

LOCAL MEDIA INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT ISAIAS AFWERKI

President Isaias Afwerki elucidated government policy on key domestic issues, overall developmental progress achieved in the past year as well as government sectorial priorities and programmes for this year in an extensive interview that was broadcast live by Eri-TV and Radio Dimsti Hafash on the 22nd and 23rd of January 2016.

President Isaias underlined that issuance of the new Nakfa Currency Notes was preceded by in-depth appraisal of the necessary fundamental financial parameters. This particular instrument is part and parcel of the structural adjustments that must be taken to strengthen and invigorate the economy, President Isaias pointed out. Issuance of the new Nakfa currency note will not, in itself, bring about miraculous economic change. However, the



government is taking incremental and supportive measures to bring about the desired changes. There are positive signs and trends even if the time elapsed so far is too short for comprehensive assessment,

President Isaias noted.

President Isaias explained that the new increased salary scales implemented for new graduates drafted in the Civil Service will

be fully applied to the entire Civil Service, PFDJ and associated bodies with appropriate adjustments when the ongoing processing of relevant personnel data is completed.

In responding to the food situation in Eritrea this year in view of the harvest shortfall that has affected the whole Horn of Africa region, President Isaias stated that the country will not face any crisis in spite of reduced agricultural output due to the GOE's judicious policy and approaches of bolstering its

strategic food reserves.

President Isaias also described in detail the government's comprehensive policies on urban and rural housing. Noting the chronic housing problems that still prevail in virtually all cities and towns, President Isaias stated that the GOE intends to ramp up its capabilities and work with other partners to fully address this challenge on an expeditious basis.

President Isaias also talked at length on government policy of "zero-tolerance" to corruption as well as government approaches to and progress made so far in the constitution drafting process. President Isaias further stressed the need to strengthen the political work of the PFDJ.

On the second day of President Isaias's interview, relevant regional and international issues including Eritrea's support to the Saudi led alliance against terrorism, the Nile river issue, and others subject matters were raised. *(Excerpts of the interview will be published on Eritrea Profile starting from this Issue)*

UN ENVOY ON WORKING VISIT TO ERITREA

Ms. Kyun-wha Kaang, Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the United Nations, is on a two-day working visit to Eritrea.

Arriving in Asmara city in the early morning hours of January 25, Ms. Kyun-wha met and held talks with various senior Eritrean government officials and U.N. Agencies. Discussions covered ways of strengthening engagement and cooperation between the government of Eritrea and the U.N. and an exploration of areas for future program support.

In a meeting held with Mr. Osman Saleh, Minister of Foreign Affairs, regarding efforts related

to development goals, Minister Osman made briefings on any potential unfounded excuses made for failure, such as sanctions, to impede the development goals from being implemented. Minister Osman expressed Eritrean Government's resolve towards consummating development goals in spite of any challenges, by any means necessary.

In a meeting she held with Mr. Yemane Ghebremeskel, the Minister of Information, Minister Yemane underlined that the engagements of the U.N. agencies should not confine themselves to development programs only, but should also play their due part in helping to lift the illegal

sanctions imposed on Eritrea in contravention of international law.

In a joint meeting she held with the Ministers of Health, Education, Agriculture as well as Labor and Human Welfare, Ms. Kyun-wha made remarks on ongoing fields of cooperation and developments towards ensuring social services, including food security and social welfare.

Moreover, in the company of Minister of Health Ms. Amina Nurhusein, Ms. Kyun-wha Kaang, visited health centers in Seregeka Subzone.

During her visit, Ms. Kuyu-wha stopped at the health centers in Serejeka and Geshenashim, followed by a tour of Emabdorho elementary and middle schools to assess various health provisions made for students.

The UN envoy also met with Ms. Senait Mehari, Deputy of the Social and Economic Department of the National Union of Eritrea Women, who discussed the progress Eritrea has made in gender equality, including progress in remote areas, and disclosed the Union's role towards this end.



HEALTH MINISTRY CONDUCTS ANNUAL WORK ASSESSMENT MEETING

During the annual work assessment meeting of the Ministry of Health, Minister Amina Nurhusein underscored that the Ministry's priorities for 2016 include upgrading its capacity in terms of quality and quantity and the boosting of health services in collaboration with stakeholders.

Pointing out the importance of endorsing work activities for better health outcomes, Minister Amina commended all health service staffs for their active and unreserved contributions to health care delivery nationwide.

In the two day assessment meeting held on the 21st and 22nd

of January 2016, at the Orotta National Referral Hospital hall, a number of briefings were made about plans to expand and upgrade health services nationwide, including previously implemented programs and impending ones.

A number of reports were also delivered in connection with the following: activities being carried out to control communicable and non-communicable diseases; health undertakings and their outcomes; efforts made to ensure maternal and child health care and, thus, reduce its mortality rate; vaccination campaigns; and the supply and supervision of food and drugs.



“The underlying Objective of the Currency Redemption is to Spur and Bring about overall Economic Restructuring” President Isaias

President Isaias Afwerki gave a live Radio and TV interview with the national media outlets on the 22nd and 23rd of January last week on the occasion of the New Year focusing on all-round developments inside the country as well as regional and international developments. Part I of the interview follows:

Q. Mr. President. *Congratulations on the occasion of the New Year. The year marks the Silver Jubilee of Eritrean Independence. The Independence Torch has already begun the journey from Nakfa. In this connection, we intend to conduct, at a later date, an interview with Your Excellency on your appraisal of the achievements registered in the past 25 years since independence. For now, we will focus on current domestic and regional issues.*

Let's begin with the recent measures that the GOE has taken in regard to the redemption of the national currency. What impact is this measure expected to entail on economic growth? What are the associated specific policies and regulations that will be taken by the financial institutions in the country?

President Isaias: First I would like to convey my best wishes for a Happy New Year to the Eritrean people at home and abroad. Currency redemption is not an end in itself. The underlying objective of the measure is to spur



and bring about overall economic restructuring. The pertinent questions that arise here are: what does economic restructuring imply? What are the reasons that underpin economic restructuring? What are the anomalies that economic restructuring will redress? And what are the modalities and methodologies that must be pursued?

One of the tools that can facilitate the restructuring process is of course the currency. Again, it must be stressed that currency redemption is not a silver bullet or panacea for addressing or restructuring all economic distortions and anomalies. But it is an essential and indispensable tool for rectifying several distortions in the economy. As such, the introduction of new currency notes will serve as a catalyst or initial set of measures for bringing about the desired economic adjustments. The process is being implemented now after long preparations.

Full restructuring will require and be predicated on comprehensive assessments of prevailing economic distortions that include: irregularities in the exchange rate of the Nakfa, inflation, fiscal imbalances, and other undesirable trends that aggravate the living conditions of the citizens. These are problems that have accumulated over time. In the event, the solutions that must be proposed must be rooted on exhaustive and accurate diagnosis of the underlying causes. These

causes can generally be classified into three categories.

The first cause can be attributed to external subversion that has been going on for the past 18 years. These include obstacles to our saving and development programs, rendering monetary policies ineffective, instigating unwarranted depreciation of the Nakfa, establishing Banks for illicit transactions, weakening local financial institutions, encouraging illegal and cross border trading and the like. These subterfuges fall within the general scheme of external subversion and constitute the first factor that has impacted negatively – with variably intensity – on our economic growth.

The second factor is speculative practices by few players who have exploited and profited from prevailing difficulties and aberrations inculcated by external subversion. These practices have resulted in spiraling price hikes, a rise in the cost of living, depreciation of the Nakfa etc. with deleterious consequences on the country's economic growth and the well being of the general population. This phenomenon must be accurately identified and appraised, in tandem with the first factor, in order to gauge the damages that it has entailed.

The third and principal factor is the subjective or internal factor that has ensued from the policies and practices of government

institutions. Poor institutional performance, starting from budgetary implementation to the lack of proper tax collection have aggravated the problems of inflation and weak currency, thereby providing operating space for the destructive two factors cited above. These are, broadly, the bottlenecks that characterize the prevalent situation.

If we agree these are the main factors, how do we bring about the economic situation to normalcy? Exchange rate is not something to be decided at will. There are standard and determinant parameters that regulate its value or rate at a given point in time. It shouldn't have gone up or down on speculative grounds or through external ploys. This has to be corrected. By and large, these were the main factors for inflation, or the rise of the cost of consumer goods and the resulting pressure on the living condition of citizens of this country. Irrational price increases on a range of items, from house rents to essential foodstuff, have occurred even when the overall economy was basically healthy. And recently, they began to circulate forged Nakfa currencies that came from abroad. This was prompted by ulterior motives; in order to claim that the economy is in ruins; in order to instigate the perception of the onset of a debilitating crisis.

In this context, the introduction of the new Nakfa currency notes is timely and part and parcel of

the structural adjustments that must be taken to strengthen and invigorate the economy. Naturally, the issuance of the new Nakfa currency note will not, in itself, bring about miraculous economic change. Other supportive measures must be taken to bring about the desired changes. Indeed, there are additional measures on monetary policy; there are measures envisaged for monitoring and regulating the exchange rate of the Nakfa; there are parameters in place to closely monitor and regulate the cost of living; there are yardsticks in place to gauge prices of consumer and non-consumer goods. In brief, there are a gamut of policy instruments and contingencies that will be applied in time. As I stressed before, currency notes redemption is not expected to bring about miraculous changes. We have to be cautious and evaluate the impact of the new currency on the economy vis-à-vis the supporting policies for economic restructuring.

Positive signs are already emerging. But we cannot be complacent. We should not expect the external ploys to stop in a short span of time or market speculative practices to end abruptly. We have to be vigilant and be prepared for all eventualities. We have to repair the weakness witnessed on the part of the public institutions. In this regard we have policy measures and contingencies. We need to meticulously evaluate the impact of individual measures; the aggregate result of several measures; their relative and interactive influences; and, above all, whether the desired changes are being achieved as a result of all these measures. But I do not want to draw hasty and premature conclusions at this stage. It is too early – in fact only one month – since the introduction of the currency changes. So we should take our time to gauge the impact. But one thing is certain; distortions and anomalies will not be entertained any more.

The policy measures that are to be taken may not serve the vested interests of those who wanted to exploit prevalent weaknesses to their advantage. But we will not allow the repetition of mistakes that occurred once. Negligence or lax regulatory mechanisms, or

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2015 in Review: Charm Offensive

(Part 3)

By Simon Keleta

This next piece in our "2015 in Review" series will look at Eritrean diplomacy in 2015. Great gains have been made in this regard yet critical new challenges exist. This article will look at this in greater detail.

Eritrea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs seems to have been quite busy this past year. The effect of Eritrea's growing relations have clearly born fruit within the halls of the UN. To understand the gains made in 2015 we must first recall UN Security Council Resolution 1907 and the conditions that brought sanctions on Eritrea in 2009.

Knowing that European Union (EU)-member states were historically reluctant to support anti-African resolutions not sponsored by Africa as a whole, Susan Rice exploited Eritrea's temporary absence from the east African regional bloc, the Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to rally members of the African Union (AU) in an anti-Eritrea resolution that was made to appear as an "African Initiative."

Revelations from Wikileaks make this reality clear. Let us not forget the cable from September 29, 2009: "Rice reminded Museveni that past experience suggested that the UNSC would not block a resolution led by African members and supported by the African Union. She shared the U.S. read that, if Burkina Faso and Uganda co-sponsor this resolution, the British will support, the French will 'keep their heads down' and will not block."

Everything about the sanctioning of Eritrea was exceptional. The AU called for UN sanctions on one of its own African states, Eritrea, in an emergency midnight meeting, which a January 19, 2011 article in the AFP called an "unprecedented step". They have relied on a succession of rare events in the face of Eritrea's reservations to make the sanctions possible.

Observing the events since

2009 up until the end of 2015, one can safely say that the game has changed. Recognizing the isolation strategy and Rice's role in it, Eritrea has taken a number of measures to defeat isolation attempts.

On November 18, 2011, Reuter's acknowledged a "charm offensive" by Eritrea. Reopening her mission to the AU that closed in the wake of sanctions and pushing for readmission to IGAD, Eritrea built new international relationships while fostering old ones.

Diplomatic engagements and partnerships since then have snowballed, accelerating this past year. Once again, on August 21, 2015, VOA's David Arnold declared a "charm offensive" by Eritrea, noting the slew of recent and repeated visits by high-level European delegations that included, inter alia, the British, Danes, Norwegians, Dutch, Swedes and Swiss. A number of foreign newspapers and think tanks have also sent their emissaries to Asmara.

Visits by European delegations are still ongoing in 2016 as they seek to partner with Eritrea to address mutual problems for mutually beneficial gain.

On June 7, Norway's NRK reported that State Secretary of the Justice Ministry Jøran Kallemyr visited Eritrea "to obtain confirmation that they intend to comply with the maximum limit of 18 months of national service...and to assess the state of the country."

"My impression is far better than I had thought...we walked around freely at night...the TV in the bar showed BBC World and there were internet cafes with access to Facebook," said the Secretary.

Secretary Kallemyr also met Eritrean Minister of Justice Fozia Hashim, reviewing the recently published Criminal, Penal, and Civil Codes and indicating that they were "extremely important when it comes to human rights issues."

Unlike superficial analyses or

confrontational approaches by human rights NGOs, Norway and other EU states have identified, through official partnerships and state visits, the Eritrean state's nascent and underdeveloped legal bureaucracy as one rate-limiting impediments to human rights and economic progress in Eritrea.

On December 11, the European Union announced that €200 million would be disbursed to Eritrea through 2020 as part of the 11th European Development Fund (EDF). The money is slated to go towards supporting the energy sector, providing social services, and improving governance. This deal makes Eritrea, the highest per-capita recipient of EDF funds.

More important than the money allocated to Eritrea, however, is the relationship the deal builds and the message it sends to the world: Eritrea is not isolated. The victim of a seventeen year US-backed Ethiopian isolation strategy and territorial occupation, Eritrea has effectively taken bold new steps towards neutralizing that strategy and strengthening Eritrea's hand in the protracted attrition war.

Eritrean diplomacy in 2015 expanded and redoubled with Arab states of the Gulf and Red Sea basin. In September 2014, a new conflict in Yemen drew security and geopolitical concerns of regional and global powers.

Three weeks before the start of 2015, the former Israeli Deputy Minister of Defense Ephraim Sneh, writing for Al-Monitor, indicated, "there is one thing the United States can do."

Opposite Yemen, on the other side of the straits, lies Eritrea. Over the last decade, the United States has espoused a policy designed to isolate and weaken the country. The wisdom of this policy should be reconsidered, given the new regional configuration."

With the start of the Saudi military campaign in Yemen last March we immediately saw a deluge of allegations about Eritrea's involvement in the conflict in Yemen and the regional ramifications.

Initial reports came from intelligence firms like Stratfor and Indian Ocean Newsletter (ION).

The world later learned that Eritrea would join a regional anti-terror alliance spearheaded by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and based on "strategic cooperation". Quickly, the rumor mill went wild.

Of course, little was said about the fact that Eritrea and her President, Isaias Afewerki, for more than a decade had been the leading proponents for such a coalition to secure the Red Sea, home to one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

For a region fraught with piracy, illegal fishing, terrorism, weapons and human trafficking, infiltration by intelligence and mercenary firms—as we saw with PVI International in 2011—and a slew of other criminal activities, it only makes sense that adequate measures be taken to bolster intraregional security. Let it not be forgotten that the Horn of Africa is targeted by Daesh (aka ISIS) to be the seat of the al-Habeshia Caliphate.

By October, the new report by Somalia Eritrea Monitoring Group (SEMG) made a number of allegations regarding Eritrea vis-à-vis Yemen.

Using vague language open to all kinds of interpretation, the SEMG warned that Eritrea could violate UN Security Council resolutions if it used the alleged financial compensation from neighboring states "towards activities that threaten peace and security."

How exactly would the use of the purported monies, ostensibly legal, be tracked? Are the currency notes bugged with GPS tracking devices and surveilled?

UN Security Council Resolution 2244 resulting from the SEMG report extended the sanctions committee mandate through 2016 despite the US, according to Herman Cohen, being the only Council member favoring the extension. Looking beyond the final vote count favoring

extension, this new diplomatic development of Eritrea winning favor with most members of the Security Council must be appreciated.

Additionally, the resolution called on "Eritrea to cooperate with the SEMG, including on public finance issues in accordance with the SEMG's mandate, in order to demonstrate that Eritrea is not violating the terms of relevant Security Council resolutions".

Security Council member Venezuela took the lead in objecting and watering down the draft resolution's stipulations for investigating Eritrea's finances and its efforts received support from Angola, Chad, Nigeria, China and Russia. According to sources within the UN, this type of support for Eritrea is not solely a result of nations standing on the side of justice but rather a result of the meticulously planned, expanded and executed diplomatic efforts by Eritrea's Permanent Mission to the UN and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this past year.

The lies of the SEMG have become obvious to Eritrea's international partners. First, there were accusations that Eritrea had "2,000 troops" in Somalia. Next, there was "support to armed groups" in Somalia. Later, there was the accusation of government sanctioned human trafficking. Then there was the claim that "Eritrea provided military and logistical support to three armed rebel groups in South Sudan."

All of these claims, as the latest ones about Yemen most likely will, have been debunked and each SEMG report since 2010 has received less and less support for continued sanctions on an increasingly internationally-aligned Eritrea.

The latest machinations by the SEMG's sponsor and patron, the current US Administration, to hang the ever-looming threat of expanded sanctions over Eritrea's head should be seen as desperate, last-ditch efforts to generate leverage over a nation over which

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We Love To Hate Each other: The Culture of Football Fandom in Eritrea

Natnael Yeibio

The weekend finally arrives and the city is filled with people of all ages wearing colors of the team they support.

Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester United, Liverpool, Barcelona, and Real Madrid. An outsider or a foreigner would probably assume the Premier League or the Spanish Liga has changed destinations. But this is just another ordinary weekend in Eritrea and Asmara in particular.

Friday evening, pubs around Asmara's famous Harnet Avenue are filled with youngsters discussing their team's line ups as if they are the ones who make the final decisions; and chatting about the headlines from Football websites leading up to the matches.

The weekend comes and games commence. Emotions fly high with passions on edge. Friendly bets for dinners and drinks are made. Fans pray for their favorite players. These are just a few of the many activities connecting thousands of Eritrean youngsters and elderly football fans around game time.

For ninety minutes of football, twenty-two men, on local television and cinema screens, take center stage. For once, brothers are not brothers and friends are not friends. All for sake of fun and games, of course. Ones friends are the eleven players on the pitch. One or two bad words occasionally fly towards some given players suffering from an off day. All because of the perceived

ensuing angst of having to swallow one's pride in front of tormenting friends by game's end.

Football is an important means for people to form and maintain strong friendships that might otherwise not exist. These social bonds between fans are so strong that many describe them in familial, kinship terms — 'my brotherhood' or 'my family'.

'Football friends' are different from friends in other areas of life. Something special is shared and exchanged by them. The football team is also a 'friend' to many fans. Over half of all fans feel that being a fan of the team is like having a long-term girlfriend or boyfriend.

Though I can't recall how the conversation first came up, a friend of mine once told me, with pure passion, that he would never miss a game to go out on a date and told me his football team came first.

Football plays a key role in family life in much of Eritrea, linking the shared experiences of family members across generations and creating a lasting sense of tradition and belonging.

The strongest of these relationships is that of father and son. Most men become fans because their father would watch games with their children, and many older fans still retain strong memories of these formative experiences.

As football fandom is socially inherited within the family. Passion for football is a unifying emotion

in the home, frequently leading to animated conversations in front of the television or around the family dinner table. The role that football plays in this context is very important given fears about the breakdown of the traditional family unit and its values across Eritrea.

There is a strong commonality among all fans in Eritrea—football unites rather than divides in this sense. The specific social and cultural role that football plays in any given country, however, is heavily influenced by historical factors.

These include times when a major side or a national team has won an important tournament at a critical epoch; or times when the sport was played by upper or lower classes of society.

For instance, Eritrea's football history during colonization was highly marginalized. The very name of the teams was used as a means for Ethiopian colonialists to prompt internal conflicts among Eritreans.

The situation in 1974 is a case in point: Embasoira, playing in Addis Ababa against its arch rival Saint George of Shewa, had to only win to capture the cup; Hamasien, playing in Asmara against Electric of Shewa, had to win by a margin of six goals to win the cup.

As fate would have it, Embasoira won 2-1 and Hamasien, only God knows how, scored six goals in the second half to secure the victory. This incident was used by the Ethiopian colonialist regime to inflict post-game violence against Eritrean fans.

Eritrean liberation fighters, having witnessed the ill-fated outcome, put fliers around Asmara advising people of the nefarious plans of the regime. As a result, most players of that era joined the armed struggle while some left for the diaspora.

However, Derg came shortly afterwards and with it came intimidation and harassment within football, reaching a boiling point at Stadium Asmara, which became a battleground between local teams versus those representing the Ethiopian army and police.



Wave of Support for the Eritrean National Team during the Cecafta Tournament

Most of the time, Eritrean players, before match day, had to stay at police stations or relatives places for security reasons.

Despite the harsh environment, Eritrean players conquered the odds, thriving in the sport and becoming the backbone of the Ethiopian National Team that won the African Cup of Nations in 1962.

To this day, images of those games are deeply entrenched in the minds of Eritrea's grandfathers and fathers, promoting a sentiment of solidarity within the Eritrean football community and the nation at large.

For years the culture of football fandom in Eritrea has been growing. As a kid, I remember supporting teams the likes of Adulis with Edinekaishew Shimanugus as their pivotal striker and despising rival teams the likes of Keih Bahri and Asmara Bira. Now, however, that seems a thing of the past as we are all avid supporters of European football. It is a bit concerning that our fandom is directed at outside football rather than our very own teams.

We have a long way to go to get back to where we were. The Eritrean National Football Federation, of course, is working one step at a time to revitalize football. This includes measures such as starting

grassroots football academies and taking part in as many football competitions as possible in order to cultivate young stars and develop the national league higher degree. It wasn't long ago that Eritrea took on Angola during the Cecafta finals with fans occupying every possible inch of Asmara Stadium. There were new friendships being formed with football acting as the fulcrum. More than 5,000 fans crammed together, sang the national anthem heartily and cheered Eritrea through every minute of the game.

Nowadays, the highly anticipated Saturdays arrives and cinemas and pubs fill with zealously screaming fans. The local atmosphere feels like one is actually half way across the world: in Old Trafford watching Manchester United take on Arsenal or at Nou Camp watching Barcelona face Real Madrid.

In environments like these, fans feel part of something greater than themselves, experience a strong connection to others in their community and develop a sense of camaraderie. We must now begin to find ways to direct and experience these same feelings towards our local teams.

Football is a force of unity that brings together people from varied backgrounds throughout Eritrea and, undoubtedly, beyond. It's time we exploit this reality.



"1962 African Cup of Nations Winners" Nine Eritrean Players made up the Starting 11

"The underlying objective of the currency ...



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good intentioned policies that were misconstrued for ulterior motives will not be repeated. We have to bring about radical changes in the way we do business so as to prevent speculators from manipulating the situation. This cannot, obviously, be done through one single law, resolution or instrument. This will come about in a process. Hence, the issuance of the new Nakfa currency note has multi-layered facets, dimensions and objectives. Its real impact can only be gauged with time.

Q. Mr. President, what developments can we expect in

the exchange rate of the Nakfa? And what will be the likely trend for market prices in the period ahead?

President Isaias: What are the conditions in the market now? What is the current exchange rate of the Nakfa against foreign currencies at this point? Personally, I have not been following the fluctuations too closely. The official exchange rate has not changed. Is this fixed exchange rate reasonable? Will it be possible to maintain it that way? A number of views have been floating in the past 10 years. What should be the optimal or realistic exchange rate of the Nakfa? Some

would emotionally say that the exchange ratio between Nakfa and the Dollar (US) should be one to one. However, can one realistically maintain the official exchange rate under the conditions of weak regulatory environment by the country's financial institutions and where the circulation of the currency is abnormal and spiraling out of control? If one pursues a floating exchange rate, what are the yardsticks and parameters that will determine the appreciation or depreciation of currency? And, why? Apart from domestic economy, how would regional economies impact it? How would trade and economic interactions at regional level and beyond be assessed? Is it possible to control the exchange rate, if illegal banks that are beyond the control of national financial institutions have been mushrooming in neighboring countries?

This was the reality in the past when the Nakfa exchange rate spiked to 70, 60 and 50 respectively. How could you stabilize irrational and unlawful exchange rates that were willfully destabilized by speculations and rule of the jungle? And, is this the only issue? How do you handle the official and unofficial exchange rates inside and outside the country? Since the exchange rate is one of the most important manifestations of a country's

relative level of economic and trade relations, investments as well as economic growth, it is clear that it has to be normalized. This has been challenging before for the reasons cited above. But, how is the current situation? Many are saying that the "black market rates have plummeted and the Nakfa has appreciated substantially..." However, is it possible to reach such a conclusion in such a short period; that is barely one month? The apparent depreciation of hard currency could be temporary response to the new realities. As such, it requires careful assessment. The exchange rate is of interest, in different ways, to all Eritreans inside and outside the country. The nationals may need to assist their family members and apart from that to participate in different development undertakings. Above all, balanced

exchange rate mostly is for the interest of nationals working in government institutions and who earn their living on the basis of fixed salaries. The relevance of currency changes and associated monetary policies are ultimately measured on the basis of their beneficial impact on the living standards of families and every citizen of this country. In this respect, we need to carefully work out and strictly adhere to emerging regulations that will govern the newly introduced monetary policy so as to achieve the envisaged goals. We should not, however, resort to hasty collusion. Impact assessments must be done rigorously with patience.

The trends we are talking about are those of a few weeks and let us give ourselves more time and space.



2015 in Review: Charm....

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it has little.

How do we know this is the case? We know because US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazier said the US didn't have any leverage on Eritrea to an audience of largely Eritrean and Ethiopian students in 2006 at the University of Washington.

As such, the SEMG has consistently assisted in "leverage creation" by using the latest regional issues to manufacture creative, new evidence against Eritrea. With no hard evidence and Eritrea's expanded diplomacy, support for sanctions is dwindling.

Without getting overly optimistic, perhaps the annulment of the UN sanctions is near. If not annulment, the Eritrean people and state's six-year contingency efforts may render them effectively annulled.

However, there remains one major obstacle. On February 20, 2014, Ethiopian State Minister for Foreign Affairs sent a memorandum to all diplomatic missions around the world briefing them on Eritrea and providing instructions on moving forward.

According to the memo, "The former U.S. Permanent Representative to UN, Ambassador Susan Rice, was

instrumental in adopting the [sanction] resolutions. The current US Permanent Representative, Ambassador Samantha Power, may not be as strong on Eritrea. But since Ambassador Susan Rice is serving as the National Security Advisor of President Obama, she will ensure the continuation of U.S.'s policy of sanctioning Eritrea."

Note the word "ensure". In life, nothing is certain but death and taxes—and, apparently, Susan Rice's promotion of TPLF's anti-Eritrea policies in Washington. It was likely that Rice pushed Obama to become the first US president to visit Ethiopia and compelled him to congratulate democracy in the

country this year in spite of the very embarrassing fact that they won 100 percent of the vote.

This type of exceptional and high-level US support that the TPLF regime has enjoyed for the last seventeen years is on its final leg. It would not be a surprise to see Rice make a final push to award the Eritrean people with a goodbye "gift" before she leaves office in less than a year.

Under the tutelage of Rice, the Commission of Inquiry's allegations of "crimes against humanity" are clearly intended draw an indictment of President Isaias Afwerki by the International Criminal Court prosecutor and to

expand UN sanctions to target mining companies by December 2016.

This reality is not lost on the Eritrean people, who have become acutely familiar with Rice and her antics. The same goes for Baroness Glenys Kinnock—the Susan Rice of the UK.

In response to all their hostilities on behalf of the US and UK as well as all the hostilities by their regime change activists, under the pretext of human rights, the Eritrean people have put up a valiant fight this past year. The next article in this series, will look at this fight by the Eritrean people vis-à-vis human rights in greater detail.



Job Title & number required	Human Resource (HR)and Admin Manager (01) <i>ማናጀርናቅሚሰብንምምሕዳርን</i>
Duties & Responsibilities	Develop, operate and maintain Human Resource systems and procedures that will meet the needs of the organization. Establish, maintain and administer the HR policies and procedures.Carry out discipline hearings for non-conformance to Koka Gold Mine policies and procedures.Maintain current working knowledge of legislation, codes of practice and other guidelines. Ensure and direct the development of the department’s work plan; assign work activities, monitor work flow, review and monitor work products, methods, and procedures. Recruits, interviews, tests, and selects employees to fill vacant positions. Develop and maintain recruiting channels. Respond to and resolve difficult and sensitive inquiries and complaints regarding recruitment, selection, termination, policies, and procedures. Conduct performance appraisals for HR personnel. Ensure all employees undergo pre-employment, biennial and termination medical examinations. Ensure medical files are maintained and updated. Ensure HR training files are maintained and updated. Develop and administer Company Manpower Budget goals and objectives. Identifies legal requirements and government reporting regulations affecting human resources functions and ensures policies, procedures, and reporting are in compliance. Ensure the records of benefits plans participation such as insurance and pension plan, personnel transactions such as hires, promotions, transfers, performance. Provide HR and Administrative support to General Manager. Ensure the provision of administrative support and services for the organization.
Knowledge & Skill Requirement	Extremely detail oriented, proactive and organized with strong Microsoft office skills.Strong interpersonal relationship building skills and adaptability to work with people of different culture and areas of the business, including internal and external.
Education	Bachelor’s Degree in Human Resources Management or equivalent.
Experience Required	Over 10 years’ work experience in similar role. Proven experience and skill in application of HR procedures pertaining of new recruits, tracking of work hours, leave disciplinary procedures etc.
Physical Requirement	To be able to pass a full Doctor’s examination. To be available to work in accordance with ZMSC rosters.
Job Title & number required	Operations Manager (01) <i>ኦፐሬሽንስማጅር</i>
Duties & Responsibilities	Heading Operations, Maintenance, Engineering, Exploration, Geology, Milling and HSE departments. Developing and implementing a global management plan. Maximizing safety and production targets. Developing, proposing and implementing annual budget plans to agreed cost, time and quality standards. Taking lead accountability for the safe operation of activities from development to subsequent day to day activity, protecting employee and employer interests to the highest standards, upholding legal requirements, and maintaining satisfactory HSE performance. Representing the Company externally with all interested parties (government, stakeholders, agencies, local communities) all while protecting the Company’s best interest.
Knowledge & Skill Requirement	A previous experience in an emerging country with a proven-track record in maximizing individuals’ potential and the ability to create good community relationships transfer their skills through training and education to apply to this fieldPossess fluent verbal and written English language.
Education	A University degree in Engineering, Mining, Geology or similar Physical Sciences.
Experience Required	10 to 15-years’ experience in a management role with exposure to major open pit mining operations.
Physical Requirement	To be able to pass a full Doctor’s examination. To be available to work in accordance with ZMSC rosters.
Job Title & number required	Safety and Health Officer (02) <i>ኦሪሰርድሕዝትንዋዕናን</i>
Duties & Responsibilities	Establish short term programs, and strategies using information obtained from daily visits and daily incident statistics to create a safe working environment. Ensure smooth running of the Koka Gold Mine safety management system utilizing own initiative and knowledge. Advise Management, Supervisors and Health and Safety Committees on the development and implementation of the various aspects of safety programs / systems and any other matters pertaining to the health and safety of workers. Conducts routine inspection of the work area. And as per Job Description.
Knowledge & Skill Requirement	Ability to communicate fluently in English and Tigrigna. Strong written and oral communication skills. Reliable, responsible and dependable and fulfilling obligations. Personable and approachable. Ability to reach resolution to complex and unusual problems involving various stakeholders. Ability to work with and positively influence people. Must be able to work and perform under pressure. Must know how to use MS Office.
Education	Minimum Secondary School. Diploma in Occupational Health & Safety. Completed a building apprenticeship.

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Experience Required	At least 3 years' experience working as a Health & Safety Professional. Preferably having experience with a mining or exploration company. Holding of valid driver's license.
Physical Requirement	To be able to pass a full Doctor's examination. To be available to work in accordance with ZMSC rosters.
General Information and other requirements: Place of work: Koka Gold Mine Site. Occasional assignment to other locations. Salary: As per Company scale.	
Additional Requirement for nationals: Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligations and provide evidence of a release paper from the Ministry of Defense. Having finished registration and duty performing for the National Army, and present the release paper or registration card issued by National Army. Provide a Clearance paper from office of the Eritrean Police and present Medical Certificate from Hospital. Present Clearance paper from the current/last employer. Only short listed applicants would be considered as potential candidates for an interview. Application documents will not be returned back to the sender and/or applications should be sent through the Post Office. Deadline for application: 10 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.	
Address: Please mail your applications to: ZARA MINING SHARE CO. P. O. Box 2393. Asmara, Eritrea.	
Note to non-Eritrean applicants: Please send a copy of your application to: Aliens Employment Permit Affairs P.O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea.	

Photographers Corner

Photo: Mhreteab Gebremichael
2012
Gergef, Gash Barka Region





“Not only one, but, two amusing jobs”

Compiled by Fanus Debesai

He is part of the well-known cultural troupe ‘Aser’. The group is known for involving many young men and women artist, which is one of the reasons why ‘Aser’ is likable. Eyobel Mikael is a member. But he is also a referee at the Sport Federation of the Central Region.

Let’s meet for today this very successful young man with, not only one, but two amusing jobs.



Was this some kind of a ‘child hood dream’?

I started it when I was 5 years old. My father is blind, he was taking guitar courses at Bidho so I regularly walked him there, and eventually I would end up listening to him playing the guitar. After time I started developing some real interests in it. That is where it all started.

And then?

I got a chance to inter Asmara Musical School and somehow they decided to let me join *Aser band: my teachers noticed that I had some talent ... for a child.

Talented child?!

At school, I originally signed

for lead guitar but then I changed to base guitar and completed my course with it. My teacher Laine Belay charged me of ruining his class, he said I was ‘rushing’, compared to my class mates. So I was upgraded.

How did you get in to sports?

I used to watch football games at the stadium of Asmara. And so one day, it hit me; I wanted to be active in sports. I remember that specific day; I was there with my uncle and my godfather.

That is how I started watching every game, even if I had to go alone. My dream was not to be a football player but a referee. You know people always have something criticizing to say about the referee, I dreamt of being a righteous appreciated referee.

Later, I took referee trainings. Ever since the completion of my courses I have been officiated 283 of league and division games. It has now been five years since I become federal, I am hoping to advance in to international. The first three years I worked in the second division followed by three years in first division and the rest five years I worked as a federal.

So, childhood dreams achieved?

I dare to say yes. I didn’t sleep for five years to reach it, as result I have become best referee for consecutively five times.

Eyobel, I have heard that you also are a dance instructor?

It is part of what I do at the cultural Aser troupe ... choreographing, I mean... correspondingly. You share ideas there. I love my troupe, I see Aser as a base of discipline, profession and a bridge of arts and professionalism.

Isn’t it difficult to handle two different professions with different nature?

Sure it is. They are of different nature. There are times in which I spend the whole day in the field and I stay all night awake to play music in clubs, however I believe everything can be simplified, it is just a matter of will and wish.

Many times I had schedules collide, there is this one particular day I won’t forget. We had a program with Aser to play in Bisha on a Saturday night and on Sunday at 4 pm I was selected to officiate a Final game match.

I wanted to be part of both of the occasions, actually I needed to. So I did music all night long with Aser and traveled back to Asmara, I reached Asmara two hours before the game, and made it!

You’ve been nominated best on federal referee for five times, isn’t is a bit late advance to international referee?

I have all it takes to be an international referee the success I have achieved in the national league is proff enough but the decision is not mine.

Who is your favorite



Eyobel and his parents in Ararib

musician?

Laine Blata is a musician; he is someone who cannot be forgotten!

Are you married or.....

Not yet. But it is a chapter we all can’t skip, so it is one of my short term plans.

Anything you want to say before we wrap up our interview?

I am a product of many people. What I mean is that all of the things I have achieved and

reached, were brought to fruition because alongside my dreams and my desires to do music and sports, I had so many people; friends, family and colleagues that supported my efforts.

So I want to take this opportunity to thank all the people who were there for me and motivated me to get to where I am at the moment. Big thanks to my music instructors Samsom Beyene and Laine Blata; also, the managers’ and my fellow members of Aser cultural band and the referee committee of the National Football Federation in the Central Region.



Eyobel, best referee award



Eyobel with fellow Aser members: tour in Sweden