

Eritrean Petition to 38th Session

Of the UN Human Rights Council

(Geneva, 22 June 2018)

To:

President of the 38th Regular Session, UN Human Rights Council;

To:

UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights,

CC:

Delegations of 47 Member States of the Human Rights Council

Subject: Human Rights Situation in Eritrea has not shown any sign of improvement!

Date: 22 June, 2018

Your Excellencies,

We, Eritrean justice seekers demonstrating today in front of the UN Headquarters in Geneva, wish to earnestly convey this modest petition for your most urgent attention and action at this 38th Session of the UN Human Rights Council. Our demands to and expectations from this Session include the following:

- The human rights situation in Eritrea has not shown any sign of improvement and, therefore, we await the Council's concrete actions as adopted in several past resolutions of this august body;
- No effective action has been taken to implement the findings of the UN Commission of Inquiry and subsequent recommendations of the Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea as adopted in previous regular sessions;
- This 38th Session is, therefore, urged to find effective means of making pressure bear on the repressive regime in Eritrea to stop, inter alia, its arbitrary arrests, disappearances, torture and endless imprisonment of people without a day at a court of law;
- We also ask this 38th Session to kindly extend the mandate of the Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea in order to keep this Council informed of the situation and to follow up Council's past recommendations.

Excellencies and Madams/Sirs in the Council,

As the Eritrea Special Rapporteur Sheila B. Keetharuth has repeatedly informed the this Council and the recent session of UN General Assembly in New Year, the fate of all Eritrean prisoners of the regime in Asmara has been "**detention until death**". This has been going on for the last 27 years in Eritrea where all basic human rights and freedoms are non-existent. Eritrea to this day remains as a UN member state:

- Without a national constitution;
- Without functional branches of government;

- Without national elections for over quarter of a century;
- Without freedom of the press, assembly, worship and movement;
- No visitation rights for prisoners, not even by the ICRC;
- The open ended "national service" and slave-labour has forced the entire young generation to flee the country. The list is endless.

We Eritrean justice seekers are no doubt grateful to the UN Human Rights Council for its previous efforts that included the creation of a Special Rapporteur in 2012 and also its formation in 2014 of a three-person Commission of Inquiry that finally submitted its disturbing findings and strong recommendation for action in June 2016.

However, we are equally disturbed by the unwarranted delay for action by concerned UN bodies and the unexpected, unjustifiable appeasements towards the repressive regime in Eritrea by some UN member States, including prominent members of the Human Rights Council.

Dear Madams/Sirs,

The June 2018 report of Ms Sheila Keetharuth is now telling the Council that the Eritrean regime's "national/military service, identified by the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea as enslavement of a whole population, a crime against humanity on reasonable grounds to believe, remains indefinite; except for a small increase in pay in 2015, no further reform has been communicated.....Other crimes against humanity, including imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and other inhumane acts, persecution, rape and murder, continue".

We therefore find it to once again remind this 38th Session that it is incumbent upon the Council to ensure that Eritrean government actors who were responsible for monstrous human rights violations against their own people are held accountable to those criminal abuses according to existing legal framework of international criminal justice. It indeed is time for the international community to find appropriate methods by which accountability for gross human rights violations is ensured in Eritrea.

Only to reiterate, we urge the UN Human Rights Council to also guarantee the extension of the mandate of a Special Rapporteur for Human Rights for Eritrea with fully strengthened follow-up measures.

Eritrean Justice Seekers
 Coordinating Committee,
 Geneva Demonstration of 22 June 2018