

In Honour of the Great Day: Glorifying the Values

Eritrea's 19th Independence Day will be celebrated on May 24th 2010. This Big Day in the Eritrean History reflects the sacrifice paid to develop a state of mind, a set of thinking related to the values of liberation, freedom and democracy and a nation building process, based on an independent stance. Thus, it is a Day that ushered the emergence of Eritrea as a nation and created a new reality in the Horn of Africa. This meant a reality of hope, prospects of peace and security, with a huge potential for development and an era of collective responsibility.

Despite some initial progress since its creation, however, its efforts were dashed due to the old patterns of behaviour typically reflected in the ideologies of aggression and the politics of hegemony in the region. These are the patterns of behaviour, which still pose a threat to the prospects of peace, security and development in the region, in which Eritrea has been a victim. It is because of this that an enormous sacrifice has again been paid to preserve the independence of the new nation. In spite of the war, which was initiated in the pretext of a border dispute and the enormous hostilities by some corners, Eritrea has been able to consolidate its values and maintain its independent stance, and foil all conspiracies that were designed to thwart the nation building process by destabilising society and blocking the economic growth of the country.

This is not to say that there are not still any more challenges and that the process of nation building has entirely been exhausted. However, it is everyone's belief that Eritrea is on the right path and only time and space are required to achieve the goals of creating a viable state, a sound economy and a strong social fabric. The 19th Independence Day in 2010 will, thus, be an extra step to commemorate the achievements so far, ensure the resolve to accomplish the nation building process and highlight the way forward by realising the challenges ahead. The Eritrean Mission in the United Kingdom in collaboration with the Eritrean Communities and the Eritrean National Campaign Committees in the various cities is launching this month as "May in Honour of the Independence Day, UK Programme" to reflect the state of thinking and practice. The main theme will be: Strengthening National Capacity and Defeat the imposed Sanctions on Eritrea.

The programme will be an integrated package, with broad activities that will involve diverse stakeholders and will be geared towards strengthening solidarity in support of Eritrea's independent stance in nation building. The Programme will be implemented in London, and some other cities in the UK including in Dublin (Ireland). A characteristic feature of the programme this year will be the participation of friends and partners in many of the events. The programme will, therefore, include community cultural activities, which will engage children, youth and families. It will consolidate in mobilizing friends and partners for greater solidarity and people to people relationships, by putting and raising the image of Eritrea in focus, with the anticipation of promoting investment opportunities in the country. This comprehensive programme will encompass the following events:-

1. Public Seminars organised for Eritreans, which focuses on the present situation and developments in Eritrea, the UNSC sanction on Eritrea and the Eritrean people's continued defiance and stance to the unjust, illegal and irrational resolution, and the role of Eritreans in Diaspora in the National Development programmes. Thus:
 - Sheffield on **April 30th 2010**.
 - London on **May 9th 2010**.

2. The Eritrean Community in Scotland in collaboration with the Forestry Department and the Scottish Friends of Eritrea is planning to start a re-forestation programme in honour of the Eritrean Martyrs and as a way of building people-to-people relations. This will be held in Edinburgh on **May 8th 2010** and the official inauguration of the Eritrean Martyrs' Park will take place on **June 20th 2010**.
3. A Press Briefing focusing on the present situation in Eritrea and the Horn of Africa will be held on **May 12th 2010**. The media and other institutions of research will be the stakeholders.
4. The essential tenet of all public campaign activities in the Eritrean communities is to focus on strengthening their social security. The children, youth and family Independence Day event, which takes place on **May 15th 2010**, will be a typical reflection of this goal.
5. Promoting a better understanding and interest of business enterprises and investment opportunities in Eritrea will be another aspect, which will be conducted on **May 20th 2010**. Businesses already in Eritrea, and others which have shown interest, will be the major participants in this event. The event will be organised by the Eritrean Trade and Investment Working Group (ETIWG).
6. The official Independence Day celebration will take place on **May 22nd 2010**, in London, many other cities in the UK and in Dublin. In London it will take place at Troxy Hall, Commercial Road.
7. One of the significant events will be the Eritrea's Friends and Partners Independence Day event, which will take place on **May 24th 2010**. Politicians, businesses, organizations, diplomats and other friends will be invited to participate alongside Eritreans as counterparts. A briefing by the Embassy and solidarity messages from friends and partners will be presented. The event will lead to a discussion on the establishment of an Eri-UK Friendship Forum. The conceptual Framework on 'Eri-UK Friendship Forum' will be circulated a week before the event. The venue will be announced very soon.
8. On **May 30th 2010**, the Eritrean Professional Networking Forum – UK (ERIPN) will hold its 1st Anniversary Meeting. The event will be important at this time, as it will create a leap in the organisation of the sector Groups in the ERIPN, and will develop a framework to establish links and develop stable relationship with the professional associations, various sectors and ministries in the country.

These activities and the various events will, thus, be used as means of strengthening the social fabric of the Eritrean communities in the UK, by broadening the mobilization and organisational capacity of Eritreans with the aim of expanding their engagement in nation building. It is with these noble ideals in mind that May is taken as a means not only of celebrating the Independence Day, but also as a way involving Eritreans, Eritrea's friends, partners and stakeholders in building a common sustainable future. It is with this in mind also that we invite all friends and partners for a common course in the people-to-people relationship between Eritrean and the UK.

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