

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

9 December 2016

### ERI105696.E

Eritrea: The Eritrean People's Democratic Party (EPDP)-Zete, including objectives, leaders and membership procedure; treatment of members and supporters by authorities (2015-December 2016)  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the EPDP-Zete was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an independent consultant, who is a researcher specializing in the Horn of Africa and who is an affiliated member of the Felsberg Institute for Education and Academic Research (Felsberger Institut) [1], provided the information in the following paragraphs:

The EPDP-Zete (Zete means "Dialogue") originated from a split within the EPDP, and was formed by members of the former Eritrean People's Movement (EPM) and the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP) who had separated from the EPDP. They created the EPDP-Zete on 23 November 2010 and claimed to be "the legitimate EPDP." The new faction also elected a 26-member Central Committee, which includes an 11-member Executive Committee.

In January 2011, the Eritrean Democratic Alliance (EDA) [2] accepted the EPDP-Zete "as the representative of the EPDP in EDA." In August 2011, the EPDP-Zete participated in an Ethiopian government sponsored seminar in Addis Ababa for Eritrean opposition political parties. In October 2011, the Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change (ENCDC) [3] allocated eight delegates to the EPDP-Zete for the National Congress held in November 2011 in Hawasu, Ethiopia.

During a conference held in 2013, the EPDP-Zete renamed itself as the Eritrean Democratic Party (EDP) (sêlfi dimokراسى érrtra, al-hizb al-dimuqrati al-irtri), which is not to be confused with the former EDP established in 2004 and the splinter EDP existing for some time between 2006 and 2013. The renamed EDP (EPDP-Zete) elected a five-member Executive Committee. The EDP (EPDP-Zete) has run the website [called] Mahhta.net since 2010.

The independent consultant further added that the EDP (EPDP-Zete)

has members in the Eritrean diaspora in Europe, North America, and Australia. The membership is limited and probably does not exceed a few hundred. It is not known whether this organisation has a clandestine structure within Eritrea, but at least it might have clandestine individual members. Outside [Eritrea,] the EDP is organised into continental branches subdivided into regional or national branches and local chapters.

As the EPDP (former EPDP-Zete) forms part of the EDA as well as the [ENCDC], which both are supported by and based in Ethiopia, any member of this organisation, [who] would fall into the hands of the Eritrean government would have to face extremely harsh punishment. (Independent consultant 6 Dec. 2016)

Corroborating information on the information provided by the independent consultant could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### Notes

[1] The Felsberg Institute (Felsberger Institut) is an independent organization based in Germany that conducts academic research and educational initiatives to "encourage and develop solidarity, an international ethos and intercultural understanding" (Felsberg Institute n.d.). It is "supported in its work by an academic advisory board and a board of sponsors" (ibid.).

[2] For additional information on the EDA, see Response to Information Request ZZZ105061 of February 2015.

[3] For additional information on the ENCDC, see Response to Information Request ZZZ105061 of February 2015.

### References

Felsberg Institute for Education and Academic Research (Felsberger Institut). N.d. "[The Institute](#)." [Accessed 6 Dec. 2016]

Independent Consultant and Researcher, Felsberg Institute for Education and Academic Research (Felsberger Institut). 6 December 2016. Correspondence with the Research Directorate.

### Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** Assistant Professor of international relations, Boston University; Associate Professor of African studies, German Institute of Global and Area Studies; Eritrean People's Democratic Party; Professor of refugee studies, London South Bank University.

**Internet sites, including:** *Africa Research Bulletin*; Africa Review; AllAfrica; Amnesty International; Asmarino Independent; Assena.com; BBC; ecoi.net; Eritrea – Ministry of Information; Eritrea.be; Eritrean Nahda Party; EriVision; Factiva; Farajat; Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme; Freedom House; HCH24; *Historical Dictionary of Eritrea*; Horn Affairs Network; Human Rights Concern Eritrea; Human Rights Watch; Institute for War and Peace Reporting; International Crisis Group; IRIN; *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*; Mahhta.net; Meskerem.net; Norway – Landinfo; *Political Handbook of the World*; Radio France internationale; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; Sudan Tribune; Switzerland – State Secretariat for Migration; TesfaNews; United Nations – Refworld, ReliefWeb; United States – Department of State, Embassy in Asmara.

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