



## **Final Statement of the Second Regular Meeting of the Central Leadership Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change**

In accordance with the regulations governing and controlling the work of the Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change (ENCDC), guided by the values of democracy and transparency, and sensing the current developments at the national and regional level, the Central Leadership of ENCDC held its second regular meeting through Zoom. The meeting lasted for 10 days and had broad participation of the members of the Council in excess of the required quorum.

The second regular meeting of the Central Leadership took place at a time when many complicated national, regional and international conditions are happening. Especially the outbreak of the Corona pandemic for the second year in a row, which has resulted in the state of forced isolation on people. The regional developments of the civil war in Ethiopia and the turmoil in Sudan, as well as Isaias' widespread human rights violations in Eritrea and his blatant interference in the affairs of neighboring countries.

The meeting reviewed the reports of the Executive Office, which included the most prominent achievements made at all levels since the convening of the second conference of the National Council in Stockholm, Sweden in April 2019. The reports also outlined the most important challenges that faced the work of the Council during the last period, namely the lack of sufficient funding, the spread of the Corona pandemic that had worldwide impact, as well as other subjective and objective factors.

The meeting of the Central Leadership of the Eritrean National Council discussed a number of papers concerning the current regional developments, particularly the bloody war in Ethiopia, and the coordination efforts that the National Council has established with a number of national forces that share its objectives and vision. As part of the coordination efforts, the goal is bringing together the work of the Eritrean opposition forces under one umbrella and direct all of our efforts against the totalitarian regime in Eritrea.

The meeting focused on the tragic conditions in Eritrea and the continuation of forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, the unlimited forced national service, as well as the threat to the Eritrean sovereignty caused by the actions of the regime. Isaias's adventures and absurdities in neighbouring countries to satisfy his evil whims and his revenge mentality is gravely endangering the lives of our sons and daughters.

The meeting was characterized by a spirit of seriousness, transparency, and in-depth and constructive discussions of all the issues on its agenda. The meeting praised the positive achievements during the past period, while as the same time identifying at length the

shortcomings and challenges faced by the National Council, and developing the necessary decisions and recommendations to address them.

In this context, the Council has adopted a number of resolutions and recommendations, the most prominent of which are given below:

### **Regarding Internal Issues:**

- The meeting unanimously approved the reports submitted by the Executive Office after extensive discussion and making the necessary additions and deletions.
- The work plan for the second session of the Executive Office has been approved with the goal to further advancing the work of the National Council.
- The application made by the Eritrean Lowlanders League to join the National Council was accepted and membership was granted.
- The two sides of the Eritrean Liberation Front will both be represented in the National Council each having two members; this was the result of the unfortunate split between them.

### **Regarding the Unity of the Eritrean Opposition Forces:**

- The meeting praised the leadership role and constructive initiatives undertaken by the National Council to establish an expanded national umbrella.
- The Council stressed the necessity of initiating the process of establishing an expanded umbrella for the opposition as soon as possible, with the need to preserve the Council's principles and premises and the unity of its component forces.

### **Agreed that the Expanded Umbrella will be Based on the Following Principles:**

- Protecting Eritrean sovereignty and the unity of its people.
- Removing the dictatorial regime and uprooting its tentacles of oppression.
- Create democratic government based on multiparty system.
- Accepting supremacy of law, and democratic rights and full liberty of its citizens.

### **At the National Level:**

- The meeting strongly condemned the systematic and widespread violations by the Isaias Afwerki regime on the rights of the Eritrean people; the assassinations of innocent, unarmed citizens; the continuation of the enforced disappearance of civilians; and the wall of a complete and tight media blackout on the country.
- The meeting condemned the systematic demographic change that the dictatorial regime has been carrying out with the aim of sowing strife among citizens and destabilizing the national cohesion that has taken root through the struggle of our people, as well as forcibly extracting land from its owners, and putting all obstacles in the way of repatriation of Eritrea refugees, despite more than three decades of liberation of Eritrea for which they sacrificed dearly for.
- The meeting condemned the dictatorial regime's interventions in the affairs of neighboring countries and its participation in Ethiopia's internal war, with accusations of numerous crimes against humanity. The Central Leadership has called on the regime to

stop its interventions in neighboring countries and not endanger Eritrea's sovereignty and independence.

- The meeting strongly warned all political forces and elites in neighboring countries against any attempt to undermine Eritrea's sovereignty and the unity of its people.
- The meeting saluted the bravery of the Eritrean people and their legendary steadfastness in the face of great repression by the regime, and their great sacrifices in defense of their right to a dignified life.
- The meeting emphasized that the continuation under the rule of Afwerki's dictatorial regime is the biggest threat to Eritrea's sovereignty and unity, and thus, it requires serious and continuous work to uproot the regime by various means of struggle and establish a democratic alternative for Eritrea. In this regard, the meeting reaffirmed that bringing change in Eritrea is entrusted to the Eritrean people, and thus the National Council will not accept any form of direct military intervention by a foreign entity.
- The meeting condemned the regime's failure to start immunizing the people of Eritrea with the Corona vaccine; this neglect is greatly endangering the lives of the citizens.
- The meeting stressed the importance and necessity of the unity of the opposition political forces and the coordination of its efforts in order to achieve democratic change in Eritrea; the National Council has a firm conviction that the serious challenges which the region in general and Eritrea in particular are facing make it imperative to unite the ranks of the national forces.
- The meeting condemned the attacks against the Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia from any side, as well as the kidnapping of a large number of them by the Eritrean forces, and their forcible transfer to detention centers inside Eritrea. The meeting called on the international community to play its role in rescuing the refugees and investigating the conditions of the forcibly abducted.
- The meeting condemned the forced deportation of Eritrean refugees from some countries, warning of the dire consequences that the refugees in Eritrea will face. Furthermore, the meeting called on brotherly countries and international organizations concerned with refugee affairs to intervene urgently to protect Eritrean refugees.

### **At the Regional Level:**

- The Central Leadership meeting of the Eritrean National Council confirmed that the war in Ethiopia is an internal war in which many parties, led by the dictatorial regime in Eritrea, have been involved, and has turned it into a regional war. The meeting has called for the war to stop and for the Ethiopian parties to sit down and find solutions to their problems through dialogue.
- The meeting affirmed the position of the National Council in condemning the intervention of the dictatorial regime in this war and demanding the urgent withdrawal of the Eritrean army from Ethiopia. The meeting reaffirmed that the Eritrean people do not bear the consequences of the actions of the dictatorial regime.
- The meeting strongly condemned the inhumane acts and practices on the Eritrean refugees from all parties; and also called for the protection of all Eritreans residing in

Ethiopia, and for the refugees to consider serious efforts to transfer them to another country where they can be safe until the conditions for their safe return to their country are met.

- The meeting strongly condemned the killing of civilians and destruction of property throughout Ethiopia, especially in the Tigray and Afar regions; and called for neutral international bodies to investigate these inhumane acts and practices against Ethiopian civilians as well as Eritrean refugees, and to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- The meeting highly appreciated the African and international efforts being made to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ethiopia, in a manner that preserves Ethiopia's unity and the gains of its peoples. In this context, the Central Leadership welcomed the federal government's decision to release a large number of political detainees in Ethiopia, considering it a good starting point for a political settlement of the conflict in Ethiopia.
- Convinced that brotherly peoples in neighboring countries played an important role in the victory of our struggle against dictatorship, the meeting assigned the leadership of the Eritrean National Council to make serious efforts to build strong relations with brotherly countries and peoples, taking into account the situation of our struggle, provided that this is not at the expense of our national sovereignty, the unity of our people and our independent national decision.
- The meeting strongly condemned any attempts by Ethiopians or those who claim to be Eritreans to undermine our national sovereignty and the unity of our Eritrean people, and strongly rejected those identifying with the position of the Eritrean regime in the Ethiopian issue and trying to find justifications for its involvement in Ethiopia's internal war.
- The meeting reminded the Ethiopian government of the need to demarcate the border with Eritrea without delay, in accordance with the binding and final decision of the special tribunal for the demarcation of the border between the two countries, considering that this is an urgent demand of the Eritrean people.
- The meeting made an appeal to all parties in Sudan for unity and consensus to protect the path of democratic transition that the brotherly Sudanese people aspire to.
- The meeting made an appeal to the international community and humanitarian organizations concerned with refugee issues to play their role in addressing the situation of Eritrean refugees in various countries, particularly in Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, Israel and Libya; and called on them to provide aid and assistance to alleviate the refugees' suffering and improve their security, living, health and educational conditions until the reasons for their asylum are eliminated and they can be returned to their country. In this context, the meeting highly valued the role of neighboring countries, especially Sudan, Ethiopia and Yemen, for hosting Eritrean refugees for decades.

The meeting called on the masses of our people at home and abroad, primarily the youth and women, to engage vigorously in the struggle and exercise their role effectively in order to overthrow the dictatorial regime in Eritrea. The meeting also made a special appeal to the Eritrean army to play its national role in the victory of our people's just struggles for democratic change. Consistent with the decisions of our second conference, the meeting reaffirmed the position of the National Council on the necessity of making every effort to advance our battles against the dictatorial regime inside the country. The meeting instructed

the Executive Office and all organs of the National Council to devise methods of struggle to mobilize our people at home and create a state of cohesion between our people struggling inside and abroad. This is imperative in order to put an end to decades-long suffering of our people, by overthrowing the dictatorial regime and establishing an alternative system in which democracy, justice and equality prevail.

The meeting affirmed its support and solidarity with the struggles of all peoples for their rights to freedom, justice, and democracy.

At the conclusion of its work, the second regular meeting of the Central Leadership of ENCDC renewed its confidence in the Secretariat of the Central Leadership and the Head of the Executive Office; and chose an executive office of ten members, members of the Law and Discipline Commission, and members of the Oversight and Audit Commission. The meeting also authorized the Secretariat of the Central Leadership and the Executive Office to select the members of the Preparatory Committee.

Long live the struggle of the Eritrean people for freedom, justice, and democracy!!

Long live free, proud, independent Eritrea!!

Glory and eternity to our martyrs!!

Second Regular Meeting of Central Leadership

National Council for Democratic Change

January 11, 2022