



# DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

## UN Human Rights Council – 49<sup>th</sup> regular session

### Item 2: Interactive Dialogue on the oral update by the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea

#### Oral statement

*Delivered by: Nicolas Agostini*

Mr. President, Mr. Special Rapporteur,

We thank you for your oral update and for continuing to set the bar high to address human rights violations in Eritrea. We would like to know: What comes next for the benchmarks for progress in improving the situation?

Mr. President,

This debate is an opportunity to take stock of Eritrea's first term as a Council member (2019-2021).

During the last three years, the Eritrean government **failed** to address violations the Commission of Inquiry, the Special Rapporteur, the High Commissioner, and other independent actors identified.

During the last three years, the Eritrean government made a mockery of Council membership standards by refusing to engage with the Special Rapporteur.

During the last three years, the Eritrean government used its voting rights to systematically oppose scrutiny and investigations. On Wednesday, it even voted "No" to a UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Finally, during its membership term, Eritrean forces committed what may amount to crimes under international law in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

Today, we must ask: For failing to take steps to improve its human rights record, refusing to cooperate, displaying an appalling voting record, and committing atrocities in Tigray, how was Eritrea rewarded?

With a second term as a Council member (2022-2024) — so it can deliver more of the same.