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3003 Bern, 16. Juni 1983

Notiz an die Politische Abteilung II

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Eritrea

- Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society (ERCCS)
- Eritrean Relief Committee (ERC)

Am 7. Juni sprachen auf eigenes Begehren der Präsident der ERCCS, Dr. Yousuf Berhanu, und der Vizepräsident der Eritrean Liberation Front, Dr. Habte Tesfamariam, bei uns vor.

Ihr Besuch galt einem doppelten Zweck: einerseits orientieren sie über den im Dezember 1982 erfolgten Zusammenschluss der eritreischen Befreiungsorganisationen "Eritrean Liberation Front/Revolutionary Council" (ELF-RC) und "Eritrean Liberation Front/Popular Liberation Forces" (ELF-PLF) bzw. deren Hilfsorganisationen "The Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society" (ERCCS) und "Eritrean Relief Committee" (ERC). Andererseits erkundigten sie sich, ob angesichts der in weiten Teilen Eritreas herrschenden Hungersnot und medizinischen Unterversorgung von Seiten der Eidgenossenschaft humanitäre Hilfe an die ERCCS/ERC gewährt werden könne.

Nach Angaben des Schweizerischen Roten Kreuzes (Frau Zanolli), mit dem die beiden Herren ebenfalls Besprechungen führten, ist die ERCCS von der LIGA in Genf nicht als staatliche Rotkreuz-Gesellschaft anerkannt.

Von unseren Gesprächspartnern erhielten wir die beiliegende Dokumentation.

Bis heute haben wir uns darauf beschränkt, unsere Hilfe an Eritrea in erster Linie über das IKRK zu leiten. Ausnahmsweise haben wir auch dem Christlichen Friedensdienst, dem HEKS und der Centrale Sanitaire Suisse Beiträge für Hilfsaktionen zugesprochen, die über die ERA (Eritrean Relief Association) abgewickelt werden, welche bekanntlich der "Eritrean People's Liberation Front" (EPLF) angeschlossen ist.

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Angesichts der Tatsache, dass bis heute keine Einigung unter den rivalisierenden eritreischen Befreiungsfronten zustande gekommen ist, erscheint es angezeigt, künftige Hilfeleistungen nur über das IKRK zu erbringen. Dies entspricht auch der vom SRK eingenommenen Haltung. Nur das IKRK bietet heute Gewähr für die unparteiische Verteilung der Hilfsgüter. Seine im Feld tätigen Delegierten koordinieren die Hilfe und sind in der Lage, die nötige Ueberwachung und Kontrolle auszuüben.

Entwicklungszusammenarbeit und
humanitäre Hilfe
Abteilung für humanitäre Hilfe
i.A.


E. Klöti

Beilagen:

- Unity Declaration
- Important Declaration
- The Derg's drought appeal
- Drought in Eritrea: urgent appeal

Kopie mit Beilagen an die Schweizerische Botschaft, Addis Abeba

Kopie ohne Beilagen an die Sektion Ostafrika

Kopie ohne Beilagen an Herrn Botschafter F.R. Staehelin

Kopie ohne Beilagen an Herrn E. Blaser

UNITY DECLARATION

between

The Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society and the Eritrean Relief Committee.

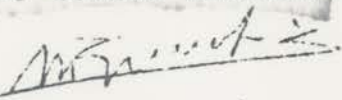
In line with the step taken to bring into direct effect unity of the Eritrean Liberation Front/Popular Liberation Forces and the Eritrean liberation Front/Revolutionary Council and in view of the necessity of unity, all efforts aiming at relieving the Eritrean people from the miserable and difficult living and health conditions they are facing and providing them with their minimum human needs, it has been decided that the efforts of both the Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society and the Relief Relief Committee should be united and coordinated through a merger body of the Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society (ERCCS) and the Eritrean Relief Committee (ERC) under the chairmanship of Dr. Yousuf Berhanu and the vice/chairmanship of Omar Abdalla.

Therefore, we hereby call upon all International, regional and national humanitarian Organizations and Societies to continue conducting their work relations with this Society and extend their support to it so that they would enable it continue its operation inside and outside Eritrea through its existing channels, and considering this step of uniting humanitarian efforts to undo the miseries of the Eritrean people to be a significant accomplishment, we urge all Eritrean sister organizations to follow suit and push forward all efforts directed towards the Unification of humanitarian activities in Eritrea.

for/ the Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society

ERCCS Chairman

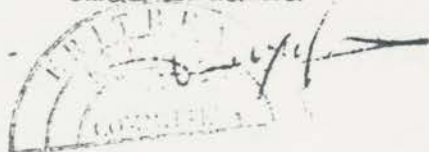
Dr. YOUSUF BERHANU



for/ the Eritrean Relief Committee

ERC Chairman

Omar Abdalla



Eritrea 21/12/1982.

AN IMPORTANT STATEMENT ON THE UNIFICATION OF
THE ERITREAN RED CROSS/CRESCENT SOCIETY AND THE ERITREAN
RELIEF COMMITTEE.

Within the framework of the unity agreement signed on 11/12/1982 between the Eritrean Liberation Front/Popular Liberation Forces and the Eritrean Liberation Front/Revolutionary Council, the Supreme Directing Committee, hereby, calls the executive bodies of both the Eritrean Red Cross/Crescent Society and the Eritrean Relief Committee to get united in such a practical formula that would ensure the unification of their humanitarian activities in Eritrea aimed at relieving the Eritrean people from both the malaise of the unjust war waged against them by the Ethiopian Armed Forces and the repercussions of Natural catastrophies specially drought. This call comes in confirmation to the spirit and letter of the Unity agreement between the two Organizations that stipulates that all their mass, humanitarian, information, political and military bodies and establishments should be united.

Supreme Directing Committee.

for/Eritrean Liberation Front
Popular Liberation Forces

OSMAN SALIH SABBE.

for/ERITREAN LIBERATION FRONT
Revolutionary Council

Dr. HABTE TESFAMARIAM.



18/12/1982.

12th December, 1982

Important Declaration

Our long Eritrean experience has confirmed the realisation of our national unity as the basic prerequisite for the victory of our revolution and the fulfilment of the just aspirations of our people to determine their own destiny and the ultimate winning of our national liberation.

Based on our deep understanding of the Eritrean national struggle, whose periodic divisions and civil wars have benefited only the Ethiopian occupiers, we believe that democratic dialogue is the only appropriate solution to the secondary contradictions that arise within the national force.

Moreover, considering the dangers and challenges confronting our struggle, both internally and externally, it becomes our historic task to gather all our human and natural resources for unified action. It is vividly clear that by exploiting our internal differences, Ethiopian colonialism has contrived to abolish our revolution and deprive us of our Eritrean entity.

Niether organisational expedience nor personal ambition can override the national interest. Since the national revolution demands the sacrifice of man's most valued possession - his life - there will henceforth be no room for personal aggrandisement or gain at the expense of the Eritrean entity, lest it should compound the challenges to the Eritrean entity, which is already endangered by Ethiopian and other international conspiracies.

In the full realisation of the foregoing, and in order

- 2 -

to implement this accord, the leaders of the ELF-PLF and the ELF-RC have agreed to integrate with immediate effect. They have also agreed to form a joint committee to complete the process of integration.

By this historic step, we take the opportunity of commending the unity of all the Eritrean liberation organisations. We call upon the other Eritrean fronts to take account of this courageous initiative and put behind them all their previous bitter feelings which have built up because of earlier divisions and civil wars. We hail our devoted peoples, who wish to unite their sons and their revolution by supporting this step for unity.

Victory to the united Eritrean revolution
Down with the Ethiopian colonizers
Glory to our revolutionary martyres

Eritrean Liberation Front
Revolutionary Council
Dr. Habte Tesfamariam
V/Chairman of RC

Eritrean Liberation Front
Popular Liberation Forces
Osman Saleh Sabe
Chairman of Central Council & EC



CAN ALL THE SUPPLIES REALLY REACH THE NEEDY?

Much through the international media the present drought in Ethiopia is being publicized and assistance sought and met through various humanitarian organizations, such as the Oxfam of England, Save the Children Fund, U.K., Norwegian Church Aid, etc...to mention but few.

Although drought, off and on, had undoubtedly been a serious problem in the countries of the Horn of Africa over the past years, the world at large should realize that this without doubt is not the only problem when it comes to the question of Ethiopia, for indeed this is a country that has chosen the road of war and destruction instead of allocating its natural resources, however meagre, for much needed socio-economic development. This is a country that according to World Bank economists' estimates is believed to have the capacity of supporting a population of somewhere in the neighbourhood of 330 million provided its natural resources are exploited well and to useful purposes, and whereas it is now supporting a mere 35 million people according to present estimates. It is a country that had been carrying on a war of wanton destruction against the Eritrean masses whose only crime had been that of their democratic right to fight for their self-determination, not to mention the war that it had been waging on the Tigrean people for the past decade, and other democratic oppositions throughout Ethiopia. As a surrogate of the Soviet Union it had waylaid much needed development projects, undertakings which would have reasonably surmounted the consequences of impending droughts and other natural calamities, and instead had chosen to barter whatever foreign currency earning commodities (e.g. coffee) it possesses in order to amass the greatest accumulation of war arsenal now unparalleled for an underdeveloped country of its kind. And it is now this very same country that had been relentlessly bent on the destruction of the properties and liquidation of this very same people for which it now appears to be humanely concerned before the eyes of all the humanitarian organizations and the World. What a contradiction indeed!

In principle the ERCCS (united ERCCS and ERC) is not against the well meant assistances provided to the needy people affected by the war and drought in the area, for, in the main, we believe very strongly that this emanates from the true and long established humanitarian traditions of assisting the sick and hungry. No misunderstanding, therefore, is either sought or intended at this juncture.

We have, however, most unquestionable misgivings about the impleme-

itation of these humanitarian assistances, however well intended at their origin, as to whether they are really going to reach the people and places where they are most needed for the following reasons:

Firstly, for a country that had been rife with war and strife going on over the decades, a country whose only acclaimed presence of authority had been, and still is, in the towns in many parts of Ethiopia and Eritrea in particular, we are not confident that this assistance provided for and channelled through the Military regime shall reach the rural parts of Eritrea and Ethiopia where the most telling effects of the drought is now apparent. And this for obvious reasons.

Secondly, for a country that had squandered its hard earned resources, and now hard pressed over how it should supply one of the largest conscription^{army} known to Africa at its disposal, a considerable part of these assistances is undeniably and rather unfortunately being channelled to supplement its war efforts. The fact that a good portion of these supplies had been, and still are, being diverted to its army is indeed well known. As if this is not enough, there had even been a recent allegation through the international media that some of this supplies are also being diverted to the Soviet Union.

What does all these mean in view of our own context? What these all means is clear beyond any reasonable doubt. It means that part of the supplies provided by these noteworthy organizations are missing their appropriate destination and are now being spent on the very war that had been at the root of all the evils, a war that had well grounded all development projects that might have been geared towards the improvement of the standard of living of our people virtually to a standstill, a war that had indeed compounded the consequences of the drought to unbelievable proportions and destroyed the livelihood of our people (the hundreds of thousands of Eritreans now found scattered in many countries in deplorable conditions is a living testimony), a war that is going to increase the suffering of our people even more if it continues. And herein lies the most unfortunate contradiction.

In conclusion, we are not here again putting any blame on these humanitarian organizations, whose motives, as had been attested many a time in the past, we believe to be true and consistent to the very religious and humanitarian principles on which they base their assistance to the needy wherever they may be. All we are saying is that, under the present circumstances, close scrutiny is neither being properly exercised such that the assistances provided are directed to their proper destination nor had it been at any time demonstrated to be practicable.

It is obvious as to who will suffer the consequences.

And since we also believe that this regime is trying to cover the war that is infact at the root of all the troubles in the area, by presently masquerading infront of the World public under the mandate of humanitarian concern for the drought affected victims, and is now appealing for aid from several humanitarian organizations by publicizing the seriousness of the drought(there is no doubt of its being serious) and therby through this unhappy occurence of the drought divert world attention from its true nature, we appeal to all concerned to treat the problem of this region in its whole context rather than in part. How much could have been achieved if this regime was prepared to listen to the democratic call of the Ethiopian people in general and the Eritreans in particular, such that peace and democracy shall reign in this region, is not even open to question. In all seriousness, all this call for humanitarian assistance shall have been very much minimized, or for that matter might have not been needed at all.


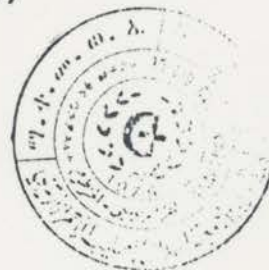
We bdlieve that if any rehabilitation is to be materialized and any development projects realized in full and for the benefit of all the people in the region, all hostilities this regime is now carrying on shall have to cease immediately. There is no alternative to the fact that war cannot go hand in hand with either rehabilitation or development.

Yours sincerely

f/ Dr. Yusuf Berhanu, chairman

Omar Abdalla, V/ chairman

Eritrean Red Cross and Crescent Society
(United ERCCS and ERC)

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ERITREAN
RED CROSS — CRESCENT
SOCIETY

Ref. : E.R.C.C.S.

P. O. Box 40783 — P. HALL

January 1983
Khartoum — Sudan



جمعية الهلال والصليب الأحمر
الأرتريّة

ص.ب ٦٠٧٦ - قاعة الشعب

خرطوم - السودان

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DROUGHT IN ERITREA

Ref.

Date JAN. 1983

URGENT APPEAL

الرقم :

التاريخ :

1. INTRODUCTION

Drought with its serious effects on agricultural production creates many social problems, by splitting homes, causing unwanted migration and eventually displacement. It disrupts the living conditions of the people by creating malnutrition and starvation, and is the cause of death of many thousands of people and livestock when it ensues. Out of the many natural calamities that effect mankind in different parts of the world drought had been, and still is, the main scourge of rural Eritrea. Even at the best of times the rains had never been good enough either in amount or distribution or both, and whenever any year is blessed with abundant rainfall, in some parts it still becomes a bit too much for the much used and much depleted soil to handle, especially in highland Eritrea. The crops nonetheless, suffer inspite of good amount of rainfall.

Hence, when one speaks of a good year in Eritrea, one usually means in relation to the worst ones, and that means when one is lucky enough to be able to harvest enough produce for him and his family to live on till the next harvesting season. Even this minimum of subsistence cannot be attained in many parts of Eritrea in any year, good or bad.

Many farmers are forced to migrate temporarily to the cities and neighbouring Sudan seeking jobs to supplement their living the dry and toughest months of the year. When all is said and done, since living memory agriculture has never been self-sufficient in many parts of Eritrea.

Tel. : 41114 — 43313

Bank of Khartoum — Account No. 25834

2. History of drought in Eritrea.

2.1 General picture of agriculture in Eritrea.

The most heavily populated highland Eritrea is mainly agricultural subsisting on cere farming employing the most traditional and primitive modes in existence today. The land besides its being overused and infertile, is much divided into smaller plots which doesn't lend itself to proper husbandry and mechanization.

In the lowlands the people mainly depends on raising livestock, subsisting mainly on their milk and only occasionally affording themselves with the luxury of meat. Livestock are raised, in the main, for status symbol and social recognition in these areas, and to a large extent tradition had been set against successful commercialization of this sector. The people are in the main pastoralists and lead a nomadic mode of existence.

2.2 Drought episodes.

In so far as one doesn't mention the history of Eritrea without giving due consideration to the various conflicts its people fought against foreign invaders, one cannot pass also without remembering the different drought episodes that occurred in the past and their bitter memories.

2.21 The most serious in living memory was the one that occurred in the late forties (48) and much remembered in our folklore by its local name 'Akhida' (in Tigriña it implies to the time when a brother forsook his brother). Untold numbers of people and livestock perished of the serious famine that resulted.

2.22 Around the year of 1959, during the Eritrean administration there was another drought of unknown magnitude, because there is no recorded statistics as to the number of people affected. The existing local government in federated Eritrea managed to amass public funds, and by purchasing sorghum from the Sudan and flooding the market at government fixed low prices tried to outcompete the prohibitive prices met by the local traders. This is believed to have alleviated the situation to some extent, but was undeniably not enough for the problem to have been

solved as a whole. Many thousands still remained without benefiting any from this government overture for lack of much wanted cash.

2.23 Another drought just as serious but much less advertised than its contemporary Wollo drought in Ethiopia, which drew much of world attention and sympathy, also occurred in Eritrea (72-73). In conformity to the policy of the Haileselassie regime, the existence of this drought in Eritrea had never been mentioned to the outside world and its plight remain buried.

2.24 The poor harvest of the year 1976-77 had also affected throughout Eritrea and were the cause of fresh influx of migration to the Sudan.

3. How Eritrean Farmers Manage to Survive the Bad Years.

Farmers in Eritrea depend almost entirely on the annual rainfall which, as we have seen, is never satisfactory even at the best of time. Crops had never been good at least in some parts, even in any of those years that were considered to be good in general. So Eritrean farmers had to forage any avenue available in those times to make do for what they could not, which temporarily necessitated separation from their families and abandoning their permanent abodes for varying lengths of times. Several thousands had to eventually leave their beloved homeland in the way for good, and migrate elsewhere in the Sudan and other countries. So migration from the rural to urban areas in part, but in the main to the Sudan and far beyond in search of available jobs to support their families had been and still remains to be the main trend. The thousands of Eritreans living in the Sudan and found scattered in other countries is a living testimony of this.

Many peasants used to supplement their incomes during the hard times by looking for temporary employments in the several fruit, vegetable, and cotton plantation that used to exist and run by foreigners, mostly Italians. Others used to try to make ends meet by digging wells and planting small vegetable gardens during the dry season and selling their produce in the market.

4. How Situation Have Worsened During the Ethiopian Occupation

4.1 Consequent to the colonial war many owners of the big farms that used to temporarily employ thousands of Eritrean peasants had left the country and the farms have since been abandoned.

4.2 Migration from the rural to urban areas was restricted by the colonial regime, so that those who could find temporary jobs in towns during the bad seasons and support their families were denied of it.

4.3 The colonial regime by purposely undertaking its military campaigns during the planting and harvesting seasons, disrupts agricultural activities in rural areas in its attempt at subduing the revolution by starving the people. This is very much in accord to the much renowned counter revolution dictum that say, that in order one to kill the fish one has to dry the sea.

4.4 The enemy runs methodical and selective campaign of killing plow-oxen and destroying agricultural implements, and thus denying our people of the only means of farming they possess.

4.5 By wantonly bombarding peaceful villages and selectively massacring able bodies younger men and women in rural Eritrea, and with the resultant mass exodus and migration, the enemy had contributed in weakening the agricultural labour force and seriously damaging agricultural productivity.

4.6 In nomadic areas where the peoples mainstay is by raising livestock the enemy's consistent policy had been the depopulation of livestock by undertaking heavy bombardment on water points and other livestock concentrations periodically causing several hundreds of deaths. Poisoning of wells had also been the usual practice of the enemy, and had been the cause of many deaths in both humans and animals.

5. Other factors contributing to low agricultural productivity.

Considering the nature of agriculture in Eritrea, droughts and rainfall uncertainties, as we have seen, are by far the most important contributing factors in low agricultural production. Other factors equally as important and seriously complementing the uncertainties of annual rainfall had also their share to play, and these are;

5.1 Where the rains are comparatively good the soils suffer from poor fertility.

The heavily populated agricultural lands in the highlands suffer from many hundreds of years of overuse and lack of fertility. The

- 5 -

farmers yearly try to fortify the soil by fertilizing their land with animal manure and other fertilizers if available, but unless there is good distribution of rainfall, which invariably is not often the case, this often results in lengthening vegetative growth and much less in yields.

5.2 Wherever the sils happen to be good the rains are usually bad

Although there is some good and virgin lands in lowland areas that could be cultivated, the rains over these areas are often scanty to support crop production, and in some years hardly rain at all. However, future prospects on irrigation from wells and dams would appear to alleviate the problem, a prospect which under our present circumstances could not be realized.

5.3 Weakened labour force.

The systematic bombardment and genocidal campaigns undertaken by the enemy on peaceful civilian population, and the forced mass migration that results from it has seriously compromised the agricultural labour force, and, hence, agricultural productivity.

5.4 Lack of Improved and Scientific Methods of Agricultural Practises

Because of the protracted instability in our country our people could not benefit from the use of improved methods of farming, such as all needed in husbandry agricultural lands (land preparation, cultivation, fertilization, pest control ... etc) and increasing yields. Our farmers still resort to their age old practices of oxen driven plows and other primitive methods and always producing poor yields.

5.5 The Role of Malnutrition and Diseases in Affecting Individual Labour Capacity.

6. The ERCCS in Combatting Droughts and its Role in Rehabilitation

6.1 The ERCCS was established in 1975 as a National Humanitarian Organization. The society is strictly governed by the principles and regulations of the International humanitarian laws and Geneva Conventions.

6.2 Objectives

- a) To expose the inhuman Ethiopian massacres and the suppressions, degradations of our people inside or outside the country to the world public attention through the use of international and national media and other extensive contacts.
- b) To undertake relief and rehabilitation and run development projects and other programmes in the liberated areas through the assistance

- 6 -

received from: Sister Societies, various concerned humanitarian organisations, individual contributions and other institutions.

6.3 A Brief Summary of the Society Activities

4) After evaluating the condition of the thousands of displaced Eritreans, the victims of war and drought, this society has been able to assist the needy people in the different administrative units of Eritrea in the past years. Its infrastructure had been, and still is, active in reaching our people with much needed supplies even under the most extreme war situation and other strenuous circumstances.

b) Its Medical Activities

Through the various hospitals, clinics, mobile teams in the field the Society had been able to provide medical treatments, combat major public health problems such as Malaria and other diseases. Here is a brief summary of the Society scope of activities in this field over the years.

Y E A R S	N. of population treated	
	Males	Females
1977	200,453	146,017
1978	333,438	247,420
1979	484,383	358,437
1980	496,618	347,520

c) Its Educational Activities

Thousands of school age children were benefiting the fruits of primary education through the joint effort of the ERCCS and the ELF Social Affaires Educational Departement. In about 100 schools found distributed in the liberated areas about 25,000 students were attending primary education in the fiscal year of 1981 alone.

Vocational Training in the crafts was also provided, especially for disabled war veterans in order to enable them to lead purposeful life and join the society.

A major effort was also undertaken in the last years to make hundreds of thousands of Eritreans in the rural parts, literate; and the results had been very encouraging indeed.

- 7 -

d) Relief Aids

Our society's main goal being that of:

- (a) Saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of the Eritrean people under the threat of death due to starvation and diseases;
- (b) eventually stopping the continuous exodus of Eritrean civilian population into the Sudan and settling them inside Eritrea.

Our relief aid was mainly geared towards giving material assistance to the most needy and displaced people. With this in mind, more than 100,000 displaced people families (around 500,000 individuals) had received the beneficial assistance of the ERCOS distribution of food aid in the past six years.

E) Rehabilitation

In several parts of Eritrea pilot projects for rehabilitation programmes took place under the initiatives and guidance of the ERCOS. In conjunction with the ELF Co-operative department simple farm implements were provided to nomadic people to encourage them to start crop farming, Flour mills installed and other assistance provided in the settlement camps.

Among the displaced people found scattered all over Eritrea somewhere in the neighbourhood of 15,000 people have undergone the positive experience of living in settlement camps, one good example being that of Tehadso.

7. P R E S E N T D R O U G H T S I T U A T I O N

7.1 At present there is a serious drought covering the whole country, whose degree of severity appear to vary from region to region. The last rains had been short-cut in most areas when the crops were about beginning to seed resulting in poor yields or none at all.

7.2 Here below in the following table are the number of villages affected by the present drought. It is to be noted that these presentation covers areas in the administrative regions where our units had been able to reach and make a study, and by no means covers the magnitude of the drought in the rest of the country.

Drought affected villages and populations in administrative units 1,2&3

No.	Adm. units	Districts	No. of villages	Total population affected
1.	1	Koita	24	6592
2.	"	Sosane	23	4594
3.	"	Shambuco	27	8082
4.	"	Hegher	23	4450
5.	"	Shederla	22	3248
6.	"	Foshla	16	4546
7.	"	Mogaraib	18	5469
8.	"	Tawda/Samtorda	30	8149
9.	"	Korenda	13	3493
10.	"	Awgaro	23	5587
11.	"	Tokombia	23	5428
12.	"	Nayte	17	4896
13.	"	Haberreda	17	4456
14.	"	Serobatia	15	5277
15.	"	Taguda	17	5074
16.	"	Goludge	27	7479
17.	"	Zeret	12	3470
18.	"	Sheleb	17	5950
19.	"	Adi-Binai	24	6400
20.	"	Mansura	31	9850
21.	"	Hirkok	15	5150
22.	"	Shebek	23	6650
23.	"	Rahia-Abai	21	6350
24.	"	Asha Golgol	15	5150
25.	"	Sheglet	12	4200
26.	"	Tekreret	27	7450
27.	"	Kar Obel	16	5600
			Total	153,140

8. C O N C L U S I O N

The Eritrean history and the life of its people is full of strife, droughts, famine, migration, and displacements. In contemporary history there had never been any let up in the harassment of both manmade and natural factors, almost invariably complementing each other at one and the same time, making the life of our people one that is unbearable and without any hope.

The unjust war waged by the colonial regime on our people and small country, the almost daily bombardments, massacres, and wanton destruction of properties has few parallels in the world today. Its compounded effects on our daily social life, family stability, productive labour is simply staggering to the imagination. Here is a small nation fighting for its just and undeniable right of self-determination, and had been paying heavy human and material sacrifices for over twenty years now. One does not need any more testimony than to see for himself the hundreds of thousands of Eritreans living abroad scattered as the refugees in various countries, their abject living conditions with uncertain individual or national rights, to understand the scope of the problem.

The interplaying factors of droughts and war have prohibited our people from employing their utmost capacity in production. Malnutrition and starvation is rampant, and diseases take their heavy toll for lack of comprehensive medical care. A certain professor of nutrition used to jest thus: 'There is more protein in the urine of an average American than there is in the average daily diet of an individual in the Third World countries'. We wonder if it was really a jest or our honorable professor was alluding much to the reality that exists today. After appreciating our situation we feel that there is more of the truth than jest in what our professor remarked.

We feel that healing the untold miseries cumulated over several years, and rehabilitation of our displaced people is one that requires a major undertaking, and that what we can do on our part through our

- 10 -

humble organization the ERCSS, can only be a tip in the iceberg. To accomplish this operation it requires first and foremost the complete cessation of hostilities and return of normal life.

We are appealing all the same, to all conscientious individuals, and all freedom loving people of the world, humanitarian organizations, to assist us in what they can, so that under our present circumstances and in the capacity we have we can do all we can to support our people survive the present drought.

Eritrean Red Cross and Crescent Society.

