



www.EritreanRefugees.org

This is a transcription of a letter written by one Eritrean refugee inmate to others in an Egyptian jail in 2010, following their flight from repression in Eritrea through The Sudan and into Egypt. The translation is provided and certified by The America Team for Displaced Eritreans. Provided on January 7, 2011.

To my brothers and sisters in this jail:

Firstly, glory is to God and the Lord Jesus Christ for being with us and for us. How are you all doing? Glory is to God for He gave us his blessing so that we can remain alive to this hour.

After saying this, my brothers and sisters, I humbly urge you to read the following:

Note that the most saddening thing is that we Eritreans are causing problem on each other just for the sake of getting this dirty money.

1) A bad thing about brokers - A broker by the name Tedros who lives in Khartoum contacted an Eritrean brother named Medhanie. Medhanie is an orphan – he has no father, no mother. Medhanie told Tedros that he is an orphan and that he had not been in a position to support his siblings back at home financially. Then Tedros advised Medhanie that he should go to Israel. But Medhanie told Tedros that he can't pay money to do that. Then Tedros suggested to him that he could send him without any charges and that Medhanie could pay back after he gets to Israel. *[Note from translator: Based on other witness general accounts, we can assume that Tedros is doing so in order to sell Medhanie to the Rashaida by deceitfully promising the Rashaida that Medhanie will pay later as he reaches Sinai. So, Tedros gets his money from Rashaida without Medhanie's awareness]*. Medhanie agreed and began his long journey in hopes of reaching Israel.

As Medhanie reached the Sinai, however, he faced a completely different situation. The Rashaida asked him to pay money. He asks them to allow him to call Tedros. He calls Tedros and informs him of the new condition. Tedros broke his promise and told Medhanie that there was nothing he could do to help out. Medhanie was handed over to a well known human trafficker in Sinai called Abdella. Abdella then started persecuting him a lot. Medhanie eventually found it too difficult to withstand the persecution and decided to escape from jail. And so he did. But he was caught shortly after he left and was brought back to the jail. He tried for the second time but was caught again. His suffering escalated from time to time and gradually he went out of his mind to the extent of eating his own waste. Abdella then released him but Medhanie had nowhere to go. Now, one can see Medhanie laughing while nobody is around him, shouting by saying that he is a man... but it is sad to see Medhanie looking like a speaking statue.

- 2) Three months ago, 50 Eritreans left the Sudan on 8 trucks heading to Israel (via Egypt). 15 of them died during the trip due to dehydration. The rest continued their trip. One day when they left a place that they had stayed in, they found out that one person was missing. Evidently, that person (Yonas) had overslept. The Rashaida decided to go back to the place and see if he could locate Yonas. He found him but Yonas had already lost his mind because of the desperate situation he encountered in the desert after learning that he had remained behind. The Rashaida understood Yonas' mental situation and started checking all his clothes. He found \$2000 that Yonas had hard earned by working in the Sudan and put it in a secure place on his pants. The Rashaida then took the money but brought Yonas to the group. Yonas started to feel better despite losing his money to the Rashaida. However, things changed soon. When all his friends paid money and continued their journey to Israel, he could not make it with them because he had no money. Yonas then ended up being mentally disabled.
- 3) Eritrean refugees and some brokers from The Sudan went on a journey to Egypt. While crossing the desert, many out of them became so dehydrated that one Eritrean broker asked the Rashaida to provide the travelers with water. The Rashaida got mad on him. He felt offended because he believed that the broker was instructing him what to do. Thus, he took his gun and killed the Eritrean broker. At the time, his cousin was on board and suddenly fell on his cousin's body. The Rashaida then killed this one, too. Both cousins lost their lives and were thrown into one grave.