



Cultural celebration contra Somali-phobic

Aarhus-Denmark 28th of May 2010

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On Thursday the 27th of May 2010 the Somali community in Aarhus, the second Capital of Denmark organized a large gathering aiming at community social empowerment and unity. The event was held at the historic national theatre at the centre of Aarhus. This was one of the few occasions ever an ethnic community staged such spectacular cultural festivity.

The community had the following three main objectives:

- Introducing Somali culture and sharing the Danish society with the admiration and the respect the Somali community has for Denmark and its great people
- Countering the anti-immigrant xenophobic rightwing groups that repeatedly promote the exclusion of the Somali-Danes
- Bringing the Somalis together so cooperation and community cohesion prevails

With Allah's will and support and the tireless effort by various constituencies of the Somali community in Aarhus we achieved all of our aims.

We particularly express our sincere appreciation to the Somali intellectual, historian, poet, teacher, father and Somali patriot Al-Ustaad Khaalid Cali-Guul Warsame. The author addressed the gathering both at the national theatre and later the Somali meeting where he presented Somali history since ancient times and poetry. We wish to share with you few lines of poetry where Khaalid, after a short visit to the Zoo, profiles the similarity of the life in exile for Khaalid himself and for the Giraffe (Gari). Khaalid says both he and the Gari originate from Somalia and both ended up in Denmark unwillingly. He adds that when the Giraffe saw him among the crowd of white people visiting the Zoo, he looked directly at him and cried, so did Khaalid.

"Geriyohow gargaariyo haddaan, gacanba kuu waayey

Aniguba geddaadoo kalaan, gees wareen ahaye

Intaan hoos u guuxaayo hoo, giisayaa badane

Carradii guduudnayd dhulkuu, Gulle kugu beeray.

Goonyaha Shabeelle iyo Bay, hawdka guradiisa.

Jubba gawyadeeda iyo Doy, gacamadii Waamo" Ustaad Khaalid Cali-Guul

Despite been around 80 years old he is active almost 24 hours, writing, lecturing, travelling and advising. We are very proud to have him in Scandinavia, where Denmark became his second home and published about 25 books since arriving here for 13 years ago.

Ustaad Khaalids immense intellectual achievement, Somali literary and historical production can be seen at this link: <http://www.khaalidguul.com>.

Similarly we are very thankful to our Ambassador his Excellency Yusuf Mohamed Ismail (Bari Bari), Somali ambassador at the UN in Genève. The Ambassador travelled a long way to join the community and thanked the Danish society for receiving and hosting the Somalis. In an address to a large gathering of Native Danes and Somali-Danes at Aarhus National Theatre, Ambassador Yusuf stressed that Somalis are grateful to Denmark and to the Danish Society. He added that more than 2/3 of the Somalis in the city are below 15 years old and were born in city hospitals.

There are about 4000 Somalis in Aarhus. That officially makes the Somali-Danes to belong and have roots in this Scandinavian country. At the same time Somalis should keep their cultural and religious roots and not forget their country of origin, he said.

Addressing a separate Somali gathering the ambassador told the Somalis:

“ We as Somalis have seen the suffering, the fighting and the division among us and the decline. Through the successive meetings, presentations and cultural festivities at Aarhus national theatre today you have demonstrated the benefits of cooperation and community cohesion. I urge you to proceed the constructive and progressive road in positively contributing to this country(that welcomed and hosted you) and to our beloved country, Somalia”
Ambassador Yusuf Mohamed Ismaaciil (Bari Bari)

In addition the Community in Aarhus is honoured to have its amongst a great Somali poet, Barre **Fiidoow Leento**. Barre has been in Aarhus since mid 1990s. Sharing a poem with the audience in the theatre Barre stressed that Somalis are indeed in serious social and political crises. But they are people with strong faith and hope and therefore together will overcome the challenges.

Responding to those who aim at excluding and discriminating the Somalis he stated the following:

We are grateful to Denmark

Painfully we suffer under state vacuum

But in our hearts we are sovereign people

Currently we experience Chaotic

But our spirit remains strong, our body sensitive and vibrant

We are people with eternal hope, We are neither stupid nor thoughtless, Poet, Barre Fiidoow Leento

At the cultural festivities there was another prominent Somali Patriot, Xalimo Soofe. As a young girl Mamma Halima was an active member of the then newly established SYL in 1940s. She has also been a resident of Aarhus-Denmark since 1990s. She shared the gathering an emotional buraanbur with the following title:

“ Listen Somalis, Our success is inseparable to our unity

We need not fight each other, Somalia can nourish more than us”

We had also the privilege to have in Aarhus-Denmark the Great Somali artist, Amin Aamir who accepted our invitation to fly from Canada in support for Somali community in Aarhus.

Addressing the gathering Amin Aamir said:

“I am not a man of speeches, I am a man of the speechless speech. Drawing and using the pen. Our country and our people suffer and we need unity and cooperation to rescue. I love Somalia and Somalis and will always and forever do”

This was indeed unforgettable day that was not only registered in the headlines of several Danish newspapers but a day where the Somali community in Aarhus-Denmark did its best to overcome internal divisions and external xenophobic right wing challenges.

It is also important to mention the immense contribution to the day by a great Somali-Dane, an academic and human rights activist, Dr Ahmed Duale Ali who travelled from Copenhagen to support the event.

Finally we are grateful that Ambassador Nuur Hassan Hussein (Nuur Cadde), Somali Ambassador at the EU and Sheikh Abdirashiid Sheikh Ali Suufi, despite busy schedule, joined us through the phone from Brussels and London respectively to encourage the community and wish the best success and prosperity for all Somalis in Aarhus-Denmark and beyond.

We unite or we Perish

To see and read more about the Somali festivity day, please visit our Danish language homepage
<http://www.aarhusomali.dk/>