

## **Press Release**

### **Harassment of Eritrea's is Unconscionable**

These are extremely difficult time for all nations and peoples in our global village. The pandemic, known as COVID-19, is spreading voraciously throughout all continents to infect over a million people and cause over 69.000 deaths in a short span time. There are no definitive indications on whether the pandemic will be controlled in the months to come or spread with merciless intensity in those countries where the infection is at its relatively initial phase.

Eritrea too has been affected by the pandemic. 29 citizens have been tested positive for COVID-19 to-date. And, as in all other countries, it is difficult to predict, with any sense of certainty, the trajectory of the pandemic in the coming crucial weeks and months.

Eritrea has thus adopted calibrated and fairly stringent measures in the past two weeks on the basis of meticulous and monitoring of the evolving situation. The High level Task Force on COVID-19 has banned international flights as well as public transport within and from one city to the other. All institutions of learning and all commercial enterprises have been closed. And on 2 April last week, the Government has imposed a “nation-wide,21 day stay at home ” policy to curtail and stop the spread of the pandemic.

Above and beyond these measures, the GOE has launched an extensive sensitization campaign through mainstream and social media outlets to drive home the gravity of the looming danger and to ensure that all citizens take requisite personal responsibility on the basis of full and clear information of the unfolding reality. Religious leaders of all faiths, professional and medical associations at home and abroad as well as other civil society groups continue to contribute visibly and significantly in bolstering the vital sensitization campaign.

Amidst this situation, we have seen a miniscule clique of avowed arch-enemies of Eritrea who have been seen a “golden opportunity” in the global pandemic to revive their pipedream of “regime change”. In the notorious words of one of these rabid elements “...it is just a matter of time for regime change...No need for bots on the ground...the coronavirus will take care of the old regime.”

Other members of this small cabal have similarly published outrageous op-eds of demonization in some outlets in the past few days (Ethiopia Insight, Al Jazeera etc...).

The GOE has to time to spare to respond to these inconsequential elements. Indeed, the entire Eritrean population is focused on the danger at hand. Eritreans at home and abroad are involved in raising substantial funds in support of the collective fight against COVID-19.

What is mind boggling is the special Rapporteur decision to jump on this bandwagon to unwittingly become the mouthpiece of Eritrea's archenemies. Culpability for this irresponsible act is not confined to the Special Rapporteur alone, but also to relevant authorities who have apparently endorsed her unacceptable conduct to issue a defamatory Press Release in the name of the institution on the basis of presumptive and defamatory allegations.

This is not the first time for UNHCR "Special Rapporteur" to harass and vilify Eritrea by gullibly recycling the smear campaigns of Eritrea's arch enemies. Most of the periodic reports of Sheila Keetharuth, the predecessor of the current SP, were culled from the intelligence services of the TPLF regime in Ethiopia, and particularly the Chief of that institution, Getachew Assefa, who is now a fugitive and trying to escape from Ethiopian Government prosecution for his numerous crimes.

In the event, it is high time for UNHCR to terminate its unwarranted harassment and demonization of Eritrea. The appointment of the SP was ill-advised in the first place and the continuation of her mandate under the present circumstance has become more untenable today.

***Permanent Mission of State of Eritrea to the United Nations***

***Geneva,***

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