



DEFENDDEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 55th regular session

Item 4: General debate

Oral statement

Delivered by: Estella Kabachwezi

Mr. President,

DefendDefenders delivered statements in debates on Eritrea, South Sudan, and Sudan under item 2. We reiterate that these situations essentially belong in the Council's agenda item 4.

With partners, we repeatedly called for an independent investigation into the assassination of human rights lawyer [Thulani Maseko](#) in **Eswatini**. He was killed on 21 January 2023 for advocating for multi-stakeholder dialogue and reviewing the role of Africa's last absolute Monarch in the Swaziland governance architecture. 14 months later, no perpetrators have been brought to justice. This gives credence to allegations of state involvement in the planning of this cowardly assassination. We call on states to add their voice to those on the African continent, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights ([ACHPR](#)), who strongly condemned his killing and the violence committed against human rights defenders in Eswatini.

Mr. President,

We also reiterate our deepest concerns over the human rights situation in **Egypt**, by any standard one of the most serious in Africa, as the crackdown on basic freedoms continues. We support partners' call for collective action at the Human Rights Council. Between the current silence and what is objectively needed (an investigative and accountability mechanism), there are a range of options. A joint statement paving the way for a resolution is the bare minimum.

Finally, Mr. President,

We express our concern about grave human rights violations and abuses in **Mali**. The situation in the Sahel region should be a priority concern for regional actors and for this Council.

Thank you.