



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 50th regular session

Item 2: Interactive dialogue on the High Commissioner's annual report

Oral statement

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Mr. President, Madam High Commissioner,

We thank you for your annual report, which shows that grave human rights violations and abuses continue in many parts of the world. Civic space, including freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, association, movement, and non-discrimination, is under intense pressure. Human rights defenders (HRDs) often pay a heavy price for their legitimate activities.

Madam Bachelet,

We encourage you to continue documenting and reporting on developments in the East and Horn of Africa. While six out of the 11 countries of [DefendDefenders](#)' core mandate (Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan) are currently on the Human Rights Council's agenda, your universal mandate allows you to report on violations wherever they happen, irrespective of Council resolutions.

In Kenya, concerns are mounting ahead of the elections scheduled for August 2022. We once again stress the need for scrutiny of the human rights situation in, among others, Algeria, [Cameroon](#), [Egypt](#), Mozambique, Nigeria, the Greater Sahel, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

Attention to these situations is vital, both to contribute to human rights-compatible solutions and to increase the political cost of violations for governments that choose to rule by fear and injustice and for any actor committing abuses.

We encourage you to operationalise paragraphs 5 and 6 of Council resolution [45/31](#) by strengthening the work of your Office regarding early warning signs and prevention, as well as risks of human rights emergencies. In this regard, could intersessional briefings be used more often to bring relevant information to the attention of the Council?

Thank you for your attention.