

Frankfurt, Germany  
19 February 2023

**Communiqué**  
*Eritrea Symposium 2023*  
**Safeguarding Eritrea’s Security and Sovereignty**

*Eritrea Symposium 2023* convened under the theme of the “*security and wellbeing of the Eritrean people to lead a fulfilling life in freedom, peace, and prosperity*” by Eri-Platform (EP) in Frankfurt, Germany, during 17-19 February 2023, concluded with the following communiqué.

**Concept**

For over sixty years, the Eritrean people have endured a protracted war of national liberation, harsh domestic oppression, and expansionist external aggression. Following the triumph of the armed struggle and five years of independence, the double jeopardy of domestic oppression and external aggression have deprived the Eritrean people of basic human security and degraded their human condition. A malevolent autocrat who has usurped power and imposed a brutal dictatorship runs the affairs of state, the business of government and public finance in an arbitrary manner, without any semblance of rationality, transparency, or accountability. The autocratic regime has squandered national resources, regressed the country, impoverished the people, and pushed the youth into mass exodus.

The regression of the country, the impoverishment of the people and the mass exodus of the youth compromise the nation’s future. Indeed, the deprivation of *security and wellbeing of the Eritrean people to lead a fulfilling life in freedom, peace, and prosperity* poses an existential threat to the security and sovereignty of the State of Eritrea. We recognise that national security and human security are integral to the security of the State which constitutes safeguarding:

1. The *physical safety of the State and the people from aggression or the threat of aggression*; and
2. The human security of the people from *repression, hunger, disease, and disruption of daily life*.

Safeguarding the *physical safety of the State and the people* and the *human security of the people* requires the prudent pursuit of complementary political, economic, military, and diplomatic action. More specifically, it requires:

1. Building a stable social order based on the rule of law through the establishment of constitutional governance that guarantees the fundamental freedoms and rights of the people;
2. Opening the economic space and managing the nation’s natural and human resources to develop the economy and create employment, produce wealth, and generate prosperity;
3. Sustaining a credible defence capability via professionalising the Eritrean Defence Forces, modernising its equipment and command-and-control structures, enabling a normally growing population, and applying national service in line with the provisions of *Proclamation 82/1995*; and
4. Deploying proactive diplomacy to advance the security of the people and the State of Eritrea.

In this context, the policies and practices of the government have jeopardised the human security of the Eritrean people and the security and sovereignty of the State of Eritrea. The establishment of constitutional governance has become a matter of national and human security, an existential necessity for a prosperous and sovereign State of Eritrea. There is thus a paramount need to crystallise an Eritrean-owned stable transition to *constitutional governance*.

Eri-Platform has, for the past six years, worked to find common ground for joint action based on a shared vision among Eritrean activists in the Diaspora, centred on the vital interests of the people and State of Eritrea. It has facilitated successive symposiums bringing together activist groups and individuals to engage in a constructive national dialogue, proffer appropriate proposals, pool resources, and collaborate in support of a stable transition. *Eritrea Symposium 2023 (ES2023)*,

convened under the theme of *Safeguarding Eritrea's Security and Sovereignty*, is a continuation of that effort.

## **Objectives and Themes**

*Eritrea Symposium 2023* has sought to achieve three principal objectives:

1. Facilitate an informed discussion on the meaning and elements of *national and human security* in Eritrea and propose plans for joint action based on a shared vision to help safeguard them.
2. Build on the *acquis* of past symposiums to enhance coalescence and collaboration among activist groups and individuals in (i) defence of the security and sovereignty of the people and State of Eritrea; and (ii) pursuit of constitutional governance to establish the rule of law in Eritrea and safeguard the fundamental freedoms and rights of the Eritrean people.
3. Provide a forum for networking and enhanced cooperation among pro-democracy Eritrean Diaspora activists in pursuit of a stable transition to constitutional governance.

*Eritrea Symposium 2023* focused on the following thematic panels:

*Panel 1: Factors of National Security of the State of Eritrea*

*Panel 2: A Path to Durable Peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia*

*Panel 3: Catalysing Home-Grown Transition to Constitutional Governance*

*Panel 4: General Question & Answer Session*

*Panel 5: Coalescence in Defence of National Security*

## **Outcome**

After extensive discussions and deliberations, Symposium participants agreed to:

1. Strengthen the *Eritrean Sovereignty Bloc (ESB)*, a broad coalition of diverse activist groups and individuals in the Diaspora, to help crystallise constitutional governance and safeguard the security and sovereignty of the people and State of Eritrea.
2. Advocate for the Eritrean people's fundamental freedoms and rights and human security.
3. Nurture unity of purpose and solidarity among pro-democracy groups, elements, and individuals to strengthen the agency of the Eritrean people to crystallise a stable transition to constitutional governance.
4. Advocate for the physical demarcation of the Eritrea-Ethiopia boundary in accordance with the *colonial treaties* and in line with the *Demarcation Directions* of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC).
5. Call on all patriotic Eritreans at home and in the Diaspora to coalesce and work together to contribute to a stable transition to constitutional governance.
6. Urge Eritreans who seek or advocate for change through the interference of external forces to reassess their imprudent stance and work, instead, to strengthen the agency of the Eritrean people for autonomous change.
7. Urge Eritreans who continue to lend uncritical support to the 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.
8. Appeal to the '*silent majority*' who remain passive spectators on an issue of crucial importance to the security and sovereignty of the people and the State of Eritrea to, instead, shoulder their responsibility of citizenship to join ranks with the struggle for justice and constitutional governance.
9. Strengthen the Coordinating Committee of the Eritrean Sovereignty Bloc to follow up the implementation of this agreement.

For more information, please visit [www.eri-platform.org](http://www.eri-platform.org).