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High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Situation of human rights in Eritrea

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker*

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 56/17, in which the Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea for one year and requested the mandate holder to present a report to the Council at its fifty-ninth session.

The report provides an overview of the human rights situation in Eritrea, with a focus on the serious human rights impacts of indefinite national service, the suppression of civil and political rights – including through arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, the absence of accountability and the rule of law, violations of freedom of religion or belief, and patterns of transnational repression. The Special Rapporteur highlights the deteriorating situation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers regionally and globally. He also takes stock of the engagement by Eritrea with human rights mechanisms, noting the lack of progress on the implementation of recommendations.

* Agreement was reached to publish the present report after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 56/17, in which the Council extended the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea for one year and requested the mandate holder to present a report to the Council at its fifty-ninth session. The report covers the period from 17 April 2024 to 15 April 2025.

2. The human rights situation in Eritrea remained critical. The indefinite national service had profound human rights impacts that permeated all aspects of life in Eritrea and continued to push thousands to flee. The authorities continued to suppress fundamental freedoms, including through the widespread and systematic arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of dissenting voices. Beyond its borders, the country's transnational repression extended to its diaspora. Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers faced deteriorating conditions, marked by regional conflicts and by increasingly hostile asylum and migration policies in key transit and destination countries.

3. The Special Rapporteur underscores the continued absence of accountability, a decade after the initial report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea,¹ and the lack of implementation of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms. Despite repeated calls for justice and reform, no meaningful steps have been taken to address the human rights violations documented over the years, to ensure access to justice for victims and to guarantee non-recurrence.

II. Methodology

4. The Government of Eritrea continued to reject the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, refusing to engage with the Special Rapporteur or to grant him access to the country. Consequently, the Special Rapporteur was unable to conduct an official visit to Eritrea.

5. The present report is based on extensive research and remote monitoring of the human rights situation in Eritrea. It draws on first-hand accounts gathered through interviews with survivors and witnesses, victims' families and other confidential sources. The report is also informed by 12 civil society submissions received in response to the Special Rapporteur's call for inputs, and by analysis of documents, photographs, videos and other materials. Civil society and experts also provided valuable information. The Special Rapporteur expresses gratitude to the individuals and organizations who contributed to his mandate, particularly to the survivors and the families of victims for sharing their experiences.

6. The findings presented in the report have been documented and corroborated in full adherence to the Code of Conduct for Special Procedure Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council and the Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. The Special Rapporteur exercised due diligence in assessing the reliability of sources, independently verified the information, and conducted an impartial, objective analysis of the information collected. A draft report was shared with the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to provide the Government with the opportunity to submit factual comments on the findings of the Special Rapporteur.

III. Activities

7. The Special Rapporteur met with victims of human rights violations and their families, human rights defenders, civil society, diplomats, public officials, and representatives of United Nations agencies and other international organizations. He continued to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, and advocate for concrete

¹ [A/HRC/29/42](#).

measures to promote human rights progress in Eritrea and strengthen the protection of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers. He also continued to provide support to judicial and legislative bodies through expert submissions.

8. The Special Rapporteur visited the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and France, from 30 January to 8 February 2025. He thanks the United Kingdom and France for their cooperation and support, and notes the importance of third-country visits to collect information in support of the monitoring and reporting mandate entrusted to him by the Human Rights Council, particularly due to the non-cooperation of the Eritrean authorities. The Special Rapporteur is concerned about the lack of response to his requests to visit several countries in East and North Africa.

9. On 30 October 2024, the Special Rapporteur participated in an interactive dialogue of the Third Committee during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly. On 27 February 2025, he took part in an enhanced interactive dialogue at the fifty-eighth session of the Human Rights Council, with the participation of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, a representative of the Government of Eritrea, a civil society activist from Eritrea and representatives of Member States and civil society.

10. The Special Rapporteur co-organized a side event to the fifty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council on the Addis Ababa Road Map and engagement on Eritrea by the United Nations and African human rights systems, jointly with a civil society organization – with the participation of a commissioner of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the former Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of assembly and of association who is also a member of the Joint Working Group on the Addis Ababa Road Map, and an Eritrean human rights defender.

11. On 23 May 2024, 14 October 2024 and 19 February 2025, the Special Rapporteur submitted letters to the Government of Eritrea requesting to meet with its representatives in Geneva and New York. On 7 August 2024, he submitted a request to visit the country. However, as at 15 April 2025, he had not received any responses.

12. The Special Rapporteur notes with regret the continued lack of cooperation or meaningful engagement by Eritrea with his mandate. He requests the Human Rights Council to engage Eritrea in this regard. He reaffirms his commitment to pursuing dialogue with the Government of Eritrea in a spirit of cooperation and stands ready to support efforts to improve the human rights situation.

IV. Cooperation and engagement with human rights mechanisms

13. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the ratification by Eritrea of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in December 2024, noting the importance of the commitments adopted by Eritrea to uphold the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights for persons with disabilities and to promote the recognition of their dignity.

14. The Special Rapporteur also acknowledges the participation by Eritrea in its fourth universal periodic review in May 2024 and its engagement with its review by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2025. He is encouraged by the enhanced engagement by Eritrea with these mechanisms and urges Eritrea to make progress on the ground by implementing their recommendations.

15. During the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review of Eritrea, 293 recommendations were made by 98 States. Eritrea supported 126 recommendations, noted 155, and provided additional clarification on seven, for which Eritrea supported only part of the recommendation. Eritrea also rejected five recommendations, stating that they contained factual mistakes or were irrelevant to the national context. The Special Rapporteur notes that the country's rate of acceptance decreased from just over 50 per cent in the third cycle to 43 per cent in the fourth cycle.²

² See [A/HRC/57/14/Add.1](#).

16. The responses by Eritrea to the recommendations received from Member States in the fourth cycle of its universal periodic review continued to demonstrate a selective approach to human rights. Eritrea accepted certain recommendations, notably on the rights to health, education and development and to an adequate standard of living; on the rights of persons with disabilities; and on judicial independence and access to justice. Conversely, it did not accept critical recommendations concerning civil and political rights. These included calls to implement the Constitution of 1997 constitution, reform the indefinite national service or respect statutory time limits, end conscription of school-age children, investigate and prevent torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances, and abolish the death penalty, as well as recommendations on accountability and on freedoms of expression, opinion and assembly. Furthermore, Eritrea did not accept recommendations to combat sexual and gender-based violence and to adopt legislation to protect women and girls against discrimination.

17. The reviews of Eritrea by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and under the fourth cycle of the universal periodic review reflected the minimal, selective and inconsistent implementation of previous recommendations. While the authorities pointed to the adoption of certain laws, policies and programmes as evidence of compliance, such measures failed to address broader structural issues raised in previous reviews that impede the fulfilment and enjoyment of economic and social rights. For example, the Government reported efforts to enhance access to healthcare and education. However, it did not address the militarization of education or the forced conscription of students – including children – and of teachers and medical personnel, which severely undermines the quality of public services and contributes to high dropout rates.³ These practices also exacerbate shortages of essential professionals, as they continue to flee the country and its abysmal human rights record. While the Government highlighted the construction of dams and infrastructure to support agricultural development, it omitted the fact that these projects had been built with conscripted forced labour under the national service programme. Similarly, while efforts to combat child marriage and early pregnancy have been reported, these overlook the fact that young girls and their families view early marriage and pregnancy as a means to protect girls against conscription.

18. The Special Rapporteur is concerned that in some instances, the adoption of laws and policies for the promotion of human rights remained rhetorical. While Eritrea highlighted the adoption of a revised Civil Code and Penal Code in 2015, introducing provisions aimed at aligning national legislation more closely with international human rights standards, a decade later these instruments have yet to be brought into force. Furthermore, the authorities provided limited data or information regarding implementation of laws, policies and programmes.

19. Eritrea has yet to put in place a national action plan or road map for the implementation of the recommendations of the universal periodic review or other human rights mechanisms, nor has it established a coordination mechanism for follow-up.

V. Regional developments

20. Escalating tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia raised serious concerns. In February 2025, the Special Rapporteur received information indicating that the Eritrean authorities had initiated nationwide mobilization. In March 2025, both countries reportedly strengthened their military presences along joint border areas. Eritrean and Ethiopian officials have denied plans for direct military confrontation. The Special Rapporteur calls on Eritrea and Ethiopia to halt military build-up and urges the international community to proactively engage to help de-escalate tensions in the region.

³ Data provided by the Government for the review of Eritrea by the Committee on the Rights of the Child show major discrepancies in enrolment in elementary school (81.5 per cent in 2018/19, ages 6 to 10), middle school (46.3 per cent, ages 11 to 13) and secondary school (19.6 per cent).

21. Eritrean forces remained present in border areas of Tigray awarded to Ethiopia under the decision of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, notably in several areas of the districts of Irob, Gulo-Mekeda, Egela and Tahtay Adiyabo, including Weraetle, Alitena, Sebeya and Zalambessa. The Special Rapporteur urges Eritrea and Ethiopia to uphold the border demarcation defined by the Algiers Agreement and the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, while safeguarding the rights of residents of contested areas; their protection must be a central priority in the implementation of the Commission's decision.

22. The Special Rapporteur continued to receive reports of human rights violations perpetrated by the Eritrean Defence Forces in areas of Tigray under their control. These included extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, sexual and gender-based violence, kidnappings, forced displacement of civilians, looting or destruction of property, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, and forced conscription of young persons, including children. Civilians in areas under the control of the Eritrean Defence Forces faced severe restrictions on their movement, including curfews and threats of reprisal for attempting to travel to Tigray-administered areas. These restrictions isolated communities, depriving them of access to essential services, livelihood opportunities, markets and humanitarian assistance. Local residents, and particularly youth, fled these areas due to fear of conscription and disappearance.

23. The reporting period also witnessed heightened regional polarization in the Horn of Africa, with ongoing conflicts and complex and shifting alliances. Eritrea provided support to the Sudanese Armed Forces in the context of the ongoing conflict in the Sudan, including through the training of eastern Sudanese armed groups allied with Government of the Sudan.

VI. National/military service

24. Eritrea has not taken any steps to reform elements of its national service programme that are inconsistent with international human rights standards.⁴ These include the indefinite duration of service, the use of conscripts for forced labour, inhuman or degrading conditions of service, the high prevalence of rape, sexual and gender-based violence and torture, and the requirement for all students, including minors, to complete their final year of schooling at the Sawa military training camp. Eritrea did not accept any of the 21 recommendations regarding national/military service received during the fourth cycle of its universal periodic review.

25. The length of an individual's national service is arbitrary and left to the discretion of the authorities, with no clear criteria or conditions for release. In practice, most Eritreans are forced to serve for periods spanning from several years to more than two decades, in both military and civil service roles. The service has also extended far beyond the statutory limit of 40 years of age. In recent years, particularly in the context of the Tigray war, children between 15 and 18 years of age as well as persons over 60 years of age were also conscripted.⁵

26. The national service programme systematically deprives individuals of their fundamental freedoms – including freedom of movement, and the rights to pursue education, employment and family life. It subjects the entire population to a system of social control where human rights violations and coercion are widespread, resulting in a climate of fear, mistrust, and enforced compliance under threat of punishment. The prolonged and coercive nature of national service has left generations unable to envision or work towards a future of their choosing, and families fractured by prolonged separation and the absence of stable parental roles.⁶ Its cumulative effect over the past three decades has been the development of collective trauma, marked by anxiety, depression, loss of agency,

⁴ CCPR/C/ERI/CO/1, para. 38; CRC/C/ERI/CO/4, para. 48; CEDAW/C/ERI/CO/6, paras. 11, 42 and 52; A/HRC/29/42, paras. 92 and 93; A/HRC/32/47, para. 121; and A/HRC/47/21, para. 82.

⁵ A/HRC/53/20, paras. 21, 32 and 27; and A/HRC/50/20, paras. 27 and 28.

⁶ A/HRC/53/20, paras. 35–41.

and the breakdown of social and familial structures. These impacts are particularly visible among young Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers.

27. National service also serves a central ideological and political role. Pursuant to the National Service Proclamation, it was intended, among other things, “to create a new generation characterized by love of work, discipline, ready to participate and serve in the reconstruction of the nation” and “to foster national unity among our people by eliminating subnational feelings”. Deserting or evading national service and exiting the country without permission are criminal offences. Those who attempt to desert or avoid the draft are regarded by the authorities as being disloyal to Eritrea and treated as traitors. They are punished accordingly, by prolonged arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. Their families and communities are also punished in order to elicit compliance.⁷

28. Freedom of movement is severely restricted, with internal travel subject to a permit system. Individuals are required to obtain government authorization to move between regions, and enforcement is carried out through checkpoints, sporadic checks and surveillance networks. Conscripts have no right to choose their place of deployment, and are deployed according to the Government’s needs, often far from their homes, sometimes in remote locations. They are granted permission to visit their families at their place of residence for a limited period – typically several weeks to a month. However, leave is granted at the discretion of supervisors, with conscripts, particularly those serving in military units, often denied family visits for several years. Absence without permission is harshly punished.

29. Completion of the national service is a precondition for access to basic services and legal entitlements. Families can only access ration coupons – allowing them to buy essential products at discounted prices – upon certifying that all family members of draft age are serving in national service. Discrimination in access to food, and to means and entitlements for its procurement, on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, age, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, constitutes a violation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.⁸

30. Furthermore, the administration of the State and its economic structures are built around, and dependent on, the national service. While some conscripts are drafted directly into the military and perform purely military duties, others are assigned to work in civilian roles after completing military training. They typically work in government ministries, schools, hospitals, the judiciary, or companies owned by the military or the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice, in sectors including developmental work, infrastructure, agriculture, mining and construction. While the hardship and working conditions vary depending on the nature of the assignment, the common denominator is that conscripts work indefinitely under threat of severe punishment, have no choice over the nature of their work or the location of their assignment, and receive minimal compensation.

31. The education system has been woven into the national service, requiring all students – including minors – to complete their final year of studies at the Sawa military camp, an institution under military command where students undergo military training alongside their academic studies. Upon completion of the final year of schooling, students sit for the National School Leaving Examination, the results of which will determine their future: students who pass may go on to continue their education and later join the civil service, while those who fail are conscripted into military service. The courses that students enrol in are chosen by the Government, based on available places and the Government’s needs.

32. According to the National Institute for Quality Standards in Education, in 2024, 74.8 per cent of the 18,638 students who sat for the exam did not pass. Only 25.2 per cent

⁷ [A/HRC/50/20](#), paras. 23–31; and [A/HRC/53/20](#), paras. 21 and 30–34.

⁸ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, general comment No. 12 (1999) on the right to adequate food, paras. 18, 19 and 26.

were eligible to pursue further studies, with 15.5 per cent qualifying to enrol in degree programmes and 9.7 per cent in vocational training.⁹ These statistics not only raise serious concerns regarding the quality of education at Sawa and across the national education system, but also point to a deliberate structuring of the system to channel the majority of students into open-ended military conscription with no prospects for further development. Additionally, young persons who drop out of school before reaching the twelfth grade join the ranks of the military directly through periodic draft calls and mass round-ups in towns and villages.

33. Notably, only 24 per cent of the candidates who took the school-leaving exam in 2024 were female. The relatively lower enrolment of women and girls at Sawa is in contrast with the higher enrolment rates for girls at the secondary level (19.6 per cent as compared to 17.1 per cent for boys in 2019), suggesting that girls are dropping out in significant numbers in the final years of schooling. This could point to structural inequalities, gender-based discrimination, and child marriage. Additionally, the heightened risk of sexual harassment and abuse at Sawa leads girls and their families to seek ways to prevent their attendance, including by arranging early marriages, seeking pregnancies or attempting to flee the country. It is therefore apparent that the national service may contribute to perpetuating these realities.

VII. Rule of law and the administration of justice

A. Institutional framework

34. The country's legal and institutional framework remained inadequate to protect and uphold human rights. Although a Constitution was formally ratified in 1997, providing for democratic institutions, human rights protections and the separation of powers, it has never been implemented. In 2014, the President, Isaias Afwerki, announced the drafting of a new Constitution, which was reportedly drafted in 2015. However, as at April 2025, it had not been promulgated and Eritrea continues to operate without a functional constitutional framework.

35. Eritrea lacks separation of powers: the National Assembly has not convened since 2002 and the President exercises legislative powers through proclamations and presidential decrees. The judiciary is also heavily influenced by the executive branch, with no checks or balances on government actions. No national elections have been held since independence in 1993.

36. Eritrea overhauled its legislation in 2015, with the adoption of a revised Penal Code, Civil Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Civil Procedure Code. The 2015 Criminal Code introduced human rights protections, including provisions relating to the treatment of detainees and the rights of the accused to be informed of charges, to a fair trial, and to legal representation. However, a decade after their adoption, these instruments have not been brought into force.

B. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances

37. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances remained widespread and systematic. Individuals were routinely detained without formal charges, trial, access to legal representation, or any means to challenge the lawfulness of their detention. Thousands of victims of arbitrary detention continue to be held in harsh and often life-threatening conditions for prolonged periods of time, spanning from months to more than two decades.

38. The situation of hundreds of Eritreans subjected to enforced disappearance remains extremely alarming. In many cases, their disappearance has continued for years, or even

⁹ Ministry of Information of Eritrea, "National school leaving examination results announced", 17 July 2024.

decades. Hundreds of Muslim teachers and religious community leaders have been forcibly disappeared since 1991, when the Eritrean authorities targeted and closed Muslim religious schools and institutions in Keren, Ghinda and Massawa. Waves of kidnappings by the security forces took place in 1991–1997 and 2005–2006 in the Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea regions, resulting in the enforced disappearance of hundreds of Islamic school teachers, religious leaders and imams (i.e. mosque imams). Their whereabouts are unknown to this date. Among those detained was Mohamed Maranet, a teacher at the Keren Ma'had religious school, detained in July 1991. He also served as a judge (*qadi*) in Ghinda and Agordat.

39. Victims of enforced disappearance are held incommunicado in undisclosed locations, including in secret places of detention, underground facilities and remote detention centres. Others are believed to have been killed or to have died in custody. The authorities often do not acknowledge their detention, and deny families information about the whereabouts, conditions and legal status of their loved ones.

40. Disappearances are often targeted at individuals perceived to be opponents of the Government or who have challenged State narratives. In September and early October 2001, 12 journalists were forcibly disappeared during a crackdown on free press. Among those detained was Seyoum Tsehay, an independent journalist, photographer, film director, husband, and father of two. Despite international calls and repeated attempts by his family to obtain information, for 24 years the authorities have not disclosed his whereabouts.

41. Alongside the well-known cases of enforced disappearance involving prominent individuals, there are hundreds of anonymous victims still languishing in Eritrean jails, whose names remain unknown to the public. They represent the broader and enduring pattern and policy of enforced disappearance in Eritrea. They must not be forgotten. As poignantly stated by the daughter of a victim: “This is why it is important that we talk about our father. We are not numbers, we are human beings and have a history, a life, a family.” Their continued absence demands urgent international attention, accountability, and justice. The Special Rapporteur reiterates his call for the Government of Eritrea to release all detainees subjected to arbitrary detention or enforced disappearance, and to provide the families of disappeared persons with information about their whereabouts and state of health.

42. The Special Rapporteur continued to document instances of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment of detainees. Conditions of detention remained dire, and detainees described being held in overcrowded and unsanitary facilities lacking basic amenities such as beds, toilets, water, sanitation or access to healthcare. Some witnesses described being confined in metal shipping containers and underground cells under extreme weather conditions and without adequate ventilation. Former detainees described receiving minimal sustenance, leading to malnutrition and related health issues. Many detainees suffered from untreated illnesses, and some had reportedly died due to lack of medical attention.

C. Accountability

43. A decade after the publication of the first report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, no tangible progress has been made by Eritrea to address past and ongoing human rights violations. The Government has shown no willingness to investigate allegations or hold perpetrators accountable. Victims are systematically denied their right to truth, justice and reparations. Moreover, Eritrea has yet to establish credible and effective mechanisms capable of addressing the prevailing impunity and providing redress to victims. This persistent failure to ensure accountability not only undermines the rule of law, but also signals tolerance for human rights violations, emboldening perpetrators and perpetuating cycles of abuse.

44. Internationally, the authorities have consistently refused to cooperate with Human Rights Council-mandated mechanisms or to engage with their findings. Eritrea has also failed to implement the recommendations of the universal periodic review, as well as of international and regional human rights mechanisms (see sect. IV above). It also did not

accept any individual complaint procedures under any human rights treaty to which it is party.

45. Avenues for international accountability remain limited. Eritrea is not a State Party to the Rome Statute, precluding direct jurisdiction by the International Criminal Court unless a referral is made by the Security Council or Eritrea accepts jurisdiction. Despite calls by the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea in 2016 for the Security Council to refer the situation in the country to the International Criminal Court for prosecution of possible crimes against humanity, such a referral did not take place.

46. Regionally, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has received communications from victims and from civil society concerning violations by Eritrea under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, however Eritrea has consistently failed to implement the Commission's decisions.¹⁰ Eritrea has not ratified the protocol establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, nor accepted the jurisdiction of the Court to receive cases from individuals or non-governmental organizations, limiting regional judicial remedies.

47. The *Nevsun Resources Ltd. v. Araya* case in Canada marked a significant development in the pursuit of accountability for human rights violations in Eritrea. In a landmark ruling in 2020, the Supreme Court of Canada found that a Canadian mining company could be held liable in a Canadian court for human rights abuses, including forced labour, slavery and torture, committed in Eritrea. While the case was ultimately settled out of court in 2023, it set a precedent for holding corporations accountable for human rights violations committed abroad and underscored the potential role of extraterritorial litigation and universal jurisdiction in addressing impunity.

48. In 2021, the European Union sanctioned the Eritrean National Security Office on the basis of serious human rights violations committed in Eritrea by its agents. Also in 2021, the United States of America sanctioned four Eritrean entities – the Eritrean Defence Forces, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, the Hidri Trust and the Red Sea Trading Corporation – and three individuals, in connection with human rights and humanitarian law violations in the context of the Tigray conflict.

49. Civil society organizations, Eritrean human rights defenders, and victims of grave human rights violations repeatedly conveyed to the Special Rapporteur their disappointment and frustration at the absence of meaningful follow-up by the international community to the findings of the commission of enquiry on human rights in Eritrea. Many emphasized that the work of the commission marked a milestone in securing international acknowledgment of the long-standing, systematic and widespread violations they had endured. However, the hope that the commission's conclusions would serve as a springboard for concrete accountability mechanisms remains unfulfilled.

VIII. Freedom of conscience, religion or belief

50. Freedom of conscience, religion or belief remained severely restricted. Only four religious denominations are authorized: Sunni Islam, Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism. Since 2002, the authorities have required all other religious communities to register with the Office of Religious Affairs or cease their activities. However, because no requests for registration have ever been approved, in practice all other religious groups are banned.¹¹

¹⁰ *Zegveld and Ephrem v. Eritrea*, communication No. 250/02, decision of 20 November 2003; *Article 19 v. Eritrea*, communication No. 275/03, decision of 30 May 2007; and *Isaak v. Eritrea*, communication No. 428/12, decision of February 2016.

¹¹ The Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief has consistently stated that registration of religious groups should not be a precondition for practising one's religion, but only for the acquisition of legal personality (see [E/CN.4/2005/61](#), para. 58; [E/CN.4/2006/5/Add.1](#); and [A/HRC/10/8/Add.4](#)). In its resolution 77/221, the General Assembly urges States to review registration practices to ensure that they do not limit the right to manifest one's religion or belief.

A. Conscientious objection

51. Eritrea does not recognize the right to conscientious objection and offers no alternative civilian service for individuals who object to military service on religious, ethical or other grounds. Individuals who refuse to participate in political or patriotic activities or to perform the national service on such grounds are labelled as traitors and face persecution.

52. Jehovah's Witnesses face severe discrimination and persecution. In 1994, the President, Mr. Afwerki, revoked their citizenship, rendering them stateless. Denied identification and travel documents, they live under constant threat of arrest. As a consequence, their access to essential services and entitlements such as healthcare, employment, property ownership, pensions, food rationing coupons and business licences is restricted. Children of Jehovah's Witnesses have been denied admission to school due to their parents' lack of coupon cards, and they are unable to graduate from high school due to the requirement to attend the Sawa military camp. Jehovah's Witnesses have been imprisoned for their refusal to participate in the national service, as well as for declining to integrate or contribute to the ruling party (the People's Front for Democracy and Justice) and associated organizations (such as the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice).

B. Religious persecution

53. Religious repression continued unabated. The Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned over the prolonged arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of religious leaders and people of faith, some of whom have been detained for over 20 years without having ever been charged with or convicted of any crime.¹²

54. As at April 2025, 64 Jehovah's Witnesses and an estimated three hundred to five hundred evangelical Christians remained arbitrarily imprisoned without charges or trial. As a result, members of unrecognized religious groups live in fear of being caught in worship, or of their faith being discovered.

55. The right to manifest one's religion or belief, including the freedom to worship, of members of unrecognized denominations, was systematically violated. Religious gatherings were targeted, with mass arrests of worshippers. On 27 September 2024, 24 members of the Jehovah's Witnesses (6 men, 16 women and 2 children) were arrested during a religious meeting at a private home. On 30 September, an 85-year-old woman residing in the house was also arrested. Although the two children were released, the 23 adults – including three elderly women over the age of 80 years and a woman who was six months pregnant (released three months later) – were transferred to Mai Serwa Prison. In early December 2024, security police raided a house where 27 evangelical Christian students aged from 14 to 16 were gathered for prayer. They were transferred to Mai Serwa Prison. Also, more than 30 Christians were seized at night from their homes in Agordat, Barentu and Tessenay in April 2024 and detained.

56. Fifty of the 103 evangelical students detained in April 2023 while recording a worship song for YouTube remained imprisoned as at April 2025. Most are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, one of the permitted denominations.

57. Young Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as their parents, also faced detention for refusing to participate in political activities. On 1 November 2024, four Jehovah's Witness students – two of whom were children – were arrested at school by security officers and transferred to Mai Serwa Prison, reportedly for declining to contribute financially to the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students Association, an organization linked to the ruling party.

¹² A/HRC/56/24, paras. 47 and 48.

C. Government interference in religious affairs

58. The Government sought to control all religious communities and institutions, both within the country and in the diaspora. Following the dismantling of civic space in Eritrea, religious communities appear to be among the few remaining entities perceived by the authorities as a source of dissent. The authorities exercised significant interference in the affairs of recognized religious denominations, infringing on the freedoms of religious groups to appoint religious leaders, to teach and disseminate materials, to communicate with individuals and communities on religious matters, and to establish and maintain charitable and humanitarian institutions, and on the right of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children.

59. The Government has systematically confiscated privately run religious schools, including Islamic, Catholic and Protestant educational institutions. The forced takeover of religious schools significantly impacted communities, limiting their ability to provide faith-based education and threatening their religious and cultural identity. Since 2019, Catholic social projects have also been confiscated, including clinics and other institutions, affecting the capacity of the Catholic Church to provide social and humanitarian services to the population. Those who have resisted these measures, including school administrators and community leaders, have faced intimidation, detention and enforced disappearance (see para. 38).

60. The authorities also interfere with the management of the finances of religious groups and the appointment and removal of religious leaders, including of Orthodox and Muslim clergy and leadership. The Special Rapporteur recalls that the freedom to train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders, priests and teachers is an essential aspect of the right to freedom of religion or belief.¹³

61. In the case of the Orthodox Church, the removal and placement under arbitrary house arrest of Patriarch Abune Antonios in 2006 by the authorities generated a rift between religious leaders and members of the Church who followed Abune Antonios and those who followed the government appointee, Abune Dioskoros. Following the death of Abune Antonios in 2022, the divisions deepened as his followers were persecuted. As at April 2025, it is estimated that more than 100 Orthodox priests, monks and followers of the late Patriarch remain imprisoned. On 26 January 2025, the Asmara Synod, reportedly controlled by the Government of Eritrea, installed a new patriarch, Abune Basilios, with the participation of representatives of the Coptic, Armenian, Indian and Syriac Orthodox Churches. Eritrean faith leaders in the diaspora denounced their exclusion from the selection process for the new patriarch.¹⁴

IX. Civic and democratic space

62. Civic space remained entirely closed, marked by suppression of the freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and of the right to participate in public affairs, leaving no room for independent media, civil society, religious communities or opposition political activity. The ruling party remained the only political party allowed in the country.

63. The systematic repression of fundamental freedoms over more than two decades – through the arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of dissenting voices – has created a climate of fear and impunity. The public is unable to express grievances or advocate for change without risking severe consequences. Private gatherings, including religious services, weddings and social meetings, are subject to State monitoring, and any discussion deemed political or critical of the Government may lead to arrest. This

¹³ Art. 6 (g) of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief; and Human Rights Committee, general comment No. 22 (1993), para. 4.

¹⁴ Statement of the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church, Diocese of North America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand and the Middle East, on recent events, 29 January 2025.

environment has effectively silenced independent expression and extinguished nearly all avenues for civic engagement.

A. Freedoms of expression and association, and the right to participate in public affairs

64. In 2024, Eritrea was ranked as the worst country for press freedom globally.¹⁵ It remains the only African country without privately owned media, following the 2001 crackdown on media freedoms, which saw the arbitrary detention and disappearance of independent editors, journalists and media owners.¹⁶ The only existing media are directly controlled by the Ministry of Information and serve as platforms for State propaganda. Eritrean diaspora-run outlets based abroad provide alternative sources of information, however their reach within the country remains limited.

65. Access to official information regarding Eritrea remains highly limited. The Government operates with minimal transparency, withholding basic information such as government expenditures, national statistics, legislative processes, or development and human rights indicators. Eritrea has never conducted an official census, and the most recent population and health survey was conducted in 2010, resulting in significant gaps in up-to-date, reliable data. The Special Rapporteur recalls that the right to seek, receive and impart information is a fundamental component of the right to freedom of expression. Access to information is essential for transparency, accountability, and effective participation in public life.

66. Access to the Internet is very limited, with connectivity primarily available through a limited number of Internet cafés, where usage is closely monitored. In addition to State surveillance and targeted blocking of websites and applications, slow connection speeds and poor infrastructure further hinder the ability to obtain independent information or communicate freely online. The digital environment in Eritrea is characterized by self-censorship, access barriers, and severe curtailment of freedom of expression. However, Eritreans in the diaspora have increasingly utilized social media to engage in political discussions and human rights activism. In response, the Government of Eritrea has adapted its strategy, with a growing presence of pro-government influencers and coordinated social media activity. Pro-government actors frequently targeted Eritrean human rights defenders online (see para. 71 below).

67. Association and assembly rights are completely denied, and independent civil society organizations or civic groups are banned. Private gatherings of more than seven people are prohibited unless authorized by the Government, and unauthorized meetings can lead to arbitrary arrest and detention. The authorities have sought to occupy civic space through structures of the political apparatus of the ruling party, such as the National Union of Eritrean Women, the National Union for Students, National Confederation of Eritrean Workers and the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice.

B. Transnational repression

68. The Government continued to employ an array of coercive strategies to enforce loyalty and suppress dissent within Eritrean diaspora communities. The Special Rapporteur continued to document instances of transnational repression, including surveillance, harassment, threats, physical assaults, punishment by proxy – whereby the families of dissenters are targeted inside Eritrea, smear campaigns, social isolation, censorship and denial of consular services. The degree to which these violations occurred varied depending on the level of protection afforded by host countries to Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers, the size and makeup of Eritrean communities, and the extent of the influence of the Government of Eritrea.

¹⁵ Available at <https://rsf.org/en/index>.

¹⁶ A/HRC/56/24, paras. 57 and 58.

69. Human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists, independent journalists and political opponents in the diaspora continued to be targeted and subjected to threats and harassment by individuals or groups linked to the Government of Eritrea. These groups included structures of the ruling party abroad, namely the Young People's Front for Democracy and Justice and other associated groups, some of which have allegedly engaged in acts of violence against individuals and participated in clashes between pro-government and anti-government groups. The role of Eritrean diplomatic outposts in supporting and mobilizing such groups should be adequately investigated by host countries.

70. The majority of Eritreans who engaged with the Special Rapporteur expressed the belief that the Eritrean authorities were capable of monitoring their activities abroad through a network of informants embedded within diaspora communities. Several individuals told the Special Rapporteur that their relatives in Eritrea had been subjected to intimidation, interrogations, and in some cases detention, due to their activities abroad. Many conveyed that fear of reprisals against themselves or their relatives in Eritrea prevented them from expressing their views publicly or participating in political activities. Almost all Eritreans interviewed by the Special Rapporteur reported being unable to communicate freely with family members in Eritrea due to the surveillance of phone and online communications, and indicated that they avoided discussing sensitive issues, such as the state of public services or the situation of detained relatives, for fear of endangering their loved ones.

71. The use of social media to attack, discredit and intimidate human rights defenders, activists and journalists in the diaspora remains a matter of concern. In recent years, pro-government accounts and influencers – reportedly operating both from within Eritrea and abroad – have targeted human rights defenders and/or government critics, disseminating defamatory content, using inflammatory rhetoric, and making threats or inciting hatred against them. The use of racial slurs to delegitimize and exclude dissenting voices has deepened divisions and further polarized online discourse.

72. The enforcement of the 2 per cent “Recovery and Rehabilitation” tax is central to control by Eritrea of its expatriates, as well as a key financial tool for the Government to secure offshore revenue from its global diaspora. The system for collecting the tax is coercive, and Eritrean diplomatic missions refuse to provide vital consular services such as the issuance of passports, birth and marriage certificates, academic records, and other critical documents, and to allow burial in Eritrea, unless the tax is paid in full. The ability to travel to or re-enter the country is also restricted, and family members in Eritrea may face legal and administrative barriers, including in relation to the execution of wills, the registration of property, renewal of licences and business transactions.

73. The Special Rapporteur is deeply concerned about the profound impacts of government interference and transnational repression in the social and political dynamics of the diaspora. The repressive practices outlined above continue to entrench divisions, undermine efforts to foster peaceful coexistence, and hinder the capacity of Eritrean communities abroad to flourish.

74. Polarization within the diaspora has intensified in recent years, following the growing mobilization of young refugees and asylum-seekers, and the intensified efforts of the Government of Eritrea to assert control over diaspora politics. Since 2022, dozens of demonstrations opposing government-organized events have resulted in violent clashes between government supporters and critics, leading to serious injuries among protestors, festival attendees and law enforcement officers. Encouragingly, by 2024, a significant reduction in violent incidents was observed across Europe and North America, with protests largely proceeding peacefully. The Special Rapporteur reiterates his condemnation of all forms of violence and urges both protestors and government supporters to express their views through peaceful means.

75. The Special Rapporteur is particularly concerned about the situation in Israel, where at least nine Eritreans – including government opponents and supporters – have been killed since September 2023. The Special Rapporteur has received information regarding intra-community clashes, as well as targeted attacks against Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers. Asylum-seekers in Israel have reported being increasingly afraid for their

lives – not taking their children to school, going to work or venturing out in the streets due to fear of attacks. The Special Rapporteur reiterates the importance of enhancing community engagement and protection and granting Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers in Israel legal status, empowering them to fully integrate in society and enjoy the full spectrum of their rights. Furthermore, the role of the Embassy of Eritrea in organizing and supporting violent pro-government groups should be thoroughly investigated, and measures to prevent recurrence adopted (see paras. 86 and 87 below).

76. The Special Rapporteur is also concerned by the negative rhetoric about Eritrean refugees in the media and from government officials and parliamentarians in some important host countries. He urges public authorities to ground decision-making on an in-depth understanding of Eritrean community dynamics, to consider the historical and ongoing repression in Eritrea and across borders and to conduct in-depth investigations into intra-community violence.

X. Situation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers

77. Eritreans continued to flee the country, driven by persistent human rights violations. As at June 2024, Eritrea ranked as the tenth-largest country of origin for refugees and asylum-seekers globally, with over 683,000 individuals, or 18 per cent of its population, having fled the country according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Eritrea had the third-highest rate of nationals who had fled the country relative to its population size, surpassed only by the Syrian Arab Republic and South Sudan.¹⁷

78. The already dire situation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers grew even more critical, marked by ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia and the Sudan, an increase in forced removals from Egypt, Ethiopia and Türkiye, insecurity and exploitation along migratory routes, increasingly restrictive migration and asylum policies in both transit and destination countries, diminished resettlement prospects, and transnational repression and polarization within the diaspora.

79. Ongoing conflicts, violence and instability in Ethiopia and the Sudan – the two countries hosting the largest numbers of Eritreans¹⁸ – severely undermined the safety, protection and overall humanitarian situation of refugees and asylum-seekers. In Ethiopia – particularly in the Tigray and Amhara regions – conflicts and insecurity have strained humanitarian infrastructure and exposed refugee camps to violence. At the Alemwach camp in Amhara, Eritrean refugees reported being targeted by criminal elements and local militias – denouncing killings, robberies, kidnappings for ransom, and assaults.

80. The deteriorating security context and the impossibility of regularizing their status or completing reunification processes triggered secondary displacement to and within countries in the region, with Eritreans relocating from Ethiopia, Israel and the Sudan to key cities including Kampala, Cairo, Addis Ababa and Juba. The worsening violence across the Horn of Africa and North Africa, combined with stricter border policies, resulted in more precarious journeys and increasingly predatory smuggling business models, further compounding the vulnerability of Eritrean refugees to human trafficking, arbitrary detention, extortion and other abuses.

81. The Special Rapporteur is gravely concerned about patterns of arbitrary detention and deportation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers in violation of the non-refoulement principle. He recalls that the prohibition of refoulement, which ensures that no one is returned to a country where they may face persecution, is the fundamental pillar of international refugee law. He also cautions that under international human rights law,

¹⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Refugee Data Finder, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>.

¹⁸ According to UNHCR, in June 2024 Ethiopia and the Sudan were hosting 179,447 and 150,067 Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers, respectively.

detention for immigration-related purposes should be a measure of last resort, only permissible for adults, and when no less restrictive measure is available.

82. During the reporting period, Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers were targeted in Addis Ababa. Hundreds of Eritreans, including dozens with refugee documentation, were detained in police stations across Addis Ababa without charges or due process. In many cases they were held for several months in facilities designed only for short-term detention, in harsh and overcrowded conditions, with insufficient food. According to allegations received by the Special Rapporteur, some detainees were pressured to pay bribes for their release. On 22 January 2025, Ethiopian police officers shot at a group of Eritrean refugees as they attempted to flee the Nifas Silk Lafto detention centre, killing three men and injuring one. Another Eritrean man was reportedly killed by the police in the same neighbourhood of Addis Ababa on 5 April 2025 as he attempted to flee arrest. According to information received by the Special Rapporteur, over 200 unregistered and registered asylum-seekers, as well as several recognized refugees, were deported from Ethiopia in early December 2024, without an individual assessment being conducted of the risk that they may be subjected to persecution upon return, in violation of the non-refoulement principle. These developments follow the suspension by Ethiopia of asylum registration and documentation since 2021, leaving thousands of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers vulnerable to arrest and deportation.

83. Egypt also continued to detain Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers for prolonged periods and to forcibly return them to Eritrea. This included individuals registered with UNHCR, long-term residents with established legal status, and parents, who became separated from their children. The Special Rapporteur received testimonies describing inadequate detention conditions and treatment that may amount to inhuman or degrading treatment. Reports further highlighted the cooperation between Egyptian migratory authorities and the Embassy of Eritrea in Cairo, including instances where detained Eritreans were taken to the Embassy and pressured into signing documentation agreeing to a supposedly “voluntary” return. Egypt adopted a new Asylum Law in December 2024. A group of United Nations experts expressed serious concerns regarding inconsistencies of the law with international human rights and refugee law, including vague concepts and legislative gaps that could further institutionalize the criminalization, detention, refoulement and collective expulsion of refugees and asylum-seekers.¹⁹

84. On 6 August 2024, Türkiye deported 203 Eritreans to their country of origin. A group of United Nations experts raised their concerns with the Government of Türkiye, including over allegations that individuals remained in detention without charges or access to legal representation, that they did not have access to the asylum procedure, and that they had been subjected to beatings and inadequate conditions of detention. In a response to the experts’ letter, the authorities of Türkiye stated that no assessment had been made of the risk that the rights of the returnees may be violated upon return, because none of the individuals had applied for international protection.²⁰ The Special Rapporteur welcomes the issuance of an interim measure by the authorities of Türkiye to prevent further deportations of 66 Eritreans who remained in detention.²¹

85. The Special Rapporteur received reliable information from multiple sources indicating that upon their deportation to Eritrea, returnees were subjected to interrogation, arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and indefinite conscription. The Special Rapporteur stresses the serious human rights consequences of forced removals to Eritrea, noting that torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, and extremely punitive conditions, have been extensively documented in the context of detention and of national service. He urges Member States to ensure access to asylum procedures, and to refrain from detaining

¹⁹ See communication EGY 7/2024, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29577>.

²⁰ See the response of Türkiye to TUR 6/2024, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=38802>.

²¹ See communication TUR 6/2024, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29417>.

and forcibly returning Eritrean asylum-seekers and refugees without assessing the individual human rights risks, and in breach of international human rights and refugee law.

86. The Special Rapporteur is gravely concerned about the situation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers in Israel, where the prolonged lack of access to legal status and basic rights and services has led to a de facto segregation of Eritrean asylum-seekers from Israeli society. These dynamics have exacerbated tensions within the diaspora, resulting in serious incidents of intracommunity violence and instances of transnational repression. Despite the presence of an estimated 20,000 Eritreans in Israel – most of whom arrived between 2006 and 2012 – only 31 had been officially recognized as refugees under Israeli law as at April 2023. The lack of access to legal status over a prolonged period has led to the marginalization of Eritrean asylum-seekers, who are unable to access lawful employment or adequate housing, to obtain driver's licences, to open bank accounts, to enrol in public education alongside Israeli students or to pursue tertiary education. This policy has left them vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and social isolation, and has severely limited their prospects for self-realization and development. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the ruling by the District Court of Jerusalem in June 2024 that Eritreans fleeing indefinite military conscription should be eligible for refugee protection under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, of 1951. However, that decision was appealed, and as at April 2025, it had not translated into policy.

87. The Special Rapporteur expresses concern regarding the introduction of a draft bill in the Israeli Knesset aimed at facilitating the deportation of Eritrean nationals identified as “government supporters”. He recalls that in accordance with international refugee and human rights law, any decision to remove an individual must be based on a fair and individualized assessment of their protection needs, including a thorough evaluation of the risk of human rights violations upon return to their country of origin. The Special Rapporteur encourages the Government of Israel to prioritize the registration, processing and adjudication of pending asylum claims by Eritrean nationals, and to undertake a review of previously rejected applications in the light of the recent jurisprudence of the District Court of Jerusalem. This would enable the authorities to make case-by-case determinations regarding the merits of asylum requests in accordance with international and national standards, obviating the need for new legislative measures targeting specific groups.

88. The Special Rapporteur stresses the urgent need to expand safe and regular pathways for Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers. Regrettably, resettlement programmes to Canada and the United States – which had previously served as positive examples of international solidarity – were temporarily suspended in early 2025, further narrowing the already limited options for safe and legal mobility.

89. The Special Rapporteur remains concerned over the significant administrative and logistical barriers faced by Eritrean refugees seeking family reunification. In particular, requirements to submit to DNA testing or provide biometric data at visa application centres constitute a major barrier in contexts of active conflict – such as in the Sudan – where such facilities and embassies are non-operational. As a result, refugees are compelled to undertake perilous cross-border journeys to access alternative centres, exposing them to heightened protection risks. The Special Rapporteur reiterates that requiring Eritreans to obtain documentation from Eritrean diplomatic outposts in order to regularize their situation or for the purposes of family reunification exposes them to harassment and coercion, placing an unreasonable burden on vulnerable individuals.²² He applauds good practices in some host countries, such as France, of facilitating the issuance of vital documentation for refugees and asylum-seekers, including in the context of family reunification.

²² A/HRC/56/24, paras. 81 and 82.

XI. Conclusions and recommendations

90. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government of Eritrea:

(a) End the widespread practices of enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention, ensure that all detainees are held in official places of detention and are afforded due process rights, and reveal the whereabouts and state of health of victims of enforced disappearance;

(b) Release immediately and unconditionally all those arbitrarily detained, including members of the political opposition, journalists, prisoners of conscience, people of faith, religious teachers and community leaders detained since 1991, and draft evaders, and their families.

(c) Ensure that persons deprived of their liberty are treated with respect for their dignity, in accordance with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), and introduce adequate monitoring mechanisms to prevent torture and inhuman or degrading treatment;

(d) Develop effective rule-of-law institutions and ensure the administration of justice by independent, qualified and professional individuals;

(e) Respect the statutory duration of 18 months of national service, and prevent the recruitment of children by the military; ensure adequate living conditions for conscripts; prevent the use of conscripts for forced labour; cease the persecution of draft evaders and deserters; and investigate allegations of human rights violations in the context of military/national service, and bring perpetrators to justice;

(f) Take steps to open up civic space by lifting restrictions on freedom of religion, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and creating a safe and enabling environment for independent media, civil society organizations and members of the political opposition to freely participate in public affairs;

(g) Halt the persecution of individuals based on their religious beliefs, and refrain from interfering with religious institutions in Eritrea and in the diaspora;

(h) Engage constructively with the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, as well as with other human rights mechanisms and organizations.

91. The Special Rapporteur recommends that Member States and international organizations:

(a) Keep Eritrea under close scrutiny until consistent, verified and tangible improvements in the human rights situation have been made;

(b) Ensure that human rights issues remain at the core of all engagement with Eritrea, and include human rights guarantees in the negotiation of development cooperation and investment projects in Eritrea;

(c) Exercise universal and extraterritorial jurisdiction and initiate investigations and legal proceedings against individuals and other entities, including companies, complicit in or responsible for the commission of international crimes, and grave breaches of international humanitarian law;

(d) Exert maximum pressure on the Government of Eritrea to end its policy of enforced disappearance, torture and arbitrary and incommunicado detention of political opponents, journalists, critical voices, prisoners of conscience, people of faith and community leaders;

(e) Provide effective protection to Eritrean nationals fleeing the country due to a risk of persecution or of being subjected to human rights violations, in accordance with the provisions of international refugee law, including the principle of non-refoulement;

(f) Support Eritrean human rights defenders and civil society organizations in their efforts to advocate for human rights in Eritrea, to promote accountability and

to support refugees and asylum-seekers as well as victims and survivors of human rights violations;

(g) Protect Eritrean refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants from transnational repression; and investigate criminal complaints filed by Eritrean diaspora members, as well as the role of Eritrean diplomatic missions in the intimidation and social control of Eritreans abroad;

(h) Urge the Ethiopian and Eritrean authorities, and the Tigray People's Liberation Front, to take all steps necessary to ensure the consolidation of the November 2022 peace agreement, and to address impunity for human rights and humanitarian law violations committed since November 2020.
