

5–7 August 2022
Brussels, Belgium

Communiqué

Eritrea Symposium 2022-II ***Catalysing Homegrown Transition to Constitutional Governance***

Eritrea Symposium 2022-II, convened by Eri-Platform (EP) in Brussels, Belgium, during 5–7 August 2022, concluded with the following communiqué.

Concept

Thirty-one (31) years after a hard-won independence, the pursuit of a better life of freedom, justice, and prosperity remain elusive to the people of Eritrea. With all political power concentrated in the hands of a single authoritarian leader, citizens have no constitutional rights while affairs of state and government business are conducted in an arbitrary manner, with no semblance of rationality, transparency, or accountability. There prevails an acute shortage of basic necessities and essential public goods and services in the country where fear, induced by severe repression, reigns supreme among the people. As a result, the need for change is palpable. Most Eritreans living inside and outside the country agree on the urgent need for change.

Constitutional governance in Eritrea is both urgently needed and inevitable. To ensure a stable transition, however, it must be *home-grown*, initiated and executed under Eritrean ownership, decision, and policy, *free from external interference*. In this regard, pro-democracy Eritreans have a moral responsibility to work to speed up the process of transition.

Eri-Platform has, for the past five years, worked to find common ground for joint action based on a shared vision among Eritrean prodemocracy activists in the Diaspora, centred on the vital interests of the Eritrean people and the State of Eritrea. It has facilitated a series of symposiums designed to bring together activist groups and individuals to engage in a constructive national dialogue, proffer proposals, pool resources, and cooperate in support of a stable transition. *Eritrea Symposium 2022-II (ES2022-II)*, convened under the theme of *Catalysing Homegrown Transition to Constitutional Governance*, is a continuation of that effort.

Objectives and Themes

ES2022-II has sought to achieve three principal objectives:

1. Build on the achievements of past symposiums to enhance coalescence and strengthen collaboration among pro-democracy Diaspora activist groups and individuals in (i) the defence of the national interest of the people and State of Eritrea; (ii) support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Eritrea; and (iii) pursuit of constitutional governance.
2. Provide for an informed discussion of the current situation in Eritrea and propose pragmatic plans for joint action based on a shared vision.
3. Provide a forum for networking and cooperation among pro-democracy Eritrean activists.

ES2022-II focused on the following thematic panels:

- 1) *The Main Challenges to Constitutional Governance in Eritrea.*
- 2) *The State of Play in the Eritrean Diaspora.*
- 3) *Economics of Transition and Sustainable Development.*
- 4) *Coalescence to Help Crystallise Home-Grown Transition to Constitutional Governance.*

Outcome

After extensive debates and deliberations, Symposium participants agreed to:

1. Establish an *Eritrean Sovereignty Bloc (ESB)*, composed of a broad coalition of diverse activist groups and individuals, to help crystallise constitutional governance and challenge all external interference and threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Eritrea.
2. Support the Eritrea people's aspirations to exercise their right to freely choose their government.
3. Continue to nurture unity of purpose and solidarity to strengthen the agency of the Eritrean people to crystallise a stable autonomous transition to constitutional governance.

4. Call on Eritreans who seek to change the authoritarian regime through the interference of hostile external forces to reassess their dangerous stance and work, instead, to strengthen the agency of the Eritrean people in the vital interest of the people and the State of Eritrea.
5. Urge Eritreans who turn a blind eye to the suffering of the Eritrean people and lend uncritical support to the dictatorial regime to reconsider their position and join the struggle for justice and constitutional governance in the higher interest of the Eritrean people and the State of Eritrea.
6. Appeal to the '*silent majority*' to join ranks with the struggle for justice and constitutional governance rather than remain passive spectators on an issue of decisive importance to the security of the Eritrean people and the political wellbeing of the Eritrean State.
7. Set up a Coordinating Committee of five (5) members to follow up the implementation of this agreement until the next symposium or conference.

For more information, please visit www.eri-platform.org.