



DEFEND DEFENDERS

East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project

UN Human Rights Council – 56th regular session

Item 2: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea

Oral statement

Delivered by: Estella Kabachwezi

Mr. President, Mr. Special Rapporteur,

Concerns over Eritrea's rights record are widely shared. The recently released [Concluding Observations](#) of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on Eritrea, following the review of the State's combined 2nd and 3rd Periodic Report, outline a long list of concerns and recommendations. They invalidate narratives of a UN "bias" against Eritrea.

Eritrea remains one of the most serious situations in Africa and in the world, as made clear by Dr. Babiker's excellent report, which we welcome – including its section on transnational repression. As you write, Dr. Babiker, the "stifling of civic engagement and suppression of critical voices by the Eritrean authorities is not confined to within the country's borders; it also extends to Eritrean communities worldwide."

Mr. President,

A group of NGOs [call](#) on the Council to adopt a resolution that extends the Special Rapporteur's mandate and moves beyond a merely "procedural" approach by clearly spelling out and condemning the grave violations committed by Eritrean authorities in a context of widespread impunity.

Eritrea remains among the very few countries that have never received any visit by a special procedure. Authorities have utterly failed to cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms and made a mockery of membership standards and obligations.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

As 2024 marks ten years since the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) on Eritrea, and Eritrea is completing its second term as a member of the Council, what can be done to enhance attention to the country's human rights record and make sure that all accountability options and processes are explored and used?

Thank you for your attention.