



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 42nd regular session

Item 4: General debate

Oral statement

Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini

Mr. President,

DefendDefenders will address Burundi and South Sudan during the dedicated interactive dialogues under item 4, as well as Somalia and Sudan under item 10.

We highlight the ongoing gross, widespread, systematic, and systemic human rights violations committed in Eritrea, and once again regret that diplomatic progress, which is an opportunity for people of the region, has not translated into domestic progress.

As a new chapter may be opening in the Horn of Africa, human rights advancements are being secured, and Governments are engaging with civil society at the national and international levels, including here on the margins of the Human Rights Council, we reiterate our call on the Eritrean Government to fulfil its membership obligations and grant the Special Rapporteur and other special procedure mandate-holders access to the country, as a first step towards human rights reforms.

Mr. President,

At its 41st session, this Council decided to maintain a high level of scrutiny over the country. The Eritrean Government should heed the message sent, including by engaging on the “benchmarks for progress” identified by the Special Rapporteur, and multiple calls to change course, including that outlined in a [letter](#) to President Afwerki signed by more than 100 African thinkers, writers, and human rights advocates. They deserve more than a blanket denial and insults.

Thank you for your attention.