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BAYTO YIAKL USA

المتحدة الولايات كفاية مجلس

Subject: Letter of Concern on illegal activity in our community

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C. St. NW
Washington, DC 20520

July 11, 2022

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We would like to draw your attention to the illegal fundraising event being organized by the Eritrean government and its representatives in our locality and seek your support in preventing them from going forward with the event.

Most of Eritrean-Americans who currently reside in the State of Texas fled Eritrea due to gross human rights violations, wars, persecutions, forced labor and lack of freedom perpetuated by the dictatorial regime in Eritrea. The State of Texas is now home for many Eritrean-Americans where we enjoy freedom and opportunities to work and pursue education to realize the American Dream.

Unfortunately, the Eritrean regime continues to interfere in our lives here in America by carrying out illegal and coercive activities in our Eritrean-American communities to extort our hard-earned money for waging wars and destabilizing the Horn of Africa. In November 2021, President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order (E.O.) 14046 that imposed sanctions on Eritrean military leadership and government entities for their involvement in the ongoing crisis in northern Ethiopia. The Eritrean regime has been an active participant in the war and a destabilizing actor in the region contributing to prolonging the conflict that has so far claimed hundreds of thousands of people.

To evade and circumvent U.S. sanctions, the Eritrean regime is resorting to illicit fundraising schemes by organizing events in the State of Texas under the banner of "Eritrean Festival In Dallas." The ploy is aimed at collecting funds to finance its war adventures in Ethiopia. Most of these illegal and subversive activities are tightly controlled by the Eritrean Embassy in Washington D.C. with elaborate mechanism in place to evade the sanctions.

The Eritrean regime has been at odds with U.S. interests and policies for many years, from supporting militant Islamist al-Shabaab in Somalia to siding with Russia for its blatant invasion of Ukraine. It's critical for the State of Texas and U.S. law enforcement agencies to give particular attention to the illegal activities employed by the Eritrean Embassy on U.S. soil.

The Eritrean regime operates like a mafia, it is known for its coercive tactics, money laundering, extortion, racketeering and instigating violence within the community.

In light of the Eritrean regime's attempts to terrorize and coerce Eritrean-Americans, we appeal to you and your good office to halt the upcoming unlawful activity "Eritrean Festival In Dallas" from taking place. The event is scheduled to take place from August 5th-7th, 2022. We would also request your keen attention to the Notice of OFAC Sanctions Actions on Eritrea:

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/29/2021-25957/notice-of-ofac-sanctions-actions>


We thank you in advance for your support in this matter, and we are available at your convenience should you require further information.

Sincerely,

Thank you,
Bayto Yiakl USA

Bayto Yiakl USA, a grassroots organization representing Eritrean-Americans from over 40 cities in the United States and advocating for democracy and rule of law in Eritrea. Our main goal is to bring peace, justice, and democracy in Eritrea. Since our establishment in 2019, our movement has inspired tens of thousands of Eritreans and succeeded in breaking the silence and fear of speaking against the dictatorship in Asmara.

• Bayto Yiakl USA

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