



To Infinity and Beyond

To all Eritreans working for ENAMCO & other mining companies in Eritrea

Your parents see you leaving the house early in the morning.

Your new military uniform cleaned and pressed to make you look neat and honorable.

You bow your head and kneel a bit in front of your elderly parents.

Your voice asking:” Merkeenei Adey maarey” {Bless me dear mother}

Her loving hand caressing your head and her other hand lifting you straight.

She says “keed bel ze weedey. Zelotey meskha aloo” {go my son, my prayers follow you}

Your father standing straight on the other side of the family door.

His eyes pushing tears away, the tall man is suddenly leaning on your Mom’s shoulder as if he is losing control.

You stand straight and salute to attention your parents. Your first and foremost leaders.

Your eyes looking straight at the Eritrean flag hanging on the background wall of your parents’ living room. They framed the flag the first day of Eritrea Independence with pride, hope and dreams yet to come.

You leave and reach your battalion for training on the outskirts of Asmara.

Somehow in those trucks the game seems boys meet girls. Eyes flirt and smiles fly from one end to another. You travel singing along other young people like you.

You reach a place called Bisha and you are asked to unload all personal belonging and report to the main tent used as headquarters’ office.

You abruptly are told that you were now under the order of a foreign company mining for gold.



photos are from Wikipedia / Google

Your mouths drop to the ground and your eyes can only stare around in a place filled with deep fear.

Everyone is freezing under the loud voice of a white man screaming orders about time to sleep, time to eat and time to report to the end of the courtyard where enormous trucks are waiting to take all of you to the mines.

You were told that you would be trained as a soldier to defend your beloved country from the enemy.

You are down on your knees along a young Eritrean girl crying all while trying to familiarize with the digging utensils.

Many workers’ faces are painted with terror and you live

hopeless days and nights.

Each day they drive you to the mines. You are groups made of boys and girls. All young and feeling the weight of mining work.

You repeat - at each sunrise- your mother's prayer:" God, do not forget me". And you add: "Oh God! Do you see me going to a cave and extracting gold? Do you see Lemlem coughing and spitting blood? Take us

home. Please God make this stop. Mom told me you are powerful. How can you allow this? Remember that I exist too!"

You look at the mountain being eaten up by huge machines.

Like a monster eating his cookie and spitting out the remains it cannot digest.

You lost sight of time. You look at the horizon at night and give your message to the stars that move to infinity and beyond.



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29 October 2015

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...As recounted by a former conscript sent to work at the Bisha mine with his military unit: "In February 2010, we all had to go to Bisha. We did not get any details, we were only told to go to Bisha. I don't know how many we were, but it was the whole military division. I was part of a team to do construction, we were building houses. They kept us working in the construction site. [Read more](#)

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...But the former construction official, a citizen of another African country, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone that Eritreans conscripted into the military were forced to work at Bisha, 180 kilometres from the capital Asmara.

"There were as many as 500-600 conscripts working in the first round of construction," the former official said in his first interview since leaving Eritrea, requesting anonymity. [Read more](#)

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