



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 42nd regular session
Item 6: Adoption of the report on the UPR of Ethiopia
Oral statement

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Mr. President,

DefendDefenders welcomes the acceptance by the Government of Ethiopia of a large number of UPR recommendations. Last May, Ethiopia's review was a milestone for human rights advancement in the country – the first UPR review for which meaningful consultations were conducted with a range of national stakeholders and the first that has the potential of contributing to systemic human rights reforms. We salute the fact that the Ethiopian Government displayed political will to engage on human rights challenges, including past and ongoing violations. The climate in the country drastically improved since its second UPR review. We warmly welcome Ethiopia's engagement with civil society, at the national, regional, and international levels.

We welcome Ethiopia's acceptance of recommendations on

- (1) *Ratifying core international human rights instruments to which it is not yet a Party*, including the conventions on enforced disappearances (CPED) and migrant workers (ICMW). We however encourage Ethiopia to reconsider its position on recommendations no. 163.11 to 163.14 and no. 163.17 to 163.25. Ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and Optional Protocols to ICCPR, the Convention Against Torture (CAT), and CEDAW would send a powerful message to all Ethiopian citizens;
- (2) *Conducting comprehensive legal reform*. We salute Ethiopia's commitment to ensure that the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation (ATP) and legislation on mass media and computer crimes are brought into line with human rights standards. We can mention accepted recommendations no. 163.56 to 163.59 and 163.62. We also salute the adoption of a new CSO Proclamation that provides more space to civil society;
- (3) *Creating and maintaining an open civic space*. Acceptance of recommendations no. 163.60, 163.219 and 163.220 is a positive signal in this regard; and
- (4) *Ensuring accountability for violations*. Recommendation no. 163.154 (“[...] ensure that accountability constitutes the core of ongoing political reforms”) is of symbolic significance, as is the acceptance of recommendations on combating torture and abuses of power.

We regret that Ethiopia did not go a step further in its replies and did not offer a standing invitation to all Human Rights Council special procedure mandate-holders. It is not too late, as the UPR is an ongoing process. We encourage the Government to reconsider its position on all “noted” recommendations.

Thank you for your attention.