



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 39th regular session

Item 6: Adoption of the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Djibouti

Oral statement

Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini

Mr. President,

DefendDefenders and the Djiboutian Observatory for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights (ODDH) took note of the Djiboutian government's replies to the recommendations it received, including those pertaining to the ratification of international instruments or the acceptance of free and independent trade unions. We regret that Djibouti refused to commit to extending a standing invitation to the Human Rights Council's special procedures, given that the lack of an independent assessment of the country's human rights situation is flagrant.

On 15 April 2018, two days after he came back from Geneva, where he participated in the UPR pre-sessions, Kadar Abdi Ibrahim was briefly detained and his passport was confiscated by agents of the Documentation and Security Service (SDS). He has been unable to leave the country since. As Djibouti accepted recommendations 129.97 and 129.202 on the fight against threats, harassment and intimidation and on the need to carry out investigations into such acts committed against human rights defenders, we ask: When will his passport be given back to him?

Djibouti committed to preventing the use of excessive force against civilians by security forces, including during demonstrations and elections (recommendation 129.73). However, at the same time the government refused to "improve training programmes for security forces to put an end to acts of violent repression of peaceful demonstrations" (129.51). We fear that this inconsistency actually reflects a lack of political will on the part of the government to implement its obligations.

Indeed, Djibouti accepted recommendation 129.95, which called on it to implement nine recommendations it accepted during the second cycle of the UPR. We salute the persistence of Zambia, which authored that recommendation, but its content had already been accepted back in 2013. It remained unimplemented. Will Djibouti appear before this Council every four and a half years to promise that it will act on recommendations it accepted in the previous cycle? Or will it, at last, deliver on its commitments?

Thank you for your attention.