

ERITREAN COMMUNITY FESTIVAL IN CANADA



The Eritrean community festival in Canada was colorfully held on 5 and 6 September in Toronto. The festival was officially opened by the guest of honor, Ms. Sophia Tesfamariam, Eritrea's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

The festival, attended by nationals from various Canadian and US cities, as well as religious leaders and heads of national organizations, aimed to promote national harmony, strengthen unity among nationals, enhance

Eritrean cultural identity, and

strengthen the organizational capacity of nationals.

Highlighting the significance of the festival in strengthening national unity, nurturing national identity, and passing on noble societal values to future generations, Mr. Temesgen Tirfe, chairman of the Holidays Coordinating Committee, commended those who contributed to the successful implementation of the festival.



ROLE OF COMMUNITY IN TRANSFERRING CULTURAL HERITAGE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS

At meetings conducted with public representatives from the administrative areas of Sireru, Mindig and Alale, Mr. Osman Tahir, head of Culture and Sports in the Southern Denkalia sub-zone, called for strengthening the community's role and contribution in transferring its cultural heritage and traditional way of life to future generations.

Noting that the cultural heritage, values and traditional customs of society are reflections of its identity, Mr. Osman called for enhancing awareness of their importance and working earnestly to ensure that they are properly transferred to future generations.

Indicating that the initiative is being given priority at the regional level, Mr. Osman highlighted the significance of enhancing public awareness regarding the documentation and preservation of cultural heritage.

COMMEMORATION OF BAHTI MESKEREM AND GOLDEN JUBILEE OF REVOLUTION SCHOOL



Nationals in Switzerland enthusiastically commemorated the 65th anniversary of the beginning of the armed struggle for independence and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Revolution School.

The event, held in Geneva on 5 September, was attended

by members of the Revolution School and heads of national organizations across Switzerland. Commemoration of Bahti Meskerem and Golden Jubilee of Revolution School

At the event, Mr. Ismail Mohammed-Nur, head of Public and Community Affairs at the

Eritrean Embassy, gave a briefing on the profound significance of the beginning of the armed struggle for independence and the establishment of the Revolution School for the Eritrean people.

Mr. Tedros Meles, one of the coordinators of the commemoration of the Revolution School's 50th anniversary, gave a briefing on the school's history and development. He said that the school, established by the EPLF during a difficult period, had produced committed and proud citizens. He also congratulated the school's members.

The event featured cultural and artistic presentations reflecting the significance of both anniversaries.

Similarly, commemorative events were organized in Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. The events featured cultural and artistic performances.

CALL ON OUTSTANDING STUDENTS TO SUSTAIN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE IN COLLEGE

A call was made to outstanding students in the Central Region who are set to pursue college education to maintain the results they attained in the national school-leaving examination and strive for excellence in their college studies.

The call was made at programs organized at the sub-zonal and school levels to encourage outstanding students who attained high scores in the 2025/2026 national school-leaving examination and are members of the 38th round of national service.

At the programs organized on 4 and 5 September, Keih-Bahri, Asmara Comprehensive and Sembel high schools recognized 44 outstanding students; Isak Tewoldemedhin High School recognized 44 students; Reisi Adi High School in Emba-Derho recognized 37 students; and Ibrahim Sultan High School recognized 76 students.

The heads of the education offices in the Southwest, Northeast, Serejeka and Gala-Nefhi sub-zones said that the outstanding results attained by the students were the outcome of the integrated efforts of the students, parents and school communities. They called on the award-winning students to become competent in their college education.

Noting that the results attained by the students do not mark the end of their academic journey, the school directors called on the award-winning students to avoid negative peer influence and excel in their college education with a view to realizing their aspirations.

According to a document from the Ministry of Education, of the students in the Central Region who sat for the 2025/2026 national school-leaving examination, 1,908 attained scores qualifying them for degree programs, while 910 qualified for diploma programs. Of these, 254 scored a GPA of 4.0.



STATEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

In a statement released in connection with International Literacy Day, observed on 8 September, the Ministry of Education called on the public to make concerted efforts to preserve the achievements registered in eradicating illiteracy.

The statement noted that literacy campaigns began during the armed struggle for independence and continued after independence. Since 2000, the program has been one of the Government's priority tasks, implemented in all regions of the country and in all languages. The statement indicated that the national literacy rate had increased from 65% to 80% in

2025.

While acknowledging the encouraging results achieved, the Ministry of Education called for a review of progress based on nationwide research conducted in 2025. It also called for strengthened efforts to improve adult education in general and eradicate illiteracy in particular, with a view to addressing areas of low achievement.

Regarding future programs, the statement noted that due attention will be given to villages and administrative areas that have received limited attention, as well as regions where low participation has been observed.

Development

Transforming Salty Land into Fertile Farm: The Inspiring Journey of Rozina Mebrahtom

By: Mussie Efriem

How did you first get started in farming?

My husband originally began developing our farm in the Mesalih River area, southeast of Adi Keih



town, and I worked alongside him from the very beginning. Unfortunately, shortly after we started, my husband passed away, leaving me alone with our seven children. Despite the grief and hardship, I decided to continue the work we had started together.

The land was extremely difficult to cultivate. The soil was salty and unstable, having previously been used primarily for livestock grazing rather than crop production. We started by land-leveling and clearing the plot. When we tried planting our first crops, they failed because the soil quality was so poor.

We had to improve the land step-by-step. We brought in organic fertilizer using pack animals, often borrowing animals from neighbors

Meet Rozina Mebrahtom—a widow, farmer, and mother of seven who turned hardship into a story of resilience and success. Living in Mesalih, near Tekonda'e in the Adi Keih sub-zone, Rozina has spent years transforming a parcel of land that was once highly saline, unstable, and uncultivated into productive farmland.

Following the passing of her husband shortly after they began clearing the plot, Rozina took on full responsibility for both the farm and her family. Through patience, determination, and physical labor, she restored the soil, built a thriving irrigated enterprise, and earned the income needed to raise her children. Her journey demonstrates how perseverance can transform degraded land and uplift an entire community.

because of the sheer volume needed. We also transported topsoil from nearby areas—including soil excavated from local dam sites—and spread it across the field. We added sand and mixed these materials into the ground through repeated ploughing. Slowly, the soil became softer, more manageable, and suitable for cultivation.

How did you manage the farm alone after your husband passed away?

It was not easy. However, we had already invested so much time, effort, and resources into leveling the plot that walking away would have meant losing everything. I wanted to build something that could secure my children's future.

Because the farm was located some distance from our main village, my children and I relocated closer to the fields. Having learned many farming techniques from my husband while he was alive gave me the confidence to manage operations. At first, my children and I did all the manual labor ourselves. As the farm expanded beyond what we could handle alone, we began hiring local workers.

Continual soil enhancement—adding sand and organic manure—was a long process. It took nearly ten years of continuous effort to transform that salty land into a fertile, high-yielding plot.

How large is your farm today, and what crops do you produce?

Today, my farm covers about two hectares. Our primary crop is potatoes, but we practice strict crop rotation. After harvesting potatoes, we plant chickpeas, wheat, or maize to maintain soil health and optimize yield.

Why do you focus primarily on potato farming?

One main reason is that the Ministry of Agriculture provides high-quality selected potato seeds in adequate quantities. Additionally, we tailored our soil preparation specifically for root crops, and the local climate in Mesalih is well-suited for it.

The returns have been very encouraging. In a favorable season, we have harvested up to 280 quintals of potatoes from just 20 quintals of planted seed.

In 2022, you were recognized as an exemplary farmer at the First National Potato Conference. What did that recognition mean to you?

The award was completely unexpected. I had never imagined receiving such recognition on a national platform. Given how difficult the journey had been from the start, being recognized as an exemplary farmer was deeply moving and validating.

How closely do you work with the Ministry of Agriculture?

We follow their guidelines very closely. Ministry experts visit our farm regularly to inspect soil conditions, monitor crop health, and ensure proper field preparation before supplying selected seeds.

We actively apply their technical advice, such as preparing and



responsibilities as a mother and a farm manager?

Managing both family duties and a growing farm requires careful organization. For major tasks, I hire day laborers. Every evening, I plan the next day's tasks and assign responsibilities.

Early the next morning, I go out to the fields to supervise. I do not simply give instructions and walk away; I work right alongside the laborers to ensure the work is done correctly. Afterward, I return home

effort on land that was so salty and barren. Over time, as they saw the green fields and high yields, their perspective changed.

Furthermore, irrigation farming was virtually nonexistent in this area when we began. After seeing our success, many local farmers adopted irrigation practices. Today, numerous families in our sub-zone are engaged in commercial irrigation farming and doing very well.

Looking ahead, my goal is to transition our water pumping system from fuel to solar energy, and eventually acquire a truck to transport our produce directly to market.

What is the main challenge you currently face?

Our primary challenge is securing official licensing and formal approval for our farmland as a recognized irrigated agricultural plot. Having invested years of labor and capital into transforming this land, obtaining legal title and irrigation permits would provide long-term security. We hope this administrative process will be resolved soon.

What message would you share with other women facing severe hardships?

When I started, I was not trying to do something extraordinary—I was simply fighting for the survival of my family. Over time, that effort turned into a lasting transformation. To my fellow women going through difficult circumstances, my message is: have courage, stay patient, and do not give up.



applying compost. Whenever I notice signs of crop pests or diseases, I consult their extension officers immediately for appropriate treatments.

Marketing has also become much more reliable through their support. When the Ministry supplies selected seed varieties, they buy back our yield at a premium—about 25 percent above local market prices. This guaranteed buyer allows us to focus entirely on production.

How do you balance your

to attend to household chores.

What changes have you seen in your life and the surrounding community?

The transformation has been life-changing. The farm allowed me to build my own home and raise my seven children independently, without relying on handouts. My children are now grown, and several have started their own independent lives.

When we first started, neighbors wondered why we were wasting

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**Editor-In-Chief
Amanuel Mesfun**

**Asst. Editor-In-Chief
Sirak Habtemichael**

P.O.Box: 247

Tel: 11-41-14

Fax: 12-77-49

E-mail:

eritreaprofilemoi@gmail.com

Advertisement: 12-50-13

Layout

Azmera Berhane

Betelhiem Tadesse

Muna Yemane

SpotLight

Eritrea's Longstanding Memory: The World's Rediscovery of Its Strategic Geography (Abridged)

Red Sea Beacon

Alula Frezghi and David Yeh

The world has a peculiar habit when it comes to Eritrea: it forgets the country when the Red Sea is quiet and rediscovers it whenever the Red Sea becomes dangerous.

When shipping lanes are secure, great-power rivalry recedes, and Bab el-Mandeb slips from the headlines, Eritrea is often pushed to the margins of international analysis. Then conflict intensifies in the Red Sea, commercial vessels come under attack, maritime insurance costs rise, Gulf powers reposition themselves, or global competition returns to the Red Sea—and suddenly Massawa matters, Assab matters, the Dahlak Archipelago matter, and Eritrea is described once again as a country of renewed strategic importance. There is little that is genuinely new about this. The ships, the weapons, the alliances and the vocabulary of geopolitics may be new, the geography, however, is ancient.

For centuries, the coastline of what is now sovereign Eritrea has occupied a consequential position between Africa, Arabia, the Mediterranean, and the Indian Ocean. Adulis connected commercial networks across the Red Sea, while regional and imperial powers recognized the value of Massawa, Assab, the islands, and surrounding coastline. The Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, Portuguese, Ottoman, and Egyptian powers reached these shores. European powers followed.

Italy incorporated the territory into its Red Sea strategy. Britain administered it after the Second World War. Cold War powers calculated their interests around it. Ethiopia fought to retain control, and Eritreans fought for three decades to recover sovereignty. The actors changed. The strategic calculation did not.

A recent main stream media analysis framing Eritrea through renewed strategic relevance reflects a broader analytical problem: presenting a historical constant as a contemporary development. Strategic attention may rise and fall, but strategic geography does not.

Understanding Eritrea's place in the Red Sea requires three things: history, sovereignty, and perspective. History explains its enduring importance; sovereignty determines political and legal authority today; perspective

prevents the Horn from being viewed solely through the ambitions of larger powers.

The Coastline Empires Never Ignored

The Babel-Mandeb Strait, linking the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and wider Indian Ocean, is one of the world's most consequential maritime chokepoints. Eritrea's significance in this geography long predates today's crises.

Long before the modern state system, the Adulis corridor linked the Horn of Africa to commercial networks across the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. Successive powers recognized the value of Massawa, its islands, and surrounding coastline.

When Italy formally established the Colony of Eritrea in 1890, Massawa and Assab became central components of its Red Sea strategy. Colonial administration consolidated boundaries, infrastructure, institutions, and administrative structures that profoundly influenced the formation of modern Eritrea. But colonial rule did not create the territory's strategic importance.

When Geography Became Sovereignty

In the Cold War era, the United States and other major powers were reassessing their military, political, and communications interests across the Horn and the Red Sea. Eritrea's future was therefore never merely a constitutional question. It was also a strategic one.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 390 A(V), adopted in December 1950, provided for a federation between Eritrea and Ethiopia that came into effect in 1952. Eritrea retained substantial internal autonomy and its own institutions, including an elected assembly and flag. The arrangement, however, did not endure. Over the following decade, Eritrean autonomy was progressively dismantled. In 1962, Emperor Haile Selassie's government dissolved the federal arrangement and incorporated Eritrea into Ethiopia. For Eritreans, this was far more than an administrative change. It marked the destruction of an internationally established political order under which Eritrea had possessed distinct autonomous status. And once again, geography stood behind the politics.

Diplomacy as geopolitical weaponry, controlling Eritrea also

meant control of an extensive Red Sea coastline, Massawa, Assab, and a strategic position along one of the world's most important maritime corridors.

Thirty Years to Reclaim Sovereignty

The Eritrean armed struggle for independence, launched in 1961 and culminating in liberation in 1991, became Africa's longest liberation wars.

For Eritreans, the struggle represented more than political self-determination. It was also a struggle to recover sovereign authority over

convert selective or revisionist readings of history into claims of present-day territorial entitlement.

The historical relationships among the peoples of the Horn are undeniably deep and complex. Communities crossed boundaries long before modern borders existed. Trade, warfare, migration, intermarriage, religion, language, and cultural exchange shaped the region over centuries. Kingdoms expanded and contracted. Political centers shifted. Populations moved. That history deserves serious study. It does not constitute a title deed.

Ancient interaction cannot simply be converted into modern

rediscovered the map; or coastline did not acquire strategic meaning.

The critical question is therefore not whether Eritrea matters to the Red Sea. Geography has already answered that. The question is whether that geography will be interpreted through the principles of sovereignty and international law or through the more dangerous logic of strategic convenience and geopolitical entitlement. A port pursued as a sovereign right can become a battlefield between them. That distinction lies at the heart of today's maritime debate.

Stop Rediscovering Eritrea

The Red Sea does not suffer from



territory whose coastline, ports, islands, and strategic position had repeatedly been controlled or exploited by others. Eritrea's sensitivity to sovereignty is rooted in this history of outside powers making decisions over its territory.

Access Is Not Ownership

The 1998–2000 Eritrea-Ethiopia war demonstrated how territorial disputes can destabilize the wider Horn. The Algiers Agreement established the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, whose 2002 delimitation decision was final and binding. This remains relevant as debates about Ethiopia's maritime ambitions risk conflating two distinct concepts.

Landlocked states routinely secure port access through bilateral agreements, transit arrangements, and infrastructure partnerships with coastal states. Such arrangements are normal in international commerce. But port access does not confer sovereignty. Economic necessity does not create territorial title or a right to another state's coastline, islands, territorial waters, or jurisdiction.

When History Becomes a Weapon

One of the most troubling features of contemporary regional discourse is the growing effort to

legal ownership.

Once that line disappears, history ceases to be a discipline for understanding the past and becomes an instrument for manufacturing claims in the present. Maps, memories, migrations, dynasties, and place names then become ammunition for political ambition. Historical scholarship becomes strategic weaponry.

The Cost of Historical Amnesia

Forgetting Eritrea's history is not merely an academic mistake. It carries practical consequences.

The Red Sea is layered with history. Every port carries memory. Every border has a political history. Every territorial claim can awaken an older dispute. The Horn of Africa has already experienced the consequences of confusing strategic aspiration with sovereign right, economic necessity with legal entitlement, and historical narrative with modern international boundaries. Those lessons were written in decades of war and extraordinary human sacrifice. The region should not have to learn them again.

The Strategic Constant

The renewed global focus on the Red Sea has once again placed Eritrea in the headlines.

Massawa and Assab did not become important because international shipping became vulnerable; military planners

a shortage of history. It suffers from a shortage of memory. Again and again, outside powers arrive at the same coastline, calculate the same maritime advantages, recognize the same ports, and describe the same geography as though it had suddenly become important. Empires did it. Colonial powers did it. Cold War strategists did it. Regional and global powers are doing it again. But Eritrea is not strategically reborn each time someone notices Massawa or Assab. It was there all along.

The Red Sea will remain consequential long after today's crises fade. Governments will change, alliances will realign, wars will end, rivalries will emerge, technologies will evolve, and great powers will come and go. Massawa, Assab, the Dahlak Islands, and Bab el-Mandeb will remain, as will Eritrea's geography that has shaped every cycle of international attention and neglect.

So, the question is not why Eritrea has suddenly become important, but why the world keeps forgetting that it always was. Eritrea does not need to be rediscovered. Its history needs to be remembered, its sovereignty respected, and its geography understood without turning it into somebody else's entitlement.



Eritrea's Traditional Houses: the Architecture of Identity

Luwam Kahsay H.

Humanity has never ceased to protect and comfort the body by constructing shelters tailored to the surrounding environment. Early humans dealt with environmental obstacles by utilizing the natural resources readily available to them. Unlike the modern world, which relies heavily on artificial air conditioners to cool rooms or convectors to generate warmth, traditional builders looked to the earth, the trees, and the stones to regulate the temperature of their living space. In Eritrea, this architectural ingenuity is beautifully reflected across the nine ethnic groups. As these groups reside across different altitudes and topographies, their lifestyles, customs, and shelters have been fundamentally shaped by the local climate. Despite the cultural diversity found among these groups, a striking harmony exists as those who share similar ecological zones have developed vivid architectural similarities in their dwellings.

In the cool, elevated central highlands of Eritrea—the rugged plateau that forms the heartland of the Tigrinya and Saho ethnic groups—the definitive traditional dwelling is the **ህደሞ**, Hidmo. The Tigrinya primarily populate the central highland regions of Maekel and Debub while the Saho traditionally inhabit the eastern foothills and the edges of the highland plateau. For both groups, the Hidmo is an engineering marvel constructed entirely using natural materials, designed to withstand the sharp temperature swings of high altitudes. The magnificence of a Hidmo often depends on the resourcefulness of the owner, but the core structural principles remain the same. Heavy wooden poles, known as **አዕኑድ**, A'enud, and massive horizontal support



beams, called **ገመል**, Gemel or **ባል**, Bala, form the primary pillars that hold the entire structure together. Builders ensure these components are harvested from the fittest and strongest indigenous trees available, such as olive or eucalyptus. The A'enud are implanted deep into the house's floor to anchor the structure, while smaller branches are woven tightly across the top to form a dense ceiling mesh. This is eventually sealed with a layer of packed mud and clay up to two feet thick, providing a flat, heavy roof that seals out moisture and traps heat.

The creation of a Hidmo is never a solitary endeavor; rather, it serves as a testament to the solidarity and communal spirit deeply rooted in Eritrean society. Whenever a member of a village decides to build a Hidmo, they notify the community, triggering a highly organized collaborative effort. It becomes a shared village task to fetch the heavy stones, cut the trees for timber, and provide the physical labor required to make the house stand firmly. The resulting thick stone walls provide immense thermal mass, absorbing the scorching heat of the highland sun during the day and slowly radiating that warmth into the interior during freezing nights. Inside, the space is meticulously zoned, featuring the **ሞድራቤት**, Midri-Bet, for living and cooking over the **ሞቅሎ**, Meklo

clay griddle, an elevated platform called the **ቆፎ**, Qofo, for grain storage and, the **ደምበ**, Dembe, a built-in section near the entrance where valuable livestock are kept safe and provide extra warmth.

Descending from the highest plateaus into the transitional valleys, mid-lands, and western plains, the **አጉዶ**, Agudo hut, emerges as a familiar and widely utilized domicile among several ethnic groups. Structurally, the Agudo is much simpler and more straightforward to construct than the Hidmo, characterized by its circular walls and steep, conical thatched roof that allows seasonal torrential rains to slide off instantly. While the basic round blueprint is shared across cultures, subtle variations reflect local materials and geography. For instance, the Blin ethnic group, who primarily reside in and around the mountainous terrain of the Anseba region centered on Keren, build the sides of their Agudos out of local stone, layering the interior with sticks and herbaceous grasses. Depending on the specific valley or hill they inhabit, the altitude of these structures and the very color of the stones change, creating a beautiful visual harmony with the local landscape.

Farther south and west, in the fertile savannas and plains of the Gash-Barka region, the Kunama and Nara ethnic groups utilize variations of the Agudo that reflect their specific lowland environment. The Kunama, who are among the ancient inhabitants of the southwestern plains, construct the sides of their Agudos using thin, flexible trees and raffia palm fibers. These materials are modified into a distinct stair-like shape and concatenated, or linked together, in a circular measurement around the lower part of the structure. This architecture bears an exceptional high resemblance to the Agudo of the neighboring Nara ethnic group, who also

inhabit the lowlands of Gash-Barka. Both the Kunama and Nara fashion their front doors entirely from thick, woven wild grasses. The primary distinction between the two lies in the interior aesthetics; the Nara uniquely line the inside walls of their homes with **ፋለት**, Falit, a beautifully dyed, multi-colored palm mat that serves as both insulation and vibrant decoration.

Regardless of the specific shape of the house, nearly every settled cultural group incorporates a space known as the **ገበላ**, Gebela. Gebela is an open, shaded porch or courtyard area where family members spend their afternoons, receive visitors, and rest whenever they feel the need for fresh air and community interaction, making it a universal staple of Eritrean hospitality.

Beyond settled agricultural communities, life skills and survival strategies dictate entirely different architectural

The Tigre home features a roof covered with thin, pliable sticks and hand-woven mats, all supported by a firm central pole. Before layering the roof, builders ensure the primary pillar is deeply rooted into the earth of the house's floor. Distinct from both the stone-walled Hidmo and Agudo, the entire perimeter sides of a classic Tigre house are completely covered with these breathable woven mats, allowing wind to circulate freely through the home to alleviate the lowland heat.

Along the extreme southern coastline and the scorched volcanic deserts of the Southern Red Sea region, the Afar ethnic group, alongside the Hidarb ethnic group of the remote northwestern valleys bordering Sudan, also make their houses entirely out of these intricately woven mats. However, their environmental adaptations have led to completely different structural shapes. The nomadic



philosophies for Eritrea's migratory populations. Some ethnic groups maintain a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, requiring homes that can be easily assembled, demolished, and transported across long distances without restraining the family's movement. This nomadic mastery is perfectly exemplified by the Rashaida ethnic group, who live along the hot, arid northern coastlines of the Red Sea and migrate across the desert landscapes. The Rashaida build tent-like structures using woven goat-hair and heavy cloths that can be packed onto camels within hours, offering maximum mobility and protection against harsh desert winds.

Similarly, the Tigre ethnic group, who live across the vast northern highlands, western lowlands, and parts of the Red Sea coast, possess a unique artistry in their traditional dwellings.

Afar fashion a uniquely aerodynamic, dome-shaped round house with a narrow, low-profile doorway designed to keep out the intense heat and blinding coastal sandstorms. In contrast, the Hidarb home is non-round, taking on an elongated, oblong shape with multiple doorways to maximize ventilation. This structure is held together by utilizing the naturally angular, bent trees native to the northwestern river valleys that act as a flexible skeleton for the heavy mats.

Ultimately, born out of necessity and tailored perfectly to its geographic circumstance, each traditional domicile found across Eritrea has its own distinct beauty. This rich architectural tapestry magnifies the immense creativity, intelligence, and adaptive attitude of the Eritrean people in every environment they call home.



OPINION

Building Monuments, Neglecting Foundations: A Misguided Approach to Development

Kidanemariam Feday

Across Africa, ambitious infrastructure projects are reshaping and redefining national aspirations. Mega airports, ultramodern conference centers, high-rise buildings, and sprawling expressways are increasingly seen as symbols of progress and economic ambition. Infrastructure undoubtedly matters. Airports facilitate tourism, trade, investment, and regional integration. Roads connect markets while ports and railways reduce the cost of doing business. These investments can stimulate economic activity and create opportunities for future generations. But the real question is whether priorities are properly aligned and whether there is an appreciation of what could happen if investments were directed differently, which tend to result in transforming lives on a scale that prestige projects rarely achieve.

Recent public discussions surrounding proposed tens of billions of dollars investment on airport in East Africa have brought this issue into sharp focus. Many of the nations that focus on ambitious infrastructure projects face significant debt pressures, limited fiscal space, unemployment, poverty, infrastructure gaps, insecurity and demands for better public services. Some have sought debt restructuring, debt relief or other forms of financial assistance. When a country is struggling to meet existing financial obligations, should it borrow billions for large prestige projects?

There is no question that a large airport is visible while a rural water system is not. A spectacular conference centre can become a national symbol, but a school in a remote community may never make international news. Whereas a major highway may be visible, a rural road connecting farmers to markets may barely be noticed. The question is which investment changes the lives of ordinary Africans more directly.

Consider the case of the Netherlands. The country has invested enormous resources over generations in protecting itself from the sea. These investments are essential infrastructure designed to protect people, cities, agriculture, businesses and the national economy from flooding. The Netherlands invested billions because water management is

fundamental to the country's survival and prosperity. African countries should ask "what are our most urgent national problems?" Is it food insecurity, water scarcity, rural development, energy shortages, unemployment, weak healthcare systems, poor education, industrial underdevelopment, climate vulnerability, conflict and insecurity? If these are the foundations of the national economy, then investment decisions should respond to them.

Imagine a billion US dollars invested wisely on rural communities and towns where the majority of East Africans live and work instead of a high rise building or expressway. Picture

value products; and thousands of young Africans equipped with skills, credit, and market access to start and grow enterprises.

Add two further ingredients: accountability and transparency, and capacity-building so that local companies and young African experts design, implement, and maintain every project and the impact compounds. Corruption has fewer places to hide, money stays in the local economy, skills take root, maintenance becomes feasible. The result is durable productivity, rising incomes, better health and education outcomes, and communities that can sustain their own progress.



young African planners, engineers, economists, agronomists, and other specialists working closely together to design and deliver the basics that sustain daily life: functional all weather roads, feeder networks, clean water systems, reliable power supply, strengthened primary health clinics, improved schools, agricultural support, dairy and livestock value chains, small-scale agro-industries, craft enterprises, and youth empowerment programs.

Now multiply those noble efforts by \$30 billion on high-return, community-level investments rather than a handful of mega airport projects. The outcome would be tens of thousands of kilometers of all-weather roads linking farms to markets; thousands of clean water projects; clinics stocked and staffed; schools with laboratories and trained teachers; agricultural farms and processing centers that turn milk and grain into higher-

African countries continue to face preventable health challenges. Rural clinics often lack essential medicines, trained personnel and diagnostic equipment. Maternal and child health services remain insufficient in many communities. These are not only social concerns but economic ones. A healthy population is more productive, innovative, and capable of driving national development.

Education presents another critical foundation. Schools require qualified teachers, updated curricula, libraries, laboratories, and digital learning resources. Higher education and technical institutions need stronger links with industry to equip graduates with skills relevant to modern economies.

Water and sanitation deserve equal attention. Millions of Africans still lack reliable access to safe drinking water and

adequate sanitation facilities. The consequences extend far beyond public health. Children miss school, productivity declines, and healthcare costs rise. Investments in clean water systems often generate some of the highest social and economic returns of any public expenditure.

Reliable electricity is indispensable for the development of a country. Businesses cannot thrive when power interruptions are frequent, hospitals cannot function efficiently without dependable energy, and students cannot fully benefit from modern technologies without electricity. Expanding affordable and reliable power—especially in rural and small-town settings—should, therefore, remain among the highest development priorities.

Agriculture and small agro-industries form the economic backbone of most rural communities. Supporting farmers with better roads, storage, processing facilities, extension services, and market linkages turns subsistence into surplus and surplus into income. Craft works and light manufacturing rooted in local materials and skills create additional livelihoods that keep value within the community rather than extracting it.

Institutional capacity is perhaps the least visible but most important foundation. Strong institutions ensure transparency, efficient public service delivery, sound financial management, and investor confidence. Without capable institutions, even well-funded infrastructure projects may suffer from poor planning, cost overruns, or inadequate maintenance. Building the capacity of local firms and young African professionals to plan, execute, and oversee projects is, therefore, not an optional extra, it is the difference between projects that last and projects that become white elephants.

Youth empowerment also deserves greater emphasis. Africa possesses one of the world's youngest populations, presenting both an extraordinary opportunity and a significant challenge. Investing in vocational education, entrepreneurship, innovation, and employment can transform this demographic reality into a powerful engine of economic growth. A modern airport may create jobs during construction, but a skilled

and entrepreneurial workforce creates prosperity for decades.

Peace and security complete the foundation upon which development rests. Investors seek stability, businesses require predictable environments, and communities flourish where people feel safe. Infrastructure can accelerate development, but it cannot substitute for peace, good governance, and social cohesion.

Monumental projects should complement not compete with investments in human development. Economic transformation requires both physical infrastructure and social infrastructure. One without the other produces incomplete progress. Yet the pattern is familiar: governments spend billions on prestige projects, then appeal for debt relief and still take on further large loans for the next iconic scheme.

Why would leaders and policymakers not think and act more responsibly? The incentives are often misaligned. Ribbon-cutting ceremonies and international headlines reward visibility. The cost of that misalignment is measured in lost opportunity. Every billion dollar spent on prestige infrastructure is a billion not spent on the foundations that would make an economy more productive, a society healthier, and a generation of young Africans more capable of creating wealth rather than simply having a craving for it.

Successful nations understand that development is ultimately about expanding people's capabilities. Countries that consistently invest in education, healthcare, institutions, rural connectivity, and human capital often found themselves able to build world-class infrastructure on a much stronger and more sustainable foundation.

Africa's future should not be measured solely by the height of its buildings or the size of its airports. It should be measured by the quality of life of its people, the strength of its institutions, the resilience of its economy, and the opportunities available to every child, especially those in rural areas and small towns. Monuments may inspire admiration, but foundations create enduring prosperity. The most successful societies are those that recognize that true development begins not with what rises above the ground but with what is carefully built beneath it.



Bisha Mining Share Company
P.O. Box 4276
Asmara
Eritrea

Tel: (+291) 1124941
Fax: (+291) 1124941
www.bishamining.com

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Bisha Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following positions

1. Position: Rebuild Fitter
Department: Processing Plant
Section: Engineering Process Plant
Number required: One (01)

Primary Purpose

- The Rebuild Fitter is responsible for the disassembly, inspection, repair, and reassembly of industrial slurry, high pressure, water pumps, chemical pumps, gearboxes, compressors, cylinders etc. to ensure optimal performance and reliability. This role is troubleshooting and improving equipment efficiency in operation of ore processing equipment.

Essential Functions

- Performs routine rebuilds while following safe work practices per BMSC safety policy.
- Provides guidance in continuous improvement of rebuilding procedures.
- Communicates with plant management regarding the status of rebuilds.
- Coordinates with the Training Department to help create content for training program.
- Assists with evaluation of national staff to validate skills for training progression.
- Must be able to interpret part’s schematics/drawings and assist the Plant with ordering the required parts for a successful rebuild.
- Must be able to find solutions for problematic machines and/or parts to increase efficiency and sustainability.

TASK DESCRIPTION EXPANDED TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

Planning

- Responsible for forecasting and planning of all rebuild work
- Follows the “Planned Maintenance Schedule”. (Planned Task Document Observation).
- Tracks the use of maintenance and repair parts and ensures orders are placed within time
- Must be able to interpret structural and civil drawings to execute Project plan
- Uses reliability centered maintenance strategy to ensure availability of equipment

Implementation of the Plan

- Ensures maintenance and rebuilding of equipment is carried out in an efficient and effective way to minimize downtime through rework
- Ensure safety requirements are utilized, including leading Field Level Risk Assessment (FLRA) and proper use of the appropriate PPE. Report any safety issues/incidents.
- Comply with mine’s cardinal rules and other safety, environmental or other rules and standards as directed. Identify any hazards in the workplace.

Training

- Ensure that trainees have all tools and knowledge to undertake tasks under your supervision.
- Trainees need to be able to identify parts and perform quality rebuilds
- Trainees must ne taught lathe work and milling.
- Manages effective use of time and attendance.
- Be able to apply skills and transfer knowledge to team members
- Ensure proper housekeeping in shop.

UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS / OTHER INFORMATION

- Candidate must be physically medically fit
- Candidate must be Mechanically Qualified
- Prior Ball & SAG Mill, Slurry and water pumps, Agitators and Gearboxes experience.

- Proven expertise in diagnosing and repairing complex mechanical systems.
- Strong knowledge of hydraulic, pneumatic and mechanical systems.
- Ability to read and interpret technical drawings and specifications.
- Experience with plant maintenance and shutdown
- Must be able to work outside exposed to heat, wind and dusty environments
- Must be able to work at Heights
- Must have a Light vehicle license

Qualifications:	Knowledge and Experience
• Internationally recognized trade certificate as a Mechanical Fitter	• 10+ years relevant experience with ore processing equipment • Lathe, Milling Machines, Welding, Cutting and Grinding
Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
• Mechanical & Maintenance experience • Problem solving skill • Milling and lathe work • Pumping system knowledge and rebuild experience • Agitator and gearbox rebuild experience • Stick welding • Ability to work to tight tolerances • Maintain a high level of workmanship • Root cause analysis and elimination • Problem solving skills.	• Communication (English) • Assertiveness • Interpersonal Relations • Integrity • Prioritizing skills & multi-skilling • Ability to work towards strict deadlines • High level of accuracy • Attention to detail • Analytical skill • Self-motivated

General Information and other requirements:

- **Place of Work:** Bisha.
- **Salary:** As per Company salary scale.
- **Type of Contract:** Indefinite

Additional requirements for Nationals:

- **Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provided evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.**
- **Present clearance paper from current/last employer.**
- **Testimonial documents to be attached (CV, work experience credentials, a copy of your National Identity Card etc.).**
- **Only shortlisted applicants will be considered as potential candidates for an interview.**
- **Application documents will not be returned to sender.**
- **All applications should be sent through the post office.**
- **Deadline for application: 10 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.**

Address: Please mail your applications to:-
Bisha Mining Share Company,
P. O. Box 4276 Asmara, Eritrea

Note to Eritrean applicants:

Please send a copy of your application to:

- 1. Aliens Employment permits Affairs,**
P. O. Box 7940
Asmara, Eritrea.
- 2. Mineral Resources Management**
P. O. Box 272 Asmara, Eritrea



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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Bisha Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following positions

1. Position: Mining Operations Superintendent

Department: Mining
Section: Management and Planning
Number required: One (01)

Primary Purpose

- Manage the Mine Operations section, including Load and Haul, Drill and Blast, TMF Construction, Dewatering and Data Control by ensuring that all resources are in place to meet the desired outputs.
- Follow directions from the Mining Manager and Engineering Team to achieve the short- and long-term goals of the open pit Mining Department.

Essential Functions

- The Mining Operations Superintendent provides overall leadership, technical direction, and strategic planning for all open pit operations functions.

TASK DESCRIPTION EXPANDED TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

Planning

- Oversee operational planning of Weekly, Monthly and 3 Monthly horizons.
- Understand the strategic, long term mining plans and implement short term plans to achieve the longer-term plan.
- Scheduling of Drill & Blast and Load & Haul.
- Create and manage training and succession planning
- Offer practical solutions to meet mine plans and designs.

Manage Load and Haul, Drilling and Blasting, TMF and Data Control systems

- Manage the operation safely
- Develop an excellent safety culture in the teams
- Drive continuous improvement of mining efficiencies
- Participate in the “36-hour plan meeting” and review production statistics against mining plan.
- Mine Planning Engineer reviews weekly plans against actual production.
- Review Drill & Blast plan
- Discuss Geotechnical concerns and requirements
- Discuss Geology requirements
- Identify safety hazards that staff should be aware of when implanting 36-hour plan.
- Draft standard operating procedures for Drill and Blast, Load and Haul, TMF, Dewatering and Data Control Section.
- Ensure ongoing optimization of the mining operation.

Generate reports

- Oversee the preparation of monthly reports including drilling, blast, mining and magazine report.
- Assist in preparing Mining Operations Budget.
- Analyse daily production data to help improve productivity outcome.
- Utilizing production data to determine root causes of where production does not meet requirement.

Manage the Operations teams

- Implement a program of ongoing training and development to enhance skills and technology transfer for successful succession planning.
- Ensure training and mentoring plan is implemented and followed.
- Mentor and train National Senior Supervisors, Supervisors and Engineers to transfer knowledge and skills.
- Support and drive practical safety to ensure that safety standards

and procedures remain the highest priority in operations.

Unique requirements/other information

- Strong drive on excellent safety culture
- Tough minded, strong leadership ability
- Thorough of mine planning and optimization
- Strong drive for efficiency
- The candidate must be physically and medically fit to work long rotations in a hot environment

Qualifications:	Knowledge and Experience
• A Bachelor of Engineering degree in Mining or Civil is required, along with over 10 years of experience in operations supervision or management, including a minimum of 10 years in supervisory roles within Mining Load and Haul, Drill and Blast or Mine Engineering.	• 15 years experience in large open-pit mining of which 10 years in supervision or management • Ability to lead and co-ordinate a multi-disciplinary team • Drilling, Blasting, Loading and Hauling experience and able to show delivery of performance.
Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
• Leadership skill in multi-disciplinary environment, Analytical skills, Project management skills, Attention to detail, Report Writing skills, Decision making skills, Planning, organising and execution skills, Understand machine capabilities and limitations, Problem solving skills, Able to read maps and plans, Able to break down Monthly plans to deliver day-to-day mining strategy, Valid Drivers License, Mining efficiency best practice knowledge.	• Excellent safety culture • Strong Supervisory skills • Interpersonal skills • Ability to work under pressure • Ability to work toward strict deadlines • Assertiveness • Results oriented • Ability to multitask • Ability to work in multi-disciplinary environment • Ability to mentor national workforce • Ability to drive changes.

2. General Information and other requirements:

- Place of Work: Bisha.
- Salary: As per Company salary scale.
- Type of Contract: Indefinite

Additional requirements for Nationals:

- Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provided evidence of release paper from the Ministry of Defense.
- Present clearance paper from current/last employer.
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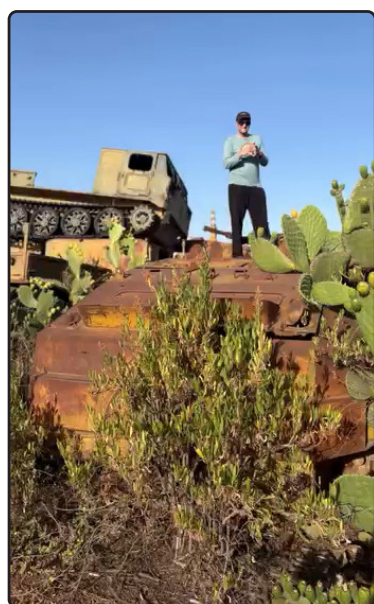


"One Hundred Seventy-five Countries Later, Eritrea: Vanquished Hegemonies, Quiet Resilience, and Green Resolve" Prof. Saleem H. Ali

Milka Teklom

What sparked your interest in Eritrea?

My curiosity about Eritrea began in high school during the peak of its war for independence from Ethiopia. The struggle portrayed in news outlets captivated me—how could such a small nation resist such overwhelming forces? Later, during my university years, I heard the news of Eritrea's independence in 1991, becoming a new UN-recognized



country in 1993. I remember thinking, "This is a place I must visit someday." Over the years, I met Eritrean friends in Australia and the USA, particularly Dr. Fitsum G/ Giorgis, whose deep affection for his homeland moved me. He spoke passionately about Eritrea's diverse landscapes, its cool highlands, arid lowlands, and rich cultural mosaic. That only deepened my desire to see it firsthand.

How would you describe your first impressions of Asmara?

Asmara is unlike any African capital I've visited. The city is full of Art Deco architecture, a legacy of Italian colonialism but now distinctly Eritrean. Walking through its streets, you see pedestrian-friendly boulevards where cyclists and pedestrians dominate, rare in a continent where traffic congestion is the norm. The human-scale urban planning creates a charm that's hard to replicate. Café culture thrives here; people sip macchiato in century-old bars as if time stands still.

Massawa made a strong impression on you as well. What stood out?

Massawa on the Red Sea is unforgettable. I visited the Sahaba mosque, which, I learned, was established during the first Hijra by H. Usman and still had the old Qibla of Jerusalem. As a Muslim

Saleem H. Ali, a Pakistani American Australian, shares his reflections on Eritrea's unique architecture, religious harmony and environmental initiatives following his two-day visit, a fulfilment of his long-time dream. He received a doctorate in Environmental Planning from MIT, a Master's degree in Environmental Studies from Yale University and Bachelor's degree in Chemistry (summa cum laude) from Tufts University. He holds the Blue and Gold Distinguished Professorship in Energy and the Environment at the University of Delaware (USA) and is a member of the United Nations International Resource Panel.

visitor, entering that mosque and performing a prayer was a deeply memorable moment. The coastal light, the narrow alleys, and the layered history of Massawa — Ottoman, African, Arab, and colonial, all converge there. I was in awe of the scenery on the way down to Massawa and the way the sea shapes daily life.

What is your observation of religious coexistence in Eritrea?

It was so refreshing to observe peaceful coexistence between Muslims and Christians in public life. Religious identity is visible but not a source of everyday friction; instead, it is woven into a shared civic fabric. That coexistence extends into workplaces and markets, where people of different faiths interact routinely and respectfully.

As an environmental scientist, what aspects of Eritrea's environment policy or practice impressed you?

Several things stood out. First, the near absence of visible plastic waste compared with many other African countries and many parts of the world. That is not accidental; it reflects policy choices and social norms that discourage single-use plastics. Second, I noticed tree-planting efforts even on the arid route to Massawa. In a landscape that can be unforgiving, the visible commitment to reforestation and greening is notable. These are early steps toward environmental sustainability, but they are meaningful and visible.

What does your life as a traveler look like and how has Eritrea fit into that journey?

I travel because I am curious about how people live on this beautiful planet. Over the years I've been fortunate to visit remote and extreme places — from Antarctica and Greenland to distant islands and mountain plateaus — and Eritrea became my 176th country. I travel for research, book writing, and for the simple, stubborn pleasure of listening. I am a National Geographic traveler and an environmental scientist. I write, I teach, and I try to pay attention. What struck me in Eritrea was how quickly a short visit can reveal deep

continuities: Asmara's human-scale streets, Massawa's salt-bright light, the Sahaba mosque where I prayed, and the hospitality of a family who invited me to a coffee ceremony and a home meal.

What will you do after your world tour and what will your next book be about?

When the world tour is done I plan to write a different kind of book — not a personal diary of my own movements, but a reflective memoir about the countries I have visited and the ways borders shape societies. I don't think my private anecdotes are the point; I want to examine how culture, policy, and geography interact at the edges where people meet and separate. The book will synthesize decades of travel, field observation, and scholarship — including work I recently completed on sustainability for Oxford University and it will draw on the seven books I've written to date. The project will be comparative and thematic rather



than chronological. Each chapter will treat a country or border region as a case study: how migration and trade reconfigure identity, how colonial and Cold War legacies persist in urban form and food, and how environmental constraints and civic practices produce different models of resilience.

What surprised you most about daily life and social norms in Eritrea?

The egalitarian presence of women in the workplace was striking. Women were visible across sectors, and there was a sense of shared responsibility in

public life. That, combined with the pedestrian-centered streets of Asmara and the communal life of Massawa, gave me a sense of social cohesion that is often overlooked in external narratives about the country.

You used the phrase "vanquished colonialism and Cold War hegemony." How did that history feel present during your visit?

The history is present in architecture, in stories people tell, and in the political consciousness of the place. You can see layers of Italian colonial planning in Asmara's buildings, and the scars of conflict in the memories people carry. Yet what is most striking is how those legacies have been repurposed into a national story of survival and self-determination. That narrative is not triumphalist; it is practical and forward-looking.

How did you find the food?

I loved it. Traditional Eritrean cuisine left a strong impression.



pizza, and the breads that are baked with care and character. The coexistence of spicy, indigenous stews and delicate Italian pastas or crusty loaves is one of the country's culinary pleasures. Eating a simple plate of pasta in Asmara felt like a cultural conversation across time, and the local twists on Italian staples were delightful.

Any particular meal that stands out?

Yes. One of my most memorable meals was at a local family's house. I was invited for a coffee ceremony, and the hospitality that followed was unforgettable. The table held several dishes: a beef stew infused with berbere, a bowl of shiro, and many vegetarian plates — lentil and chickpea preparations, sautéed greens, and richly spiced sauces. The coffee ceremony itself was slow and ceremonial, a social ritual that framed the meal. Eating in that home, sharing food prepared with care, and joining the coffee ritual made the visit feel intimate and rooted in daily life rather than tourism.

Any final reflections from your two days?

Eritrea left me with a sense of wonder — at its architecture, its coastal beauty, and its social fabric. "While challenges remain it is a country which has vanquished colonialism and Cold War hegemony with tenacity." That sentence captures what I felt: a nation that has endured, that holds on to its cultural and spiritual landmarks, and that is quietly working toward environmental and social sustainability. My three days were only an introduction, but they were enough to make me want to return.

Thank you for your time and we wish all the best in your upcoming projects!