

20 June 2023

## **Eternal Glory to Our Martyrs!**

Martyrs' Day 20 June 2023 is a solemn occasion which we commemorate, with deep reflection and great pride, our heroic martyrs who sacrificed their precious lives so that Eritrea would be independent to rise and thrive and that the Eritrean people would be free to live in dignity, justice and prosperity.

Our heroic martyrs brought about sovereign independence and safeguarded territorial integrity through their sacrifices. With their crimson red blood, they inscribed the modern history of Eritrea. As such, 20 June is a special day that every patriotic Eritrean at home and abroad commemorates with reverence for the heroic martyrs who made the ultimate sacrifice to make Eritrea independent and the Eritrean people free.

As the conclusion of the Dergue's biggest, vastest and longest 6<sup>th</sup> Offensive (all out Red Star Campaign) that the Eritrean People's Liberation Army (EPLA) foiled triumphantly at the cost of the greatest number of martyrs, 20 June 1982 marks a special symbolic significance in the annals of the Eritrean people's armed struggle. The Eritrean people waged an epic struggle for national liberation that has few parallels in modern history and achieved national independence through the sacrifices of tens of thousands of their finest sons and daughters. Independence rid Eritrea of colonial rule and enabled it to take its rightful place among the community of free nations.

National independence, however, was not the ultimate objective of the struggle for which our martyrs gave their lives. Beyond independence, the struggle aimed to bring about fundamental socioeconomic transformation and build a new democratic society with freedom, justice and prosperity for all. In brief, the primary objective of our struggle was to enable the Eritrean people to own and fully enjoy their political, economic, social, cultural and human rights in independence. Post-independence, however, betrayal aborted the process. The concentration of absolute power created absolute dictatorship; imposed a state of suppression and predation without any legal constraints or institutional checks; drove mass exodus; regressed the country; and immersed the people in the misery of extreme poverty.

Today, the international geopolitical, trade and financial system established following the end of the Second World War seems set on a course of irreversible change. At this critical juncture with all its volatility and challenges, most countries are actively striving to promote national development and raise the standard of living of their peoples primarily through mobilising their domestic resources, building their human capital and fostering international cooperation in infrastructure, trade, investment, health, education, science, technology, human security, renewable energy, green economy, blue economy, etc.

What about Eritrea? The regime has pursued domestic and foreign policies that glorify and aggrandise the tin-pot dictator, drag Eritrea backwards and harm rather than benefit the people and the country. Having betrayed the noble aspirations for freedom, rule of law, justice and prosperity in whose pursuit our martyrs sacrificed their lives, it feigns annual commemorations

of their sacrifice to prolong its rule. All the while, its oppressive and predatory policies and practices have caused the mass exodus of the youth, the demise of the national economy, the impoverishment of the people, and the overall regression of the country by all measures. Safeguarding Eritrea's durable security and sovereignty requires the establishment of an accountable and transparent constitutional governance that protects the people's fundamental freedoms and rights; revitalises the national economy; provides the basic necessities of livelihood; and promotes human dignity, justice and prosperity.

As we solemnly commemorate Martyrs' Day today, the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 2023, let us endeavour to realise the noble objectives for which our heroic martyrs gave their lives. The realisation of the noble objectives of empowering the Eritrean people to live in freedom, dignity, justice and prosperity and enabling independent Eritrea to rise and thrive would vindicate their sacrifices and console the Eritrean people.

Let us work with resolute determination to help bring about an accountable and transparent constitutional governance that (1) is based on the rule of law; (2) administers justice; (3) establishes a functional government with institutional checks and balances; (4) ensures durable national security through the proper demarcation of our international borders; and (5) uses our country's natural, human and material resources, including its manpower, sea, ports and mineral resources, in the service of national development and the improvement of the standard of living of our people to uplift the human condition in Eritrea.

Long live an independent sovereign Eritrea!

Eternal glory to our martyrs!