



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 53rd regular session

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

Oral statement

Delivered by: Estella Kabachwezi (video recording)

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. High Commissioner,

We thank you for your report. Around the world, crises multiply, human rights violations continue, and civic space is under pressure. Human rights defenders often pay a heavy price, including in [DefendDefenders'](#) mandate countries, namely the East and Horn of Africa sub-region.

Six of the 11 countries of our mandate (Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan) are currently on the Human Rights Council's agenda.

Mr. Türk,

We encourage you to continue documenting and reporting on developments in the sub-region and on the African continent. Wherever the opening of a country office is considered, we urge you to insist on signing an agreement for a fully mandated office, allowing it to conduct a range of human rights activities, including monitoring and documentation of violations.

Wherever this is not possible, your global mandate allows you to report on situations that require attention, including on early warning signs and risks of human rights emergencies, as per Council resolution [45/31](#). In this regard, intersessional briefings could be used more often to bring relevant information to the attention of the Council.

Thank you for your attention.