

Minister Osman Saleh's Address on the Occasion of Independence Day



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Address by the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Osman Saleh on the
Occasion of Independence Day Celebrations

20 May, 2026

Honourable Ministers,

Senior Government and PFDJ officials,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Eritrea,

Honorary Consuls,

Distinguished invited guests,

Esteemed members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year, our nation is commemorating the 35th anniversary of Independence Day under the national theme: **“Our Resilience — Our Guarantee.”** The celebrations are being observed across the country with great enthusiasm and solemn pride. Independence Day remains the foremost of all our national celebrations, embodying the sacrifices, aspirations, and enduring determination of the Eritrean people.

Over the past 35 years, Eritrea's nation-building and steadfast resilience undertaken by its people has been neither easy nor without immense hardship. Yet, just as our people demonstrated extraordinary courage, sacrifice, and

unwavering commitment during the years of the armed struggle, they have, in the post-independence era, mirrored that same indomitable national resolve, dignity, and sense of ownership over their country. This enduring devotion and patriotic spirit constitute one of the most remarkable chapters in Eritrea's modern history.

As history attests, while many African nations attained independence during the 1950s and 1960s, the Eritrean people were deliberately denied their legitimate right to self-determination due to the geopolitical calculations and strategic interests of powerful states. In pursuit of this fundamental and inalienable right, the Eritrean people initially waged a peaceful political struggle throughout the 1940s and 1950s. However, despite their lawful and measured appeals, their voices fell on deaf ears within the prevailing international order.



Confronted by this systemic denial of justice, the Eritrean people embarked upon a bitter armed struggle that endured for more than three decades. Against overwhelming odds, and in the face of successive Ethiopian colonial regimes armed, financed, and politically protected by powerful external actors, the Eritrean people achieved a historic and decisive victory.

The liberation secured on the battlefield in 1991 was subsequently and unequivocally affirmed through the internationally recognized referendum of 1993, thereby establishing Eritrea's independence and sovereignty in full accordance with international law.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its emergence as an independent and sovereign nation, Eritrea has consistently pursued a strategy of cooperation founded upon the principles of mutual respect, sovereign equality, non-interference and shared benefit. Guided by this vision, the country has remained actively engaged in constructive diplomatic efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability within the Horn of Africa in particular, while contributing more broadly to international peace and security.

From the very outset, the Government of Eritrea adopted a foreign policy that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighboring states while advancing cooperation and partnership based on mutual interests. Eritrea has consistently demonstrated its commitment to regional peace despite persistent provocations, hostility, and destabilization campaigns directed against it.

However, both before and after independence, external powers hostile to the very existence of the Eritrean state-acting through subservient Ethiopian regimes-repeatedly propagated the false narrative that Eritrea constitutes a “**threat to Ethiopia.**” Under this pretext, and with the backing of powerful states wars, sanctions, political isolation campaigns and multifaceted acts of aggression were orchestrated against the Eritrea people, igniting a destructive cycle of conflict that spanned nearly eighty years and three generations.

This formidable trial was ultimately overcome through steadfast resistance, profound resilience, and an unyielding spirit of perseverance. Despite the immense external pressures encountered along the way, the Government of Eritrea remained firmly guided by the principle that “*our national development programmes must never be held hostage.*”

As a result, Eritrea has registered significant achievements in strengthening food security, expanding national infrastructure and broadening access to social services, all anchored upon our core principles of social justice and self-reliance.

Excellencies,

The present moment represents a period in which the multifaceted hostilities directed against Eritrea and its people have been decisively thwarted through the

strong unity between the Eritrean Government and its people, allowing the true image of Eritrea to come to light before the international community.



Longstanding misconceptions and distorted narratives concerning Eritrea and its people are gradually being corrected, and Eritrea's constructive role in advancing regional, continental, and global peace and stability continues to gain well-deserved recognition. This evolving reality has emerged at a time when the international order itself faces profound instability, widening conflicts and deep structural crises.

Eritrea therefore remains steadfast in its conviction that the domestic affairs of sovereign nations must be resolved through nationally owned solutions, free from external interference, coercion, or imposition. Eritrea further maintains that the establishment of a just, balanced, inclusive, and genuinely representative international order is indispensable to the advancement of lasting peace, justice, stability, and equitable cooperation among nations. These principled positions, once deliberately dismissed, distorted, or marginalized, are today gaining increasing recognition and resonance among peoples and states across the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To concluded, the Government and people of Eritrea reaffirm their unwavering commitment to principled engagement in international affairs and their continued readiness to contribute to the peace, stability, dignity, and collective prosperity of the peoples of our region, our continent, and the wider world.

Allow me also to extend my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Celebrations Committee for their exemplary efforts in organizing and

ensuring the success of this important occasion. I further express heartfelt gratitude to all Government institutions that contributed to the realization of this event, including the Commission of Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Information.

Eternal Glory and Honor to Our Martyrs.

Victory to the Masses !