



## 34<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY OFFICIAL CEREMONY HELD ENTHUSIASTICALLY IN ASMARA

The Official ceremony marking the 34th anniversary of Independence Day was held with great enthusiasm yesterday afternoon, 24 May, at Asmara Stadium.

In his keynote address, President Isaias Afwerki extended

congratulations to the patriotic Eritrean people at home and abroad, to all friends of Eritrea, to the free peoples of the world, and to all those who conveyed their sincere congratulations to the Eritrean people.

President Isaias stated that as

we assess the trajectory of our independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity each year, in the context of our formidable nation-building process, it is essential to clearly understand the global and regional environment from an objective and relational perspective. He emphasized that strengthening and safeguarding our independence cannot be viewed in isolation from establishing a just global order and a regional architecture based on mutual respect, complementarity, cooperation, stability, and progress.

President Isaias noted that while the assessment of global and regional developments over the past year and earlier years remains relevant, what distinguishes this 34th Independence Day anniversary is its coincidence with President Trump's rise to the highest office in the United States. Considering the US's global influence and the perspectives already outlined, he underscored the need for a serious analysis to understand the new administration's underlying policies, approaches, and trends.

Amidst the global rivalries shaping this "transitional phase" toward a new global order, President Isaias stressed that Africa remains virtually absent. This marginalization is neither shocking nor surprising. Despite its vast natural resources, Africa continues to export raw materials at minimal prices while importing expensive manufactured goods, maintaining a subsistence economy heavily dependent on foreign aid.

On Eritrea's regional strategy, President Isaias reaffirmed that its permanent goal is to cultivate strong regional ties founded on mutual respect, complementarity, cooperation, stability, prosperity, and integration. He emphasized that the neighborhood's geostrategic significance has made it vulnerable to foreign interference and subversive acts driven by geopolitical ambitions. In this context, he cited the crises in Sudan and Ethiopia as illustrative examples.

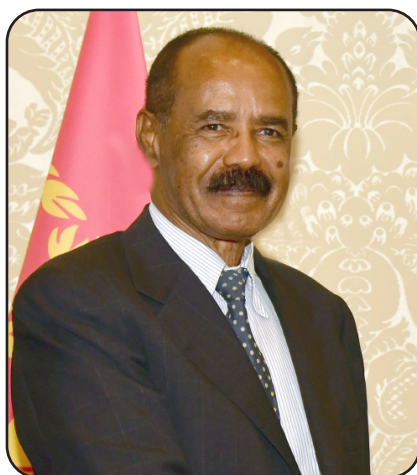
He explained that the overarching goal of the development agenda is to

improve the living standards of all Eritreans, especially the most vulnerable, and to transition from a subsistence economy to one driven by productivity, manufacturing, and sustainable industrialization. He noted that the agenda extends beyond economics to include diplomacy and communications, especially given the current global and regional climate. Human capital, he stressed, remains the nation's most vital resource. *(Full text of President Isaias Afwerki's Keynote address is on page 3)*

Ambassador Zemedu Tekle, Commissioner of Culture and Sports and Chairperson of the National Holidays Organizing Committee, commended all contributors for ensuring the success of the colorful celebration.

The official commemorative event that last for over three hours was broadcasted live on ERI-TV and Dimtsi Hafash. It featured a military parade, an aerial show by the Eritrean Air Force, and various musical and calisthenics performances.

### MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATIONS



Leaders of the Kingdom of Jordan, Republic of Burundi, Republic of Benin, and Republic of Maldives have sent messages of congratulations to the people and Government of Eritrea on the occasion of the 34th Independence Day anniversary.

King Abdullah of the Kingdom of Jordan, President Evariste Ndayishimiye of the Republic of Burundi, President Patrice Talon of the Republic of Benin, and President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu of the Republic of Maldives conveyed their best wishes for good health to President Isaias Afwerki, as well as peace and prosperity to the Eritrean people.

The leaders also expressed their countries' readiness to further develop and strengthen bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of their nations and Eritrea.

In his message, the Director General of Food and Agriculture of the United Nations also wished peace and prosperity to the Eritrean people.

# Our Cohesion: Our Armour!



# REPORTAGE

## “Our Cohesion: Our Armor.” Eritrea’s 34<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary

Mussie Efriem

May 24th isn’t just another date on the calendar for Eritreans; it’s a profound day of independence that signifies the culmination of an arduous and protracted struggle. This date marks the moment the nation shed the heavy burdens of agony and suppression, emerging from decades of struggle as a free, proud, and self-determined country. For over half a century, the Eritrean people endured immense suffering and fought tirelessly for their sovereignty. This hard-won freedom came at a tremendous cost, paid for by the sacrifices of thousands of lives. Therefore, May 24th is not merely a historical anniversary but a day of deep reflection and gratitude, honoring those who gave everything for the birth of an independent Eritrea. It represents a transformative stage in the nation’s history, where the veils of oppression were finally torn apart, paving the way for a new

era of self-governance and national dignity.

The 34th Eritrean independence anniversary from that initial spark, the capital city of Asmara transformed into a vibrant celebration hub. Streets and squares were adorned with glittering lights, symbolizing the vivid spirit of independence. The air was filled with the sounds of various concerts and the sights of colorful cultural and artistic activities, presented by a multitude of cultural troupes. A highlight was the cultural carnival, where subzones of the central region paraded through Asmara’s main thoroughfares, showcasing the rich diversity of Eritrean heritage. These lively programs drew in thousands of Eritreans, both the locals and diaspora, and foreign visitors, all eager to partake in the joyous atmosphere. On the top of that, the independence anniversary celebrated in 152 communal pavilions with sharing

followed by stunning fireworks at midnight, building anticipation for the big day. The firing of a cannon salute heralded the morning of May 24th. The culmination of these extensive celebrations arrived on the afternoon of May 24th, as thousands of Eritreans, invited guests, and friends of Eritrea flocked to the Asmara Stadium. There, they gathered for the grand official ceremony of the 34th Eritrea’s Independence Anniversary, a poignant and magnificent celebration that perfectly capped a month of historic remembrance and profound national pride. This year’s Independence Day anniversary was officially celebrated under the theme, “Our Cohesion: Our Armor.” The ceremony began in the esteemed presence of President Isaias Afwerki, alongside senior government officials, senior PFDJ officials, religious leaders, and members of the diplomatic corps, all joined by thousands of citizens.

The official ceremony for Eritrea’s 34th Independence Anniversary commenced at 4:25 PM, an hour steeped in anticipation and reverence. The ceremony began with a stirring military salute followed by a solemn minute of silence, a tribute to the fallen martyrs whose ultimate sacrifice paved the way for the precious freedom being celebrated in that very moment. Following this solemn tribute, the floor was given to the National Holidays Organizing Committee Chairman and Commissioner of Culture and Sports, Ambassador Zemed Tekle. He officially opened the ceremony with a welcome speech, setting the tone for the day’s events. Ambassador Zemed on his speech, explained

table and various cultural programs organized by the administrative areas of the thirteen subzones in Asmara.

This celebratory spirit extended nationwide, with similar festivities unfolding in towns and villages across Eritrea. This widespread merriment continued until the eve of May 24th with concerts



that the ceremony of the 34th Independence Anniversary will reflect the Eritrean identity, culture, and steadfastness. In his speech he underscored the significance of the anniversary and extended gratitude to all attendees, both inside Eritrea and the Diaspora. Taking the venue next, President Isaias Afwerki gave a keynote address focused on global, regional and domestic issues. (*Full Text of the President’s Keynote address is on page 3*)

The celebration peaked with the highly anticipated and breathtaking military parade following the keynote address. Hundreds of the 37th round of the Eritrean national service trainees representing the comprehensive Eritrea’s Defense Force, Eritrean National Service, Navy, Air Force, Police Force, and Land Force marched with perfect unison, echoing like a drumbeat alongside the marching band. This impressive display showcased the formidable strength of the national service concept in Eritrea. The parade was a magnet for the spectators, drawing their attention with its rhythmic movement. The combination of disciplined formation, vibrant uniforms, and powerful music created an unforgettable spectacle, serving as a powerful testament to the nation’s security and the unwavering commitment of its armed forces to protect the hard-won freedom.

Immediately following the impressive military parade, the celebration became a captivating series of artistic programs. These performances, curated for the occasion, included over twenty stirring songs in all Eritrean languages performed by veteran and young singers. The National Orchestra band performed the live musical program with 34 musicians, sixteen singers and a choir group of six members accompanied with around 120 members of the Miras, Admas, Snit, Sbrit and Sesni choreographic groups. Each artistic piece served as a vibrant narrative, visually and audibly expressing the journey, sacrifices, and triumph that led to Eritrea’s freedom. These cultural presentations entertained and deepened the collective understanding and emotional connection to the day’s historic meaning. The traditional live drum showcase presented by dozens of men and women drummers was also among the captivating cultural performances of the program making the national celebration a truly vibrant atmosphere and beautiful festivity.

Adding another layer of vibrant energy to the festivities, a spectacular performance unfolded: songs in various Eritrean languages filled the air, each melody a testament to the nation’s rich linguistic diversity. These vocal expressions were complemented by a calisthenics display of 750 students on the foreground and 1400 on the stage’s background. Their synchronized movements and dynamic formations created a visually stunning spectacle that perfectly embodied the collective spirit. This combination of diverse musical traditions and impressive physical coordination infused the national celebration with an undeniable sense of enthusiasm and vibrancy.

The official celebrations of the 34th anniversary of Independence Day concluded with national anthem at 7:30 PM.



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# Keynote Address By President Isaias Afwerki on the 34th Independence Anniversary

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Allow me to extend my warmest congratulations to the patriotic Eritrean people at home and abroad, to all its friends, as well as to the free peoples of the world.

Let me further express my gratitude to all who have adorned with splendor – a splendor whose intensity and vibrancy grows each year – the celebrations of our 34th Independence Day Anniversary with a variety of programs and events, and to all those who conveyed their sincere congratulations to the Eritrean people.

As we appraise the trajectory of our independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity each year against the backdrop of the formidable process of nation-building, it is imperative to clearly comprehend, in an objective and relational perspective, the global and regional environment. Precisely because the bolstering and reinforcement of our independence cannot be seen in isolation from the prevalence of a just global order and regional architecture of mutual respect, complementarity, cooperation, stability and progress that we deeply cherish.

While our readings of the global/regional developments that transpired last year as well as in the preceding years remain valid, what is new on this auspicious occasion of our 34th Independence Anniversary is its confluence with President Trump's accession to the highest office in the United States. In view of US global standing as well as the new perspectives that have already been pronounced, serious homework is required to gauge from the outset the underlying policies, approaches and trends of the new Administration. As palpable as this vital approach remains, prudence requires patience and refrainment from premature conclusions as the dynamics of this new phenomenon remain complicated and complex.

If we take the pronounced mantra of

“MAGA” – the acronym that stands for Making America Great Again – as the starting point, there are several questions that crop up before one can delve into fundamental matters of strategy, plans and processes. What are the ramifications of being “Great”? Why is not the US considered great in the first place, and why does it need to be so? And how will this cherished ideal be achieved?

In literal terms, being “Great” translates into being the wealthiest, the most industrialized, leading in technological progress, strongest in military power, unparalleled in the sphere of influence and soft power, regarded in awe by all, etc. If these metrics (some parameters can be added or altered) are taken as reference points, an objective appraisal of the status of the US in the global pecking order would involve exhaustive analysis of the Cold War period as well as the subsequent 30 years of the “unipolar” phase of reckless pursuit of dominance; (this is leaving aside the preceding centuries since the foundation of the US). This will allow us to predict what lies in the horizon in the period ahead.

As we focus our lenses onto contemporary times – the last 35 years after the end of the Cold War, when the overarching theme revolved around US's “uncontested global preeminence and control” – the massive and galloping, over 30-trillion, national debt accumulated due to wasteful Administrations in Washington serves an eloquent indicator that merits no elaboration. Washington's myopic and reckless postulate of “off-shoring our industries to countries – with China at the forefront – with cheaper labor and energy costs, and low consumption will ramp up our profits” had ultimately backfired to yield heavy economic losses.

Indeed, China stands today as pre-eminent in the world in terms of industrial output. Even in technological dominance, US status is not only suffering multifaceted corrosion, but future trends do not

predict its return to preeminence. The US is not the most powerful country militarily – a fact corroborated by several metrics in addition to NATO's precarious condition. The situation is not improved by showy parades of naval carriers, the demolition of small countries such as Yemen, or the sheer number of nuclear weapons. Excessive profits gleaned in a global environment – marked by the absence of healthy competition, free markets and trade as well as fair distribution of wealth and income; where a financial order dominated by zero-sum games that resorts to speculation and unethical practices of usury; the unencumbered printing of paper money; and illicit weaponization of sanctions and intimidation, etc. – are dwindling and becoming increasingly unsustainable. This current state of affairs can be expanded with extensive and detailed substantiation.

In the face of this prevailing reality, President Trump has announced policies and initiatives aimed at reducing or eliminating America's debt, reversing and rectifying wasteful fiscal expenditure, attracting and bringing onshore industries and investments that had migrated abroad as well as encouraging new ones, increasing tariffs and taxes, lowering domestic taxes, flaunting force and employing brinkmanship, and ramping up active diplomacy and public relations, etc.

The overarching rationale and objective of these aggregate policies is to make America great, which, in his view, it is not at this point in time. It is not easy to forecast, at this juncture, how domestic issues as well as US ties with China, Russia, Europe, Asia, Latin America will evolve and pan out in the next four years, both in terms of the specific agendas as well as the collective impact of all the distinct facets of the package. As such, the scenarios envisaged will require constant monitoring and evaluation on an hourly basis within detailed reference frames. One cannot, of course, ascertain that it is “absolutely impossible” to rectify cumulative



misguided policies pursued for centuries. That the task requires scaling a very steep uphill is, nonetheless, evident. More importantly, intimate knowledge of the reactions to, and engagements with, the Trump administration of the purportedly “Great” countries/governments that are the target of these policies, and gauging the trend in relation to these tendencies will be critical.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Amidst all the global rivalries set in motion during this “transitional phase” for a new global order, marginalized Africa is virtually absent in the equation. That Africa is ignored is not appalling or surprising. Indeed, in spite of its tremendous natural endowments, Africa continues to export raw materials for nominal prices while importing manufactured goods at exorbitant rates, forcing it to maintain a primitive subsistence economy and depend on relief handouts.

Perhaps, against the backdrop of Trump's indicative policies, Africa's prevalent precarious system anchored on handouts and subsidy from the US and others might face what is often dubbed as the “unintended consequences” of change. The latter could potentially open a new opportunity and impetus to the African peoples. How will Africa act in the coming four years? And above all, what will Africa do to ensure the advent of a sustainable and fair global order? These will help us refine the policies we have already drafted on this crucial subject.

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

What about the regional situation

closest to us? Our permanent strategy is anchored on fostering robust ties in our region predicated on mutual respect, complementarity, cooperation, stability, prosperity and integration. The geostrategic importance of the neighborhood has always made it susceptible to myriad interferences and acts of subversion spurred by perceived imperatives of “increasing influences”. In this respect, we can look at the crises in Sudan and Ethiopia as manifestations and indicators of these machinations.

The people of the Sudan had registered commendable progress in the task of nation-building in the early decades following their liberation in 1956. But this progress was hampered from 1989 onwards principally due to the threat posed by the irresponsible policies of the NIF. When their patience was exhausted, the Sudanese people resorted to a spontaneous uprising to remove the obstacle, subsequently ushering in a period of transition. And on behalf of the Sudanese people, the Sovereign Army was entrusted with the task of transition.

But for reasons that have to do with the geostrategic importance of the Sudan, external forces bent on derailing the process begun to stoke conflict while the transition process was still in its infancy by co-opting and instrumentalizing internal surrogates. The “transition” process became compounded and exacerbated and was plunged into military polarization and confrontation through externally incited rivalries and acrimony. These forces are engaged in managing the

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## SpotLight

# Eritrean Independence: A Legacy of Resilience, Dignity, and National Pride

Natnael Yebio W.

Eritrea's independence is one of modern African history's most extraordinary examples of resilience and self-determination. Born out of a protracted and arduous struggle that spanned decades, Eritrea's liberation is not just a date on the calendar—May 24—but a tribute to the unwavering will of its people. It is a story marked by sacrifice, unity, and a vision for national dignity. As Eritrea commemorates its independence, it is imperative to revisit the historical trajectory culminating in liberation and rearticulate the enduring ideals and aspirations that continue to shape the nation's identity.

The origins of Eritrea's struggle against colonial occupation are inextricably linked to the region's complex colonial and geopolitical inheritance. Strategically situated along the Red Sea corridor, Italy colonized Eritrea in the late 19th century, becoming a linchpin of its East African colonial edifice. While Italian colonialism was undeniably extractive, it nonetheless laid a modern state's infrastructural and administrative foundations. Following the Axis powers' defeat in World War II, the British assumed temporary administration of Eritrea, a period marked by a burgeoning nationalist consciousness and the incipient articulation of Eritrean political identity.

However, the post-war international order, shaped by Cold War exigencies, denied Eritreans the right to independence. In 1952, the United Nations, under considerable influence from dominant global actors, imposed a federal arrangement with Ethiopia, ostensibly guaranteeing Eritrean autonomy. This federal compact was summarily abrogated by Emperor Haile Selassie in 1962, who dissolved the federation and annexed Eritrea, effectively transforming it into an Ethiopian province. This unilateral act precipitated the initiation of Eritrea's armed resistance.

Commencing officially in 1961, the Eritrean War of Independence would evolve into one of the most protracted and determined liberation campaigns in postcolonial Africa. Waged initially by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and subsequently consolidated under the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), the struggle was characterized

by its strategic ingenuity, internal cohesion, and uncompromising commitment to self-sufficiency.

Operating under extraordinarily adverse conditions, the EPLF cultivated an egalitarian and ideologically grounded movement, distinguished by its integration of women across all spheres of activity—from combat to education, health, and engineering. The territories under EPLF control functioned as de facto proto-states, wherein rudimentary yet effective education, healthcare, and self-governance systems were implemented, anticipating the post-independence ethos of national development.

The 30-year war for liberation left no family untouched. From Nakfa to Assab, from the trenches to refugee camps, from rural farms to urban underground networks, Eritreans gave everything to win their freedom.

Despite being outgunned and confronting sustained foreign interference, the Eritrean resistance achieved landmark victories that irreversibly altered the balance of power. The liberation of strategic towns such as Nakfa, the decisive engagement at Afabet, and the eventual capture of Asmara in May 1991 marked the disintegration of the Derg regime and the de facto realization of Eritrean sovereignty.

After the fall of the Derg in 1991, Eritrea entered a transitional period with cautious optimism. The EPLF established a provisional government and began laying the groundwork for a sovereign state. In 1993, under the auspices of the United Nations, an UN-observed referendum was held in which an overwhelming 99.8% of Eritreans voted for independence.

On May 24, 1993, Eritrea formally proclaimed its independence and joined the international community as a sovereign nation, receiving widespread diplomatic recognition, including from the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (now African Union).

The nascent state inherited a landscape ravaged by conflict, economically debilitated, and infrastructurally decimated. However, the same spirit of self-reliance that fueled the liberation struggle became central to Eritrea's nation-building philosophy. The government, led by the EPLF,



reorganized as the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), prioritized national unity, equitable development, and social services.

A resolute focus on human capital development, public health, and infrastructure marked the transition from revolutionary movement to governing authority. Education campaigns eradicated illiteracy in large parts of the country. Primary health care, with a strong focus on prevention, extends access even to rural and remote communities. Roads, schools, and clinics were

built through foreign aid, mass mobilization, and community labor.

Eritrea also adopted an independent political stance, eschewing dependency on donor-driven policies. This principled but often misunderstood approach earned both admiration and criticism. For Eritreans, however, independence was not just about removing a foreign flag but ensuring that national policies reflect domestic priorities, free from external interference.

For over three decades, Eritrea has navigated the complexities

of sovereignty within a volatile regional and international environment. The country is progressively increasing its investments in renewable energy, agriculture, technical education, and infrastructure modernization. Youth and women are increasingly placed at the forefront of national development, and the Eritrean diaspora continues to serve as an essential conduit for financial remittances, professional expertise, and diplomatic advocacy.

Each year, on May 24, the streets of Asmara, Keren, Massawa, and the myriad towns and villages of Eritrea resound with the jubilant expressions of remembrance and renewal. National colors envelop the public spaces, and the air is suffused with the rhythms of cultural celebration and the proud chants of a people who remember – and refuse to forget – what it took to become free. This collective observance is an act of historical affirmation, an assertion that the sacrifices of the past remain sacrosanct, and that the principles of the struggle endure in the present aspirations.

Eritrea's path to nationhood was neither facile nor externally ordained. It was arduously earned through its people's perseverance, its vision's moral clarity, and the unity forged in the crucible of resistance. Independence remains a living endeavor—an evolving process of affirming sovereignty, deepening justice, and cultivating a sustainable and dignified future.

*Awet n'Hafash!  
Glory to Our Martyrs!*







# UMOJA – The Voices of Africa

By: Sona Berhane  
Photos: Sandile Majiza

*Tell me about Umoja. How was it formed?*

Todd Twala: Umoja is a South African musical. The show tells the story of the evolution of South African music. But originally, the whole project started in 1983 as an outreach program. At that time, when I came back from the United States, there was a serious problem with the young generation in South Africa – drug abuse, school dropouts, and many youths leaving their homes. A lot of them were living on the streets. And we wanted to help them. That's how this musical production started. It wasn't initially intended to become a stage show. We just wanted to get the young kids off the streets and give them something creative to do. We took care of them – we went to their parents and tried to learn about their lives. As the years went by, the group started to grow. The kids liked the program and spread the word to other kids who were in similar situations.

*Did you begin the outreach program on your own?*

Todd Twala: I started it with Thembi Nyandeni. She was a dancer like me. At the time, we were part of the original cast of very popular South African musical called Ipi Ntombi. It was well-known worldwide – we toured in London and America – and we had just returned from a tour in the US when we began the outreach program. Now, the two of us along with Busi Kunene, are the directors of Umoja. The outreach program officially became a musical production in the early 1990s. Until then, we were training and teaching the kids, but we didn't yet have a defined theme or story to perform. We wanted it to be relevant. We noticed that the youth were drifting away from indigenous South African music. We wanted to bring them back to it and to teach them the musical journey of South Africa. The show went international in 2000, and it was a sensational success. It was well received by audiences all over the world – and it is still running today.

Khutala Mayosi: The story starts with very traditional music from before colonization and moves through a cappella, gospel, jazz, and other musical forms, all the way to modern music. The performance includes storytelling as well. Between acts, there is a narrator who guides the audience through the journey.

*What is the meaning behind the name Umoja?*

*Umoja, South Africa's electrifying stage sensation, is back in Eritrea to take part in the 34th Independence Day celebrations with their captivating performance. Globally acclaimed for its vibrant choreography, stunning costumes, and evocative storytelling, Umoja: The Voices of Africa has dazzled audiences in over 50 countries for more than three decades. But beyond the lights and music lies a powerful origin story rooted in community and belonging.*

*Now returning to Eritrea after their unforgettable debut on the 20th Independence Day celebrations in 2011, the Umoja team is once again sharing their message of unity, resilience, and African pride. I sat down with the show's co-founder and co-director Todd Twala, along with Khutala Mayosi, Umoja's costume and makeup expert, to talk about the roots of the production, their connection with Eritrea, and their vision for future collaborations.*

Todd Twala: Umoja means "unity" – it is a Swahili word. We are uniting these youths with each other, with their families, with their culture and musical legacy, and, at events like these, with other African communities like you Eritreans. As you know, for us Africans, the spirit of togetherness is very important. And music is deeply important as well – it accompanies us through every stage of our lives.

*How many performing cast members are in Umoja currently?*

Khutala Mayosi: For this event, there are about 20 performers on stage. But the full team, including supporting members like myself, choreographers, the media team, and management, add up to about 25 people. Normally, there are 30 performing members – 15 male and 15 female – not counting the additional non-performing production crew. But the number of performers can vary depending on the size of the production. Umoja is a very flexible show. Sometimes the request is for no more than six performers; other times, it requires the entire production team.

*Most of the senior members of Umoja were some of the first members of your program? How does it feel to see them grow up and lead the show?*

Todd Twala: It's wonderful. I'm very proud of them. Most of them have been with me for decades. They joined the program, and eventually the show, when they were little kids. It's very heartwarming now to see them grown up and taking the mantle. Besides the discipline of performance, we also insisted that they finish school. Some of them even have their own shows. Some are doctors, nurses... We didn't want

them to be just performers, but also educated, disciplined, sensible men and women.

*Are you still involved in outreach programs?*

Todd Twala: Yes, though not musically. I visit different schools and give talks. I get invited to churches and other gatherings to motivate the youths to do better. The young generation knows me in South Africa. I try to motivate and encourage them. They don't all want to be singers or dancers, but they all need support, encouragement and love. I try to help them in that way.

*How was your first performance at the Bahti Meskerem stadium?*

Khutala Mayosi: It was beautiful. The audience was amazing. They followed the flow of the story and danced along with us, copying the same moves we were doing. It was really nice. We did not expect them to enjoy the show so much, and we were pleasantly surprised. We hope the second performance on Friday will be just as enjoyable.

Todd Twala: The place was packed! We were amazed. Everyone was really enjoying themselves, especially the youth. They were dancing and waving their hands.

*It's your second time visiting Eritrea. How do you find the Eritrean people and the culture here?*

Todd Twala: One thing I've noticed about Eritreans is how welcoming and humble they are. They are very, very humble. I have not encountered any kind of hostility. Almost everyone I have met has either invited us to their home, or to church, or even to a wedding. I've never seen such humble people. The pace of life here is so balanced. There is no unnecessary

rush or chaos. And I was also amazed by how many people ride the bicycle – men and women. That's probably why you're all lean and healthy. We, on the other hand, are all nice and round. [Laughs]

And there is no crime in Eritrea. That is the most incredible thing. People are very polite here, but they also mostly mind their own business. It is very peaceful and safe. I think this is the most striking thing for me.

*What do you hear about Eritrea abroad?*

Todd Twala: To be honest, I don't hear anything about Eritrea on the news. Because usually there are crimes, disasters and negative things reported on the news. And like I said, there's no crime in Eritrea. It is so quiet and peaceful. You guys will

never be on the news!

*Are there any future plans for performances or collaborations with Eritrean artists?*

Todd Twala: Yes. But more than performances, I'd love to create workshops here that bring together artists and creatives – and I want to involve the youth too. Workshops create longer lasting relationships and collaborations. And our cultures have many things in common. I think it would be a fruitful collaboration.

*Do you plan to come back to Eritrea?*

Yes! I hope we will return to perform again. But personally, ever since I first visited Eritrea, I've been telling people back home, "When I retire, I'm going to live in Eritrea."







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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Asmara Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following position;

**Rigger Supervisor**  
**Number required – (01)**  
**Type of contract – Definite For 2years**

Major Duties and responsibilities

- Assist the Maintenance Supt. to recruit, train and mentor a crane Operator and Rigger team that will deliver quality rigging services to the fixed plant. In doing so, ensuring KPI's that facilitate sustained and productive operations are delivered.
- The Supervisor is responsible for planning, coordinating and directing all daily rigging and crane/truck movement activities required to maintain the mechanical and structural integrity of the Plant. This person will report to the Process Plant Maintenance Supt. and assist with various administrative and management functions.

TASK DESCRIPTION Expanded TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

General responsibilities:

- Ensure compliance with quality, health and safety rules, guidelines, and regulations.
- Planning, prioritizing, assigning, supervising, reviewing, and participating in all tasks related to rigging maintenance.
- Development and implementation of statutory inspection and preventative maintenance programs for all site-based rigging gear and crane/truck mobile equipment
- Recruitment and coordinating training sessions in rigging, crane operation safety procedures, and methods.
- Train Crane Operators, light truck operators and riggers
- Manage, motivate, develop, and provide direct leadership to maintenance staff.
- Ability to interface with other departments, particularly Production Operations.
- Ability to build and motivate a team comprising of expatriates and national employees.
- Understanding computer driven maintenance management programs,
- Able to compile reports, update/compile Job Description etc.
- Develop the Operation Readiness program for the Rigging section

Profile: Qualifications and Experience

Formal Education, Certifications or Equivalents

- Trade Qualifications as a Rigger or equivalent
- Mobile Crane Operator License

Working Experience – Nature & Length

- 10 years' experience in large scale open-pit mines in the areas of rigging, lifting and crane operation
- 5 years' experience as Maintenance Supervisor

- In-depth knowledge of different Fixed Plant Equipment
- Operation Readiness Exposure
- Good ability in cross-cultural communication skills.
- Excellent leadership qualities.
- Sound knowledge of preventive maintenance programs
- Functional communication in English is mandatory.
- Computer literacy including planning systems

Technical Skills

- Statutory requirements regarding lifting, rigging and crane operation
- Rigging Equipment knowledge, including heavy lifts to 200t
- Analytical skills
- Writing & Compiling report skills
- Plan, organize and execution skills.
- Valid crane Operation License

Behavioral Skills

- Safety leadership by example
- Ability to work in developing countries
- Ability to work under pressure with challenging targets
- High level of initiative
- Demonstrated training and people development skills.
- Strong interpersonal relationship-building skills and adaptability to work with people of different cultures.

General Information and other requirements:

- ☐ **Place of Work:** AMSC Site
- ☐ **Type of contract:** Definite Period
- ☐ **Salary:** As per the Company salary scale

Additional requirements for Nationals:

- Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provide evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.
- Present clearance paper from current/last employer.
- Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card, etc.).
- Only shortlisted applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview.
- Application documents will not be returned to the sender.
- All applications should be sent through the post office.
- Deadline for application: 7 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.

- ☐ **Address: Please mail your applications to;**  
Asmara Mining Share Company,  
P. O. Box 10688 Asmara, Eritrea
- ☐ **Applicants shall be required to send a copy to:**  
Mineral Resources Management  
P.O. Box – 272  
Asmara
- ☐ **Note to Eritrean applicants:**  
Please send a copy of your application to  
Aliens Employment Permit Affairs,  
P. O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea

# Keynote Address By President Isaias Afwerki . . .

**C**ontinued from page 3

conflict while simultaneously funding and aggravating it through “neighboring” countries. It is the Sudanese people who are victims of this ordeal, who are shouldering the brunt of the worsening calamity. The people of the Sudan have gleaned adequate experience from the subversion that has caused this quagmire. They have begun to expand and strengthen their opposition to this subversion. The neighborhood of the Sudan has an obligation to shoulder its moral responsibility and extend unreserved support to the Sudanese people. This is a duty and not a favor by any means.

## **But what about Ethiopia?**

The spiral of crises and devastation inculcated for eighty years – no less than three generations – by the misguided policies enunciated by Washington’s Fosters (Foster Dulles and his ilk) is well-known and fully documented to warrant reiteration here. In the same token, the grave mistakes perpetrated by leaders of the former Soviet Union under the same logic during the Cold War era is fully documented. The opportunity of nation-building was consequently denied for two generations. And after the end of the Cold War, Ethiopia gravitated towards ethnic polarization instead of building a nation anchored on citizenship. The upheavals and devastation wrought by this option does not merit much elaboration. Following the several

and repeated disasters unleashed by Ethnic Federalism, the euphoria and optimism that the presumed “reform” engendered not only in Ethiopia but also in Eritrea and other neighboring countries seven years ago is indeed fresh in our memories.

But the external forces who were perturbed by the promising prospects were not idle. The wars they have declared against the Ethiopian people under the rubric of Prosperity (their new surrogate) in the past few years is illustrative of their desperation. The pretexts and banners are many; the reckless agendas and their pre-emptive features transparent. They include: “Issue of Water”, “Nile and the Red Sea”, “Access to the Sea”, “Ideology of Orommuma” that does not represent the Oromo people, the conundrum of a “Cushitic-Semitic antagonism”, “Instrumentalizing the people and land of Afar as a ruse and convenient platform”, “stoking ethnic wars all over”, etc.

The purchasing spree set in motion to acquire weapons and “technology” in order to unleash these declared wars, the accompanying bravado and military brinkmanship, are all well-known and documented. The dollars squandered to enlist the collaboration of traitors and turn-coats are limitless. The tools of “psychological warfare” deployed as a third pillar so as to spread abject lies, suppress and distort truth and facts, and foment hatred and grievances are numerous too.

Overt and “covert” acts of subversion being concocted against the people and Government of Eritrea are well known to all and sundry.

In conclusion: the optimistic prospects that were in the offing have dissipated. The Ethiopian people have already made their choice, and they are buckling up to strengthen their opposition. The people and Government of Eritrea do not regret the unreserved support that they vigorously extended with high hopes to the presumed Rectification/Reform because of the sudden turn of events. They do not have the appetite to indulge in platforms of lies and futile acrimony. They call on the external forces that are embroiled in concocting subversion to “fold their hands/tentacles”. As for the few collaborators and vacillating elements, they urge them “to stay away from these transgressions”.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is incumbent on us to monitor, meticulously analyze, and properly read international and regional developments and trends in order to make judicious choices that impact our own agenda of internal progress. But as the sayings of the Sage run – “Hold the yoke firm irrespective of the meanderings of the Oxen”, or, “Better to focus on the fulcrum rather than running aimlessly” – our core mission is to give our undivided focus and priority to our own domestic

developments and trends.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our development programs which continue to be pursued in accordance with their sectoral priorities (water infrastructure, energy/electricity, agriculture, marine resources, physical infrastructure – as well as housing, transport, education, health, tourism...etc.) will be further bolstered through an Integrated Development Program that will be implemented in the Six Regions in the current year based on detailed plans and by marshalling the requisite resources. And above all, in a manner that galvanizes extensive popular participation and contribution.

The wide popular participation along with the developmental tasks implemented in the past through the Defense Forces will increase in scope and quality with better institutional organization and higher popular inputs. As I had mentioned last year, the framework launched to create a conducive environment in order to stimulate the latent potential and active initiative of our patriotic citizens abroad in our developmental agenda has not yet materialized due to delays in the data collection task that is essential for charting out tangible plans. But the concrete participation of our citizens abroad in our developmental agenda will be launched from the second half of 2025 onwards as a third cohesive pillar to supplement the architecture of the

Six Regions and the Defense Forces as outlined above. This configuration does not include projects and investments in various sectors and fields that may be launched at an individual, group or community levels.

The overarching and multi-pronged goal of our development agenda revolves around the timely alleviation of the living conditions of our people, especially the deprived segments, and more importantly, the extrication of our economy from a subsistence level towards an economy that augments our productivity and aggregate produce in a sustainable manner; that catalyzes our transition towards manufacturing and industrialization. But our development agenda is not confined to economic growth alone. The diplomatic and information/communication fronts should not be glossed over in the context of the volatile international and regional trends. Naturally, capital, other resources and facilities are vital. But the resource of paramount importance is devoted and industrious human capital. As such, we are marching forward with reassuring guarantees. And no force can impede the inexorable progress.

## **Our Cohesion: Our Armour!**

**Glory to our Martyrs that Ensure the Integrity of Our Commitment!**

**Victory to the Masses!**

**C**ontinued from page 8

taken on a number of issues that UNDP has worked on, including energy transformation, shifting to more sustainable sources of green energy, addressing environmental challenges this country faces, and also in terms of building capacity to future-proof the country,” comments Ms. Sattar. “We are also seeing huge impacts on the ground in terms of access to water, access to energy, and in terms of building resistance in the country. I am particularly happy to see the government’s commitment on issues of green energy, climate resilience, and gender equality. We are also seeing a lot of commitment by the people and the government towards development pathways.” “Firstly, allow me to congratulate the Government of Eritrea on your 34th anniversary of Independence Day. UNDP has been a partner for the last three decades, engaging with and partnering with the government and other development partners to truly fulfill the aspirations of the people of Eritrea. We hope that the future is brighter for Eritreans, and we hope that issues such as transforming to greener sources of energy are achieved in the near future.”

# Celebrating Progress: UN Agencies . . .

“I have been here for almost three years now, and I am always struck by the resilience of the people of Eritrea. It is a hopeful time for the people; there are a lot of challenges that people are facing, but it’s also a people that meets these challenges with confidence and resistance.”

## **Dr. Nonso Ejiofor - WHO Representative in Eritrea**

“I think the most interesting lesson coming to Eritrea is that of self-reliance, as we all know, engraved in the philosophy of the Government of Eritrea: that of a state-driven development sector,” states Dr. Ejiofor. “Amidst the background of limited resources, Eritrea continues to strive with a strong sense of commitment and collaboration with partners on the ground to meet their development



**Dr Nonso Ejiofor - WHO Country Representative**

needs. This is something that is worthy of admiration.”

He highlights a key success: “We have seen immunization coverage in Eritrea that has become a model for most African member states. Amidst very tight resources, Eritrea has managed to reach children in the most hard-to-reach areas using the most innovative approaches. We get on camels, we access the most inaccessible parts of the community, making sure that no child is left behind in terms of immunization coverage. And so today, I think we are proud to say that Eritrea has the record of the highest coverage compared among other African member states. This is something that we are proud to be associated with.”

Dr. Ejiofor also notes progress beyond immunization: “Not only limited to immunization but also HIV programs, colleagues from the global front would tell you that Eritrea is transcending from infection to talking about elimination. These are important strategies of achievement that can only be possible with the unwavering commitment to development and leadership, as has been demonstrated by the

Honorable Ministry for Health.”

He also praises technological advancements: “The genomic sequencing technology is rather one that is strategic to emergency preparedness and response. All of us remember what we went through during COVID-19 trying to sequence strains. And Eritrea has identified this as one of the critical technologies it would like to acquire in terms of strengthening emergency preparedness and response capacities. So, with the support from WHO, Eritrea has been able to deploy this technology, positioning itself as one of the few African countries that has this technology on the ground. What it means is that the national lab in Eritrea is taking yet another bold step in terms of building capacity to detect all diseases of public health concern. This is an investment that we expect to yield dividends in the near future. Before now, we had to ship samples for diagnosis for certain diseases of public health concern. But with the activation of the laboratory here, which is a baseline for genomic sequencing, we are seeing ourselves testing some of the diseases locally, which means a lot in terms of

public health outbreaks.”

“My aspiration and confidence as well is that if Eritrea continues to progress on this trajectory, achieving the SDGs is only a matter of time. With this kind of collaboration I have seen with the government, we are on track to achieving the health-related SDGs. You can count on our continued collaboration and commitment in driving the health agenda, working closely with the most critical stakeholders like the Ministry of Health of the Government of Eritrea.”

“This is a joyous occasion for all of us. We wish the Government of Eritrea a happy Independence Day commemoration. We wish all of the aspirations of nationhood for Eritrea come to pass in our lifetime. We also would like to reaffirm our partnership with the Government of Eritrea; ‘leaving no one behind’ is the mantra for health in Eritrea. This is in close alignment with WHO’s agenda of universal health coverage. So, Eritrea is truly a partner we are proud of, and on this occasion, I would love to say we are proud to be associated with the progress that has been made so far.”





Q and A

# Celebrating Progress: UN Agencies Highlight Eritrea's Sustainable Development Achievements

By: Sabrina Solomon

*From ensuring clean water and affordable energy to championing gender equality and climate action, Eritrea's achievements highlight the interconnectedness of its dedicated efforts. Through resilience, determination, and innovation, Eritrea is overcoming challenges and laying the robust foundation for a prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future. Together, the people of Eritrea are turning aspirations into tangible achievements, one step at a time.*

*Here, representatives from six UN agencies share their insights and opinions on Eritrea's commendable progress across various sectors, offering their heartfelt congratulatory messages to the people and Government of Eritrea on the occasion of the 34th Independence Day anniversary.*

**Mr. Abdullahi Mohammed Yusuf – UNICEF Country Representative to Eritrea**

"Eritrea has made significant progress in social development," notes Mr. Yusuf. He highlights impressive strides such as the vast numbers of children attending school and the high vaccination



**Abdullahi Mohammed Yusuf**  
UNICEF

rates against preventable diseases. "We also see progress in the number of people gaining access to social health and nutrition services. On my field missions outside of Asmara, I frequently observe many communities getting access to clean drinking water. All of this contributes to the positive changes I have experienced during my time in Eritrea, but these are just a few examples of what I have witnessed."

He emphasizes Eritrea's success stories in Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in health. "This country has made great progress in child health, with 95% of children under the age of five fully vaccinated. Eritrea tops the region in child vaccination, which is critically important as young lives can be saved through such preventable disease vaccinations."

Mr. Yusuf commends the government's decisive action against harmful traditional practices. "If we also look at traditional unjust practices, the government banned FGM, and you see sub-zones that have already been declared FGM-free thanks to the efforts of communities and the government."

Regarding education, he observes substantial improvements: "Now, more children have access to education as all teachers have been trained, more schools have been constructed, and more teaching and learning materials have been distributed. Thus, we see significant progress in the number of children attending school, and importantly, an equal number of boys and girls attending."

In water sanitation, "there is an increase in the availability and accessibility of water across the country. Whenever I go out for field missions, I see rural communities in very remote areas with access to clean water. What's also interesting is that most of the water facilities are fitted with solar systems and are climate resilient."

Mr. Yusuf expresses pride in the government's efforts and focus. "As UNICEF, we technically support the government's programs in sectors related to children and mothers. I very much hope that Eritrea will continue its path of development and improvement. What's particularly interesting is that the government already has clever policy options such as self-reliance. It's clear now that with a decline in alliances, the majority of countries must be self-reliant. This policy is quite well-established here. Locally promoted efforts are most sustainable. I also see a lot of effort by the Government of Eritrea to continue that path, which is commendable. Eritrea should be proud of it because it is leading many countries on this front."

He suggests a key lesson for other African nations: "One particular thing that a lot of African countries need to learn from Eritrea is self-reliance because we do have a lot of resources, and Africa is a resource-rich and young continent with huge numbers of young people. Eritrea can provide many learning opportunities for these

young countries because we understand that the world is not going to be the same, and Africa needs to explore its own resources and become more self-reliant over time. So these policy options and self-reliance, being as independent as possible, are crucial areas."

"Once again, I would love to congratulate all Eritreans on this Independence Day. I know that it has been a hard-won independence. We at UNICEF are going to keep supporting the government and reaffirm our commitment to children, working hand-in-hand with the government here. I truly appreciate our partnership with the Government of Eritrea, and that is going to continue. I hope for a brighter future for Eritrea."

**Mr. Pacome Kossy – UNRCO Head of Office**

"I have been in Eritrea since June 2024 and I am quite impressed with the country's resilience and self-reliance," states Mr. Kossy. "I believe that Eritrea's commitment and emphasis on national sovereignty and social cohesion offer meaningful lessons not only for Africa but for the rest of the world. The hospitality of the people of Eritrea and the natural richness of the country make this a meaningful assignment for me."

He notes significant progress in health. "This year, for example, we can say that 81% of all births in the country are happening in health facilities. We can also report that almost 100% of all children under the age of two in the country are fully immunized. These are major milestones in maternal and child health in the country."

Regarding food security, "there is also progress. Between 2023 and 2024, fish production has improved by nearly 70%. This is a very good development for coastal communities."

"On behalf of the UN family in Eritrea, I extend heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of Eritrea on the 34th anniversary of independence. This is a moment to honor the spirit of reliance and the spirit of resilience that define Eritrea. As you celebrate more than three decades of national sovereignty and nation-building, the United Nations stands with you, supporting your aspirations of peace, dignity, and sustainable development."

**Mr. Mohammed Aw-Dahir, FAO Representative in Eritrea**

"Eritrea has huge potential in its agriculture and is a very unique country in its reliance on its own people and resources," remarks Mr. Aw-Dahir. "This spirit of self-reliance is absolutely something many African countries are also emulating, given that the financial landscape and aid have changed significantly. So, what Eritrea has been doing is an inspiration for everybody, and we see a bright future for the Eritrean agriculture sector."

He emphasizes past investments: "Eritrea made a lot of investment in the water sector. For that sector to be fully utilized now, improving the agriculture value chain to create employment and wealth is very critical. So, we see huge potential with the possibility of attracting investment, not only from the public but also from the private sector."

**Mr. Keity Ohashi – UNFPA Country Representative to Eritrea**

"In terms of mortality, you have made significant declines compared with the 1990s in the health sector's MDG [Millennium Development Goals]. Now, you are making good progress," states Mr. Ohashi.

"We congratulate you on your Independence Day. Eritrea is



**Pacome Kossy – UNRCO**

making good progress, and I think this is an occasion that we commemorate together. I just want to validate that what you are doing is great in achieving what you are aiming at. I think that for the SDGs, you have only five years left. We would like to encourage



**Mr. Keity Ohashi – UNFPA**

you to continue the efforts and try to achieve all the objectives of the development goals. Not only for the UNFPA mandate areas but also in terms of the UN. We are working together, sometimes jointly, and we are here to achieve and support you in that sense."

**Ms. Nashida Sattar – UNDP Deputy Resident Representative to Eritrea**

"We are happy to see the commitment the government has



**Nashida Sattar – UNDP Deputy Rep**

**C**ontinued on page 7

# Our Cohesion: Our Armour!