

**Amanuel Biedemariam:  
Eritrea's Struggle is Long,  
And Victory is Certain**



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*Our guest today is Amanuel Biedemariam, an author and social media activist. His dream was to become a professional football player in Asmara, where he was born and raised, but he had to flee in the late 1970s due to the war, eventually settling in the United States. Now living in Washington, DC, Amanuel is a very active member of the Eritrean diaspora community. He is the author of *The History of the USA in Eritrea* and has recently published his second book *Eritrea: the struggle is long, and victory is certain*. Amanuel has also written numerous articles aimed at empowering Eritrean communities and advocating for various causes.*

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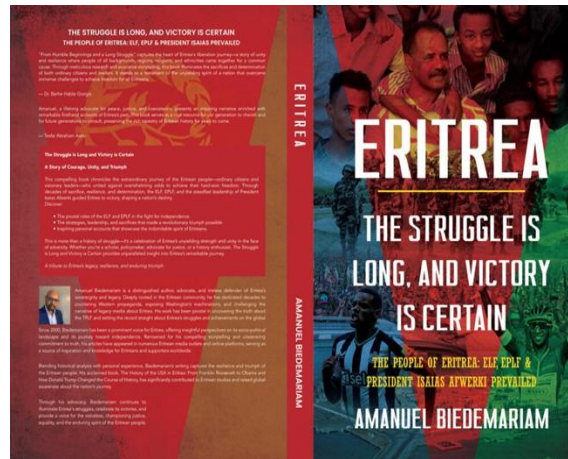
*What inspired you to write your second book, “The struggle is long, and victory is certain”?*

It's the collective journey of the Eritrean people. We have undertaken numerous initiatives in the diaspora, including demonstrations and campaigns to defend and promote Eritrea, and I was chronicling that and writing articles that became the journals of Eritrea. Eventually, I wanted to write about the Eritrean people, and

asked “How did these people come to America, Europe and other places?” When I started tracing the journey of the Eritrean people, I realized it all started in 1941 when the Italians were defeated by the British.

I did the research and learned about the United States’ post World War II agenda and why they wanted to come to Africa. Initially, I thought it was going to be just a chapter but it ended up becoming a book — “The History of the USA in Eritrea.” I found a lot of the information after it had been declassified and have put it together in a paper for young Eritreans and the future generation to read and understand their history.

While doing the research, I learned so much that instead of going back to doing the refugee stories, I ended up wanting to write about the Eritrean story.



***What do you hope to achieve through the book?***

As you know, our story is not told worldwide. So, I want every university in the world to get a copy of the Eritrean perspective. I want government representatives and law makers of other countries that judge Eritrea superficially to understand its history and the global context to be able to understand Eritrea. And I would like Eritreans to engage in distributing the books and making sure that they go to every library in the world so that Eritrea’s true story is known.

The number one thing your enemies do in order to undermine you is to undermine your history. So we need to be able to tell our story to counter the negativity and we need to put the good stories in there to make sure that people understand..

***In today's world, war is all about winning the narrative. How can the Eritrean people at home and in the diaspora contribute towards efforts to have control over their own story in a world dominated by narratives disseminated by the Western media?***

We, Eritreans, are very well organized in the country and elsewhere in the world. But we need to organize our communities better to be able to create media and financial institutions from the ground up. Then our collective voice is going to be very powerful.

***What would you say to young Eritreans in the diaspora to help them protect their identity?***

We need to have more entertaining programs that focus on our culture to appeal to the young. It can be done through artistic works like music and drama. We need to make sure that the youth don't think that other stuff from other countries is better than theirs. It's their responsibility to develop theirs and put it in the world rather than becoming consumers of others' products and be taken advantage of. Eritrea is in a very strong position politically, financially, economically, militarily and in terms of security. We can do the media and the entertainment. This is a really good time to start.

***As you know, books or documentary films on legendary Eritrean figures aren't common in Eritrea. What's your thought on this and what do you think should be done?***

The very people that accomplished so much in Eritrea's history that I described in the book are too modest to come out and talk about their achievements. I think they have to tell the story as it is theirs and be able to create a perspective about it. I think we need to press for that and those legends should start writing.

We need to encourage people to tell their stories not only in our mother tongue but also in English.

***Do you have plans for further engagement with Eritrean communities to expand the subject matter that is discussed in your book?***

Writing encourages others to write, and people are messaging me through social media inviting me for discussions to help one another in so many ways. I'm currently doing that, but we need to make it more formal and create a supporting network and encourage others to join. For instance, we can help by editing one another's works and grow together. We need to somehow institutionalize our relationship to be able to support people better.

It is very important that we create a platform for publishing and distribution. We are organized and have the possibilities to make it a reality. As a step towards that, I'll have both of my books translated into Tigrigna. And I would like the proceeds to go to war-disabled and veteran fighters. We would also like to expand Haben Eri globally to help Eritreans publish and distribute books. This way our stories and narratives could be distributed worldwide.

I am going to have a book signing event at Hotel Asmara Palace and then go on a tour around the world. I hope people will be receptive.

***Is there anything else you'd like to add, Amanuel?***

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. I am so happy and honored. This is a very important opportunity for Eritrea worldwide. This is the time for every Eritrean to come together. The Eritrean journey is the journey of victory. It is really amazing and people need to realize that. So, you should read the book, and I'll be available to engage with anybody that wants to. We have to be dedicated to getting our information out and empowering our youth with our history because the first thing that enemies do is destroy your history. So know your history, understand it, own it and promote it.

***Thank you so much for your time. I wish you all the best.***