

Remarks Made by H.E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps on the Occasion of the National Day of the Peoples Republic of Algeria in Tokyo December 20, 2019:

**Your Excellency Mr. Mohammed El Amine BENCHERIEF
Mrs Amira Lotifia BENCHERIEF
Citizens of Algeria present
Honorable guests present (all protocol observed)**

First and foremost let me express, in my capacity as a Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo and as Ambassador of the State of Eritrea, our deep respect and unfathomed love for the brave Algerians who sacrificed their life for freedom and dignity – the sole reason why we are all gathered here to commemorate and celebrate the National Day of Algeria today.

The glory of this day shall always be shared with all the people of the 54 independent countries in our beloved continent of Africa - not only because the heroes and heroines of Algeria ascertained by a historic armed struggle their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in 1962 but because it is also these same heroes and heroines who have established the benchmark for all African nation states and oppressed people in the world that there is no going back on the long arduous road which is destined towards human emancipation in general and the preserving the dignity of the colonized people of Africa in particular.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to share briefly how the revolutionary experience affected my generation and the generation of our fathers who fought in World War II and subsequent wars in Korea peninsula and the Congo.

(I understand Madam BENCHERIEF the good wine and cuscus of Algeria are still waiting for the guests to enjoy and hope you will be patient with me as usual)

1. Let me ask the participants if they know who “Djamila the Algerian” is:

In early 60th, a film made on the story of one heroine of the Algerian struggle was shown in Cinema Impero in the city of Asmara Eritrea. It was like when the Beatles Music Band arrival in Tokyo. Our father’s generation, who were betrayed after the Second World War, and the screening of this film infected us, their siblings immediately. Every one of us in the city wanted to be a “Djamila the Algerian”. The genie of a revolution to achieve freedom was out of the bottle and no super power could get it back to the bottle again - into the status quo of oppression - in the Horn of Africa after this.

I am sure when go home today and Google “Djamila the Algerian” in U Tube – and take time to watch it carefully, you will be infected definitely and if you are not infected by any chance positively, I think it is a missed opportunity that only happens once in a century in humans. You should not worry much about it.

**2. Let me ask to the participants:
Who is Mohammed SAHNOUN?**

In late 60th, the Assistance Secretary General of the Organization of the African Union (OAU) who was a beacon of hope for the struggle for freedom and dignity in the Horn of Africa was Mohammed SAHNOUN. He was the one who conveyed again, this time in person and intellectually, the spirit of “Djamila the Algerian” to Haile Selassie University of Addis Abeba.

SAHNOUN was the only official in the OAU who faced and kept at bay the wrath and anger expressed by the students from Eritrea, Ethiopia and other scholarship African students who were lead by Tilahun Gizaw. In 1968 this group of students were dismayed and ready to ransack the OAU headquarter for its absolute silence on the 1965 White Unilateral Declaration of Rhodesia's Independence lead by Ian Smith, and assisted by South Africa and Portugal.

Indeed the voice of the student's represented by their leader Tilahun Gizaw, Mohammed SAHNOUN the Assistance Secretary General of the Organization of the African Union and President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana were loud and clear like "Djamila the Algerian" for everyone to hear in Africa. Unfortunately, Nkrumah was overthrown and Tilahun Gizaw was gunned down in the street while walking home peacefully from school. When oppression and persecution became rampant, many of our student leaders who survived imprisonment and assassinations headed to the land of "Djamila the Algerian" for protection and wisdom during this period. It is through this and other local history of struggle and solidarity that generations in Africa got the chance to develop among them trust and friendship towards a common destiny.

Mohammed SAHNOUN - from the Land of the spirit of "Djamila the Algerian" - was one of the key negotiators who facilitated the signing of the final and binding Algiers Peace Agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 2000. May he rest in peace now! The mission he embarked on decades back has been accomplished after 18 years of open deception.

As we all know, Prime Minister Abiy of Ethiopia was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2019. Yes, it is dawn after a long night since we saw "Djamila the Algerian" in film screens of the 60th but it is obvious that her true spirit has

always been here in the last half a century and shall stay in the Horn of Africa for ever now.

Last but not least, I would like to reiterate and remind all present here to celebrate the National Day of Algeria and the spirit of “Djamila the Algerian” – who still lives and is kicking alive in Africa especially in the Horn of Africa today.

Thank you for lending me your ears and please don’t forget to watch the film – “Djemila the Algerian”- because that is why we are gathered here tonight.

Pass the word!!! Africa is a land of heroes and heroines!!