

E R I T R E A N  
A M E R I C A N  
H A R M O N Y

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# Editorial

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## Public diplomacy works best when it's truly public

The U.S., as the leading super-power in the last seven decades, has greatly been influencing world affairs. Many of the ideas and actions that determine life-and-death issues in the Horn of Africa region, as in the rest of the world, usually have their origins in Washington, D.C. Eritrea's history of the last seven decades is a testament to that fact. Some of the defining ideas and actions that put Eritrea and the Eritrean people through long periods of suffering and destruction have had their genesis or full support in the U.S. The role and actions of some Americans, including some in official positions, in the Eritrea-Ethiopia border conflict, continue to have a ravaging effect on Eritrea and the Eritrean people.

Today, the growing Eritrean American community and the rest of the Eritrean Diaspora have been working hard to turn this historical pattern into an opportunity for a better U.S.-Eritrea relation by ensuring that the voice of the Eritrean people is heard and their interests are considered in the centers of global power, but especially in Washington, D.C. What we have witnessed the last two decades is that diplomacy works best when it is truly public when every citizen abroad serves as an ambassador. Eritreans in the Diaspora have shown this to be true in their relentless effort to defend their country from well-funded attempts to undermine Eritrean sovereignty and bring about lasting peace to the troubled Horn of Africa region.

# Culture

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## Culture: A Trade-off in Public Diplomacy Activities of the Eritrean Diaspora

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Eritrea's history is as old as humanity and is characterized by the convergence of old and new amenities which took shape over millennia. Embarking from these premises, I surmise around vital archaeological and/or historical records to emphasize that its visibility in the international arena can be fertile ground to foster understanding and respect. Central to the conception of public/cultural diplomacy, or whatever semantic features are attached to it, and I strongly feel that platforms can be forged to effect inter-cultural dialogue around themes of Eritrea's archaeological heritage. In this respect, I provide a sketch to touch upon elements of the country's bounties to the extent that their resonance in the spectrum of public diplomacy will help us explore ways of interaction than perhaps often resorting to orthodox avenues of diplomacy.

Located at the juncture of the so-called "Afar triangle," Eritrea's Danakil depression is one of the world's fossil gold mines. Eritrea's map in the growing spectra of paleontological and paleo-anthropological ventures across the globe has been delimited thanks to the discovery of a million-year-old hominid remains and the mammalian fossil record (picture on the following page). This research has attracted international scientists to the fore. The integration of the state-of-the-art in these research projects will broaden our knowledge of human and mammalian evolution in the context of African and Euro-Asian parallels.

Themes around common human ancestry, ecological and climatic challenges, and resource exploitation strategies amid these barriers are explored from different points of view, and further help instill knowledge on multi-culturalism, peaceful coexistence, and global responses to human challenges and catastrophes.

Efforts are harnessed towards integrating these into school curricula and disseminating them via media channels in the country and thus contributing to nation-building. Yet, these values transcend beyond national frontiers, and the visibility of these values in the international arena is vital towards ensuring peace and stability in the Horn of Africa. Conversely, while room should be given to advancing the scientific advancement of research around these themes, peace, and stability in the region are critical for these endeavors. Therefore, public diplomacy activities should consider this trade-off, which is bestowed in Eritrea's archaeological record.

On a similar account, exploring the history of religious harmony and its tenets takes us to appreciate the advent of Christianity and Islam in Eritrea. The country's location on the Red Sea provided a gateway to both religions in the Horn of Africa. Their peaceful coexistence over millennia helped shape the present values of tolerance, human respect and dignity, and religious harmony. The preservation of paleo-Christian churches at Adulis, the Sahaba Mosque in Massawa (perhaps the earliest Islamic sacred edifice in the African continent), and several historical mosques throughout the country, well-preserved early monastic traditions in the highlands of Eritrea, and archaeological records of the height of Islamic civilizations in the Dahlak Islands on the African Red Coast provide a massive repertoire of the early forms of these civilizations.



Fig. 1. One-million years Old Skull from Buia(left), the landscape of Buia, in northern Danakil Depression of Eritrea(right)

The social capital built upon the values of early Christian and Islamic civilizations is distinctive of peaceful coexistence in the society where diversity is instead a blessing than a source of conflicts. In a similar vein, preserving traditions, where religious festivities accommodate pilgrims, no matter their faith, cannot be overlooked when humanity is tested in its history by acts of global terror and fundamentalism. In summary, the ideals of the Eritrean society on tolerance and mutual coexistence exemplify the very notion of the rights of a fellow being as an individual and his/her place in the society, a vital attribute of the different codices of customary laws in the country. It transcends beyond communal or national frontiers to imply that the local notions of respect and coexistence also resemble the ethos enshrined in universal conventions. These old amenities survive the test of time, and preserving this aspect of cultural heritage in Eritrea is central to building institutions of law and order. In this respect, a broader understanding of the Eritrean society should dwell on these premises, which are also reflected in the activities of the Eritrean diaspora, to make visible the very core of these values. The wider resonance of these ethos should also serve as the conduit for inter-cultural dialogue key to building para-diplomatic engagements. One such possible future in public diplomacy involving the Eritrean diaspora thus may lie in diplomacy stressing the commonalities around these themes to better approach regional peace and stability in the Horn on the one hand and build a shared understanding of global issues with their host countries.

Similarly, Eritrea owns a rich culture of modernity as perceived in the architectural ingenuity of the late 19th and 20th centuries. Eritrea's capital, a world heritage site, is a haven for a unique urban environment, where an experiment of modern architecture of the early 20th century mingled with indigenous African realities. The physical and social context of Asmara phenomenologically instilled a seed of cosmopolitanism, and this spirit of the city is still intact in the 21st century. Music, art, cinema, and the like that took shape in a constantly evolving urban fabric provide a façade to Eritrean realities. When visible in the international arena can be fertile grounds for building and fostering intercultural dialogue and exchange, a diplomatic enterprise can eventually stem from these ventures. It can be said that the Eritrean diaspora has a lot to offer along these frontiers to engage in building constructive dialogue based on cultural exchanges actively.

Finally, I would like to make a statement by touching upon the ethos of the armed struggle for the independence of Eritrea, in which monumental remains of the struggle bear testimony to the sacrifices paid to ensure human dignity. The struggle was a sheer response to narratives of hegemony built on myths and historical fallacies in the Horn, which denied the region's peoples their plea for a peaceful existence.



Fig.2. Paleo-Christian Church unearthed in the archaeological site of Adulis

The nation-building process that begun after the independence of Eritrea, on the other hand, to a great deal is a stride to build a proper representation of history that has been marginalized for a long. Research on archaeological heritage should foster peaceful coexistence, and the archaeological bounties in Eritrea offer a plethora of venues that contribute towards these ends. Peace is vital for these endeavours that transcend borders in the Horn of Africa. The international community should give credence to these efforts by supporting inter-state dialogue in the Horn. Recognition of the sacrifices made by the people for dignity and peace in the past thus should be made visible in the international fore as an act of public diplomacy and help build long-lasting peace in the Horn. The Eritrean diaspora stands for this cause, and its plight for peace through public diplomacy is a manifestation of the premise that a proper representation of history and understanding of the challenges in the current times is integral to finding solutions to problems in the region. Such efforts, thus, beg accommodations in foreign policy corners through inter-cultural dialogue.

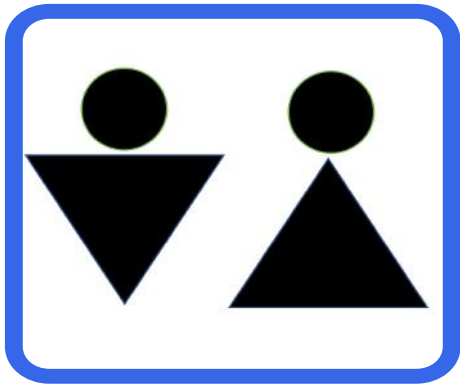


Fig. 3. The Derbush Mosque in Massawa

**Eritrea's history is as old as humanity and is characterized by the convergence of old and new amenities which took shape over millennia.**

# Culture

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## Men Shimki? (What's your name?)

### Rahel Musa

In our Eritrean culture, the rite of name-giving holds many significant honors. Beyond a sense of individual identity, it is often a reflection of family and the larger community. Names are tied to eras and hallmarks of Eritrea's rich history and indicators of strong-rooted cultural beliefs, values, and norms. Names tell a story, hold memories, and are more than letters strung together.

With so many intersecting identities, such as ethnicity, religion, family practices, etc., there is no homogenous practice of naming a child amongst Eritrea's nine ethnic groups, with as many languages, and a variety of religious practice from Christianity and Islam, to those that observe Traditional religions.

Generally speaking, religion and religious practices are deeply embedded in the daily life of Eritreans, and this is reflected through many names. Traditionally, stories in the Bible and Quran are excellent sources of inspiration for choosing a child's name. While many names from both these Books are universal, the translation may result in a phonetically different sound in Christian names. For example, the name John in English will be Yohannes in Tigrinya, and the name David translates to Dawit

When names from the Bible are chosen, it is based on the person's acts in the Bible rather than the meaning of the name. For example, according to the Bible, you will not find an Eritrean named Cain or Judas because of what their actions denote. It is also common for people to choose names of cities, landmarks, bodies of water, geographic locations, etc., that are in the Holy Books. Among the observers of Traditional religions, the naming of a child could be traditional deities or a name or a word they first hear during the birth of a child.

In the Christian lectionary, almost all the days are dedicated to an angel or saint. A child born on a day dedicated to a saint or angel is given a name with a prefix in conjunction with the name of the saint or angel. Some common prefixes are Welde (M), meaning "son of"; Gebre (M), meaning "servant"; Lete (F), meaning "daughter." Using this method, the name Weldemichael translates to "the son of" Michael – which is the name of an angel. Likewise, Letemariam translates to "daughter of" Mariam – the name of a saint. Many of these names are given during baptism. While some use that name throughout their lives, others opt to use a different name. Interestingly, during rites of burial, a person's baptismal name is the only name used. Positive or negative family circumstances can influence giving a name to a child during the time the child is born. Passing down the name of a deceased family member to honor the memory is standard. Only in rare cases is the name of a living family member given. It can be considered insulting because it insinuates a desire for someone to pass away to preserve their memory. Therefore, you will rarely see suffixes of "Jr." or "Sr." in Eritrean culture.

Among many communities, women reserve from saying the name of their father-in-law out loud. If a child is given the deceased grandfather's name (and her father-in-law), the child's mother will not directly call them by that name. Instead, she will often pick another name or use a nickname to address the child. For example, amongst Tigre speakers, many use "Gabsha" instead of "Ali" or "Reshid" instead of "Idris."



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Likewise, some women will not call their husbands by their first names. Instead, they will address them as “father of” and the name of the firstborn son or daughter.

When Eritrea faced a higher infant mortality rate, many believed the superstition that fairies would take children and were the cause of a child’s death. If a family experienced multiple child mortalities, they named the child an unconventional name in hopes that the fairy would not attract the child and spare their life. Examples of such names are:- Adgoy (donkey), Zboe (hyena), Kelb (dog), etc. Over time as the mortality rate decreased, this practice has also lost its predominance.

After independence, there was a notable change in choices of names. Many names expressing freedom (Natsinet), jubilation (Yohanna), etc., were given. Equally, names that reflect the struggle for independence were and remain popular – Nakfa – a town in Eritrea significant and momentous to gaining independence; and Salina – a place in Massawa where many Eritreans were martyred. Pre-independence, many children born in the diaspora were named Eritrea, honoring the desire for fruition for independence.

Generally speaking, most Eritreans are called by their first given names, and they don’t have a middle name. To address a person, you use the first name followed by the father’s name, and while in official documentation, the grandfather is added, this is not used as a “surname.” Contrary to many western practices, a married woman does not change her name as her identity is tied to her family of birth. Thus she keeps her father’s name.

There is much to be said and shared about how nuanced and interconnected to culture it is to name an Eritrean child.

As generations of Eritreans are born, as culture evolves, and the Eritrean population in the diaspora grows, naming a child has become even more critical to preserve culture. However, as with many practices, passing on the stories, legacies, and knowledge continue to fall as the elders’ responsibility in the community. It is a great honor to be named “Rahel” by my father, who so diligently shared his wisdom and knowledge by authoring a Tigrinya dictionary of names. In carrying on his legacy and that of others who contribute to this intentional conversation, I say:

**“Every name is not built only by the sound of the alphabet, it has a meaning”- Musa Aron**



# COVID-19

## Eritrea

Dr. Fikrejesus Amahazion wrote a well researched scientific article for the Open Journal of Social Sciences. Below is the abstract and the link for the article.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the greatest global crises in decades. To date, around the world tens of millions of cases have been confirmed, nearly two million people have died, and the livelihoods of billions have been greatly affected. While COVID-19 has been a truly global problem, infection and death rates in many African countries have been much lower than originally feared. One COVID-19 success story is Eritrea, a young, developing country in Northeast Africa that, by late December 2020, reported less than 1000 positive cases and one death due to COVID-19. However, despite its relative success, little focus has been devoted to Eritrea's response. How did it manage to keep COVID-19 at bay and what factors contributed to its success?

Based on several different research methods, the present study finds that, notwithstanding limited resources, Eritrea has managed to respond to COVID-19 with relative efficiency and keep the virus at bay. The country's general success has been based upon a number of different factors

According to the Ministry of Health of the State of Eritrea, to date (as of August, 23, 2021):

6,623 were inflicted

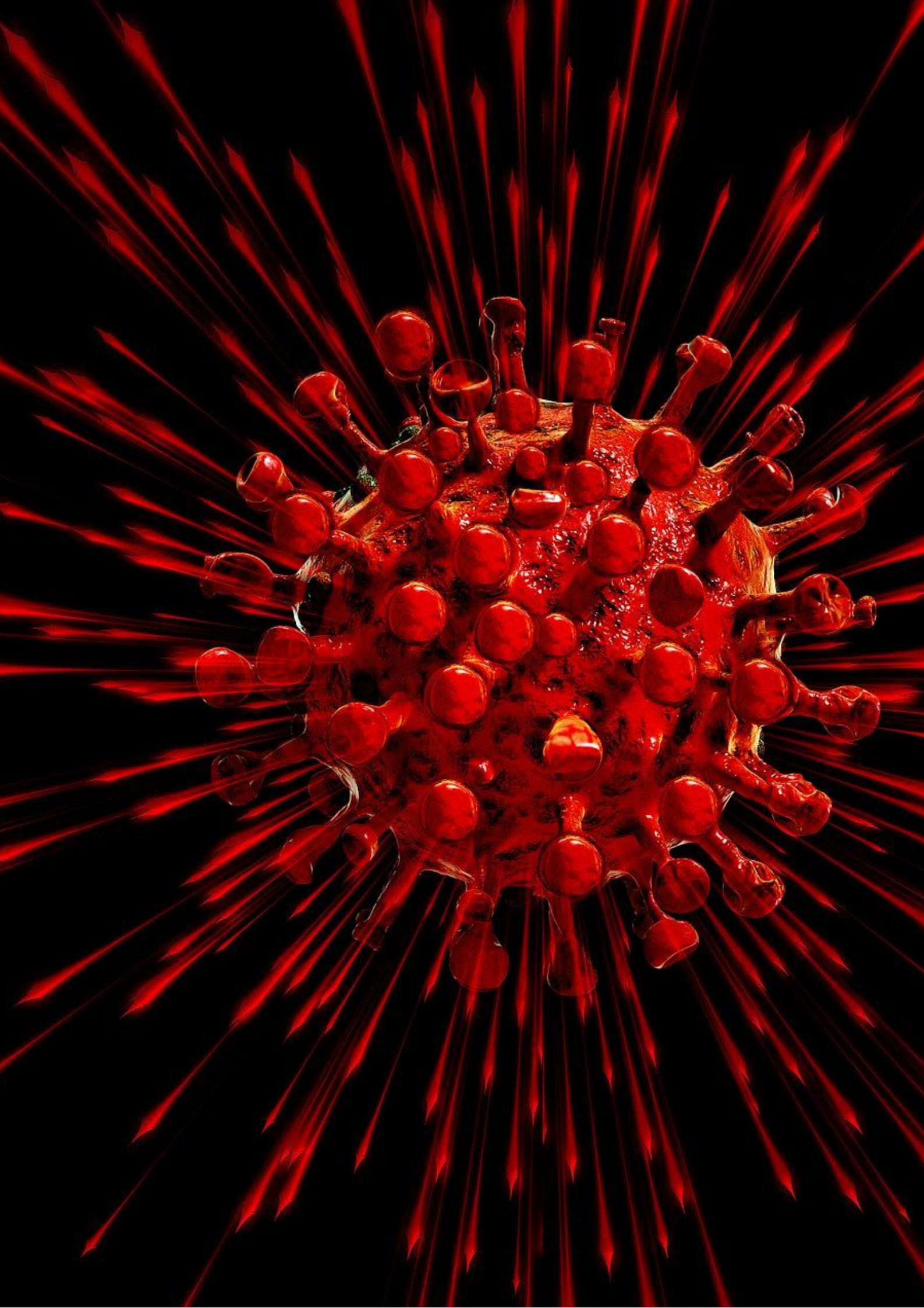
6,565 recovered

37 deaths

21 hospitalized

NCEA Public Diplomacy Group used Photographer Yared Tseggai's photos to create face masks. See the samples on the following pages.

<https://www.scirp.org/journal/paperinformation.aspx?paperid=107327>





*Eritrea: Can you dance?*



Eritrea: How high can you jump?  
Come and See!

Eritrea: Full of life, full of colors



Eritrea

# Biodiversity

## The Diverse Biodiversity of Eritrea is a National Treasure

Ted Papenfuss, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California at Berkeley

Large animals like the elephant, African wild ass, leopard, and ostrich are recognized as important animals that are well known to Eritreans. Small animals are also part of the biodiversity of Eritrea and most people are not aware that some of these small animals were first described scientifically from Eritrea as long ago as the 1830s. Several species are found nowhere in the world except Eritrea and are thus "National Treasures" that must be protected, studied, and appreciated.

The Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Marine Resources, the Ministry of Water, Land, and Environment and other governmental organizations continue to conduct wildlife surveys in each of Eritrea's six Zobas so that all Eritrean wildlife can be identified and protected from potentially harmful human activities.

In December 2019 the 6th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity was issued by Ministry of Water, Land and Environment.

This is a public document that interested readers can download using this link.

<https://www.cbd.int/doc/nr/nr-06/er-nr-06-en.pdf>

**Since Eritrea's independence, conservation, environmental protection, and respect for wildlife have been national policies.** Eritrea does not allow hunting or logging of natural forests. The Ministry of Energy and Mines requires environmental impact studies before mines are allowed to operate. The Bisha Mine in Gash-Barka Zoba and the Zara Mine Anseba Zoba have on site environmental staff to ensure wildlife protection

Here are photos of four species of amphibians and reptiles that were first scientifically described from Eritrea.

### Asmara Toad (*Sclerophrys asmarae*)

**Asmara Toad**  
አስመራ ግዛዕ (አንቀርዖብ)

The only Toad named after any capital. This Toad is named after Asmara, the capital of Eritrea.  
It lives around Water

አስመራ ግዛዕ እታ እግዚ ብደረጃ ዓለም ብሰም ዋና ከተማ ሃገር እንጽዳቆ ዘርእ. እንቀርዖብ ሓንቲ ነብ ጸጋጋት ሃገርና ሰለዝኾነት ንሓዋሩ ንኸትተር ንጻጻቡ።

**Males and Females are differently colored, Males being brighter in color**

Ministry of Agriculture/ Forestry and Wildlife Authority,  
The State of Eritrea. 2016  
Photos by Futsum Hagos, Text Ted Papenfuss University of California

The Diverse Biodiversity of Eritrea is a National Treasure.

The Asmara Toad is the only toad in the world with a scientific name that includes the capital city of a country. These toads were first described in 1982 from a pond on the edge of Asmara. They are a common species that is found at many places in the Eritrean and Ethiopian highlands. Toads are very beneficial to farmers because they eat insect pests including locusts.

### Eritrea Clawed Frog (*Xenopus clivii*)



The Eritrea Clawed Frog was described in 1898. The species is named after Paolo Clivio, an Italian veterinary surgeon. He collected some specimens at Segeneiti and Adi-Keih and sent them to Italy. They were described as a new species by a scientist at the University of Torino. There are 29 species of clawed frogs found in Africa south of the Sahara Desert. The name clawed frog refers to tiny claw-like finger and toe tip. All species are aquatic. Most people are not aware of them because they usually stay on the bottom of ponds and lakes.

**The Asmara Toad is the only toad in the world with a scientific name that includes the capital city of a country**

### Eritrean Side-necked Turtle (*Pelomedusa gahafie*)



Side-necked Turtle



### Setting turtle traps near Barentu, Gash-Barka Zoba

The Eritrean Side-necked Turtle was described in 1835 from specimens found in a stream in the hills west of Massawa. These turtles were not found again until 2016. They were thought to be extinct. When I started collaborating with the Forestry and Wildlife Authority in 2016 we set traps baited with sardines in streams and small rivers along the road from Massawa to Asmara. We were very excited to rediscover Eritrean Side-necked turtles in the Damas River at Ghinda, 186 years after the original discovery. Additional surveys have now documented these turtles in rivers and ponds in Anseba, Gash-Barka, and Northern Red Sea zobas. There are several other species of side-necked turtles in Africa. These turtles have a long neck and when they pull their head in to the shell, they turn the neck to one side so their head can fit into the shell for protection.

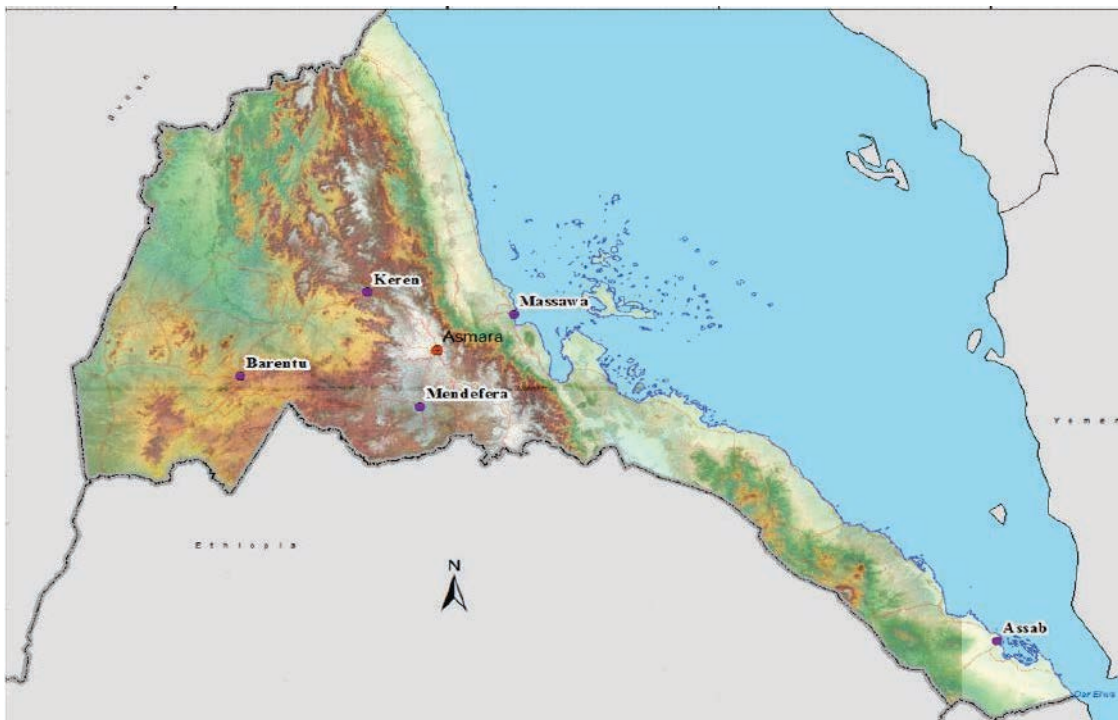
## Keren Rock Agama Lizard (*Agama doriae*)



The Eritrean Rock Agama was described in 1885 from specimens collected at Keren in Anseba Zoba. This species is now known to occur in other parts of the south of the Sahara Desert. Eritreans and other visitors to Eritrea can see these lizards basking in the sun on large boulders along the highway from Keren to Argodat. They are common in rocky hills across the road from Keren War Cemetery. They live in scattered colonies where a dominant male watches over several females and juvenile lizards and chases away other males lizards that may try to take control of the colony.

**The Eritrean Side-necked Turtle was described in 1835 from specimens found in a stream in the hills west of Massawa. These turtles were not found again until 2016. They were thought to be extinct.**

**We were very excited to rediscover Eritrean Side-necked turtles in the Damas River at Ghinda, 186 years after the original discovery.**





# City Spotlight

## The Activities of Seattle's NCEA (National Council of Eritrean-Americans) Public Diplomacy Group.



Public Artwork by Seattle resident, Eritrean-American artist Yigzaw (Yeggy) Michael. This does not represent the actual size and art.

### Establishment:

Our purpose as a public diplomacy group is to serve our nation by being the voice for our people. In pursuing the goal, Seattle's NCEA Public Diplomacy Group was formed by dedicated volunteer community members to combat the continuously orchestrated false media campaign against Eritrea in general and Eritrean forces' involvement in atrocities in the Tigray territory of Ethiopia, in particular. Therefore, we centralized our focus on utilizing facts to fight the allegations made against Eritrea. In our first group meeting on March 2, 2021, the organizing committee was formed; eight members were selected to serve on the leadership committee. In addition, we have three members who are also part of the Eritrean-American National Public Diplomacy Task Force within our group.

Furthermore, the meeting allowed our community members to have an opportunity to share their respective visions for the group and express the importance of young people taking leadership in our Group. The leadership team agreed to start generating/implementing ideas, delegating tasks, and conducting weekly meetings to share how to facilitate each activity and execute goals.

### Political Activities:

.1. A Peaceful Rally at the PBS Station in Downtown Seattle

Our Group and the Eritrean community conducted a peaceful rally on Monday, May 3, 2021, at the PBS station in downtown Seattle, Washington State. The purpose of this rally was to share our concerns about the PBS Frontline program that was scheduled to air a documentary with a misleading title, "Escaping Eritrea," at a time when thousands were 'escaping' into Eritrea from neighboring countries fleeing from conflicts and to minimize risks from the COVID-19 pandemic.



## 2. Zoom Meetings

We conducted several zoom meetings with U.S. politicians and their respective representatives. Those meetings aimed to inform and influence U.S. policymakers to promote Eritrea's national interest and counter the disinformation that is being widespread on social media and the mainstream media about Eritrean forces committing atrocities in the Tigray territory. | on July 29, 2021.

We conducted several zoom meetings with U.S. politicians and their respective representatives. Those meetings aimed to inform and influence U.S. policymakers to promote Eritrea's national interest and counter the disinformation that is being widespread on social media and the mainstream media about Eritrean forces committing atrocities in the Tigray territory.

We also would like to highlight that we have worked closely with the Ethiopian Public Diplomacy Group in Seattle and participated in joint presentations.

The Group presented an extensive virtual presentation to convey the conflict in Ethiopia, truth vs. misinformation, to:

Glenn Carpenter, Deputy District Director for Congressman Adam Smith on April 25, 2021,

Shayna Daitch, Representative for Senator Patty Murray on April 15, 2021,

J.Z. Golden, Legislative Director, and Lindsey Webb, the Snohomish County Community Liaison from U.S. Congressman Rick Larsen's Office on May 6, 2021,

Dontae Payne, Deputy District Director for U.S. Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland on May 20, 2021,

and Marielle Trumbauer, Outreach Coordinator for U.S. Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal on July 29, 2021.

### 3. Mayoral Candidates

The Public Diplomacy Group hosted the Mayoral Candidates Forum on July 17, 2021, at the Eritrean Community Center (ECC) in Seattle.

The Mayoral Candidate Forum, which was the first of its kind to be held at the Eritrean Community Center, was hosted by our Public Diplomacy Group. We had the opportunity to ask four of the six candidates questions relating to:

- a) mental health needs to marginalized communities,
- b) the support of quality early learning programs for children due to the displacement of people losing their homes and their communities,
- c) the gap between wages in Seattle and the cost of living plans,
- d) how to make up for the educational losses suffered during the pandemic,
- e) to commit to restoring total funding from grants from the city of Seattle CDBG for critical capital projects for Eritrean Association,
- f) and if elected to commit to meet with us within the first 60 days to implement the promises they made.

Mayoral Candidates Andrew Grant Houston, Bruce Harrell, Lance Randall, and Colleen Echohawk participated in the Mayoral Candidates Forum. We wish them all luck!

**Eritrean Association In Greater Seattle**

**Mayoral Candidates Forum**  
**Saturday, July 17th 10AM-3PM**

Please join us for City of Seattle Mayoral candidate forum at The Eritrean Association in greater Seattle

**YOUR VOTE COUNTS**

ጠቅላይ ተመራጭ ንክትብኩ ከተማ ስዎትል (Candidates Forum)  
 ሰከት 06/17/2021 ነብ ሰዓት 10:00 ቅድሚ ቀድቲሪ ከተብ 3:00  
 ድህረ ቀትሪ ከብድርጭጭ ላብጽቢ ስለትጽቢ በድህረ ስቡ ዲብካራል  
 ቫቸር (Democracy Voucher) ሊብዎ ንክምድሉ ንምልጻን።

Colleen Echohawk, Jessyn Farrell, M. Lorena González, Bruce Harrell, Lance Randall, Andrew Grant Houston

**Eritrean Association In Greater Seattle**  
 1954 S Massachusetts St  
 Seattle, WA 98144



#### 4. Cultural Activities

Our Group participated in the 30th anniversary of the Eritrean Independence Day celebration centered around traditional food and coffee ceremonies on May 29, 2021. The coffee ceremony is one of the most recognizable parts of our culture, bringing our community together to discuss politics, economics, education, and just plain simple catching-ups. Our members were dressed in traditional clothing to reflect the nine different nationalities of Eritrea. As we are the face of Eritrea, it's an honor to host this celebration and share with others our rich culture. Our goal was for every guest to experience Eritrea's well-known traditional hospitality. Also, our Group presented the topic "Conflict in Ethiopia Truth vs. Misinformation" for our special guests, along with a video titled "Gas, Gold, Copper, Oil, Zinc, You name it Eritrea's got it," which describes the natural resources and beauty that Eritrea has to offer. In addition, the NCEA Public Diplomacy Group took this opportunity to introduce themselves on the stage to the public and shared the vision and roadmap of the Group. It also shared information and resources with the people in hopes of recruiting young Eritreans.



## 5. Eritrean Memorial Day Hiking

We organized the 2021's Eritrean Memorial Day (also known as Martyrs' Day) hike at Poo Poo Point Trailhead at Issaquah Alps Tiger. Our community members hiked 7.2 miles with an elevation gain of 2,021 feet. The hiking route traverses many creeks valley crossing several small creeks, then levels out briefly to cross Gap Creek on a high bridge which was a great place to pause and enjoy the streams and the large mossy trees. The trail then inclines steeply through the coniferous forest. The Task Force provided a hiking packing list and guide to about fifty community members and distributed about two-hundred tri-fold Eritrean history brochures.

## 6. Media Activities

Seattle's NCEA Public Diplomacy Group Chair, Senait Habte Hall, Social Media Lead, Samuel Tsehaye, and Community Development Researcher, Meron Abraham discussed our work with EriXpress Media's Ruta Tesfay on how they are encouraging and cultivating broad participation of all Eritreans in the Seattle area to fight the disinformation that is rampant on social media and mainstream media.

## 7. Informational and Educational Activities

Our TGroup invited various guest speakers to share their respective experiences in public diplomacy, media, history, and activism. The guests include:

- a) Issayas Tesfamariam on Participatory Budgeting.
- b) Simon Tesfamariam presented a topic entitled "Disinformation in Tigray-Manufacturing Consent for a Secessionist War."
- c) Fenan Desta presented the history of Eritrean youth and volunteerism.
- d) Alex Tekie on how to reach out to public representatives and policymakers, and
- e) Dr. Ghidewon Abay on the needs of Mekete .

Finally, Seattle's NCEA Public Diplomacy Group would like to thank the following individuals and groups:

Yohannes Sium: learning ambassador, who helped us with training and reviewing questions for our Mayoral Candidate Forum

- Biniam Abraha: photographer, who helped us by taking videos and pictures on all our events.
- Eritrean Association of Greater Seattle: provided moral support in all our events and meetings, and Medhane Sebahtu and Efreem Mehari for leading our team.



# Bunn/Coffee Break?



COFFEE X BOON  
GROUNDED / ዝተወቐጠ ቡን

While sipping your bunn, listen to Mama Gebar's song .



COFFEE X BOON  
ROASTED / ዝተቀለወ ቡን





# Anatomy of Public & Cultural Diplomacy - the why and how to become an ambassador for Eritrea

Alexander Tekie

All too often, the phrase public diplomacy is pitched around to imply government to government relations. Although this is true and is always relegated to the respective embassies and diplomats assigned to it, there is also a role the Eritrean diaspora in the US can play to exercise their civic duties and possibly advance issues that are dear to the nation of their origin, Eritrea, to elected local and state representatives. The other type of diplomacy that is quite often comingled with public diplomacy is cultural diplomacy. Thoughtful consideration is required to distinguish one from the other. This article intends to define these two distinct forms of diplomacy and help inform the Eritrean diaspora how and why they ought to participate in both, thus become an ambassador for Eritrea.

Nicholas J. Cull of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy defines public diplomacy as "... deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications."

While people and nations worldwide may have opposing opinions, particularly related to politics and foreign policy, public diplomacy provides a process, typically conducted with sensitivity, for different parties to successfully communicate with and negotiate between each other and to better understand differing points of view. Although this is generally true, it could sometimes also lead to stalemates and hostilities that may spur international conflicts, including military. This is well documented as the international order has changed over the 20th century.

On the other hand, cultural diplomacy emphasizes cultural communication and the reciprocity of cultural exchanges, which is why it is also often characterized as cultural cooperation. There is always a personal dimension to cultural diplomacy. We may often think of cultural diplomacy as the musicians and artists representing their home nations, but more often, cultural diplomacy also comprises immigrants and diasporas sharing their traditions.

For example, Eritrean diasporas of all ethnic and religious backgrounds serve this dual role of ambassadors of their own cross-cultural experience. In this case, the State of Eritrea, by extension, can try to improve its image without seeking support for an immediate policy objective. Instead, governments use such cultural diplomacy, i.e., branding strategies, to foster a better impression of themselves in the world. Ideally, cultural diplomacy creates general goodwill and facilitates cooperation across a variety of issues. It also helps to maintain long-term alliance relationships and undermine enemy propaganda.

## **What then should be the role of the Eritrean diaspora?**

As expressed above, the Eritrean diaspora ought to be an ambassador for Eritrea. From the outset, Eritrean communities across the US should mobilize and organize themselves to exchange ideas and information – an inherent characteristic of democratic societies.

One area designed to facilitate more speedy results is political advocacy. Political advocacy requires visibility at the local and national political levels. Diaspora Eritreans could utilize various strategies to achieve visibility, such as community outreach, round table meeting, volunteering for political campaigns, voter mobilization for candidates, and fundraising drives for campaigns. These strategies may affect long-term perceptions and build US support for immediate policy objectives in the Horn of Africa. This is especially true today as public diplomacy practitioners use a variety of instruments and methods to advance their policy objectives. Recognition that Eritrean Americans have a strong voice and resources creates awareness and visibility across their adopted country and promotes essential issues affecting their homeland.

Strategies for cultural diplomacy boil down to acquainting Americans to Eritrea and Eritreans' history, people, and culture. Few ideas and approaches may create long memories for the audience, such as introducing Eritrea's natural beauty to spur tourism, announcing the achievement of Millennium Development Goals, sharing the various cuisines, and invitations to cultural shows.

The State of Eritrea's desired benefit is maintaining a positive bilateral relationship with the US, be it political, economic, or cultural, which is why awareness and participation are essential to the Eritrean community in the diaspora. Moreover, such efforts could establish a strong precedent – blueprint - for Eritrean communities across the US to participate in future successful political and cultural engagement. But, in the end, Eritrea's most important resource is its people.

**While people and nations worldwide may have opposing opinions, particularly related to politics and foreign policy, public diplomacy provides a process, typically conducted with sensitivity, for different parties to successfully communicate with and negotiate between each other and to better understand differing points of view.**

**Political advocacy requires visibility at the local and national political levels. Diaspora Eritreans could utilize various strategies to achieve visibility, such as community outreach, round table meeting, volunteering for political campaigns, voter mobilization for candidates, and fundraising drives for campaigns.**

# Book Notes

## Memoir Shows Effort to Deny Eritrea's Rights

Dr. Asgede Hagos

Some readers may be familiar with G.K.N. Trevaskis's 1960 book *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition, 1941-1952*, published by Greenwood Press and issued under the auspices of the British Royal Institute of International Affairs, which focused on the critical decade between the defeat of Italy and the end of British rule as well as the beginning of the next colonial occupation of the Red Sea territory by Ethiopia facilitated and thinly disguised as a "federation" by the then U.S.-led United Nations. In that work, Trevaskis predicted continued violation of Eritrea's autonomy by emperor Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, would "risk Eritrea's discontent and eventual revolt." The following year the 'revolt' he correctly predicted entered a new phase; it marked the beginning of Eritrea's armed resistance to regain its rights to determine its own future.

Three decades later in his memoir which he completed just before his death in 1990 but not published until 30 more years later, in 2019, Trevaskis (later Sir Kennedy) repeatedly pointed out the incompatibility between Eritrea and Ethiopia and the damage the sham federation imposed on the former may cause not only in the two countries but also in the rest of the Horn of Africa region and beyond.

The memoir, *The Deluge: A Personal View of the End of Empire in the Middle East*, edited and introduced by Wm. Roger Louis, covers his experience as a loyal guardian of the declining British empire during the fast-moving era of decolonization, in Africa and the Middle East where he almost lost his life in an attack in 1963 by a Yemeni local rebel group fighting against British colonialism in the region.

It is the portrait of a dedicated empire builder and guardian and protector serving at a time when that enterprise was in a hasty retreat throughout the world. The key word *Deluge* in the title is intended to capture the intensity and extent of that retreat as well as the global and furious anti-colonial forces expediting the decline, beginning with a British retreat from India and Pakistan in 1947.

The new book also reveals the magnitude of what the British attempted to undermine the lives and rights of the people of this small Africa territory. It also shows the extent of his own role in his country's effort to dismember the former Italian colony between their colony to the West, Sudan, and their client state to the south, Ethiopia, with what was known as the Western Province (see map) going to their Sudan Dominion, and the rest of the territory doled out to Emperor Haile Selassie. The partition idea had no support in Eritrea; however, that didn't deter the British foreign policy elite who pushed with everything they had to make it a reality. Fortunately, half of that insidious plan didn't work out as planned due to factors in the other former Italian colonies, Libya and Somalia. It was defeated by the member states of the Latin American and the Soviet blocs at the UN.



Other British officials who along with Trevaskis worked hard to partition the territory included the first and second heads of the British Military administrations in Eritrea, Brigadier Stephen Longrigg and Brigadier Binoy respectively. This despite the fact that the British were in Eritrea to temporarily administer the territory on behalf of the Allied Powers comprised of the United States, the Soviet Union, France as well as Great Britain. At almost every step of their decade-long occupation of the territory, they tried to make decisions whose adverse impact on Eritrea and its people are still felt today--more than seven decades later.

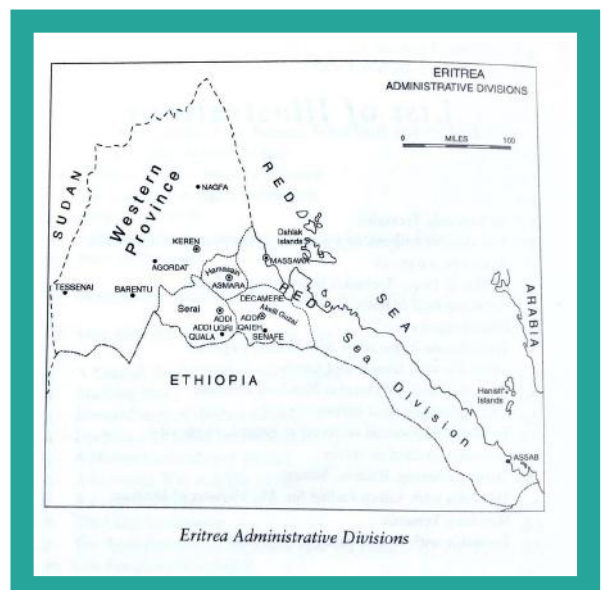
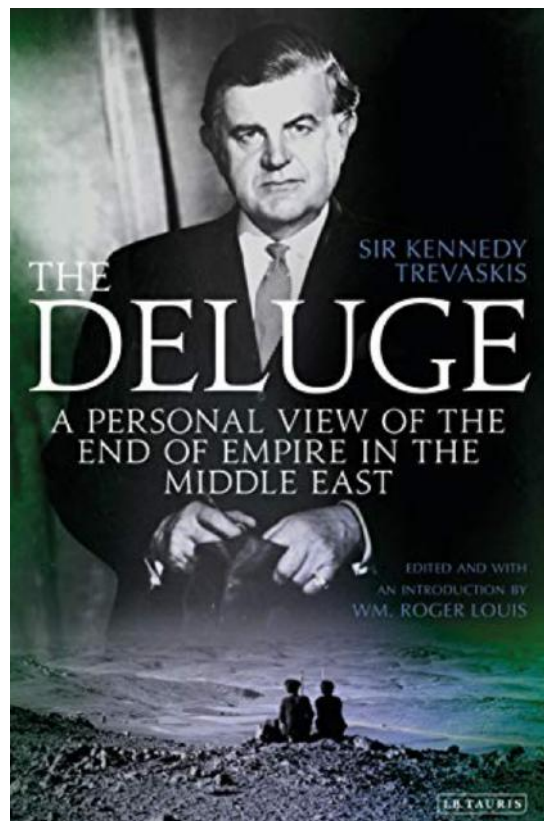
The book also offers a glimpse into the colonial arrogance displayed by the British foreign policy elite that was active at home as well as abroad in Eritrea and neighboring colonial outposts such as Sudan and across the Red Sea in the Middle East. It also chronicles the elite's persistent campaign of disinformation that tried to portray Eritrea as being not viable economically and not cohesive socially to justify their insidious plans.

Here below are the specifics about the book:

[The Deluge: A Personal View of the End of Empire in the Middle East](#), by Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, IB Tauris Publishers (New York, London). 2019. 319 pages ISBN: 978-1784538279

For a review and an expanded and critical examination of the memoir, please visit [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu) or click the link below:

[https://www.academia.edu/45410664/Book\\_Review\\_When\\_Eritreans\\_Faced\\_a\\_Double\\_Annexation](https://www.academia.edu/45410664/Book_Review_When_Eritreans_Faced_a_Double_Annexation)



**The book also offers a glimpse into the colonial arrogance displayed by the British foreign policy elite that was active at home as well as abroad in Eritrea and neighboring colonial outposts such as Sudan and across the Red Sea in the Middle East.**

**It also chronicles the elite's persistent campaign of disinformation that tried to portray Eritrea as being not viable economically and not cohesive socially to justify their insidious plans.**

# Announcement

## Active & Veteran Eritrean-American members of the U.S. military

The Eritrean American Military Personnel Team is a small all-volunteer group based in the USA supporting the Eritrean community. The team consists of Eritrean personnel in the U.S. Armed Forces network. This team will expand and recruit Eritreans from the United States Armed forces, which comprise active duty, reserve and guard forces, and veterans. The Eritrean American Military Personnel Team has a strategic plan that will help direct efforts and initiatives of the community relevant to programs, activities, and projects that will allow the execution of community objectives and goals. The primary goal would be to establish a network of volunteers to create awareness among the government offices, media, and non-governmental organizations, about the misinformation that is going on about Eritrea in the Ethiopian law enforcement operation.

Strategically together as military personnel, we have established a platform to give us credibility to mobilize and support our community in the U.S. and Eritrea. This group does not have a specific political agenda and is entirely voluntary. As of now, the group has recruited 30 members of active and veteran status military personnel. We are beginning with a verification process and introductory meeting to set expectations of the future outlook of the organization. This team will devote sustained and severe effort to advocate for the Eritrean people and to promote unity. In Eritrea, national service embodies the fundamental Eritrean values and is viewed as a rite of passage. National service is a training ground that builds national unity and good citizens. We hope this group can bring Eritreans together to meet the country's critical political, economic, and social sectors. There is a strong foundation and tradition in national service both in the U.S. and Eritrea.



To join contactt :  
Dr. Yohannes  
ydebesai@gmail.com  
1(703)655-4894 or  
Yosief Fesseha  
Yfesseha@hotmail.com  
1 (980) 346-3025

# 47th Annual Eritrean Festival

## Reportage

Every year, Eritrean Festival USA brings many Eritreans from the U.S. and else under one arena in a unified and harmonious celebration of Eritrea's social fabric. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the 2020 Eritrean Festival USA was gated within cyber walls, and all events were held virtually. This year, 2021, with less restrictive measures from the prior year, the National Council of Eritrean Americans (NCEA) decided to hold both an in-person and virtual festival, ensuring Eritreans in the USA had both options available.

Under strict COVID safe guidelines, the 47th annual Eritrean Festival USA opened its gates to many Eritreans and friends of Eritrea across the USA with exceptional vitality and zeal on the 14th of August 2021. For the first time, the Eritrean Cultural & Civic Center (ECCC) in Washington DC, home to the Eritrean community in the District of Columbia (D.C.)/Maryland/Virginia (DMV) area, flexibly transformed itself to host this year's Festival

With diverse music, dances, and ululations representing our nine ethnicities, the ceremonial ribbon was cut by Dr. Woldai Futur, Minister of National Development with Mr. Berhane G. Solomon, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Eritrea to the USA at his side, officially opening the 2021 Eritrean Festival USA. Dignitaries and many friends of Eritrea flanked Dr. Woldai and Mr. Berhane.

The crowd, in deafening silence, bowed their heads in a moment of silence, remembering the consummate sacrifices of Eritrea's fallen heroes, for whom the candle of the promise to share and continue Eritrean cultures and traditions burns. After singing the national anthem, Helen Meles, Jemal Romodan, and Yodit Berhe, a few of our national treasures, gave electrifying performances at the opening ceremony.



Before the Taste of Eritrea luncheon was organized by NCEA, guests proceeded to tour the exhibits, which were meticulously prepared by the eight (8) regions:

**Midwest:** Status of Education in Eritrea - Before & After Independence

**South:** Health Services in Eritrea - Before & After Independence

**West:** Eritrea's Efforts Towards Food and Water Security

**Southwest:** Eritrea's Customary & Modern Laws

**Northwest:** TPLF's Lies & Crimes

**Northeast:** 80 Years of U.S. Hostilities and Injustices Against Eritrea

**East:** History of Sports in Eritrea

**Southeast:** Role of Music in Reinforcing Eritrea's Identity, Consciousness & Determination.

The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) arrayed a pictorial exhibit depicting their history and continuous achievements. Members of NUEW welcomed their guests with signature Eritrean hospitality, offering traditional snacks & beverages surpassed only by their traditional coffee ceremony, the infused aroma adding to the ambiance.

Set among the exhibitions, the Kids' Area offered arts and crafts activities for children honing in on their creativity. With paintbrushes in hand, the children made their canvasses pop with their own unique and vibrant creations. Many vendors were at hand with traditional clothing, jewelry, and lots of other accessories. The bookworms also found their haven in the plethora of books that speak of Eritrean stories by Eritrean authors.

In addition to a taste of Eritrean culture, the Festival offered rich political, social, and economic programming. Keynote speaker representing the Government of Eritrea (GOE), Mr. Alamin Mohammed Seid, Secretary of People's Front for Democracy & Justice (PFDJ), provided a succinct analysis on COVID-19 management, development planning, and the current situation affecting the Horn of Africa (HOA).

We experienced another first at the 2021 Eritrean Festivals. This being the first seminar in English presented and moderated by a panel of all Eritrean youths. Titled "What is Really Happening in the Horn?" the forum provided a systematic look at where we are and how we got here from various angles.



**47TH ANNUAL ERITREAN FESTIVAL USA 2021**  
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**ላሚናር**  
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 ብወኪል መንግስትን ግንብርን  
 ጸሓፊ ህግደፍ  
 ብ/አልኣሚን መሓመድ ስዒድ

**DATE & TIME:**  
 SATURDAY, AUGUST 14  
 2:00PM

**PLACE:**  
 ERITREAN CULTURAL &  
 CIVIC CENTER  
 2154 24TH PL, NE  
 WASHINGTON, DC 20018

**COVID-19 GUIDELINES**  
 [1] All COVID-19 safety protocols will be strictly followed.  
 [2] Everyone over the age of 2 (including fully vaccinated people) must wear masks in indoor public settings.  
 [3] Attendees must have their COVID-19 vaccination card OR a PCR test indicating negative COVID-19 result within 72 hours.  
 Entry will not be allowed without vaccination card or negative PCR test completed within 72 hours.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ERITREAN AMERICANS & ENHOC

Additionally, the First Annual Eritrean Short Film Festival also premiered at the 2021 Eritrean Festival USA, featuring nine (9) short films. These showcased the talents of Eritrean film writers, directors, cinematographers, producers, artists, etc., while providing a glimpse into life, culture, and tradition.

Four (4) Eritrean authors commanded the stage at the Discussion with Authors segment of the programming. With the moderator stimulating discussions, our three (3) panelists gave the audience a sneak view into their stories and the emotions that still incapacitate. The message was unmistakable: we have a lot of stories to write and to read. The audience, at completion, rushed to an author's corner to continue the engagement and/or to get their copies signed.

Titled "Substance Use, Review, Prevention, and Treatment," this next segment provided a general overview of addiction and substances commonly abused. Discussions also included triggers and identifiers in adolescents as well as support and treatment options.

The workshop of Eritrean Professionals, "Eritrean Diaspora Professionals' Role Towards Nation-building," held on the second day of the Festival, had three panelists, and each shared their expertise. The main message emphasized at the workshop was any professional contribution to make Eritrea thrive counts. The successful seminar encouraged all Eritrean professionals to seek out purposeful opportunities aligned with their skills and capacities.

The Sports Committee organized Soccer, Bowling, and Golf tournaments. The golf tournament was held at the Langston Golf Course with nine (9) competitors. Three (3) teams and seven single-players competed in the Bowling tournament. In addition, there were eight (8) soccer teams, all from the DMV area, and 4 of which were under 17.

Eritrean superstars gave electrifying performances on Saturday and Sunday evenings, with audiences crowding the dance floor, swaying to all the rhythms of Eritrea's nine ethnic groups

**47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ERITREAN FESTIVAL USA 2021**

**DISCUSSION with Authors**

**PANELISTS:**

- AKBERET BEYENE** [ጸሐፊት (ግራፊክስን ጽሑፍ)]
- OGBAZGI TEKLE** [ጸሐፊት (ግራፊክስን ጽሑፍ)]
- AMANUEL BIEDEMARIAM** [Author of The History of The USA in Eritrea]

**DATE & TIME:**  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 15  
11:00PM

**PLACE:**  
ERITREAN CULTURAL & CIVIC CENTER  
2154 24TH PL NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20018

**MODERATOR:**  
**DAWIT G. HABTE** [Author of Gratitude in Low Voices]

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**Eri press MEDIA**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ERITREAN AMERICANS & ENHOCC  
More Info @ www.festivaleritrea.org

**47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ERITREAN FESTIVAL USA 2021**

**YOUTH SEMINAR**  
What is REALLY happening in the Horn of Africa ?

**PRESENTERS:**

- DINA M. ASFEHA**
- SENAI ANDIKIEL**
- BETHEL BERHANE**
- SIEM ERMIAS**
- SIMON TESFAMARIAM**

**DATE & TIME:**  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 14  
4:00PM

**PLACE:**  
ERITREAN CULTURAL & CIVIC CENTER  
2154 24TH PL NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20018

**COVID-19 GUIDELINES**

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More Info @ www.festivaleritrea.org

# 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ERITREAN FESTIVAL USA 2021



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! مستعدون دائما لكل الاحتمالات!

**DATE & TIME:**  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 15  
4:30PM

**PLACE:**  
ERITREAN CULTURAL &  
CIVIC CENTER  
2154 24TH PL NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20018

## SEMINAR Professional & Economic Contributions

PANELISTS:



DR. AREFAINE  
YOHANNES



DR. BERHE  
HABTE-GIORGIS



MR. PETROS  
YOSIEF



MODERATOR:  
IBRAHIM ABDUNUR



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OF ERITREAN  
AMERICANS  
& ENHOC  
More Info @  
[www.festivaleritrea.org](http://www.festivaleritrea.org)

# 47<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL ERITREAN FESTIVAL USA 2021



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! مستعدون دائما لكل الاحتمالات!

**DATE & TIME:**  
SATURDAY, 14 AUGUST 2021  
7:30PM TO 8:30PM

**PLACE:**  
ERITREAN CULTURAL &  
CIVIC CENTER  
2154 24TH PL NE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20018

## First Annual ERITREAN SHORT FILMS FESTIVAL



### FILM #1

NAME: ስለ ገብረ ገብረ  
WRITER: ለገሰ ገብረ  
DIRECTOR: ለገሰ ገብረ & ለገሰ ገብረ

### FILM #3

NAME: ገብረ  
WRITER: ገብረ ገብረ  
DIRECTOR: ገብረ ገብረ

### FILM #5

NAME: ገብረ ገብረ  
WRITER: ገብረ ገብረ  
DIRECTOR: ገብረ ገብረ

### FILM #7

NAME: Untitled by Harmil  
WRITER & DIRECTOR:  
Sami Gebremiche

### FILM #9

NAME: Harestay  
WRITER: Sami Gebremiche & Lal Mengesha  
DIRECTOR: Sami Gebremiche

### FILM #2

NAME: ለገሰ ገብረ ገብረ  
WRITER: ለገሰ ገብረ ገብረ  
DIRECTOR: ለገሰ ገብረ

### FILM #4

NAME: ገብረ ገብረ  
WRITER: ገብረ ገብረ  
DIRECTOR: ገብረ ገብረ

### FILM #6

NAME: ገብረ ገብረ  
WRITER: ገብረ ገብረ  
DIRECTOR: ገብረ ገብረ

### FILM #8

NAME: Beles  
WRITER & DIRECTOR:  
Sami Gebremiche

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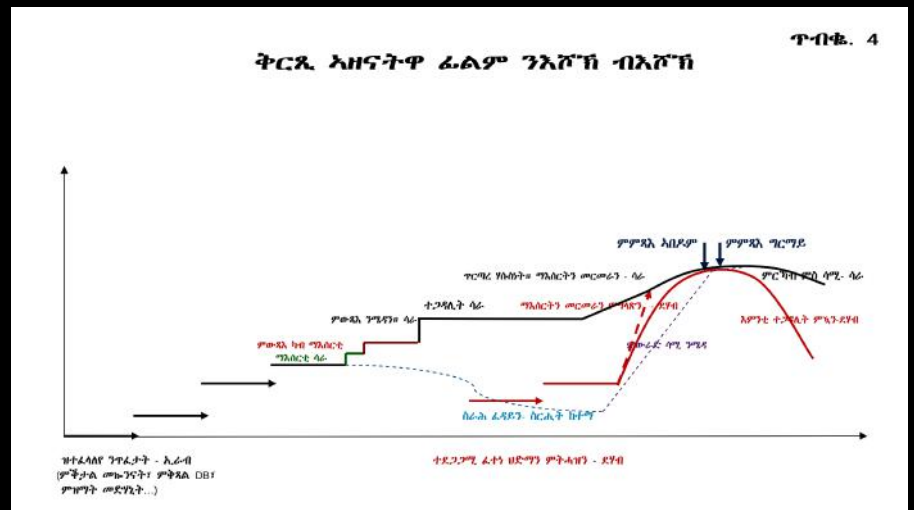
## Short films

The First Annual Eritrean Short Film Festival was held in Washington, D.C. on August 14th and 15th, 2021, during the 47th Annual Eritrean Festival.

Harestay by Sam Gebremiche (Super Gebar), a young Eritrean-American filmmaker, was one of the short films that were shown. Harestay was the official selection at the following film festivals:

Seattle Black Film Festival, New York Independent Film Festival, and The RSF Martha's Vineyard African American Film Festival.

Seven other Eritrea-produced short films were also screened. Film analysis and criticism are growing in Eritrea. Here is an example of an analysis of the film "A Thorn with a Thorn" in Tigrinya using the "Three-Act Structure".



A Movie (short film) Break featuring Harestay



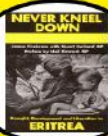
# Resources

## Books on/about Eritrea

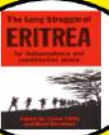
Novice



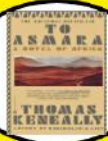
Roy Pateman:  
Eritrea: Even the Stones Are Burning



James Firebrace with Stuart Holland, MP:  
Eritrea: Never Kneel Down



Lionel Cliffe & Basil Davidson:  
The Long Struggle of Eritrea for  
Independence and Constructive Peace



Thomas Keneally:  
To/Towards Asmara (Historical novel)  
Author of Schindler's List.



Ruth Iyob:  
The Eritrean Struggle for Independence:  
Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941-1993



Tekeste Fekadu:  
The Tenacity And Resilience Of Eritrea 1979 -  
1983 (first of a trilogy)



Alemseghed Tesfai:  
Two weeks in the Trenches

Once you've finished reading the books above, you will be an  
advanced beginner of Eritrean history

## Books on/about Eritrea

Advance Beginner

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Do you want to move to the  
intermediate level of Eritrean history?



# Posters

The 60th anniversary of the beginning of the Armed Struggle for the independence of Eritrea. Source: Ministry of Information, Eritrea.



# The Photography of Eritrean-American, Yared Tseggai













