

FUNERAL SERVICE OF VETERAN FIGHTER MUSA HUSEIN NAIB



Funeral services for veteran freedom fighter and member of PFDJ Central Council, Mr. Musa Husein Naib, were held at Asmara's Patriots Cemetery yesterday in the presence of President Isaias Afwerki, senior Government and PFDJ officials, religious leaders, his family, and a number of nationals.

Veteran freedom fighter Musa Naib joined the EPLF in 1975 and served his nation and people, with distinction and utmost dedication, in various capacity, for 51 long years.

Veteran freedom fighter Musa rose through the ranks of the EPLF Security Department and was its Head towards the last years of liberation.

After independence, Mr. Musa continued his illustrious service to his country, including as: member of the Executive Committee of the Constitution Commission; administrator of Massawa and Keren respectively; Prosecutor General; and, Director General of the Department of General Education at the Ministry of Education.

Veteran freedom fighter Musa Naib passed away yesterday, at the age of 77, after a long illness.

Mr. Yemane Gebreab laid a wreath on the tomb of veteran fighter Musa Husein Naib on behalf of the PFDJ; Dr. Halima Mohammed, Minister of Education, on behalf of the Ministry of Education; Mr. Mehari Belai on

behalf of the EPLF Security; and his son, Idris Musa.

Veteran freedom fighter Musa Husein Naib is survived by his wife and five children.

Expressing deep sorrow over the passing of veteran freedom fighter Musa Husein Naib, the Ministry of Education conveyed condolences to family members and friends.

ADULT EDUCATION OPENS EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

At an activity assessment meeting conducted in Barentu on 23 January, it was reported that the adult education program has opened educational opportunities to many citizens in the Gash Barka Region.

At a meeting to review the adult education program from 2016 to 2026, Mr. Ishaq Yosuf, Head of the Adult Education Program in the Gash Barka Region, said that over the past 10 years, more than 25,000 citizens have benefited from the program.

Regarding activities in 2025, Mr. Ishaq said there are about 531 adult education centers in the region and called for coordinated efforts to reach the 268 villages without access to adult education

opportunities.

Mr. Tikuabo Aimut, Head of Planning and Curriculum Preparation for Adult Education at the Ministry of Education, said that the illiteracy rate in the Gash Barka Region had been very high and that, as a result of the strong efforts exerted, the number has been significantly declining. Commending the strong efforts made, Mr. Tikuabo called for further efforts to achieve better outcomes.

At the event, a report on efforts to improve educational capacity at the elementary school level was presented, and participants engaged in extensive discussion and shared supportive ideas for further improvement.



OUTREACH PROGRAM DRIVES DECLINE IN EYE HOSPITAL VISITS, SURGERIES INCREASE



Berhan-Aini National Referral Hospital's targeted eye treatment programs in remote parts of the country have contributed to a significant decrease in the number of patients traveling to the hospital for care. In 2025, outpatient visits dropped by approximately 9% compared to the previous year.

Dr. Kahsai Fesehatsion, Medical Director of the hospital, reported that

outpatient numbers fell from around 69,000 in 2024 to about 62,000 in 2025. He attributed this decline to the success of the hospital's outreach efforts, which bring diagnosis and preliminary treatment closer to communities in underserved areas.

At the same time, the hospital has recorded a notable increase in surgical interventions. Eye surgeries rose

from 4,848 in 2024 to 6,723 in 2025, reflecting enhanced surgical capacity and greater detection of cases requiring operation.

Dr. Kahsai urged the public to protect their eyesight through careful daily practices to avoid injuries and diseases that can lead to blindness. He also emphasized the importance of parental vigilance, calling on families to monitor their children's eye health and seek professional care at the first sign of any issue.

Medical experts added that common eye conditions such as trachoma, glaucoma, and cataract remain prevalent. They strongly advised against relying on traditional remedies that may worsen these conditions, encouraging patients to pursue evidence-based medical treatment instead.

The hospital continues to expand its community-based eye care programs as part of its strategy to prevent blindness and reduce the burden on central medical facilities.

VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONATION IN ASMARA

Workers of various Government institutions in Asmara have voluntarily contributed 197 units of blood from 17 to 23 January.

According to a report from the National Blood Transfusion Service, staff members of the National Service Training Center voluntarily donated 22 units of blood; members of the National Marching Band, 62 units of blood; members of the Office of the President, 31 units of blood; and members of the Central Region administration, 82 units of blood.

Mr. Seare Kifle, coordinator of the program from the Office of the President, said that the initiative taken by members of the Office of the President was in continuation of the regular donations they have been making, and that they will continue the program in earnest.

Noting that donating blood has a double advantage in saving lives through renewable blood and in knowing one's health condition, members of the Central Region administration called on all citizens to follow the noble example.

Nurse Mehari Abraham, head of the blood donation service at the National Blood Transfusion Service, said that, as a result of increased public awareness, voluntary blood donation has been rising from time to time. He also commended the initiative taken by members of the various Government institutions.

OPINION & ANALYSIS

Misinformation in Academic Robes: Intellectual Malpractice Disguised as Scholarship

Response to William Gourlay, "Another war in the Horn of Africa would be disastrous for one of the world's most repressive nations," in *The Conversation*

Ghidewon Abay

Not all propaganda shouts; some whispers in footnotes. When territorial ambition is softened into "concern," and sovereignty is recast as a psychological defect, the danger lies not in ignorance but in the misuse of authority. William Gourlay's article in *The Conversation* presents itself as a warning against war in the Horn of Africa, yet its real function is to legitimize Ethiopian revisionism while pathologizing Eritrean statehood. Explicit claims on Eritrean territory are reframed as understandable anxieties, while Eritrea is reduced to a caricature, "repressive," "hermit-like," and inherently deficient. This is not a balanced analysis; it is a narrative construction under the cover of expertise. The asymmetry is deliberate, not incidental, and it reveals a deeper refusal to treat Eritrea as a normal sovereign state protected by international law. When commentary grants empathy to ambition but suspicion to legality, it does not prevent war; it helps make it thinkable.

Mischaracterization Begins with Basic Facts

The article's intent is revealed

less by what it argues than by how it frames its subject. This is not an attempt to report on a distant or complex conflict; it is an exercise in disparagement. The title: "the world's most repressive nations", betrays that purpose from the outset. By what standard, and according to whose metrics, is Eritrea deemed among the most repressive on earth? The article offers none. No verifiable benchmark, comparative dataset, or rigorous methodology is presented to support such a claim. Instead, the designation reads as a rhetorical flourish, an unearned superlative deployed to provoke rather than to inform. For an author relying on cursory online searches rather than serious research, such shortcuts may pass as analysis. They do not withstand scrutiny.

The framing deteriorates further in the opening paragraph, where Eritrea is casually described as Ethiopia's "diminutive neighbour." This adjective has no relevance to the subject under discussion, nor does it carry any analytical weight. International law does not scale with land area, and geopolitical legitimacy is not measured in square kilometers. More importantly, the description is factually wrong. Eritrea covers approximately 125,000 square kilometers, larger than more than one hundred UN member states worldwide. Within Africa alone, at least seventeen countries are smaller. In Europe, more than a dozen states, including Portugal, Ireland, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, the Baltic states, Albania, and the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, occupy less territory than Eritrea. In Asia, countries such as South Korea, Jordan, Israel, the Gulf states, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, and Taiwan are likewise smaller.

To label Eritrea "diminutive" is therefore not merely careless; it is misleading. One is left to ask whether the author would apply the same descriptor to Switzerland or Israel, or whether the term is reserved for African states deemed convenient to belittle. The answer appears implicit in the article's tone. What masquerades as neutral reporting is, in fact, a narrative shaped by condescension, unsupported assertions, and a

troubling indifference to basic factual accuracy.

This lack of care continues when the article refers to Abiy Ahmed as "Ethiopian President." Ethiopia's president is Taye Atske-Selassie; Abiy Ahmed is the prime minister. Such an elementary error in an academic outlet raises doubts about the rigor applied elsewhere in the piece.

Normalizing Irredentism through Language

Gourlay reports that Abiy Ahmed has described Ethiopia's loss of Red Sea access as a "historical mistake" and an "existential question." These words are not benign metaphors. In parliamentary and public remarks since 2023, Abiy has repeatedly framed access to the Red Sea as inevitable and tied to Ethiopia's survival. Language of inevitability and correction, when applied to a neighbor's sovereign territory, is a classic marker of irredentist thinking.

The article treats such statements as reasonable expressions of economic necessity. International law, however, is unequivocal: economic inconvenience does not confer territorial entitlement. The port of Assab has never been Ethiopian territory. In the nineteenth century, it formed the nucleus of Italian Eritrea, later becoming one of the two principal ports of the Eritrean state federated with Ethiopia in 1950, and it has remained part of an independent Eritrea since 1991. Its legal status was reaffirmed by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission established under the Algiers Agreement, a treaty Ethiopia voluntarily signed and formally accepted. To speak of "regaining" Assab is therefore not an argument grounded in law or history; it is a repudiation of a binding legal settlement and an endorsement of territorial revisionism.

The Fiction of Eritreans' Ignorance

Perhaps the most revealing passage in Gourlay's article is the claim that public responses in Asmara were "muted," followed by the speculation that "few Asmarinos were aware of these developments" because "the media is entirely government-controlled." This is

not evidence-based reporting; it is inference built on ignorance of local realities.

The article's insinuation that Eritreans were somehow "unaware" of Ethiopia's Red Sea rhetoric is not merely incorrect; it is either a symptom of remarkable ignorance or an exercise in intentional disinformation. Eritrea operates daily television, radio, and print media in multiple languages. National radio broadcasts in at least nine Eritrean languages, while newspapers are published regularly in Tigrinya, Tigre, Arabic, and English. Ethiopian statements regarding Red Sea access have been widely reported and discussed across these platforms.

television is ubiquitous, enabling Eritreans to follow Ethiopian, Arab, and international news directly and in real time. The notion that a population embedded in a multilingual, multi-platform media environment was oblivious to rhetoric that dominated regional discourse defies credibility. It reveals far more about the author's failure to observe, listen, or engage meaningfully with Eritrean society than it does about the public's awareness. What is presented as insight is, in reality, projection, substituting the author's own informational blind spots for empirical reality.

Rewriting Eritrea's Security Choices

Continued on page 5

Beyond domestic media, satellite

from Social Media

Yemane G. Meskel @hawelti

Potemkin Party zealots and minions continue to ramp up their wholesale, defamatory, media campaigns against Eritrea by peddling and recycling abject lies (Horn Review; IFA etc.), on its governance architecture and disparaging its economic policy approaches and realities.

Truth is, these incessant campaigns invariably stem from, and are principally pursued, in order to deflect attention from the chronic internal security quagmire that is afflicting the country as well as to camouflage & rationalize the grave threat to regional stability its misguided agenda of "sovereign access to the sea" has engendered.

Indeed, as the figures below illustrate, its economic predicaments remain extremely dire in spite of massive financial injections, and perennial "safety nets and bailouts" by its multilateral and bilateral donors. (Aggregate donor support to Ethiopia in the last three decades amounts to a whopping 84 billion US\$).

The country is also seething under spiraling conflicts and centrifugal forces that stem from deep-rooted governance deficits that the PP has exacerbated.

These are, indeed, the poignant realities that the Potemkin Party should grapple with instead of stoking internal and regional conflicts in pursuit of its costly and elusive pipe-dreams.

~21.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance	~4.5 million Internally Displaced People (IDPs)	• 80% of federally registered businesses became inactive in 2025	• 470,000 businesses disappeared from registry
~12 million children in need of humanitarian assistance	~8.32 million children out of school	• Estimated 4.7 million jobs lost	• Approximately 23.5 million people affected
~9,178 schools damaged or destroyed	~24% of population living below the national poverty line (based on 2015/16 survey)	• National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) recorded losses equivalent to USD 2.6 billion	• NBE incurred 407.1 billion birr in foreign exchange losses
~38.6% of population living below \$3/day poverty line	~68.7% of population are multidimensionally poor 18.4% vulnerable	• National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) recorded losses equivalent to USD 2.6 billion	• NBE's overall operating loss to 428.56 billion birr
		• NBE entered a negative equity position of 380 billion birr	• NBE also reported 57.2 billion birr in losses from gold sales and inventory write-downs

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Scaling Water Security

Bana Negusse

Recent developments in Eritrea's Southern Region offer a compelling snapshot of the country's broader efforts to secure sustainable access to potable water. According to Mr. Kibrom Misgina, head of water development in the region, 41 potable water projects valued at more than 84 million Nakfa were implemented between 2021 and 2025 through close collaboration between the Government and local communities. These initiatives include 258 kW of solar energy systems, 116 water distribution centers, 48 reservoirs, and more than 90 kilometers of water pipelines, collectively benefiting over 100,000 people.

Mr. Kibrom noted that while 60 percent of the project costs were covered by the Government, the remaining share was contributed by local communities – an approach that has strengthened community buy-in, local agency and ownership, and long-term sustainability. He also commended the active participation of members of the Eritrean Defense Forces, highlighted renovation work carried out on more than 200 water schemes, and emphasized ongoing training in water management to ensure durability. Currently, the Southern Region operates 50 potable water projects powered by solar systems, along with others powered by hand pumps and generators.

While these achievements reflect tangible progress at the regional level, they are part of a much larger national effort rooted in the understanding that water lies at the heart of sustainable development.

Water is fundamental to socio-economic growth, energy and food production, healthy ecosystems, and human survival itself. It is also central to climate change adaptation, serving as

the critical link between society and the natural environment. Yet water security remains one of the most pressing global challenges. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, more than two billion



people worldwide still lack access to safely managed drinking water services, including over 100 million who rely on unsafe surface water. At the same time, approximately 3.5 billion people live without safely managed sanitation, with 419 million still practicing open defecation. The WHO estimates that improving access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene could save 1.4 million lives every year, while the FAO and UN-Water report that nearly 10 percent of the global population lives in countries facing high or critical water stress.

These stark realities underscore the urgency of sustainable water management worldwide. They also provide important context for understanding how individual countries, particularly those facing harsh climatic conditions, are responding.

In Eritrea, progress in water development has translated directly into gains in public health, human development, and economic resilience. Expanded access to safe water has reduced the burden of waterborne diseases, improved maternal and child health, and strengthened

hygiene standards in schools and health facilities. At the same time, a more reliable water supply has supported agricultural productivity, livelihoods, and local economic activity, particularly in rural areas. These outcomes

underscore that water investments in Eritrea are not merely infrastructural achievements, but foundational drivers of national development.

Shaped by arid landscapes and recurrent droughts, Eritrea has embarked on a determined and forward-looking water journey, transforming scarcity into an opportunity for resilience, innovation, and inclusive development.

Located within the Sahelian Belt, Eritrea is characterized by predominantly arid and semi-arid conditions, where water scarcity has long constrained development. The country's surface water resources are distributed across five major river basins: Setit, Mereb-Gash, Red Sea Basin, Barka-Ansebas, and Danakil Ba. Together, these basins generate an estimated mean annual runoff of 9,967 million cubic meters. Of this, approximately 932 million cubic meters flows eastward into the Red Sea, 8,613 million cubic meters flows westward, and 422 million cubic meters is retained within inland depressions. Despite this natural endowment, surface water alone cannot reliably meet the needs of a growing population. Groundwater has therefore become Eritrea's most dependable freshwater source, though these reserves face increasing pressure from overextraction, deforestation, inadequate recharge practices, and intensifying climate change impacts.

Recognizing that water security is inseparable from national development, Eritrea established

a comprehensive legal and policy framework to guide water management from the outset. Beginning in 1997 and revised in 2007, the Water Policy, Water Law, Water Sector Institutional Framework, and related Water Sector for Human Development documents are grounded in the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management. Central to this approach is inclusivity, helping to ensure that all population groups and economic sectors participate in the planning, use, and protection of water resources. This framework has provided the foundation for Eritrea's sustained progress in expanding access while building long-term resilience.

The results over the past three decades have been striking. At independence in 1991, only 13 percent of the population had access to clean and safe water. Today, nationwide coverage exceeds 85 percent. Urban access has increased from 30 percent to over 92 percent, while rural coverage has expanded from just 7 percent to nearly 80 percent – a powerful reflection of the



country's commitment to leaving no one behind.

Improved access has also transformed public institutions. More than half of Eritrea's schools now have reliable access to safe water, while health facilities across the country are increasingly equipped to provide dependable services. These gains have contributed to better hygiene, safer childbirth conditions, and measurable reductions in neonatal mortality.

At the heart of this progress lies a sustained expansion of water infrastructure. At independence, Eritrea had only 138 dams and ponds. Today, the number exceeds

800, significantly enhancing water storage capacity and distribution. In recent years, dozens of new structures have been completed and inaugurated, with additional projects currently under planning or development. These achievements reflect a cooperative, government-led approach that brings together communities, national institutions, and international partners. Through this model, Eritrea has mobilized technical expertise, financing, and capacity-building support, enabling the country to scale up sustainable solutions and adapt innovative practices.

Looking ahead, Eritrea remains firmly committed to strengthening efficiency and climate resilience in its water sector. Agriculture, the largest consumer of freshwater, is undergoing a gradual transition from traditional furrow irrigation to modern pressurized systems that reduce waste and improve productivity. Aging pipelines are being replaced to minimize losses and extend services to underserved areas. Equally important is environmental stewardship: investments in reforestation,

watershed management, and ecosystem protection help safeguard the natural systems on which water availability depends.

Water, ultimately, is more than a resource. It is a lifeline and a catalyst for transformation. Eritrea's experience demonstrates that even in resource-constrained and climate-vulnerable settings, meaningful progress is possible through clear vision, strong policy frameworks, community engagement, and sustained investment. By integrating infrastructure development with environmental protection and social inclusion, Eritrea has significantly strengthened its water security.





The Eritrean Red Sea's Underwater Treasure: A Haven to Timeless History and Biodiversity

Mussie Efriem

The Red Sea coast of Eritrea represents a unique intersection of geological and strategic importance, defined by an expansive archipelago formed by a combination of ancient volcanic activity and natural coral growth, ranging from large, bustling hubs to secluded uninhabited islets. This maritime landscape serves as a vital sanctuary for biodiversity, hosting thriving ecosystems both on the surface and within the deep, nutrient-rich waters of the Red Sea. Because of its control over key maritime lanes, this region has historically served as a bridge between Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, making it a pivotal geographic asset for millennia.

Beneath the natural beauty of the coastline lies a profound historical legacy that has accumulated over thousands of years. The area stands as a living testament to the ancient Eritrean inhabitants, whose lives were intricately linked with the rise of early civilizations and the flourishing of global trade. As a primary hub for economic routes through the Red Sea, the coast facilitated the exchange of precious commodities and cultural ideas. This history reveals a society that was not merely adjacent to the sea but deeply integrated with it, developing a maritime identity that influenced its architecture, economy, and social structures. The region is also home to over



connection, extending back thousands of years, is evident in the ancient human traces found along its coast. The depth of this maritime legacy is illustrated at the Abdur Archaeological Site, which is located on the Buri Peninsula, about 60 kilometers southeast of Massawa. It's here that stone tools embedded within ancient reef terraces were unearthed, providing some of the world's earliest evidence of humans using tools and living along a sea coast. The artifacts, which include a sophisticated variety of hand axes, blades, and flakes, date back approximately 125,000 years to the last major warm period between ice ages. The presence of these tools suggests that early Middle Stone Age people had already mastered the art of harvesting marine resources, marking a significant shift in human behavior and survival strategy.

The discoveries along the Eritrean coast offer a unique perspective on humanity's story. By demonstrating that our ancestors successfully

human evolution and the origins of international commerce are etched in its shores and beneath the sea.

Eritrea's coastline stretches over 1,200 kilometers and has historically served as a vital link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. This strategic position turned the Red Sea into



one of the world's most significant waterways for global commerce. A primary testament to this ancient history is the legendary port city of Adulis, located just 56 kilometers southeast of Massawa. As a flourishing center of trade, Adulis linked the societies of the Horn of Africa with the Roman and Greek empires to the west, as well as the markets of India and China to the east. Although its prominence faded around the 7th century AD, the city's ruins, both on land and submerged, remain an insightful testament to Eritrea's early integration into the global economy.

to an advanced civilization that thrived in a challenging maritime environment. Evidence of their ingenuity is still visible today in the form of 365 ancient cisterns and wells dug into the coral ground designed to sustain its population as well as the expansive residents of Dahlak Kebir. The architectural remnants and submerged ruins found throughout the archipelago suggest a society that was deeply connected to the sea, highlighting the immense, untapped potential of Eritrea's underwater cultural heritage.

The importance of these waters was also further amplified in the modern era, particularly after the opening of the Suez Canal. During World War II, the Massawa Channel and the Dahlak Islands became a

Resting in the Dahlak Islands, this 130-meter-long vessel has been reclaimed by vibrant marine life. Its mast sits only 5 meters below the surface, making it accessible even to amateur divers, while its hull descends to 40 meters. Recent explorations have continued to expand the inventory. For example, a 2019 joint survey discovered the Prometio. This well-preserved wreck, 120 meters long, lies at a depth of 37 meters. Lack of visible blast damage suggests it was also a victim of deliberate scuttling, adding another chapter to the story of wartime maritime strategy.

The chronicle of Eritrea's submerged history persisted right through its war for independence as demonstrated by what happened during the "Fenkil Operation" that was launched by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) in February 1990, resulting in the liberation of the port city of Massawa. When the Derg army faced imminent defeat and a complete rout near Massawa and along the northern coast, it deliberately scuttled a vast array of military hardware in the deep Nakura channel so that it would not be captured and used by the advancing EPLF fighters. The act of scuttling by the Derg army has, albeit inadvertently, given birth to a rather unique underwater museum of war history. The mass disposal has created a surreal underwater graveyard of T-55 tanks, armored vehicles, and naval ships such as Nebelbal and Ras Dejen.

Moving further south to Black Assarca Island, the history goes even further back. A 5th-to-7th-century shipwreck discovered there in 1995 revealed a cargo of ancient amphorae ceramic jugs commonly used to transport wine and oils alongside glass shards and lead weights. Together, all the sites across the Eritrean coast offer an unbroken chain of human history, from ancient merchant vessels to the remnants of modern conflict.

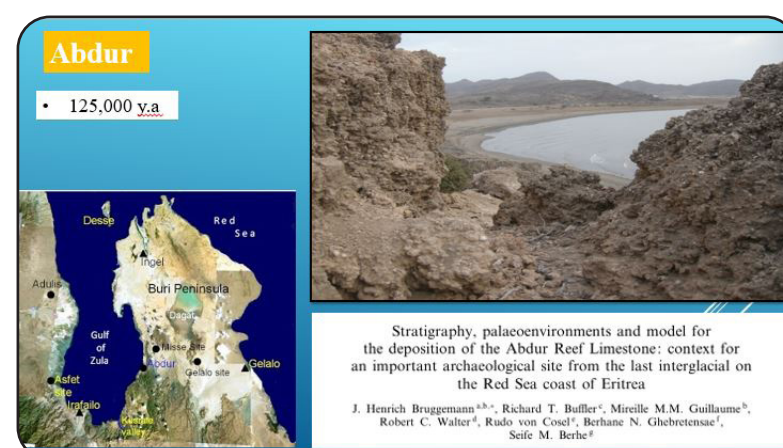


1,200 fish species, more than 340 hard coral species, and threatened marine life, including sea turtles and dugongs.

Eritrea's ancient historical link with the sea is underscored by its ancient name "ግድረ ባሕሪ" (Mdre Bahri), meaning "Land of the Sea," and the title of its rulers, "ባሕሪ ነገሥ" (Bahri Negash), meaning "King of the Sea." This enduring

adapted to coastal environments over 100,000 years ago, sites like Abdur can provide critical clues about the "Out of Africa" migration theory. The region where Eritrea's coast lies was likely a corridor for early humans as they moved across continents, using the rich resources of the Red Sea to sustain their journey. Thus, the Eritrean coast remains a site of immense global heritage, where the roots of

Following the decline of Adulis and the rise of Islam, the focus of commerce shifted to the Dahlak Archipelago, which became a hub. The rise and spread of Islam in East Africa from the 8th to the 15th century A.D., and the remains of the Kufic-inscribed rock tombs and coral-cut masonry buildings, are living testimony to the historically rich Dahlak Islands. The group of islands gave rise



Misinformation in Academic Robes . . .

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Gourlay further claims that after the 1998 border war, President Isaias Afwerki “reinstated compulsory military service”. This is factually incorrect. Eritrea’s National Service was introduced in the summer of 1994 and codified in Proclamation No. 82/1995, well before the 1998–2000 war. What changed after 1998 was not the existence of national service but its extension in response to renewed hostilities and Ethiopia’s refusal to implement the boundary ruling. One would expect a serious “scholar” to tell the difference.

More fundamentally, the article reduces Eritrea’s political trajectory to an inward-looking tale of authoritarian impulse, as though it unfolded in a vacuum. This framing is not merely incomplete; it is analytically indefensible. It ignores a decisive external reality: for nearly two decades, Ethiopia refused to implement the Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission ruling, maintaining a deliberate “no-war, no-peace” posture while continuing to occupy sovereign Eritrean territory in open violation of international law. To abstract Eritrea’s security policies from this context is to erase cause and elevate consequence. Under conditions of unresolved borders, sustained military threat, and legal noncompliance by a thorny neighbor, securitization is not aberrant; it is the predictable response of any state intent on survival. What distinguishes Eritrea is not exceptional repression, but the persistence with which its legal rights were denied while its reactions were selectively pathologized.

Selective History and Exotic Fillers

While Gourlay correctly notes Eritrea’s forced federation with Ethiopia in 1952 and annexation in 1962, he omits the crucial implication: Eritrea’s independence completed a decolonization process interrupted by a UN-sanctioned injustice, rather than constituting secession from a legitimate sovereign. This legal lineage is essential to understanding Eritrean political culture, yet it is quickly displaced by psychologized explanations borrowed almost entirely from Michela Wrong’s partly tabloid and apocryphal book “I Didn’t Do It for You”, a work that is neither archival nor scholarly.

The same lack of seriousness surfaces in the article’s references to “highland camel markets” and

a “visible military presence across the country.” Camels are central to Eritrea’s lowland pastoral economies; they are not features of the central highland plateau around Asmara, Dekemhare, or Mendefera. At most, the author may have glimpsed a camel caravan passing through the highlands—hardly unusual in a country with integrated trade routes, but that is categorically different from a camel market. “Highland camel markets” do not exist in the highlands. The phrase is pure invention.

Such a claim betrays either a fundamental misunderstanding of Eritrea’s geography and economic life or a willingness to manufacture exotic imagery for narrative effect. In either case, it underscores the article’s broader problem: observation mistaken for knowledge, impression elevated to analysis, and fiction smuggled in under the guise of reportage. These descriptions function as orientalist color rather than verifiable observation.

Likewise, his statement “there is a visible military presence across the country” is simply false. Eritrea’s defense forces are largely invisible in the cities. Visitors in Asmara, Massawa, Keren, or Barentu rarely encounter armed soldiers or police. There are no military checkpoints in cities, and police are typically unarmed. Seeing individuals in fatigues (common among civil service trainees) is not evidence of a “military presence.”

The Danger of the Closing Frame
The article closes with the claim that Eritrea is “ill-equipped to respond” to another war and that its people would suffer most. This final move is not merely careless; it is the most revealing and irresponsible passage in the entire piece. It sidesteps the only question that matters, who is making territorial claims, and on what legal basis, and replaces it with speculation about Eritrea’s presumed weakness. In doing so, it accomplishes three things at once: it normalizes Ethiopian irredentism, preemptively assigns blame to Eritrea for a conflict it has neither sought nor threatened, and signals to Addis Ababa that escalation will be met with moralizing commentary rather than legal accountability or strategic consequence.

What this framing betrays is a profound ignorance of Eritrean history, society, and military reality. Eritrea has no interest in war. War is not abstract in Eritrea; it is a lived memory. It consumes people, families, and futures. Eritreans understand the cost of war more intimately than most,

and for that very reason, the loss of even a single Eritrean life is regarded as one too many. Eritrea does not view its children as expendable, as cannon fodder, or as mine sweepers for geopolitical fantasy. This is not rhetoric; it is a principle forged through decades of sacrifice and struggle.

At the same time, restraint should not be mistaken for incapacity. Eritrea does not flaunt its military capabilities, nor does it traffic in theatrical displays of force. But it is more than capable of defending its territory, as history has repeatedly demonstrated. To suggest otherwise is to confuse quiet determination with weakness, a mistake that has been made before, always at great cost to those who made it.

If the author were genuinely concerned with preventing war, he would interrogate the ambitions of the party making territorial demands rather than speculate about the vulnerability of the party defending its internationally recognized borders. By fixating on Eritrea’s supposed fragility, the article reveals its true posture: not analysis, but projection. Those eager to lecture Eritrea about preparedness would do better to reflect on the consequences of throwing stones while standing in a glass house.

Eritrea is not a humanitarian experiment, a Western disappointment, or a cautionary tale. It is a sovereign state with internationally recognized borders, affirmed by treaty and arbitration. The real question raised by Gourlay’s article is not whether Eritrea is repressive or resilient, but why African borders are treated as inviolable everywhere except when Ethiopian ambitions are involved.

Until commentators confront that double standard, such articles will continue to function not as warnings against war, but as soft enablers of it.

Intellectual Malpractice Disguised as Scholarship

The Conversation claims to occupy a higher ground in public discourse, assuring readers that its articles are written by university scholars with “deep expertise,” that they do not oversimplify complex issues, and that they serve democracy by elevating informed voices. William Gourlay’s article makes a mockery of those claims.

What is presented as scholarly analysis is, in reality, an exercise in intellectual negligence. The piece is not merely weak; it is fundamentally unserious. It displays the hallmarks of shallow

sophomoric commentary, careless with facts, indifferent to history, and oblivious to legal context, while trading on the authority of an academic affiliation it does not merit.

The article betrays no sustained engagement with Eritrea’s history, languages, legal foundations, or political evolution. Instead, it relies on anecdotes, recycled clichés, and voyeuristic “on-the-ground” impressions that substitute for observation. Errors that should have been caught in the most basic editorial review, misidentifying political offices, mangling timelines, misrepresenting institutions, and exoticizing everyday life, are allowed to stand. This is not rigorous scholarship; it is malpractice.

Even more troubling is the article’s ideological posture. Ethiopian territorial claims are laundered as reasonable anxieties, while Eritrean sovereignty is treated as an aberration to be explained away. Aggressive rhetoric is normalized; legal facts are marginalized. The result is not analysis but narrative alignment, an alignment that echoes decades-old propaganda frameworks hostile to Eritrea, now repackaged in the language of concern and

humanitarian alarm.

If this is what The Conversation now considers “expert knowledge,” then its claim to enrich democratic debate collapses under its own weight. Democracy is not strengthened by misinformation wearing academic robes, nor by commentary that flatters power while caricaturing those who insist on the rule of law.

This article does not merely fail Eritrea; it fails scholarship itself. And by publishing it under the banner of academic authority, The Conversation compromises its credibility and insults the very scholars it purports to represent.

In the end, this article does not merely misrepresent Eritrea; it exposes a deeper failure of intellectual responsibility. What is passed off as “expert analysis” is little more than ideological storytelling fortified by academic branding. By publishing a piece so riddled with factual errors, historical illiteracy, and legal amnesia, The Conversation abandons its own professed standards and invites readers to mistake prejudice for insight. This is not scholarship in the service of democracy; it is the corrosion of scholarship itself. When advocacy is laundered through the language of expertise, truth becomes collateral damage, and that is precisely what has occurred here.

NEWS

POTABLE WATER PROJECT IN GUAKAT

A potable water project implemented by the Adi-Halo Project in the Guakat administrative area of Dekemhare Sub-Zone was inaugurated on 20 January.

The project includes three water distribution centers, a water container with a capacity of over 130 barrels, and a 6 km pipeline.

Noting the problem residents had been facing in fetching water, Mr. Yemane Abera, Administrator of the Sub-Zone, said that residents can now access a potable water supply from their backyards. He also called for the judicious use of the project to

ensure its sustainability.

Mr. Shishai Tesfay, Head of Water Pipeline Installation at the Adi-Halo Project, called for proper water management and regular follow-up.

Indicating that residents of Guakat had been compelled to travel long distances to fetch water, it was stated that they have now become beneficiaries of a potable water supply from their backyards.

The residents, on their part, commended the opportunity provided and expressed readiness to conduct regular follow-up of the project to ensure its continuity.





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

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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Bisha Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following position for Bisha site project:

Position: HR Supervisor - Employee Relations
Department: Employee Services
Section: Human Resources (HR)
Number of Positions: One (01)

Primary Purpose

- Supervise and administer all employee related issues, disciplinary matters, wellbeing activities, case management, HR documentation, and compliance activities, ensuring accurate reporting and adherence to company policies and Eritrean Labour Laws.

Main Functions

- Administration of HR Processes and Reports
- Coordinate employee wellbeing activities in collaboration with relevant departments
- Manage Disciplinary Matters, Grievances, Employee Cases, and Legal Compliance Tasks
 - Disciplinary & Grievance Management
 - Employee Case Management
 - Sick Leave Management
 - Separation Management
 - Labour Court Case Management
- Ensure HR documentation and processes meet audit and legal standards.
- Data Analytics & Reporting

TASK DESCRIPTION EXPANDED TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREAS

Administration of HR Processes and Reports

- Ensure all Employee Relations activities are captured in relevant systems.
- Prepare and submit month-end HR reports, IRC reports, and Board notes.
- Monitor compliance with HR policies, procedures, and statutory requirements.
- Maintain accurate filing of HR documentation in line with audit requirements.
- Conduct reports and analysis of exit interviews; escalate issues of concern.
- Prepare discipline reports (daily), turnover analysis (monthly), employee case reports (weekly), and labour court status reports.

Coordinate Employee Wellbeing related activities in liaison with various departments

- Assist in planning and execution of company sports activities and social events.
- Facilitate projects and activities aimed at improving employee morale.
- Coordinate annual employee morale survey.
- Organize and manage sports activities in collaboration with various departments.

Managing Disciplinary Matters, Grievances, Employee Cases & Legal Compliance

A. Disciplinary & Grievance Management

- Arrange disciplinary hearings, including venue, participants, translators, and custody of evidence.
- Investigate grievances, misconduct, and workplace complaints with fairness and confidentiality.
- Ensure all necessary documents are available and participate in disciplinary hearings.
- Provide guidance to line management and employees on disciplinary policies and procedures.
- Ensure grievances and complaints are handled in compliance with the grievance policy and Eritrean labour law (legal standards).
- Document hearing proceedings by taking accurate minutes.
- Ensure disciplinary measures align with company policies and procedures.

- Draft responses to court orders and represent the company in court when required.

B. Employee Case Management

- Routinely monitor and diligently follow up all employee cases.
- Ensure timely and appropriate resolution of each case.
- Maintain open, clear, and empathetic communication with employees, providing updates and guidance while ensuring confidentiality.
- Collaborate with managers and supervisors to ensure consistent application of policy in case management.
- Record all interactions, progress, and outcomes in the case tracker.

C. Sick Leave Management

- Oversee the entire sick-leave process from documentation to return-to-work protocols.
- Ensure compliance with sick-leave policies and entitlements.
- Adhere to Eritrean labour laws relating to sick leave.
- Provide guidance to employees and managers on sick-leave procedures and legal obligations.
- Follow up all employee insurance claims.

D. Separation Management

- Facilitate a smooth, respectful, and legally compliant separation process.
- Analyze exit interview feedback to identify improvement opportunities.
- Oversee accuracy and timely processing of severance pay, accrued leave payouts, and Certificates of Service in line with policy and Eritrean labour law.

E. Labour Court Case Management

- Follow up court case status and hearing schedules.
- Maintain detailed records of communications, filings, and court decisions.
- Ensure full compliance with court orders and rulings.

Ensure HR Documentation and Processes Meet Audit and Legal Standards

- Ensure all HR documentation is accurate, complete, and properly filed, meeting legislative (Eritrean labour law) and internal audit requirements, with periodic self-audits to verify compliance.
- Verify employment contracts before final approval by the HR Manager.
- Ensure clearance forms and certificates of service are completed prior to final sign-off.
- Monitor compliance with severance pay policy and termination procedures.

Data Analytics & Reporting

- Maintain accurate records of employee relations cases.
- Analyze data to identify patterns in grievances, turnover, or engagement.
- Provide regular reports to HR leadership for decision-making.

Unique requirements / other information

- Ability to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information professionally.
- Carry out any other lawful duties or instructions as requested by the line manager.

Knowledge, Experience and Skills

Qualifications:

- Degree or Diploma in Business Management, Public Administration, Human Resources Management, or Law.
- Strong understanding of employment law, compliance, and HR best practices.
- Education or experience in labor law and legal compliance is highly desirable.
- Prior HR experience, ideally in employee relations or labor relations.

Knowledge and Experience:

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ASMARA MINING SHARE COMPANY
Abo Street, No. 178, House No. 16
Gejeret, P.O. Box 10688
Tel. ++291-1-153986
Asmara, Eritrea

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Asmara Mining Share Company is inviting applicants for the following position.

FEL Operator
Number required – (06)
Type of contract – Indefinite

Major Duties and responsibilities

- Operate specific machines (following safety procedures) to ensure daily objectives are achieved, check that machines are all in working order.

TASK DESCRIPTION EXPANDED TO CORE PERFORMANCE AREA

Planning

- Attend “Toolbox Meetings” every morning and then plan the day’s activities depending on priorities.

Implementation

- Operate the Front-End Loader efficiently, completing specific tasks, as requested by supervisor.
- Follow all mine environment, safety and health procedures.
- Follow equipment operating procedures to ensure correct use thereof. (Pre-start checks; safe driving).
- Report any problems with the equipment to supervisor and maintenance.
- Practice good housekeeping of the machines, both inside the cab and outside.
- Be willing to operate other machines if authorized and certified to, as and when requested.
- Follow Mine road safety rules

Reporting

- Report on the progress of jobs to supervisors.

Profile: Qualifications and Experience

Formal Education, Certifications or Equivalents	- Grade 10 -12 - Driver’s license /Certificate for FEL operation
Working Experience – Nature & Length	3- 5 years relevant experience (mine; civil; road works)
Technical Skills	- Driving skills - Attention to detail - Fit and healthy - Problem solving skill
Behavioral Skills	- Communication (local language) - Team player - Timekeeping - Prioritizing skills & multi-skilling - Ability to work towards strict deadlines - High level of accuracy - Understand and follow instructions - Self-motivation

General Information and other requirements:

- Place of Work:** AMSC Sites
- Type of contract:** Indefinite Period
- Salary:** As per the Company salary scale

Additional requirements for Nationals:

- Having fulfilled his/her National Service obligation and provide 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 would be considered a3s potential candidates for an interview.
- Application documents will not be returned to the sender.
- All applications should be sent through the post office.
- Deadline for application: 7 days from the day of publication in the Newspaper.

Address: Please mail your applications to:

Asmara Mining Share Company,
P. O. Box 10688 Asmara, Eritrea

Applicants shall be required to send a copy to:

Mineral Resources Management
P.O. Box – 272

Asmara

Note to Eritrean applicants:

Please send a copy of your application to
Aliens Employment Permit Affairs,
P. O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea

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- 3 - 5 Years of experience in personal administration handling employee-related issues; experience in the mining industry is an advantage.
- Knowledge and understanding of the Eritrean Labour Proclamation and related employment laws.
- Experience with disciplinary hearings, grievances, court appearances, and drafting legal responses.
- Experience in HR reporting, compliance processes, and employee case management.

Technical Skills	Behavioral Skills
- Computer Literacy (MS Office – Intermediate) - Attention to detail - Report writing skill - Knowledge of HR Policies, Procedures and Processes - Manage audit requirements - Labour Legislation knowledge - Business Communication skills - Financial acumen - Administrative skill - Presentation skill	- Strong communication skills (English and Local language) - Assertiveness - Interpersonal Relations - Ability to meet deadlines - Accuracy - Confidentiality - Integrity/Business Ethic - Ability to work under pressure - Strategic Thinking - Problem Solver

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
Aliens Employment permits
P. O. Box 7940 Asmara, Eritrea



Haile Weldemicheal's unfinished painting

Kidane Shimendi

Mr. Haile, could you begin by introducing yourself?

I was born in Asmara in 1953 and completed my high school education at Kadamawi Haile Selassie Secondary School—today's Red Sea Secondary

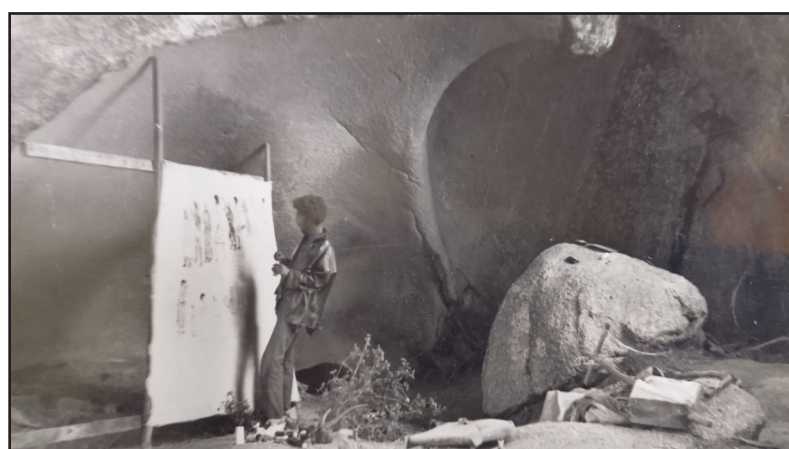


Haile Berhe during a painting in the armed struggle

School. Although I didn't make the high school matriculation exam, I performed well in French, which allowed me to join the French College in Addis Ababa in 1972. By 1975, the political situation in Eritrea had deteriorated, prompting several friends and me to leave our studies and join the armed struggle.

How did you discover your passion for painting?

My older brother, Berhane Berhe, greatly influenced me. He would bring magazines and newspapers and ask me to draw portraits of famous football players and film celebrities, such as Pelé,



Haile Berhe during a painting in a cave

A Kalashnikov in One Hand and a Paintbrush in the Other: An Interview with Artist and Freedom Fighter Haile Berhe

Haile Berhe is a former freedom fighter and a renowned painter who currently serves as the Head of Public Relations at the National Museum of Eritrea. The national paintings, drawings, and artistic works created during the armed struggle remain vivid in his memory, with many now displayed in the museum. Eritrea Profile invited him to share the significant history of art during the liberation struggle.

Eusebio, Giuliano Gemma, Liz Taylor, Aretha Franklin, and James Brown. I also learned calligraphy from my father, who was an artistic writer. These skills led me to work with Asmerom Adhanom, a well-known painter at the time. Together, we prepared advertising materials for the Asmara Advertising Agency,

none of my comrades knew about my artistic skills. Then, while stationed near Massawa, I found oil and watercolors in abandoned enemy trenches. Using these, I decorated our unit's underground trench with paintings and slogans. Everyone was surprised and applauded my work.

After the strategic withdrawal in 1979, cultural troupes were established in the brigades. I was selected to create background paintings for Brigade 70's cultural troupe. For materials, I used canvas from flour sacks and made paints from soil, expired pills, exposed batteries, Aloe vera, tamarind, stramonium, and fig.

In 1982, during the Red Star Campaign, I was seriously injured in one leg and hospitalized for over a year. Due to this injury, I was reassigned in 1983 to the Front's Art Center in Arag, where I worked as both a painter and archivist until independence.

The Art Center was established in 1975 with the slogan "From the Masses to the Masses." It grew steadily in workforce and resources. We organized art seminars and short courses and produced paintings, slogans, handicrafts, and designs. We also held art contests—one in 1987 was judged by artists from Sudan—and displayed works at Eritrean festivals abroad. Materials like oil and watercolors were mainly donated, but in times of scarcity, we relied on our own resourcefulness. By independence, I had recorded around 350 paintings, among other works.

The Center had about fifty painters. I remember Abeba Weldelibanos, Aynalem Estifanos, Yosief Gebremeskel, Berhane Abreha, Berhane Kidane, Yakob Asmerom, Haile Gebremicheal, Kubrom Garza, Haile Weldemicheal, Ghirmay Gebreleul, Tesfaldet Haile, Gebreab Tekle, Tsegereda Yohannes, Elsa Yakob, Amanuel Afewerki, Mussie Asgedom,



Tirhas Eyasu, and others. Women's participation in painting and other art forms was particularly impressive.

What are the stories behind the unfinished paintings displayed in the museum?

Among the works on display, there are two unfinished paintings—one by Haile Weldemicheal and another by Ghirmay Gebreleul, both now martyrs. Haile was painting a portrait of his wife, and Ghirmay was depicting women washing the clothes of wounded freedom fighters. Both artists sacrificed their lives in battle before completing their works. To some, these may appear unfinished, but



Ghirmay Gebreleul's unfinished painting

their sacrifice for liberation has, in a deeper sense, completed these paintings through their stories.

What themes did the paintings reflect?

Our paintings were realist in style, focusing on Eritrean history, colonial atrocities, national unity, the beauty of our diversity, daily life in the struggle, and other themes reflecting our national identity. They serve as historical documents and a valuable

heritage.

How would you explain the role of art in the armed struggle?

Art was a powerful weapon. Through it, we conveyed crucial messages to raise political awareness, organize, and equip the masses. It was like holding a Kalashnikov in one hand and a paintbrush in the other. Art played a profoundly significant role.

What does painting mean to you personally?

Painting is a source of endless joy for me—something so profound in my soul that I cannot imagine life without it. Whenever I see these works, I am overwhelmed with a sense of life's eternal beauty.

How do you view today's modern paintings?

Today's modern paintings are admirable, showcasing impressive knowledge and variety. However, I worry about the overuse of computerized work, which can undermine originality and creativity. I would encourage young artists to focus on original art free from excessive digital

interference.

Do you have any final thoughts?

I recommend that the public visit the National Museum to see these artworks and other historical and cultural displays. It is an opportunity to gain knowledge, deepen awareness, and help preserve our national heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Haile, for your time. We wish you continued success in your work.