

Wad Sherifey Refugee School for Eritrean Children in Sudan Ends Its 32nd School Year

By Idris Ismail and T. Elfu

The Wad Sherifey elementary school for Eritrean refugee children ended its 32nd academic school year on 21 March 2017 in the presence of invited honour guests, parents and residents of the refugee township near the Eritrea-Sudan border.



Started on 11 July 2016, the current academic year opened classes with 637 registered students. Of this, 22 students left the school due to various reasons, including economic problems to their parents and third-country resettlements. The school year thus ended with 615 students, 42% of them girls. Those who passed the final examinations were 88.6% of the total while 70 students could not pass the final examination. The report added that 48 of those who failed to pass from one class to the next were boys, and only 22 girls failed.



Among the dignitaries and elders attending the ceremony were Ustaz Al-Zibai Ajak, director of non-governmental schools in the Kassala region; Father Ghebrai Bedemariam, friend of the school and director of Catholic Church schools in Eastern Sudan, and Idris Ismail, acting school supervisor who continued the work of the late Osman Ahmed who passed away six months ago. Also present were known elders like Ismail Nada, and elderly Eritrean patriot, Ali Humed Dinai and others. The school children entertained guests with Eritrean folkloric music, dances, songs, poetry, jokes and drama staged in Eritrean languages.

In his address at the school closing ceremony, the school director, Mr. Teklemaimanot Elfu, expressed profound gratitude to the Sudanese education officials in the Kassala region and to Father Ghebrai for his continued cooperation with the Wad Sherifey School Administration.

Mr. Teklehaimanot Elfu also paid tribute to the late Osman Ahmed who tirelessly served the school for over two decades. The school director also expressed deep gratitude to the Swiss charity Organization in Geneva (ASEE - Association Suisse Enfance-Erythree) and other friends of school, past and present, who have been working hard to keep the refugee school going for so many years.



The school was started in 1984 in make-shift tents until modern buildings were constructed in 1988 with the help of charitable groups in the Netherlands. The late Father Marino Haile of Milano further modernized the school in 2005 and ASEE of Switzerland has been active as of October 2005 to cover major expenses of the school which is administered under the Eritrean Red Cross-Crescent Society (ERCCS). Dr. Habtemichael Tekle of Sweden is the current president of the ERCCS, an old Eritrean charity which closely follows up the situation and needs of the refugee school in Eastern Sudan. Dr. Habtemichael Tekle continually calls former students of Wad Sherifey Refugee School to come together and seriously think of supporting the continuation of this vital school for refugee children until their happy return to a democratic Eritrea.