



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 52nd regular session

Item 2: Enhanced interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights in Eritrea

Oral statement

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Mr. President, Mr. Special Rapporteur, Mr. High Commissioner,

We welcome the Human Rights Council's steadfast attention to the human rights situation in Eritrea and the rationalisation of Eritrea debates at the Council's March sessions. In a [letter](#), civil society called for this move as well as for stronger action on Eritrea. The "enhanced" nature of today's debate reflects the gravity of the situation.

[Violations](#) Eritrean authorities commit at home and abroad are two sides of the same coin. The total closure of the democratic and civic space enables these violations to continue with impunity.

Mr. President,

The Eritrean government is now in its fifth year of Council membership. The gap between its human rights record and Council membership standards is as broad as ever. For instance, in terms of cooperation with Council mechanisms, Eritrea remains among the very few countries that have never received any visit by a special procedure. The government's attempts to discontinue Council scrutiny, however, have failed.

Ahead of the Council's 53rd session, in June 2023, we urge states to further extend the Special Rapporteur's mandate. We highlight the need to move beyond merely procedural resolutions, to clearly describe and condemn the violations committed, and to ensure follow-up to the recommendations of previous mechanisms and mandate-holders, including the Commission of Inquiry and the Special Rapporteur and his benchmarks for progress.

Mr. Special Rapporteur:

What accountability avenues exist for crimes under international law committed by Eritrean forces in Tigray?

Thank you for your attention.