

HAPPY SILVER JUBILEE INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY ERITREA'S SILVER JUBILEE INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATED WITH DEEP ENTHUSIASM



Celebrations marking Eritrea's Silver Jubilee Independence Anniversary were conducted yesterday with deep enthusiasm at Bahti Meskerem Square in Asmara.

In a speech he delivered on the

occasion, President Isaias Afwerki underscored the paramount significance of continued resolute defiance of external hostility and other anti-Eritrea agendas, in addition to nurturing the spirit of unity, harmony and cohesion. He

further underlined the cultivation of displaying continued resilience, patriotism and sacrifice, hard work, productivity in the face of enemy challenge. President Isaias also underlined the need to keep intact the glorious legacies that constitute

the hallmark of our national values. *(For full text of the President's speech, see page 2).*

The Chairman of the National Holidays Coordinating Committee, Ambassador Zemed Tekle said

that the preparations to colorfully celebrate the Silver Jubilee Independence Day took months and the strong participation on the part of experts, artists, athletes, youth, students and other stakeholders has been witnessed.

The celebration highlighted different cultural and related performances by Eritrean artists from inside the country and abroad as well as shows by cultural and musical participants from 12 African, European, North American and Latin American countries.

The Independence Torch that has been on a nationwide tour in connection with the Silver Jubilee Independence anniversary was part of the colorful celebration.

On arrival at the Bahti Meskerem Square, the torch received warm welcome by thousands of nationals from inside the country and abroad as well as friends of Eritrea who were present at the impressive celebration.

MORE MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATIONS

The leaders of the United Arab Emirates and that of Sudan and Egypt have sent messages of congratulations to the People and Government of Eritrea in connection with the Silver Jubilee Independence Day anniversary.

The leader of the United Arab Emirates, President Khalid bin Zayed Al Nahyan, wished good health to President Isaias Afwerki as well as peace and prosperity to the Eritrean people. He also expressed readiness to strengthen the existing strong and historical relations between the UAE and

Eritrea.

Similarly, the Vice President and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the UAE, Mr. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and the Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, expressed good wishes to the People and Government of Eritrea.

In his message, the President of the Republic of Sudan, Field

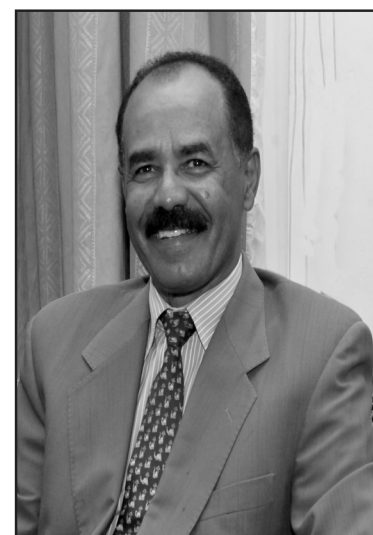
Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, expressed firm belief that the occasion would further strengthen the existing friendly relations between the two countries.

In the same vein, the President of the Republic of Egypt, Mr. Fatah Al-Sisi, conveyed good wish to the People and Government of Eritrea. He also expressed readiness to strengthen Eritrean-Egyptian relations in all sectors.

Similarly, the President of Cuba, Mr. Raul Castro and the

Head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis sent messages of congratulations to the People and Government of Eritrea in connection with the Jubilee Independence Day anniversary.

The Cuban leader wished good health to President Isaias Afwerki and peace and prosperity to the Eritrean people. Pope Francis on his part expressed good wish to the people and Government of Eritrea and expressed conviction that Eritrea would continue to strive to build a society based on the pillars of truth and the



common good. He also invoked divine blessing upon Eritrea.

QUARTER CENTURY OF RESILIENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

President Isaias Afwerki's Keynote Address on Silver Jubilee Independence Anniversary

Dear Participants,

Allow me to congratulate the people of Eritrea everywhere as well as the friends who stood on the side of, and extended their solidarity to, the liberation struggle and independence of the Eritrean people.

Let me further express our profound gratitude to all our compatriots who have come from abroad to amplify the significance of this auspicious moment, as well as to foreign and domestic artists, athletes, youth, students and children who have made tremendous efforts, under the coordination of the Commission of Culture and Sports, to present spectacular shows.

What is the significance of 25 years or quarter of century of "resilience and development"? Where did we start from; in which place? And, where are we going?

Where did we start from; where are we and where could we have been; what is the trajectory of our future progress? How do we conduct resistance and development? Why does that succeed? How did we achieve independence? How do we defend and build it? All these questions/issues impinge and define the contours of our road-map. In this perspective, I will give a bird's eye view without going into minute details.

Resistance is a matter of both culture and heritage. And culture is nurtured by an intertwined value system. A value system takes time; it does not crystallize abruptly or by chance in a fleeting moment. It is accumulated, preserved and inherited in a complex process of formidable challenges over a long period of time. To resolutely defy colonial rule, capitulation and dehumanization; the cultivation of mutual respect and compassion; the nurturing of unity, harmony and cohesion; displaying courage, determination, patriotism and sacrifice; to foster ethos of hard

work, productivity and creativity; to be steadfast in the face of trying challenges... these are the legacies and hallmarks of our values and the secret behind our victories. Our resilience and developmental progress are accordingly gauged and asserted by these innate attributes.

The quarter century of independence, marked by resilience and development, is rooted on a robust foundation of a heroic fifty year history. The fifty previous years represent the consummation of a process that was pivotal in our transformation and being as one people. As such, we need to delve deeper into the chapters of our history that we know in order to properly gauge the significance of the quarter century of independence that has elapsed as well as what will unfold in the period ahead. In this context, we may not need to go back to ancient history. But we should not ignore the exemplary feats of resistance and heroism of prominent Eritreans in different times and places against Italian colonialism and other predatory powers that preceded them.

Eritrea should have been independent in 1941 after the defeat of Italian colonial rule at the end of the Second World War as it was indeed the case with virtually all African countries whose political boundaries were established by colonial powers towards the end of the 19th century. But as it was deemed that "Eritrea's independence would not serve US strategic interests", its inalienable national rights were compromised and the country was put under British Military Administration for over ten years from 1941 until 1952. Its economy and physical infrastructure were deliberately ransacked. Divisive campaigns were unleashed to drive a wedge between the people and thereby fragment and weaken their resistance. From 1952 until 1962, new machinations were devised to ensnare Eritrea and its people in a bogus federal relationship. This was a prelude for outright annexation and colonial rule by proxy. .. From 1962 until 1974, various military offensives were unleashed by the United States and its regional allies through the provision of military support to the Haile Sellasie regime in order to suppress the resistance of the Eritrean people and thereby secure colonial rule by proxy. From 1974 until 1991, the former Soviet Union and its allies were engaged in futile attempts to suppress the legitimate liberation struggle of the Eritrean people through a huge military machine. Thus, all the events of the preceding fifty years constitute the bedrock of our 25 years of independence.

How did the Eritrean people defeat successive global powers and their surrogates, who tried to stifle their natural right to independence, in this grossly asymmetric equation? This happened primarily because truth was on the side of the Eritrean people; and,

because they were confronting their enemies on Eritrea's soil. Furthermore, the balance of the equation shifted in favour of the truth and independence because the Eritrean people succeeded, in the fifty years of resilience, to bolster, phase by phase, their resistance. This occurred essentially because the Eritrean people managed to progressively invigorate their culture and value system of resistance; to augment their political awareness and refine their organizational capabilities; to upgrade their armaments and refine their operational plans. And, because the Eritrean people were able to draw appropriate lessons from subversive and treasonous activities of certain elements. The quarter century of resilience and development must thus be measured against the backdrop of these strong foundations.

What about the past 25 years of independence?

The right to independence that should have been exercised in 1941 became a reality fifty years later in the battle field without external succor and advocacy and through unparalleled resistance and the precious sacrifices of over 65,000 of Eritrea's heroic martyrs. Subsequently, the people of Eritrea, rejecting the logic of force and adhering to justice and the rule of law, secured their sovereignty through a referendum. This imbued additional luster and double respect to its independence.

National reconstruction was naturally accorded highest priority. The people and government of Eritrea therefore embarked on constructive engagement with their regional partners in pursuit of this task. The overriding objective was to promote a conducive environment through the cultivation of friendly ties of cooperation first and foremost with the people of Ethiopia but also in a wider framework with the peoples of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Middle East. Coincidentally, the end of the Cold War also presented promising prospects for a new world order. The regional and domestic visions charted out were not driven by sheer emotions and good will. They were indeed objective and achievable.

The pronounced aspirations and initiatives were at variance with what transpired. Why?

One of the unfortunate trends that entailed negative consequences to various developments in our region after the end of the Cold War, the advent of the new era and the collapse of the former Soviet Union, was the fateful decision of the US-led bloc that misconstrued the occasion as a historic opportunity to pursue policies of hegemony. This led to a distorted appraisal of contemporary events and trends. It was presumed that the world is now susceptible to unassailable US power. To monopolize the resources and wealth of the world, the US had to



deter the emergence of any rival military power ... a policy of containment had to be pursued against potential competitors... to control highest technology, the centers of knowledge and culture, as well as information centers and dissemination ... to divide the world into regions and administer affairs through corrupt anchors and surrogates... by trampling on legality and the rule of law, reduce global and regional institutions to appendages and vehicles of overriding US policy... These policies and measures stemmed from a reckless ideology bordering on insanity. As a consequence, the seeds of conflict, upheaval and terrorism have proliferated to precipitate insidious crises, devastation and loss of life in our region and other parts of the world. The challenges and hostilities that we have faced in a quarter of century of our independence must be seen against the backdrop of this global reality.

In 1996, the "Hanish dispute" was concocted and instigated although such "controversy" was never raised in any forum prior to Eritrea's independence. An appalling legal decision was given. Nonetheless the matter was brought to closure. To cut a long story short, the overarching objective was to embroil Eritrea in intractable border conflicts, weaken it through these entanglements and force it to succumb to hegemonic agendas. This does not merit additional elaboration.

In 1998, as a continuation of the Hanish agenda, the Badme border dispute, in effect another war, was instigated and declared through the blessing and direct meddling of Washington. The Badme dispute had otherwise no legal or political rationale. Unnecessary losses that defy logic were inculcated in two years. Around 19,000 Eritrean heroic citizens were martyred

to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of their country. In 2002, after two years of litigation and arbitration, a "final and binding" decision was delivered. Yet again, international treaties, international law and the Arbitral Award were breached with the direct intervention of Washington. Sovereign Eritrean territories continue to be ransacked and destroyed for over 14 years under illegal occupation. This strategic regional conflict, which was no ordinary occurrence, accrued non-negligible dividends to the agenda of hegemony. On the one hand, it scuttled the friendship and alliance of the Eritrean and Ethiopian peoples, and, obstructed the prospects for regional opportunities for change. On the other hand, it also secured a corrupt regime in Ethiopia that serves the agenda of hegemony. By scapegoating Eritrea, the TPLF clique also managed to secure US protection to defend it from the threat and wrath of the Ethiopian people.

In order to deflect attention from flagrant invasions and violations of the rule of law that occurred after the "final and binding" arbitral award, a "border dispute" was provoked in 2008 in order to entangle Eritrea in yet another conflict and incessant crisis. This was again another putative border dispute that had never cropped up since the independence of Djibouti in 1977. As part and parcel of the broader agenda, this so-called dispute has and continues to be unscrupulously instrumentalised as a tool of pressure and disinformation through intensive diplomatic and propaganda campaigns.

The addition of the Djibouti component in their arsenal did not quell

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REPORTAGE

Remembering a Quarter Century of Resilience and Development A Glimpse to the Official Ceremony

Mela Ghebremedhin

It is Tuesday morning, after a long night celebrating the eve of the Independence Day, the streets of Asmara are quite, people take the time to finally meet and enjoy breakfast together. Soon after, men and women start to get ready for the official ceremony of Eritrea's Silver Jubilee Anniversary. The 25th anniversary finally arrived. This special anniversary has been celebrated for the whole month of May in great zeal throughout the country, featuring art performances, music, drama, carnival, sport competitions as well as social gatherings in all cities.

This sunny Tuesday, the Independence Avenue is closed, allowing only people to walk by. It is now about 3pm, Eritrean women wearing their latest traditional outfit with some silver colored print while men look elegant in their suit and tie representing the Eritrean flag. People start to slowly get their seat at the official ceremony in Bahti Meskerem. Protocol, organizing committee as well as the media are making the latest arrangements. Flags are up and waving in the air. Members of the expat community, as well as children and parents are getting their seat while scrutinizing the program booklet. Young Eritreans in blue and white representing the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students (NUEYS) are part of the hospitality team and showing a high level of organization.

Seats are quickly filled up, long lost friends from the diaspora greet each other by saying 'elelelelel'. Government bodies, military officials, PFDJ Officials, diplomats and members of the international community and religious leaders finally arrived. A show of helicopter and a musical background already started to entertain the crowd patiently awaiting for the opening ceremony. President Isaias Afwerki arrived with standing ovation. He greeted the crowd before taking seat.

The ceremony started with a minute of silence in memory of Eritrean Martyrs. The torch, 'shege' in Tigrinya, is finally arriving after a long journey nationwide which started on the 15th January 2016. Zeresenay Tadesse, Eritrean Olympic athlete is the lucky one holding it and illuminating the last destination. Crowd is standing, dancing to the

Eritrean beat, waving the flag and dancing with one another.

Ambassador Zemed Tekle, Head of the Commission of Sport and Culture gave his welcoming speech, in which he highlighted how the people of Eritrea have worked hard and with positive spirit to make the silver jubilee anniversary a success. Artists, sportsmen and women, staff from various departments worked day and night in preparing this special day, he added. Following his eloquent speech, President Isaias Afwerki took the attention of the crowd during his official remark on the occasion. He stressed the long journey and resilience of the people of Eritrea dating back from 1941 and how Eritrea faces constant challenges even during the independence, thus, the theme of a quarter of resilience and development goes in line with the Eritrean reality.

The symbol of resilience was then beautifully portrayed with the march opened by camels carrying materials and people. The camel, the symbol of Eritrea's resistance and resilience was portrayed while men in traditional Tigre clothing carried the EPLF flag. The ceremony continues with the march by members of the defense and police forces with such eager and zeal. Young women leading their march amazed the crowd and close-up camera on the two giant screens installed for the occasion make everyone closer to this youth. This young women, the face of the Eritrean youth, the youth of the silver jubilee make the elders proud of this continuing legacy.

The song, 'Asseye, Assena' by Filmon 'Queshat' then take the feeling of participants and quickly the whole stadium is standing and dancing in unison.

The march continues of people from the Diaspora waving both the Eritrean flag as well as their respective countries, passing by Canada, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Switzerland, and Germany among others. Following the Diaspora, all the nine ethnic groups are then showing off their cultural heritage through dances and cultural outfits.

The singer Kaleab Teweldemedhin arrives singing probably the most hit song of the year, called 'shigey intay riekhi' or my torch what have you seen. The metaphor used in the lyrics as the torch reminds of the long



journey and how through resilience it reaches its destination. The beats gets everyone into another world, women in their silver outfits from head to toe, capturing the attention of everyone including the cameras. Banners written 'Eritrea Never Kneel Down' are proudly displayed up in the public. Young men from NUEYS are showing off their dancing skills, while older women are joining them, bringing different generations together. Kaleab singing 'Neaki mber shigey' to you I am living my torch, while young dancers hold a torch throughout their performance.

The show continues with a song in hedareb 'sahleb ebal' by Humed Mahmud Tita, followed by Bilen language by Hadjait Mendal called 'awdi' including a scene of the everyday life throughout the performances.

As Eritrea put great effort in including artists from the international participants in its program, a collaboration song by artists who have been performing for the last three weeks in the country come together. The harmony and peace is clearly the message behind. Young artists from Germany, passing by Uganda, Latin America and the U.S. took part in this fantastic collaboration singing Natzenetey or my independence in chorus. A song written in English by Sophia Tesfamariam, called Shadows in the Mountains, looked back at the struggle and the decades spent in the trenches for the respect of the rights for independence and identity of Eritreans. Four Sudanese talented singers continue the performance through three wonderful songs and illustrating the strong relations between the two countries; the

Sudan and Eritrea.

Wedi Zagr arrives singing 'niberi, niberi' or live, live. A message to Eritrea and Khadija Admay and her powerful voice continues the show in Tigre with 'Wed Gebil' and wearing a reddish lewiet by dancers adding a touch of silver on their scarf while the torch keeps illuminating this early evening.

Children at the back with their shiny color are getting ready for their tremendous performance. As the President mentioned during his speech, he firstly thanks children and youth for their hard work and indeed, the unforgettable performance of this year's anniversary is surely the great involvement of children. Indeed, under the theme of resilience and development, a great live representation of both meaning was represented by hundreds of well-organized children from the age of 7 to 15. Wearing the colors of the flag and with the impressive lighting and sound system, the audience is attentively listening and watching the performance.

While youth performed representation of Eritrea's history for independence, a video show including historical images of the struggle all the way to the arrival of Tegadelti to Asmara in 1991 and the referendum of 1993 were all carefully watched by the guests. The show continues with a young girl standing inside a giant turtle. The Turtle, the symbol of Eritrea's development policies where it believes that development and prosperity, even if it takes steps as the turtle marches, it is worth taking it by avoiding 'short cut' through aid for instance and preserving its vision of self-reliance. The young talented girl addressed the thousands of people gathered

together with confident through jokes and powerful message while the song 'Lemat iyu timirti, Berhan iyu timirti' or development is education, the light is education.

Beats of Fihira songs mixed with modern beats heat the crowd. A young artist, Luam Teklit, then concludes the show with her song named 'yebelki'lo hizbi' the people is telling you, where she said how culture is a way of promoting our identity, our very existence. Sport is one way of such promotion, thus, group of cyclists and athletes then take part to the show.

The little girl comes back by saying how the turtle takes a long challenging journey but at the end it is worth it. She continues by saying that she can't wait to be a grown up and celebrate her silver jubilee which it will be the country golden year in the coming 25 years. She concluded by saying adjokum adjona' or courage to you, to us all and a united elelelel is heard in the audience.

The beautiful official ceremony of Eritrea's silver jubilee anniversary is synonym of success, steadfastness as well as impressive organization. The month of May was home to numerous amount of performances and great participations and responses from the public coming from all over the country, the diaspora as well as tourists. While the National Anthem put an end to the ceremony, it is also the time to reflect to the peaceful celebration and the high quality of activities that clearly is putting the level high, for Eritrea's next 25 years towards development through resilience.

Happy Independence Day to Eritrea and Eritreans!



“I’m here to stay”, said the little Resistant Nation

Natnael Yebio W.

It is difficult to get rid of your masters if you have been living with them for a long time. You learn fast to stoop low and accommodate the unthinkable. Even in the absence of the former master, the mind bows to the shadow that still lingers in the slaves mind.

“I am independent!” he says, but he is not.

A slave is independent only when dreaming. The African slaves in Georgia dreamt about their Ashanti warrior kings, their elephant hunting expeditions and their Hajji to Mecca, where they prayed side by side with fair complexioned Arab coreligionists.

That was by night. By day, as a slave, you get accustomed to the masters’ manner of mistreating you and degrading you. Gradually, you come to love servitude. Servitude that makes you even miss a servile condition when it is already gone.

When the African slaves in America were set free during the civil war, many did not know what to do with themselves and their newly acquired freedom. What is freedom? They kept on saying. What is independence? It is difficult to look at a light source the instant you come out of a dark tunnel.

“Freedom is making the master happy.” Said the white plantation owner.

“Freedom is singing while picking cotton,” added his son.

Some even went back to their former masters. What can you do with independence if you have not learned to think, work and live independently?

But there were some in the crowd that were born rebellious. They hated their white masters all along. A fiercely independent blood ran inside their veins. They hated to be told to do this or that. They wanted to be free. They wanted nothing short of independence and with that, equality.

Spartacus (71 BC), a roman enslaved laborer and rebel led an uprising that defeated several Roman armies before he was killed in battle, he produced many followers in Europe who caused the downfall of Kings and tyrants for centuries.

After the death of Spartacus, slavery continued once again, what happened? The slaves were not organized to start with and had no political agenda. They did not fight to eradicate slavery but because they wanted a good master. An improved slave institution will do.

Besides, they did not learn to think independently. First they were slaves to the Romans, and as they followed Spartacus, they became his slaves.

If the enemy gives you your independence, it means he is either fed up with you (you have just become a case of diminishing returns) or he wants to come back through the door when you are not looking, that perchance he may rob you.

Don’t trust anyone to bestow independence on you, unless that person is inspired by some noble feelings which in many cases are to be taken with grain of salt. In the event, the unthinkable happens and you get your independence on a silver platter, you would have more chance to survive if you stayed clear out of his turf physically and mentally.

The Americans declared their independence in 1776. But at the same time there was also a declaration of dependence that echoed from the other side of the continent. We live in a very strange world, you know.

It is like the lion, which the moment it is set free in the woods after a long zoo life, finds it difficult to hunt on its own. It has been fed by its owners for too long, a time to be able to chase an antelope for dinner. Slavery and dependence is a wound that heals only slowly.

In America, the advocates or followers of such deviant ideas of dependence are said to have been tarred and feathered. That’s a very hard punishment for those who fail to grasp the meaning of independence.

Our fighters in the field learned to live independently for 30 years long bloody struggle for the liberation of this country. They depended on themselves and their meager material and human resources. They fought in their own manner and negotiated when they deemed it important. No one can tell them to say this or that or to turn this way or that way. They refused the help of those who approached them with ulterior motives of those who presented their help packages with future strings.

“You want to be a business partner?” was the question most often asked.

“What! Partners with you guys,” thought the guest.

“How about some diplomatic help for future compensation?”

To accept such a proposition would be a contradiction in terms; for one cannot fight for independence and at the same time be dependent on others in one’s activities.

The problem with some third world countries is that after declaring their independence they came to realize that during their struggle days in the fields and bushes or jungles, they have never been independent after all. They dealt with mercenaries, they made businesses with thugs and visited European countries in search of money and sympathy.

When finally, they got their land back, they woke up from their



slumber only to find that they have lots of favors to repay and still more debt to settle.

After your independence, many countries tend to watch you behind the fence.

“What is this little country going to do next?” they will ask.

Some simply turn into vultures and watch from tree tops. Others come with their trade proposals and like to poke you on the rib. They want to know how much independent you are.

After May 24 1991 and later after the Referendum, many arrived just to test the waters. They discovered what they least expected. Independence to the point of arrogance. Many left disappointed, others stayed out of curiosity.

Nothing was changed since the struggle days. The perpetual slogan is come as partners not as masters!

To be independent is to be the master of your destiny. They way of taking care of your destiny is to become self reliant as much as possible. By working and developing one’s country, you gradually become economically independent. By educating the people, you become socially independent.

However, the colonial specter that haunts European minds does not feel comfortable with such doctrines.

What do you exactly mean by that? Says the cooperate world.

“I want to lead my life the way I want to. You reply.

“Forget it.” Huffs the samsonite-singling business man.

“We will see.” Sighs the skeptic.

In such a situation, the best way to keep and retain one’s independence is to watch every step you make. It is a tightrope walking that may cost you all that you have worked for all your life long, the moment you lose your balance and fall down, you will be falling right into the outstretched hands of your would-be saviors. And they will take you away and will treat you nicely and will try and cure you of your fever of independence and infection of freedom.

“How do you feel now?” They will ask.

“Fine, just fine.” You will say.

“Do you still believe in self-reliance?”

“It sounds like absolute terms to me, where did you get it from?” you wonder.

“How about the brand of independence you subscribe to before you were admitted to the hospital?”

“I lost all sense of independence and freedom during my free fall to the ground,” you conclude.

“That is more like it,” they will say rubbing their hands.

And you will never be the same ever again.

Eritrea this year is celebrating its Silver Jubilee Independence Day, a quarter century of resilience and development, let this be a testament to the Samsonite-singling business man that Eritrea is here to stay forever. Self-Reliance and independence are two words deeply imbedded in the Eritrean fabric of existence and no matter what outside aggression tries to push it out of balance, its people are here to pull it back up.





The Ever Fresh Marine Biodiversity

Asmait Futsumbrhan

Red Sea is one of the biggest and unpolluted seas in the world. It is one of the few and most significant source of marine biodiversity in the world. Through the benefits of its unique water characteristics, such as its warm waters, higher salinity isolation, favors extraordinary species diversity. The waters of the Red Sea are known for its richness in containing great amount of miscellaneous marine species, with around 1,000 known species of fish and more than 220 species of corals. It holds astonishing proportion of underwater species not found in any other seas. It is estimated to provide 36,000 to 80,000 tone of different kinds of fishes and corals to be harvested annually.

Eritrea has a total marine exclusive economic zone of 121,000 km2 along its 1,200 km that covers a continental shore in the Red Sea and about 52,000 km2 of continental shelf. The country owns more than 350 small and medium-sized islands. Corals are very abundant on shallow bottoms in the Eritrean waters, forming reefs in an open sea, around the islands and along the shores of the continents. The Dahlak Archipelago is one of the many islands where majority of the corals are suited.

The continental shelf is wider in Eritrea's waters than in most other countries of the Red Sea. The Eritrean part of the Red Sea is generally recognized as being highly favorable for the development of artisanal fisheries. Important coralline areas, extensive surfaces and numerous shelters of the Dahlak archipelago plateau, the north and south of the plateau, short distances to the continental shelf break; are all conditions encouraging to such development. Outside the coralline zones, the sedimentary floors, though not particularly attractive for artisanal demersal fishing activities, but offer quite favorable conditions for bottom trawling operations.

The coastline and water of the Eritrea's Red Sea are rich in marine fauna. Due to the suitable environment, the number of sea bird's species, globally threatened or endangered marine mega-fauna such as dugongs and turtles, and creatures of certain interest, such as dolphins, porpoises and whales are lavish.



For the inhabitants of the coastal areas and islands of Eritrea, fishing has traditionally been a major source of livelihoods. For years the people have used fishing as their source of food and revenue. History shows that, back in 50's and 60's the tremendous economic growth of fishing in the history of Eritrea. Nonetheless, as everything was disrupted during the war for independence, the fishery as well was disrupted just like other sectors of the economy; fishermen dislocated because of loose management of that times colonial regime, and resulted in loss of productive capacities.

Since its establishment at the end of 1991, the Ministry of Marine Resources have put relentless efforts over the next 25 years to the development of the fisheries sector of the country with aims, to enhance the income from fisheries, ensure food security, improving living standards of the society and more.

After independence, one of the government's prior aims was to organize fishermen and supply them with different fishing equipments

and rehabilitation of the tradition of fishing. The Ministry's objectives were directed to support and sustain the artisanal fishing endeavors through institutional arrangements.

One of the purposes of organizing fishermen into cooperatives is to establish loan program through which fishermen can have access to credit to purchase fishing accessories such as boats, gear, engines, ice boxes, fuel etc... The national cooperative society established three credit lines. These were: Short-term credit payable in 6 to 12 months for small scale investment on fishing business and other income generating activities, the Medium-term credit payable in 15 to 45 months for the purchase of fishing gears, engines, iceboxes, fishing boats and other fishing equipment, and Long-term credit payable within 60 months for the purchase of inboard and outboard engines and fishing boats.

Extension of credit started in 1994 and until now more than 19 million Nakfa worth of fishing accessories has been distributed to fishermen in the six regional cooperative



societies all over the coast. As a result, the number of traditional fishermen had increased over the years remarkably.

Traditionally, majority of the Eritrean fishermen, living particular in and around Massawa, Assab, and on the islands of the Dahlak Archipelago have been using artisanal fishing. This form of fishing technology limits the extent to which they can venture into the sea, thereby restricting their catching rate especially during the hot season (May - September) when fish tend to migrate further into deep sea waters. During the hot seasons, fishing will generally take place at around 90 -144 meters mostly towards the southern coastline. The artisanal fisheries in Eritrea have showed slight growth over the years. In 2001, there was 1,300 tons of fish harvest which was 581 tones extra from the numbers in 1996.

Currently, fishing activities are undergoing by two groups of vessels, foreign and Eritrean vessels. The industrial fishing have already showed important potential for development. The overall mission and vision of the ministry is the sustainable development and management of the fishery sector to make a significant contribution to the overall growth of the national economy. According the third round restructuring, the Ministry of Fishery's structure has been streamlined to concentrate more on policy, control & regulatory matters. While operational activities are delegated to the three regional administrations - the Central Administration Zone, the Northern & Southern Red Sea Administrative Zones.

All in all both the artisanal and industrial fisheries sub-sectors have showed steady growth in the last several years after independence, the end result verifies annual catches have risen from 399 tons in 1992 to about 13,000 tons since 2000 to this day.

Over the twenty five years of independence numerous projects has been carried out by the ministry regarding the enhancement of fishermen and fishery sector. Few of the many are, projects focusing on the establishment of developing fishery's infrastructure in the northern cost; Sahel province was started in 1993. The main aim was

to train new fishermen with modern way of fishing and to train woman in making and repairing nets. The project was also focused in training potential fishermen in fishing and safe fishing. The project was funded by the Dutch government through ISEE URK in Halibai, a place near Wekiro.

Similarly, in late 1993, the ministry in collaboration with the Oxfam Canada implemented a project to rehabilitate the fishing tradition in the areas of Zula, Foro, Afta, and Irefaile. Fish shops in Zula and Foro villages and fish store and office have been built in the Zula coast by the project.

The Ministry of Fisheries has also assembled a well-equipped laboratory as per the standard of European Union quality control with funds from the AFD (a French Agency for Development). The project's purpose was to measure the quality and safety of sea food products that are intended for human consumption along with fulfilling the requirements of the European Union for the export of sea food products from Eritrea. The laboratory started its operation in 2001 and is still fully operating and is capable of performing chemical and microbiological analyses on sea food samples and other accessory facilities.

In addition to all the development on the fishing endeavors, the ministry has focused on establishing landing sites. The landing site inside Massawa fishery center at Ghibi includes 2-block ice making machines and a cold storage. Yet, with the increase of fish landing, more projects aiming at expanding the existing landing site were launched at the beginning of 2003 with huge amount of budget from the government.

Twenty five years into Eritrea's independence, its marine diversity is still as diverse as Eritrea itself, diversity yet to be fully tapped into. With the right amount of initiatives from the government of Eritrea, the country's long range of coastline; the marine sector has the full potential to be a significant economic and tourism sectors with capability to employ massive human resource and yield immense economic yields for a country located in one of the most important strategic locations in the world.





Eritrea Nurturing its Cultural Diplomacy

Mela Ghebremedhin

Art, humanities, literature, music, painting, philosophy, performing arts... all these words are combined into one: culture. The customs, the social settings are in constant move throughout history and even more in the era of interconnectedness. While cultural mainstream tries to

heritage with others, unconsciously, it becomes a tool for dialogue, to build relations based on mutual respect and tolerance towards one's cultural differences.

Globalization brought cultures into closer contact and, thus far, is a soft power tool in diplomacy and world affairs. In today's world,

an independent Eritrea.

Surely, at independence, promoting the culture in bringing the people together as well as promoting the image of Eritrea continued to be the task of the last 25 years.

This year's celebration of Eritrea Silver Jubilee Anniversary will certainly stay engraved in everyone's memory. This year's carnival compiled all segments of Eritrean history as well as the 25 years of achievements through symbolic artwork as well as songs and dances. Passing by the arrival of tegadelti in the reminiscence of 1991 makes one emotional, the National Union of Eritrean Women active roles during the armed struggle as well as its resilience at independence at home and in the diaspora was demonstrated, the resilience and development of the people in terms of food security, health care, education were also portrayed by the youth also showing Eritrea's vision of self-reliance and as holding the torch towards prosperity.

Monday evening, the 23rd, the Independence Avenue was packed of children, youth and less young all gathered together at the symbolic avenue defining Eritrea's culture at its best. While performers from different parts of the world entertained dwellers, foreign visitors are amazed by the harmony despite the huge amount of people on the streets. At midnight, fireworks started and lasted for 25 minutes, everyone rushed to get their mobile phone and record the moment, smiles, laughs, greetings make the avenue a place of joy.

In today's Eritrea, culture continues to be the backbone of the society. By ensuring the equal representation of all traditions, languages, religions, the country manages to keep a great sense of social harmony. This continuing work in ensuring peace and stability is also used by many at international level. To strengthen this, Eritrea encourages cultural sharing every year by bringing guests preformerece from abroad as well as working in partnership with foreign missions to Eritrea in organizing cultural events.

Eritrea is using its cultural diplomacy strength through the month of May with great gesture by including all layers of the society

together and, more importantly, by inviting a great amount of artists from all over the world passing by China, Uganda, Chile, Venezuela, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey, Germany and the United States among many others.

With more than 180 artists coming from all over the world and joining local artists to make this year's independence day unique was also a success in terms of cultural diplomacy for Eritrea. The venues at Cinema Roma, Cinema Asmara, open-air concerts at City Park among others, were all packed by curious dwellers, tourists and members of the expat community.

All diplomatic missions in Eritrea took ownership in this tremendous task. The German Embassy gave a hand in bringing German artists such as the famous Leipzig Orchestra for the second time, the Egyptian Embassy and its folk art troupe, Elarish, who made great artistic metaphor on representing Eritrea saying "Eritra zen, Eritra zen, Sha'ab Eritra zen and only by coming here you will witness the reality, a country of peace and harmony". Mr. Tom from the Atlanta Hornes, a jazz band, also expressed how his band are the "ambassadors of positiveness" and will stress how peaceful Eritrea is once they return home.

Clearly, since the liberation struggle until today, Eritrea through its multiple cultural events, such as the Sawa festival, independence day festivities and also festival abroad; has understood the strength of cultural diplomacy particularly with the rise of cross-cultural communication and the need to cooperate regardless of cultural differences in terms of religions, values and beliefs. To strengthen this, the Afro American jazz band,

the Atlanta Horns, explained how, back in the U.S., another group was supposed to take part and as soon as they saw the State Department advice on Eritrea as being at high security risks zone, they postponed their trip. "The other band went to Brussels... Well, actually Eritrea is so peaceful and we will surely share our positive thoughts about Eritrea upon our return..." The Ugandan artist also stressed how the harmony and the love of the country is what makes Eritrea so unique in Africa.

As Dinh (1987) explained in his article titled *Communication and Diplomacy in a Changing World*: "communication is to diplomacy as blood is to the human body". Hence, to enable a great communication, a diplomat is a person able to understand cultural differences, norms and values. Thus, Eritrea through its promotion of culture and experience sharing as well as its multiple 'informal ambassadors' is clearly showing its influence and will continue to nurture it as part of its development strategy.

Without a doubt, the next 25 years will await many challenging tasks to overcome for Eritrea, one of them being: nation branding in a world where Eritrea continues to be portrayed negatively. Thus, changing the course of affairs by putting greater effort in cultural diplomacy will allow Eritrea to influence the global public opinion.

This soft power tool as Prof. Joseph S. Nye explained: *The ability to persuade through culture, values and ideas, as opposed to 'hard power', which conquers or coerces through military might.*

In other words, cultural diplomacy should not be seen as secondary in diplomacy but rather as an important soft power instrument.



impose its values and cultural codes, Eritrea manages to keep intact its culture by passing the torch to the younger generation. Anyone in Eritrea throughout this month-long of celebration of the silver jubilee anniversary cannot be indifferent to the amount of activities and involvement of all layers of society in all programs.

This month, we are not solely celebrating Eritrea's independence, but also strengthening or reaffirming our cultural diplomatic resilience. Hence, let's have a glimpse on the strength of cultural diplomacy and its benefits for Eritrea in broader sense.

To start with, what do we mean by cultural diplomacy? Here we have put together the words culture and diplomacy, does the former goes with the latter?

Cultural Diplomacy may best be described as a course of actions, which are based on and utilize the exchange of ideas, values, traditions and other aspects of culture or identity, whether to strengthen relationships, enhance socio-cultural cooperation, promote national interests and beyond; Cultural diplomacy can be practiced by either the public sector, private sector or civil society (ICD Berlin 2012).

Indeed, throughout history, artists, tourists, travelers, diaspora groups were perceived as informal ambassadors by sharing their cultural

culture has become one of the most powerful tool in bringing different people and governments together. With the ease to communicate due to the massive expansion of information technology, using cultural diplomacy is predominant in fostering peace and stability.

Understanding one another is key. Eritrea knows it best. Throughout its history and struggle for liberation, Eritrea used cultural events such as songs, dances and poetries to express cultural heritage and, more importantly, cultural exchange is voicing of Eritrea's struggle for independence. As a matter of fact, during the armed struggle, Eritreans living in the Diaspora were highly efficient in such setting. Bologna Festival throughout the 1980s until 1991 was the platform of cultural diplomacy. By inviting artists, organizing drama performance, art exhibitions as well as seminars, Eritreans and friends of Eritrea gathered each summer into one city. It was the place to promote Eritrea's cause; many non-Eritreans would join the festival.

In Eritrea also, movement for liberation included cultural troupe of tegadelti and was seen as a predominant actor in firstly, spreading consciousness through songs and other art performances, secondly, bringing civilians as well as freedom fighters under one umbrella and thirdly, to keep the momentum and the spirit of camaraderie, love and unity among Eritreans in achieving its vision of



Official Silver Jubilee Independence Anniversary Celebrations In Pictures



WOMEN

The Miracle of the 30% in Eritrean Struggle for Independence

Rigat Tesfamichael

The independence season has an inevitable effect in triggering one to look back to the voyage and history in attaining the independence that we are celebrating now. Within this contemplation, one cannot pass without a pause of astonishment on the history of women in the struggle for independence, and to acknowledge their role as a vital acceleration to the triumph of the struggle. This part of history makes it unique on its character from other national liberation struggles.

This active involvement of women was initially started in limited number from the sixties. Yet, the mass participation multiplied in the seventies with the formation of EPLF. Since this time the involvement of women in diverse sectors increased in exponential rate.

The Eritrean struggle with the coming of EPLF has taken multifaceted dimension, as it was not only an armed struggle but also a social revolution. Social revolutions according to Theda Skocpol are rapid, basic transformation of a society's state and class structure; and are accompanied in part carried through movements from below (Skocpol, 1979). EPLF's social transformation focused on changing the social relations which prevailed at that time. One of the main social issues it raised and sought to change was the Eritrean society's attitudes towards women and the gender relations that existed. The social revolution in Eritrea was aiming in changing different social formation of the society and altering traditional values, where a parcel of this social transformation was emancipation of Eritrean women.

The participation of women was a parallel struggle for two fundamental goals. In one hand, it was their struggle to liberate the nation from colonial power and all its atrocities and, on the other hand, a struggle to fight against all attitudes and practices undermining their equal status within the Eritrean society. The principle 'Equality through Equal Participation' was the drive behind these phenomena. In a nutshell, women were active in every possible way, to contribute in the struggle. They were part of the struggle as combatants in a very big number, and those who were directly combating were active part of the struggle inside and outside of the country through raising money,

working in espionage operations and storing and transporting ammunitions and facilities in demand by the struggle (Astier Fisahastion). Unlike many cases of women's participation in liberation movements, where the involvement is limited in areas and chores related to domestic domain, women's participation in the struggle was in diverse capacities, which were previously male-dominated. The participation of women consisted to around one third of EPLF combat members. Many were front-line fighters who affirmed their unshakable valiance and courage in battle fields. Although this was challenging at first because of the preexisting patriarchal attitudes, female fighters in the field had proved not only as courageous and as resilient but also as source of encouragement and moral to their male comrades. Now it's not a surprising occurrence in Eritrea to witness families with female martyr member or female ex-fighters who are disabled and had initially sacrificed their ability to bear children as the result of their wound. Their participation was not only limited in the battlefield, but we see huge participation in various sectors to mention few, media (41%), transportation (25%), health (55%), media (41%), public administration (35%), construction (19.5%) (NUEW Research and Information: 1989). In the womb of this struggle, Eritrean women formed their organization (NUEW), with purposes of ensuring national liberation and equality of men and women through social mobilization. The presence of this organization in the liberation has made the question of women's equal status at the center of political issue.

In attaining the social transportation and enhancing consciousness regarding the struggle, EPLF had an effective organizing and sensitizing strategies through its fighters who are committed in mobilizing the public. In regards to the national liberation and social transformation, these fighters were predominantly known as 'jemahir' which included female fighters to a large number.

The role of this female fighters was pertinent in creating common understanding of the struggle, and on eliminating attitudes and practices that created social injustices and inequalities. On women's issues, activities included sensitization in combating early marriage, FGM/C, girls' abduction dowry and bride-price. Within this process of promoting women's

status; measures were taken in enhancing women's participation in political and public sphere, equal labor payment and rights to land entitlement. Education as a strategy for women's empowerment was one of the priorities of EPLF, as such, adult literacy programs of women were provided not only in liberated areas but also in occupied zones which demanded its own risk to conduct. The number of girls who joined schools in the liberated areas and the revolutionary school increased drastically. In sum, the role of women through their diverse participation and contribution in the struggle was able to secure the independence of Eritrea. They confirmed the motto of the struggle on the ground, "A revolution will not succeed without the full and conscious participation of women" has assured its reality on the ground

during the Eritrean struggle for liberation. The legacy of the progressive success of the participation of women in the struggle and its impact has laid a conducive ground in post-independence Eritrea.

This story of the struggle of women against colonialism and patriarchy is a story of inspiration and pride of what women can alter through their participation. However, social transformations attained in such struggles are always on consistent change, same as they can be progressive, there is a potential for regression. Hence, it requires greater endeavour to ensure and effectively implement the existing progressive policies and empowering women in the sustainability of equal status



and participation. Thus, for Eritrean women the post-independence period has not been only euphoric but also challenging in retaining what has been achieved and also in accelerating its momentum.

President Isaias Afwerki's ...

Continued from page 2

the frustration of Eritrea's detractors. In 2009, on the basis of a fictitious association with "Al-Shebaab", a sanctions resolution was adopted against Eritrea on Christmas Eve in the name of the UN Security Council through a dramatically orchestrated campaign of deceit, disinformation and pressure. The primary objective of this ploy was to deter the growth of Eritrea's military capabilities for self-defense. It was also meant to widen the ground for political and diplomatic isolation of the country.

The greatest historical threat to Eritrea's arch-enemies being the Eritrean people, "human trafficking" was employed to disperse and weaken Eritrea's human capital. This policy was given paramount priority under the rubric of "granting asylum status" to Eritreans. The campaign was formalized with the official blessing of the US President. Organized crime of human trafficking thereby received additional impetus and gained traction through frantic and intensive propaganda and diplomatic campaigns. It is now being utilized as another tool for accusation of violation of human rights against Eritrea.

Economic sabotage is further resorted to on a constant basis with the aim of creating poverty and starvation to instigate crisis in the country. To this end, various obstacles are concocted to prevent the collection of the 2% rehabilitation and reconstruction tax as well as remittances. Various subterfuges are also conducted by Washington to paralyze and destroy

the mining industry and discourage foreign investment and development assistance.

Psychological campaigns and media demonization of Eritrea as well as futile political machinations to create division and discord among our ranks are being ramped up to weaken our integrated resilience and developmental efforts. These are further bolstered by suffocating measures to prevent objective media portrayal of the reality in Eritrea.

Dear Participants,

I have tried to highlight, in a much condensed form, the indelible and repetitive truth of the past quarter century in all its ramifications and linkages. This is sadly a narrative of incisive hostility against the sovereignty and independence of Eritrea. What is more important however is how our endeavours for development are gauged against these hostilities and challenges; irrespective of their magnitude and manifestations. Our culture and value system have been further enriched and reinforced. Our all-rounded resistance (legal, political, informational, diplomatic and National Security) has become enhanced more potent. In spite of our limited resources and incessant hurdles, our economic, social, cultural and developmental endeavours have undergone through various phases to scale new heights. (Although I have not delved into profound description of the sectoral developments). We are now poised to embark on greater and more expansive development programmes. Indeed, this is vividly demonstrated by the spectacular display of our people

inside the country and abroad during these past festive days.

Dear Participants,

We have lived through and witnessed independence, resistance and development for the past quarter century. What are the prospects of the next quarter century?

In order to chart a clear vision and road-map for the future, I wish to underline that a complete and detailed documentation, sector by sector, of the past quarter century of resilience and development must be undertaken (at this still remains work in progress). From this day onwards, all legal, diplomatic, informational, and political campaigns that we conduct on all fronts and levels should be pursued with greater pace and better organization. As far as our broader future developmental campaign is concerned, which cannot be addressed in full on this occasion, big and expansive programmes will be as usual implemented with the full participation of our people. I assure you that we are ready to shoulder and fulfill our responsibilities.

Eternal Glory to our heroic Martyrs who secured our independence and sovereignty!

Dignity and Pride to the indomitable people of Eritrea!

Praise and Gratification to Eritrea's Defence Forces; the forefront of resistance and development!

Victory to the Masses!
24/052016



Magnificent events and Harmony to Celebrate Quarter Century



Asmait Futsumbrhan

Quarter century of independence, and the Eritrean people still celebrate their independence day as if it was yesterday. Independence and the value of it, not a lot of nations would understand it perfectly as the Eritreans do. As a nation they have shared unbearable pain together to get to where they are today. Every Eritrean family possess the same history and memory. They understood that in loving their differences and strengthening their unity they would get to be free as people. They did. This is what makes them cherish, value and celebrate it with such enthusiasm and all kinds of excitements every year.

After months of preparation, numerous interesting and entertaining programs and shows have been setup to celebrate the silver jubilee. Well it certainly is not hard to guess the excitement and happiness of the people to celebrate their independence day with such enthusiasm in different ways. These days, it never is a surprise to see a crowd waiting in lines and fighting to attend in these different events that are being hosted at different cinemas and the streets of Asmara, or cars driving around the streets with Eritrean flag attached to them. The streets of the city are busy, similar to all the previous Independence Day celebrations held each year. Likewise, Cinema Roma was full-packed from one end to the other with no seats left, still numerous crowds were outside waiting in line to get to one of the programs that was being hosted at the cinema. While inside, some of the audience watched the entire

show standing for almost two and half hours.

The program presented an opera musical drama of hidareb with a title, “Ibikshk”. The well-directed and written drama told a story of one bidawiet village (hidareb’s village) in the Gash-Barka region which was conquered by colonizers. It was an interesting dramas which made the audience silent and in deep curiosity of how the story was going to end. The drama also included Bidawet songs, which made the Bidawet people in the audience dance traditional dances.

The glamorous and zest of a performance, included a poem by Samuel Gebreadonai former journalist, presented poem “AGENAE” which is roughly

comedy, songs and dance performers by foreign individuals Abi Gail Obi a South African vocalist and Crane performers from Uganda.

No different to all the programs that are taking place regarding the independence celebration, several exhibitions have been displayed at Expo grounds starting from 17th of May. People have been visiting these exhibitions and where one of the highlights of the celebrations.

Freedom fighters corner is one of the sites that has been visited the most. The corner includes photo and war material exhibitions. It is a place where you can see and feel the hardships and dreadful times that the freedom fighters went through to achieve freedom.



starting from during the armed struggle activities like Bologna festivals to the recent festivals that have being held in the recent years. With great hospitality of the people at the “Deki hade libi” corner, people have been enjoying

traditions of the nine ethnic groups of Eritrea. Those administrations showed a dedicated work of art to represent the ethnic groups which made the event one of the many best performances of the month. Moreover, numerous sport clubs presented a carnival show of their own representing their team and Eritrean woman from all over the world joined the carnival as well.

Indeed twenty five years is a big number to celebrate and enjoy, to walk free in your own homeland breathing the very fresh and peaceful air. It is without a doubt something worth celebrating. It is a time to share your memories with friends, tell history to your kids and most of all, remember the heroes that gave their lives to bring freedom. The Eritrean people equally suffered and shared their pain throughout the years of colonization’s in harmony, yet the harmony carries on to keep their freedom and celebrate it for the quarter century.

Now is the time where they get to shine as people, to enjoy their peace more than ever. It is a season for Eritrea to come together to remember their loved ones who have passed to get this moment, and be proud of who they are. This is the only reason why Eritreans from all over the world are here to celebrate their freedom and their unity. Starting from little kids to much older people, are enjoying all the events that are being presented regarding the celebrations , and it is a time when you know that the Eritrean people cherish and value the meaning of their independence.

Happy Birth Day Eritrea!!!!



translated as well done, went on to say well done to the Eritrean people on their success and determination of the 25 years of journey to development and success. The event included

The material exhibitions included everything from Food, clothes, Education tools to each warfare resources used during the armed struggle, in a sense, the corner showed it all which brought flash backs to the former fighters who were lucky enough to enjoy this day today. Even children were amazed by the incredible history of their fathers and mothers. This specific corner explained how all todays peaceful Eritrea came with great sacrifices, mind techniques and unbreakable patience.

The “Deki hade libi” corner is a communal association, this corner depicts different cultures of foreign countries by which diverse Eritrean citizens reside. The communal association presented photo exhibitions

different foreign cultural drinks and introduced to some of the cultures of the countries.

Furthermore, besides all the performances that are being displayed at the streets and cinemas, carnival was also one of the programs that has been given lots of thought and efforts for months. The carnival show which took place on Sunday 22nd May, starting from six o’clock was attended by different people from all walks of life. In this year’s carnival different institutions and administration took part to present dazzling shows. The institutions paraded a show representing their organization and productions, where on the other hand the administration of the Mael region presented the styles and



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TOTAL ERITREA

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On the occasion of the
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Eritrea, Total Eritrea congratulates to the
People and Government of the state of Eritrea.

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The young voices

Billion Temesghen

In the past month long editions, Q&A took on the quest to bring you people that have stories worth being shared. We took on interviewing people from the previous generations that lived through the war for independence and the latest one of the Ethiopian offences. A freedom fighter or not, a soldier or not, every Eritrean did/ does contribute and sacrifice so much to the last breath, to safeguard the nation's honor while guarantying younger generations a country with no bullet, where no child suffers.

Inversely, today Q&A, brings you young boys and girls born after the independence. They do not have cheerless stories of war or destruction rather youthful and jovial experiences that they are willing to share with Q&A. Let's see what these amazing youth are doing in the free, sovereign and peaceful country assured and secured to them by previous generations.

Mussie Menghistaab (21)

Student in the College of Marine Sciences

Hi I am Mussie, I was born in 1995 so I am 21 years old and I am a student in the Marine Sciences College in Massawa. You ask me what freedom means to me and I don't know where to begin because in Eritrea 'freedom' is not just a word. I hear the elders speak and freedom for them is something that they worship, and so do I.

Personally freedom, independence and being born in a free country, to me it means being able to go to school, having so many friends and enjoy brotherhood.

My school is in the port city of Massawa, so my friends from the college and I always go to the shores and swim for hours after class. It is just amazing! The weather is awesome, the waters are clean, there are plenty of fishes, islands are so appealing, yum grilled sea food and there is so much to do.

We love it so much, and we are not the only ones, in fact many young people come to Massawa on the weekends and holidays, and it is really enjoyable. Back in the days Eritreans were neglected of walking down the main avenues, let alone have a chance to enjoy the natural beauty of their own country! And we all know of it in depth.

As such I know being Eritrean, I have a duty to honor previous generations' martyrdom while freeing our country in the war



Mussie Menghistaab

for independence and also during the war with Ethiopia. I honestly don't remember much of it but I have friends and families that lost parents and children so it is only natural for me to know all about it, Eritrean martyrs paid their lives for us to be as free as we want. As such, what I set as my priority is to do as best I can in school and I also believe that, what they wanted for us the most was, happiness, and we are, very much in fact so, and I appreciate it.

In addition there are many older youth, like our older brothers and sisters who are working every day to develop the country, to construct infrastructures and buildings, schools, hospitals and they do much more to serve the people... I am grateful and my peers are too.

I wish thousands and thousands and many, many more years of good fortune for the people of Eritrea. Happy Independence Day!

* * *
Merhawi Kudus (23)

Professional rider of Dimetion Data

I miss home every day. I miss rushing down riding my bike through the serpent roads to Massawa and Keren, while the wind blows against my speed.

Whenever I went out of the city (Asmara), during my training sessions, I'd go to many places and everywhere I went I didn't have to worry and felt at home. If I ask for food I have it, water is extremely guaranteed and if I want to rest it is always okay. You don't have to be related by blood, follow the same religion or speak the same language; every woman is your mother, every man is your father and you get to have millions of brothers and sisters. This is what freedom means to me.

I miss my family, friends and the amazing people, even though we don't know each other on a personal level we say hi and pass greetings to each other every time we see one another. That is just how it is in my country especially in Asmara, because that is where I



Merhawi Kudus

am from, everyone is familiar with one other. I miss the sincere smiles of the society I grew up in.

I was born in a free country, of which, at least one person in a family is a martyr. It gives me pride and courage to tell that I am an Eritrean everywhere I go, it also gives me motive to do my best in what I do and not let down my fans and my people; because I know and I even feel that I have every one's support.

My deepest most heartfelt greetings to every Eritrean. Every single one is doing due part in developing and safeguarding the country; my words would be too little to express my gratitude for the Eritrean youth. I am certain that this silver jubilee is something like a prologue for the perpetual happily ever after.

* * *
Arsema Tekie (20)

Student recent high school graduate

I recently graduated from high school in Accounting stream and now I am looking to take the next step in college. However I really don't know what I want and which college to attend, it is more likely for me to study political sciences or social sciences. In September I will be a college student! I am beyond excited, aside education, what thrills me the most is getting to be with students from all over the country

.We Eritreans, we live to live together. We love being together and I know I will have so much to learn from my future college mates, that come from different cities, towns and different ethnic groups of different colleges. I told myself that if I do great in school I will learn one, at least one ethnic language. Colleges in Eritrea are

scattered around the country, all outside of Asmara and this is a good opportunity for us to travel and come together like one big family.

What does freedom mean to me? Uhm... I hear of girls in different African countries being stopped from going to school because armed troops rape them. But here, it is different, so to me freedom would definitely mean not fearing



Arsema Tekie

of anything happening to me and young girls like me, even if we are out in the evenings and away from home.

I don't know what I will do when I grow up but I will certainly put to good use my education serving the people. After all it is only right to give back to a generous society that provides free schooling for everyone!

For the Eritrean people, I'd like to tell them how much thankful I'm for teaching me how to love, not be selfish and respect anybody as my own self. I am a decent youth like the millions Eritreans of my time because of the most humane society on the face of earth. I wish us, perpetual happiness!

* * *
Regaat Tesfamichale

Political Sciences graduate, works at the NUEW

Freedom to me is going out in the morning knowing that I will

be back. The independence of Eritrea goes far beyond freeing the country from foreign aggression, it is a testimonial of humanity. As we nourished values of equality no matter the gender, ethnicity, religions and skin color. Young men and women of previous generations gracefully gave up their lives, in the most important years. They could have done so much more than throwing away families and dreams in the search of freedom.

So for us it is a renewal of innate pledges made amongst nationals to not let go of what we've achieved and what we're aiming for as one big force.

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Teshfahiwet kahsai (25)

Mining Engineering graduate

I haven't lived before the independence and I haven't participated in the last war against Ethiopia either but that doesn't mean, me or young Eritreans are clueless of our history. The fact that we are conscious makes our sense of identity immensely strong. Our country is a like a baby taking small steps and we all know it is our duty to assist it.

Speaking of duties and responsibilities, we are very aware of the fact that for thirty years, our freedom fighters died while fighting to get us out of suppression, and recently younger ones too followed their lead to avoid the same history being repeated. As such, youth of today we might be young yet very sharp, for us is a moral value, a call we don't ignore.

As the Eritrean independence is



Teshfahiwet kahsai

of great value to everyone, I direct my greetings to Eritreans all over the world. Happy Independence Day!