for similar events held by Eritrean communities across the world.



For kids it is time to go out with their parents or older siblings to have fun, take a picture with Tom and Jerry, eat a bite of Eritrea's finest food, and take a turn at the swing set or slide, for the elderly it is a moment to once again proudly witness Eritrea in continuous harmony, for participants it is a chance to earn extra bucks, for Eritrean foreigners it is a joy to be among their people and experience being Eritrean first hand, while for Eritrea it is simply a bestowed blessing to have its harmoniously diverse population in one place being what Eritrea is best at, celebrating being Eritrean.





Zara Mining
Share Company

Vacancy Announcement


Position:	Welder
No. required	1
Location:	Based at Koka Gold Mine (Site)
Department	Maintenance/Mining
Reporting to:	Mine Maintenance Supervisor
Job purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To execute all welding work for fixed plant and mobile fleet and machinery
Primary Responsibility & Scope of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provide welding service for maintenance of fixed plant, mobile fleet, and machinery.- Repair and maintain as required- Being accountable for the safe commissioning of all equipment- Work in liaison with the maintenance supervisor to develop and implement a rigorous maintenance program.- Any other work requested by management.
Knowledge & Skills Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Above 8th Grade.- Updated 4th & above driving Eritrean license.
Work Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Minimum 2 years of experience in operating trucks in mining, construction, or related industries.
Other skills & abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Elementary spoken & written English language skills.- To be able to pass a full Doctor's physical examination.
Unique requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To be able to work with ZMSC's roster.

Salary: - According to Company's salary scale.

Place of work: - Zara Mining Share Company Koka Gold Mine
Zoba - Gash Braka
Sub - Zoba Salea

Requirement for nationals: - Having fulfilled his/her 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 potential candidates for an interview. Application documents will not be returned to applicants.
Address: Please mail your applications to **Zara Mining Share Company. P. O. Box 2393. Asmara, Eritrea.**

Note to Non Eritrean applicants: Please send a copy of your application to **Aliens Employment Permit Affairs P.O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea.**
Deadline for application: **7 days from the day announced in the Newspaper.**



Vacancy Announcement

Position: No required	Man-Truck operator 1
Location:	Based at Koka Gold Mine (Site)
Department	Mining
Reporting to:	Mine Maintenance Supervisor
Job purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To drive Man. Trucks & operates truck-mounted cranes in a timely & cost-effective manner
Primary Responsibility & Scope of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Comply with all ZMSC Occupational Health & Safety requirements.- Operates Man. trucks as company licensed operator.- Drive from the mine site to Asmara.- Operates crane must identify weights & rig items to lift in a safe manner
Knowledge & Skills Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Above 8th Grade.- Updated 4th & above driving Eritrean license- Minimum 2 years of experience in operating trucks in mining, construction, or related
Work Experience	
Other skills & abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Elementary spoken & written English language skills.
Unique requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- To be able to pass a full Doctor's physical examination.- To be able to work with ZMSC's roster.

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NEWS

KEREN CITY MAYOR ENGAGES WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY

In a proactive move towards community involvement, Mr. Rezene Araia, the Mayor of Keren City, convened a series of sessions with local residents to assess ongoing activities and future prospects. Spanning from August 2 to August 8, these meetings were dedicated to fostering both social engagement and developmental progress within the city.

Mr. Rezene articulated that the advancement of any nation hinges upon a harmonious and coordinated endeavor. He underscored the paramount importance of nurturing a shared national consciousness and bolstering organizational aptitude to effectively execute meticulously planned development initiatives.

Central to his vision was an urgent call

to amplify efforts directed at afforestation programs, conscientious water and soil conservation campaigns, and the much-needed revitalization of water diversion schemes. Emphasizing the fragility of the ecosystem, he passionately advocated for a robust framework for creating designated reserve areas, thereby fortifying the region's environmental integrity.

Addressing a multitude of concerns, Mr. Rezene articulated a comprehensive agenda, including enhanced strategies for village reunification, rigorous environmental cleansing operations, and the eradication of breeding sites for disease-spreading mosquitoes. His multi-pronged approach illuminated his commitment to creating a healthier and more sustainable living environment for the city's inhabitants.

Following an extensive and productive discourse, the participants collectively

formulated a series of insightful recommendations. These encompassed the imperative need for the regular and responsible disposal of both solid and liquid waste, the strategic construction of a dam to alleviate the pressing issue of potable water scarcity in the administrative area of Begu, and a resolute focus on fostering educational avenues for children residing in remote and underserved regions.





Q and A

Eritrean Art: An Art of Resilience

Simon Weldemichael

What does poetry mean to you, and what drives you to write poetry?

Poetry defies rigid definitions; to me, it's a medium for expressing inner emotions. Within us reside a multitude of feelings: hope, despair, happiness, anxiety, longing, anger, love, and dreams, among others. Poetry provides a concise and precise means to convey these human emotions. It's the most refined art form, employing heightened language to succinctly communicate experiences, feelings, conditions, and states of consciousness. I



inspiration in magazines like Sagm, published by the EPLF. The turning point was when I heard Asmerom Habtemariam's poem on Radio Dmtsi Hafash in 1990, dedicated to the Fenkil Operation. From then on, I began

In this conversation, we welcome Efriem Habtetsion, a poet, photographer, and critic, to delve into the world of poetry. His poetic journey is marked by three distinct collections: "seb dika" (are you a human being) in 2014, "Hara mkuan" (to be liberated) in 2022, and "dhri znab" (after the rain) in 2023. Efriem's creative process is akin to a spider at the center of its web, weaving intricate connections between events, emotions, and life itself. Through his carefully chosen words, he constructs a community of emotions, intertwining hope, despair, love, anger, and more. As a poet, he channels historical themes, awakening a deep historical consciousness within readers. His poems are woven with traditional elements, echoing Eritrean society's indigenous rhythms, proverbs, and oral traditions. Often recited during national occasions, such as Martyr's Day, his verses console, remind, and invite reminiscence. Below, we share an excerpt from our enlightening conversation with Eritrean poet Efriem Habtetsion.

devastation in Mogadishu moved me. Eritrea and Somalia share historical ties, standing together during the challenging times of our struggle for independence. The sight of Mogadishu affected me profoundly. The hardships Somalia faces serve as a lesson for developing nations, including us. I wanted to be a part of Mogadishu's renaissance. The poem aims to inspire the city to rise from the ashes, echoing the sentiment: "Wake up Mogadishu, Asmara is on your side."

Your connection with Eritrean singers seems quite remarkable. Can you tell us more?

I have strong connections with both veteran and emerging Eritrean singers of diverse languages. I've penned lyrics for various artists, like "fanwa bxot" by Dawit Shilan, "hdmona abay aderash" by Saba Andemariam, "bxay" by Beraki, "Reyeka" by Rezene Alem, "seb eyu hayli" by

Merhawi Tewelde, and "Sawa" sung by four artists, among others. I also composed the Somali-Eritrea song performed by the Somali military band during President Isaias Afwerki's visit. My collaboration with musicians continues to evolve.

Could you elaborate on the themes that drive your writing?

My books predominantly delve into Eritrean history, past struggles, present challenges, and prospects. Martyrs Day holds a special place in my heart, and I've composed numerous commemorative poems for this occasion. Nakfa, a symbol of Eritrean resilience, particularly resonates with me. Writing about Nakfa felt like chronicling the entire history of Eritrea. I'm also captivated by societal ideas, exploring themes of existence, death, yearning, and human imperfections. My writing revolves around fostering a

collective and strong Eritrean national identity, reflecting historical and cultural narratives.

How does poetry intertwine with Eritrean national identity?

Eritrean art is an art of resistance, deeply embedded in our identity. As an Eritrean, I'm naturally drawn to this reality. My poems contribute to this narrative of resistance; failing to do so would be a disservice to the spirit of resistance. In embracing this ethos, I align with those who resist external pressures and those who stand up against them. Ultimately, my poetry reflects the essence of Eritrea's collective spirit and resonates with the aspirations of its people.

We appreciate your insights and time. Thank you for joining us.

I'm grateful for the opportunity. Thank you for having me.



write to communicate with both people and myself, expressing what remains unsaid through other modes of communication. My poems are not crafted merely for the sake of art; they mirror reality and existence.

Could you share your journey toward developing a passion for writing poetry?

My upbringing played a pivotal role in igniting my passion for poetry. During my time as a student at the Revolutionary School of the EPLF in Kassala, Sudan, we would recite revolutionary songs and poems. I would even jot down song lyrics in my textbooks. I found

crafting poems in high school to commemorate Women's Day, Independence Day, Martyrs Day, and First September, which marks the start of Eritrea's armed struggle. My first significant poem, "Meytu zeymete," was published in Haddas Ertra in 1997 as a tribute to the renowned singer Yemane Gebremichael.

I understand you wrote a poem about Mogadishu. Can you elaborate on that?

My travels to China, Germany, Russia, and Sweden exposed me to various cultures, architectures, and beauties. However, my visit to Somalia in 2018 deeply impacted me. Witnessing the

