



# DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

**UN Human Rights Council – 42<sup>nd</sup> regular session**  
**Item 2: General debate (oral update by the High Commissioner)**  
**Oral statement**

*Delivered by: Estella Kabachwezi*

Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

DefendDefenders reiterates its support to your “preventative engagement” approach, which has the potential of bringing about tangible results in a number of areas and country situations. As you highlighted in the informal conversation you held on 4 September 2019 with Members and Observers of the Council, where “quiet diplomacy” is not effective, OHCHR action may include more public advocacy. Regarding a number of situations, human rights defenders and civil society need your voice more than ever.

We and the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network (AfricanDefenders) remain deeply concerned at the situation in **Cameroon**, in particular the crisis in the North-West and South-West regions, which deserves the Council’s attention. The Council should exercise its prevention mandate to end violations and contribute to settling the crisis. The Cameroonian Government should respond positively to offers of assistance now – or face stronger multilateral action at a future session.

Regarding **Tanzania**, we concur with your analysis. The Government should acknowledge the legitimate concerns, expressed by a range of national, regional and international stakeholders, over human rights developments in the country, and accept to engage on the needed reforms, including through amending legislation affecting civic space and the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, and access to information.

We will address **Sudan** in the dedicated interactive dialogue. We stress the need for an international inquiry into violations of the rights of peaceful protesters and Sudanese citizens, monitoring and reporting through the extension of the Independent Expert’s mandate, and long-term OHCHR presence on the ground through a country office, to help Sudan implement systemic human rights reforms, including in relation to accountability.

Thank you for your attention.