



# Horn of Africa Seminar

University of Oxford | African Studies Centre | MT 2014

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*CALL FOR PAPERS: COMPARATIVE SYMPOSIUM*

## **Eritrea & Rwanda**

### Post-liberation trajectories in comparative perspective

*1-2 December 2014*

*Oxford University*

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For Eritrea and Rwanda, 2014 has special significance for the ruling elites, which have dominated politics in both countries for the last two decades. In Eritrea, it marks twenty years since the formation of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, the political party that succeeded the Eritrean People's Liberation Front after it had finally won Eritrea its independence from Ethiopia. For Rwanda, it marks twenty years since the Genocide and the rise to power of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, led in particular by former Uganda based refugees. In both countries, the continued presence of liberation leaders -- Eritrea's Isaias Afewerki and Rwanda's Paul Kagame -- turned presidents is fuelling speculation about succession, as Rwanda's elections approach in 2017 and since the prospect of a constitution drafting process was announced by Eritrea's president in his Independence Day speech this year.

Whilst critical academic engagement assessing these post-liberation states has proliferated, especially literature examining the development of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the Eritrean and Rwandan Studies communities have both at times faced criticism for being excessively polarising and damagingly insular. This conference thus seeks to address both critiques. In bringing together academics working on these two different countries, whose resemblance in political ideologies and history poses interesting questions for the state formations we see now, it seeks to provide a productive space for sharing theoretical approaches and empirical observations through a series of exploratory panels. These are aimed at addressing topics not based on normative models of state formation and behaviour, but

observed themes concerning those features which, though distinctive for each regime, appear to have interesting degrees of comparability across the two.

Proposed themes include explorations of:

- Mechanisms enabling consolidation and retention of state control
- State behaviour in the context of regional security
- Strategies for engaging and utilising the youth in reproducing the state, and youth responses to government policies
- Evolutionary trajectories in the post-liberation movement governments, including the questions of leadership succession and party stability
- Historicising nationalisms and the politics of the history of the liberation struggle
- Transnational mobilisation and diasporic politics

Applicants are **not** required to submit articles already offering a comparative perspective (although comparative papers are of course welcomed). Panels will be composed of a discussant and a minimum of three presentations, with at least one paper representing each case study.

The symposium will be hosted by the African Studies Centre at Oxford University, and supported by the Department for International Development, the Horn of Africa Seminar and the Oxford Central Africa Forum.

The organisers will have limited funding which will be used to facilitate the participation of scholars from the Global South.

### **Submission Information and Guidelines**

Please email all abstracts by **September 15<sup>th</sup> 2014**. Selected papers and panels will be announced shortly thereafter.

If selected, full papers are requested to be submitted by **November 14<sup>th</sup> 2014**.

Please email all abstracts (and papers) to [eritrea.rwanda.oxford@gmail.com](mailto:eritrea.rwanda.oxford@gmail.com). Any queries can additionally be directed to the conference organisers: Jason Mosley ([Jason.mosley@africa.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Jason.mosley@africa.ox.ac.uk)) and Georgia Cole ([Georgia.cole@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Georgia.cole@qeh.ox.ac.uk)).