

## Press Release

### The Afars in Dankalia Under Existential Threat

Ever since the secession of Eritrea from Ethiopia, the Afar people who are the indigenous inhabitant of Dankalia have been subjugated to marginalization, persecution and ethnic cleansing by the Eritrean government. There is well documented evidence by the UN that the Afar people in the region have been deliberately targeted based on their ethnic backgrounds and their freedom of movement is severely restricted thus putting chock hold on day to day life of to feed their families.

Furthermore, arbitrary arrest, incommunicado disappearances, extrajudicial killings and the destruction of Afar traditional economic activities have also been reported in the UN Special Rapporteur reports. Ten of thousands of Eritrean Afar refugees have fled the country as the result of Eritrean government's policies towards the Afar people. Many Afars have lost their lives and those who remain in the country are at the brick of starvation and famine due to government imposed economic blockade and systematic marginalization. Some of the people who escaped these harsh treatments are living in the neighbouring countries as refuges in extremely difficulty conditions. These and other atrocities to which the Afar people in Dankalia are subjected to will undoubtedly continue unless the International community takes bold measures against the Eritrean government to address the deteriorating political, social and economic of the indigenous Afar people of Dankalia.

The Eritrean Afar National Congress (EANC), who first reported the starvation news and followed by various Eritrean Afar civic organizations and the diaspora community, accuses the Eritrean government for weaponizing the COVID-19 pandemic in order to further its political domination of indigenous Afar nation. The most recent Eritrean government inhuman treatment towards the Afar people in Dankalia is the total blockage of the regime's age old discriminatory policy only enhanced by the use of COVID-19 pandemic to isolate and curtail essential food delivery and aid to the region. As reported by Eritrean Afar National Congress who is fighting to restore self-determination of the Afar nation in Eritrea and citing credible sources, the report highlighted Afar traditional economic activities and means to support livelihoods have all being blocked by the government. Access to the sea, critical roads used for food transportation have all been closed. No fishing on the sea is allowed, camel caravans have been detained still missing. The Eritrean government has totally neglected its responsibility for looking after it's vulnerable to provide critically needed food assistance and healthcare. In addition, sadly it has wilfully refused the entry of international assistance to fight against the COVID 19 pandemic in the country.

The harsh treatment of the Afar people in Eritrea to uproot them from their indigenous land is well documented crimes reported by the UN Special Rapporteur (<https://undocs.org/a/hrc/44/23>). Despite this report by the UN and other creditable information regarding the government of Eritrea gross human right abuse, the abuse towards the Afar population in Dankalia is still condoned by the international community. Martin Luther King who was the champion of non-violence resistant leader in the US once said, "Injustice somewhere is a threat to injustice everywhere". The Afar people deserve to live in peace, in the safety of their traditional environment to develop their economic means and live in harmony with other nations and tribes in the region and contribute towards the betterment of regional peace and security.

Finally, the Afar Forum calls on the international community and the UN in particular to address and heed the UN Special Rapporteur on Dankalia and devise a long term solution to this ongoing human right abuse by the Eritrean government. The Afar Forum calls on all civilized people of the world to join hands with the Afar in Dankalia and provide a voice in solidarity to denounce the inhumane actions of the government of Eritrea.

Afar Forum Executive Committee

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