



## Abdallah Matraji : Honorary consul of Eritrea

A young man with an old soul, a commander and leader, he breached the walls of Africa straight into Eritrea and became the honorary consul, with his ambition and determination, he succeeded in initiating various businesses in the telecommunication industry and now he's going for more.

A man, a gentleman, a charismatic symbol of success and will, an icon and an enigma of the future all are qualities that Mr. Abdallah Matraji possesses and more.

Here is a sneak peak at the life and ambition of the Honorary Consul of Eritrea.



**1. Your Excellency, I would like to start with some questions about the man before me not the business mogul or the Honorary Consul. In your own words can you tell the readers who is Abdallah Matraji?**

To begin with, I am a man with high expectation of myself. I started dreaming early and with God's help I started achieving early but as my faith aided me, my hard work and persistence. My father's aid also got me to the post that I'm currently at and of course with more determination and resilience I will climb yet another mountain.

As for my personal and more private life, I am a very friendly man that is sociable. I love to get together with friends and family.

**2. Through the grape vine I have heard that almost everyone that knows you calls you (El Khal) or in English the (God father) . Is this relevant to your personality?**

(Matraji smiles and says) "I was given this title 19 years ago. I imagine people have given me this nick name because in general I like taking care of my loved ones and I've always been strong willed."

**3. Are you married? What is your take on love and marriage?**

No I am a single man but marriage is a must

for me. I think that love is essential in life and solitude can only be tolerated for so long before you desire to have a partner.

I don't necessarily believe in Romeo and Juliet but I could only hope to find a woman that I will love and respect and of course vice versa. I would like to add that I think the wife plays a major role in raising the children and in the social life of the family.

**4. What is the legacy that you want your children to take from you?**

Strong personality, self-confidence and maintaining self dignity and integrity are the main legacies that I would like my children to take from me.

**5. What is the thing that you don't want them to take from you?**

In general I have a very good heart but unfortunately that can be taken advantage of in various circumstances. Sure I want them to have a good heart but on the other hand they should also know when to use it and how to use it. Every parent wants to protect his/ her child and in that sense I want to protect mine from the ruthlessness that awaits them.

Secondly I want them to be careful of whom they trust.

**6. Being a single Honorary Consul and a Businessman, do you still have time for your friends?**

Although I'm a workaholic I still see and meet my friends a lot especially in the evenings. Addicted to work doesn't mean that I start my work early morning and finish at midnight, instead it means that I can quit or postpone a friend's gathering for the sake of a business deal.

**7. Can you give me a brief description of your educational background?**

I initially went to Lycee Elementary School then IC, shortly after in 1988 I travelled to England and received my High School diploma in the International School of Choueifat and then I came back to Lebanon and attended Business School in LAU.

**“ Jamal abdul Nasser, he was a charismatic leader and commander ”**

**8. You have pursued business in your life, what is the nature of your businesses?**

The first business venture was establishing Matraji International Group (MIG co.) which is a dealer of

MTC touch (ZAIN) in Lebanon. Basically we distribute their entire collection of scratch cards, prepaid lines and post paid lines throughout Lebanon along with many other services.

I also have "Teletel" which is an African based telecommunication company as well as some real estate ventures.

**Matraji's favorite quote :  
“Forgive but never Forget”**



With Family : Ghassan (father), Dalia, Nadine & Rana (sisters)



With his nephew Sarah

**9. Do you anticipate branching out your businesses?**

The telecommunication field in Eritrea is still virgin. Eritrea is almost the only country that has one GSM operator therefore I'm working on getting the second GSM license, along with that I'm going to be exploring their land lines network.

**10. You've recently been appointed the Honorary Consul of the State of Eritrea, Who gave you this position? What are the job requirements and what do you hope to achieve for this country?**

The Eritrean Government appointed me the Honorary Consul with the approval of the Lebanese President General Michel Sleiman and the Eritrean President Mr. Isaias Aferwerki. As for my duty which is set by the president, it is to facilitate consulate activities of 1500 custodians, to present the intransitive facilities for achieving the treatments of Eritreans, to grant visas for foreigners. You see my father had worked with the Eritrean Government which was involved in gaining their independence for over 25 years, throughout these years we have made many friends, attained a good pertinence with the president Mr. Aferwerki and some Eritrean officials, thus I have grown a certain fondness of the country. Therefore, I hope to improve the relations and cooperation between Eritrea and

Lebanon, increase the trade between the two countries and enhance the level of commercial, economical.

**11. Is there an Eritrean embassy in Lebanon?**

There used to be one but it closed two months ago due to logistics reasons and that is when I became as the honorary consul that is responsible for such a large number of custodians in Lebanon.

**12. What are the advantages and disadvantages of your job?**

I don't think that there are any disadvantages just the opposite. Throughout my duration as Honorary Consul and a Head of Mission which is to represent the State Eritrea, I'm going to lighten the importance and richness of its resources. There are Many Lebanese citizens spread out throughout Africa, but not necessarily in Eritrea, therefore I hope to shed light on the opportunities and possibilities that can be established there.

**13. What are these opportunities?**

This country has many resources such as Gold, Copper, Zinc, Oil, etc... It is also rich in agriculture which is widely spread. Eritrea is famous for its ministry of fisheries and let's not forget the tourism especially on the red sea shores. Now the government has assigned 14 foreign companies to explore the oil, gold etc....

**14. What is the kind of business that you like most?**

I like closing deals. I like the kind of challenge that increases your adrenalin and get your blood pumping. Business on high levels is challenging, exciting and needs strong PR and I believe that I have attained that throughout my extensive experience.

**15. How do you rate your PR?**

My PR is widely spread throughout Lebanon, Africa and the Arab countries due to my living in London for 5 years.

I would like to note that while attending boarding school in England my colleagues and I became like one family so the relations became very strong.

**16. What do you think of politics in general, and Lebanon in particular?**

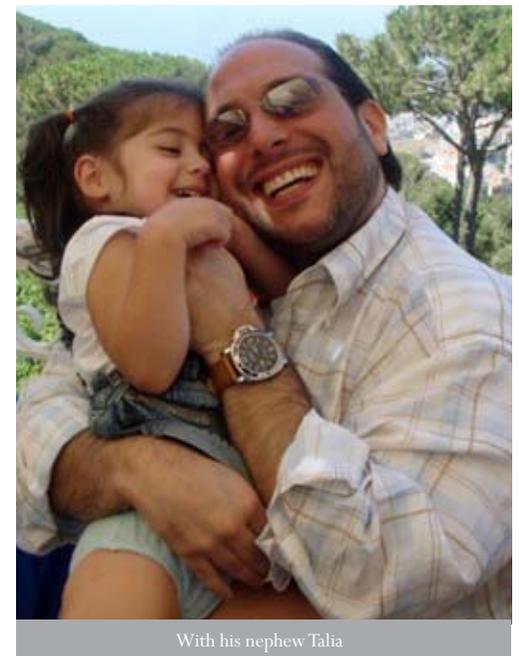
In general politics is a very important issue. Everyone should be aware of what is going on in their own Country, in Lebanon most people are well informed. As for me, I adore politics and take it on a more serious note especially since I was born surrounded by Politicians due to my in-home atmosphere.

**17. Would you like to see your name active in the Lebanese government someday?**

Why not?

**18. Which parties do you support?**

I support anyone who is ardent and resistant towards his country; anyone who loves, defends and honors the dignity of his country gets my salute. This makes me go back to Eritrea which is similar to Lebanon in the sense that some of its neighbors are greedy and waiting to grab a piece of it.



With his nephew Talia

## 19. What does success mean to you? How can you describe it?

Success is when a person sets a certain goal in life and achieves it. Reaching success is a wonderful feeling and experience that motivates you to accomplish more achievements and set more goals in your life.

## 20. Do you still have more goals and achievements in your life that you would like to reach?

To be honest, I have lots of goals and dreams and I think I'm on the right track, but at the same time I believe in "Destiny". God already set plans for me that I had not foreseen or even thought of but they happened anyway, for example I didn't seek for the consulate post in the real sense, the post was presented to me and I was honored to accept it.

## 21. How do you deal with failure?

I am an emotional person, once something goes wrong I react and get frustrated but after the initial shock, logic and sensibility takes place. Once that happens, I put my head back up and see what I can learn from that experience. Being a believer helps ease the process.

## 22. What are your hobbies and do you have passion for something in particular?

Travelling and shopping are my main hobbies, politics is my passion and collecting weapons is my addiction.

## 22. What makes you different than other business men?

Not only I am a shrewd business man but I also have a very large public relations network. I respect and befriend the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong. I am confident of my relations with everyone and I believe that this makes me more of an asset.

## Other face

### What's your:

**Favorite sports?:** Squash

**Favorite movie?:** The usual suspect for Kevin Spacey

**Favorite writer?:** Mr. Mohammad Hassanein Haikal

**Preferable historical figure and why?:** Jamal Abdul Nasser, he was a charismatic leader and commander.

**Preferable perfume:** ... i will keep it for myself and the ones who know it

**Do you forgive?:** As my favorite slogan goes I forgive but never forget

**Weakness?:** Illness

## What do you think of?

**Life:** Is a tunnel which we have to cross. We should try our best to make our performance good because this is what remains of us and this is what we take with us.

**Children:** A blessing

**Death:** a due

**Women:** (smiles and says) "Simple pleasure"

**God:** God resembles nothing and no one!

**Favorite car:** Austin Martin

**Favorite watch:** Audemars Piguet

**Favorite Jewelry:** Bvlgary

**Favorite Food:** Seafood

**Favorite City:** London

**Favorite Music:** Arabic

**“ We should try our best to make our performance good because this is what remains of us and this is what we take with us. ”**



From the interview