



“Commission of Inquiry”: Unwarranted witch-hunting of Eritrea

The “Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea” has recently issued invitations to “interested individuals, groups and organizations” to submit alleged human rights violations, **“including where these violations may amount to crimes against humanity perpetrated in Eritrea since its independence”**.

This act constitutes yet another campaign of unwarranted witch-hunting of Eritrea by an entity which has clearly opted to instrumentalize human rights to serve political agendas.

Indeed, for the “Commission of Inquiry”, it is the very independence of Eritrea, won through a popular resistance against colonial occupation after three decades of armed struggle and huge human sacrifices, that has to be put on trial. This is too indecent and irresponsible to merit serious consideration. COI’s appalling imprudence is not only an insult to Eritrea but it also makes a caricature of fundamental pillars and sacrosanct principles of human and people’s rights enshrined in the UN Charter, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as other relevant international conventions.

The “Commission of Inquiry” has been afflicted by political bias and a litany of procedural flaws in the manner that it carried out its “investigative mission” from the outset. Eritrea has elucidated these untenable flaws in its comprehensive response to the report issued by the COI in June this year. Major anomalies in the process include the following:

1. The HRC resolutions contradict accepted norms by a majority of States against country-specific measures in situations where the Universal Periodic Review mechanism is operational and effective. Eritrea was and remains fully engaged in the UPR process. In this respect, the discriminatory measures invoked against Eritrea contravene agreed ground rules and procedures and have no dividend in the promotion and protection of human rights.

2. The HRC resolutions that created the Special Rapporteur and the Commission of Inquiry were adopted in an under-handed manner to serve overriding political agendas of certain countries. In both cases, the resolutions were mainly tabled and co-sponsored by Somalia and Djibouti. These countries were prodded to do so to give an African semblance to an exercise that was in reality “led behind” by certain powers.

3. The Special Rapporteur on Eritrea has a personal history of biased and subversive involvement in the affairs of a sovereign nation she barely knows about. But she was handpicked for the job in spite of her compromised political stance and obvious conflict of interest. In addition, she was appointed to the COI; an explicable act bound to corrode the neutrality, objectivity and credibility of that “new fact-finding” body.

4. All three COI members subsequently exceeded their mandate to actively engage in militant smear campaigns against Eritrea when their report was issued but long before it was submitted to the HRC for discussion and due consideration. This was a clear violation of their mandate but it also exposed their lack of neutrality and professionalism. In spite of these obvious flaws, the HRC failed to take requisite remedial action.

5. There is overwhelming evidence that COI members maintain to this day open association and close consultations with subversive Eritrean elements in the Diaspora as well as with Ethiopia and Djibouti, although they know full well that the latter have adversarial ties with Eritrea. On the other hand, the COI continues to refuse to meet or receive submissions from thousands of Eritreans in the Diaspora as well as neutral institutions and private foreign companies that have presence in Eritrea but that seriously question and refute its erroneous approaches, narrations and conclusions.

6. The last report of COI was collected from a few hundred asylum seekers without rigorous validation for its veracity. The current process underway will not be different in any way as COI’s standards of proof and validation remain awfully subjective and weak, rationalized as they are by what is termed as “reasonable grounds to believe”.

In the event, it is clear that COI’s mission, working modalities and objectives have nothing to do with the promotion of human rights. This is essentially an entity that has set out to undermine Eritrea’s inalienable sovereign rights under the pretentious umbrella of human rights. COI’s mission, including the present request for submissions, must therefore be rejected and challenged in its totality.

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