

EPLF's Last Journey: From Afabet to Asmara via Massawa in Three Years

Written by Administrator

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Eritrea won its independence militarily against all the odds, thanks to the gallant EPLF fighters and following a referendum, its independence was legally recognised by the International Community against the wishes of its enemies, thanks to the wisdom of the EPLF leadership. Eritrea survived as an economically viable and politically independent nation in a volatile region in spite of all the conspiracies, sabotages and conflicts and is set to achieve food security and [holistic development](#)

in 2011 thanks to its people inside the country and in the Diaspora. The icing on Eritrea's 20th

birthday cake is expected to be delicious, thanks to Eritrea's natural resources such as fish, gold, silver, zinc, copper, lead, cement, potash etc.

In March 1988, the backbone of the occupying army in Eritrea, the Nadew Command, was crushed by the gallant EPLF fighters in 48 hours after it had entrenched itself in the outskirts of Afabet town for nearly ten years. This command was composed of three divisions and other support units and had over 20,000 soldiers including [Soviet military advisors of whom three were made prisoners of war](#) for the first time in the history of the liberation struggle.

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This incredible victory sent shockwaves throughout the globe and the late Basil Davidson who was a highly respected historian and a radical journalist happened to be in nearby EPLF base to give first hand and reliable eyewitness account of the greatest military victory scored by the EPLF. Basil acknowledged that this victory was the most significant victory for any liberation movement since the Vietnamese victory at [Dien Bien Phu](#) that brought an end to French colonialism in Vietnam.

Several counter offensives and other attempts made by the Dergue regime to recapture lost grounds failed miserably further demoralising its soldiers. While the occupying army tried to restructure its resources and re-evaluate its strategy, the EPLF made further surprise attacks behind enemy lines in other parts of the country and even across the border in Ethiopia in order to divert the enemy's attention and destroy its organs piece by piece.

The EPLF leadership acknowledged that at least three more major victories had to be scored by the EPLF before the occupying regime can collapse and be uprooted from Eritrea for good. Therefore, two years later, in February 1990, the EPLF confidently attacked the occupying army in the port city of Massawa both by land and sea scoring another major victory in the history of the Eritrean struggle for independence. Operation Fenkil is a historic victory in the thirty years of struggle for liberation. This victory sent a clear message to the International Community that the clock was racing against the downfall of the regime. Eritreans knew that independence was only a matter of months.

The occupying army that had its backbone broken beyond repair in Afabet, in March 1988, was strangulated in Massawa in February 1990 and was almost completely disabled. Subsequently, the regime was betrayed by its military officials in a failed coup attempt and by those countries that supported its aggressive policy on Eritrea.

However, the regime maintained its areal superiority and carried out merciless and indiscriminate areal bombardment killing several civilians using illegal weapons such as cluster bombs and napalm gases that it obtained from countries which supported its occupying force in order to annihilate the EPLF and prevent the birth of Eritrea in the Horn of Africa.

Eritreans celebrated the great victory, 21st year liberation of Massawa in February 2011 and will be celebrating one of the major victories, 22nd year

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liberation of Afabet in March 2011. The sum of these and other major victories led to the historic and final victory of Eritrea's independence on 24th

of May 1991 and Eritreans round the globe are gearing up to celebrate this glorious occasion in unison, patriotic zeal and festive atmosphere.

Every year, Eritreans celebrate the anniversaries of these great victories and the historic occasion of Eritrea's independence, however, on 20th of June, they renew their allegiance and commitment to their martyrs and make vows to defend and develop Eritrea in unison.