

ELF-RC and EPC (Islah) Hold Bilateral Talks on EDA Matters

Wednesday, 28 March 2007

High level delegations of the ELF-RC and the Eritrean People's Congress (EPC) on 26 March 2007 held bilateral talks in Khartoum and evaluated the outcome of the recent EDA congress.

Initiated by and held at the office of EPC (also known as Harakat al-Islah al-Islami al-Eritri) the meeting was attended on the Islah side by Adem Ismail (Abu Haars), head of economy and finance office; Ali Mohammed Saeed, head of information, and Abdurahman Osman (Abu Badr), head of Khartoum office. On the ELF-RC side were Woldeyesus Ammar, the chairman; Tesfai Woldemichael (Degiga), the vice chairman; Gime Ahmed, head of social affairs, and Mohammed Adem Artaa, head of the office for youth and women's affairs. The two sides agreed in their evaluation of the EDA congress as a relative success achieved through compromises that led to revising controversial articles in the Charter. However, both sides had differing views on the cause of the crisis but all the same agreed on the fact that the EDA central council failed to elect a leadership. The ELF-RC noted that the congress was convened in the first place to resolve a number of big issues that included settling the problem of proportional representation, but this issue was once again left pending because no effort was done by the executive office to have it settled at the congress.

The EPC/Harakat Islah delegation emphasized that the split of the EDA in two blocs was not to the interest of anybody and none of the member organizations expected a split until it happened. The ELF-RC delegation expressed satisfaction in the role of Islah in helping revise the Charter but did not hide its surprise at the Islah Movement's insistence on Hussein Khalifa's candidature for a third term. The ELF-RC reaffirmed that it had no ill feelings towards Hussein Khalifa and the sisterly organization that he leads but it expected all organizations not to insist on his candidature after discussing at the central council meeting the defective reports and shortcomings of Hussein Khalifa's leadership in the previous two years. The ELF-RC delegation also stated that the compromises that today's Bloc One presented at the central council meetings were sufficiently reasonable proposals that could have saved any split in the alliance. The Islah Movement and ELF-RC underlined the importance of consensus in the life of any alliance, and agreed that the EDA is now split in two parts and that there is a need of searching for a mechanism that can facilitate coordination of activities between the two blocs as well as other opposition organizations.