



General Assembly

Distr.: General
7 May 2026

Original: English

Human Rights Council

Sixty-second session

15 June–10 July 2026

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
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 59/1, 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 sixty-second session.

The report outlines the human rights situation in Eritrea, emphasizing ongoing, systematic human rights violations. These include the continued use of enforced disappearance, decades-long arbitrary detention, and the persecution of political opponents, journalists and religious groups over the past three decades. It highlights, in particular, the systematic arrest of religious leaders and the closure of Muslim religious institutions and seizure of their property since the country's independence.

The Special Rapporteur details the harsh and degrading conditions of detention and imprisonment. The widespread and systematic use of such inhumane conditions, combined with prolonged arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances and religious persecution, may constitute crimes against humanity. The persistent and intentional use of these practices strongly suggests they are part of a broader State policy of repression, coercion, punishment and intimidation.

The Special Rapporteur highlights the ongoing lack of adequate protection measures for Eritrean refugees, including deportations and deficiencies in the protection offered by host countries and by United Nations entities. He also highlights the persistent failure to implement recommendations and the inadequate cooperation of certain Member States, particularly some African States, in addressing the human rights situation in Eritrea.

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



Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	3
II. Methodology	3
III. Activities	4
IV. Cooperation and engagement with human rights mechanisms.....	4
V. Regional developments	5
VI. National/military service	5
VII. Rule of law and the administration of justice	6
A. Institutional framework.....	6
B. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance.....	6
C. Accountability.....	8
VIII. Detention and prison conditions.....	8
IX. Freedom of conscience and religion or belief	10
A. Religious persecution of Muslims	10
B. Religious persecution of Christians	11
C. Religious persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses	11
X. Civic and democratic space.....	12
A. Freedom of expression and association, and the right to participate in public affairs	12
B. Transnational repression	13
XI. Situation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers.....	16
XII. Conclusions and recommendations	17

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 59/1, 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 sixty-second session. The report covers the period from 16 April 2025 to 15 April 2026.
2. During the reporting period, there was no progress in the human rights situation in Eritrea. On the contrary, since the appointment of the Special Rapporteur in 2020, the situation has continued to deteriorate and remains dire and critical, requiring close scrutiny by the Human Rights Council. Authorities continued to use arbitrary detention as a systematic tool of repression, while thousands of disappeared and arbitrarily detained persons remained in harsh detention and prisons without due process.
3. During the reporting period, Eritrean authorities continued to dismantle religious structures by intervening directly in their leadership and by arbitrarily detaining religious leaders. Through this strategy, authorities aim to restrict the exercise by religious communities of their rights to belief and religion, underscoring the continued interference by the Government in religious affairs.
4. Beyond the country's borders, transnational repression is increasingly playing a more prominent role as authorities continue to engage in coordinated efforts to silence, intimidate or harm Eritreans in the diaspora. Furthermore, many Eritreans continue to face deportation and inadequate safeguards in host countries, in violation of principles of non-refoulement and international refugee protection standards. The situation has been exacerbated further by gaps that remain in the protection system of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which leave numerous Eritreans vulnerable to incidents of refoulement, as well as to arbitrary detention, persecution and other severe human rights abuses upon their return.
5. The Special Rapporteur underscores the continued absence of accountability, a decade after the publication of 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 were taken during the reporting period to address the human rights violations documented over the years, to ensure access to justice for victims and to guarantee non-recurrence.
6. The Special Rapporteur is concerned about the lack of response to his requests to visit several countries in East and North Africa. Furthermore, some States refused such requests, citing the principle of non-interference in other States' internal affairs. Non-cooperation by Member States in extending an invitation to visit the region undermines the mandate set out in the relevant Human Rights Council resolutions.

II. Methodology

7. The Government of Eritrea continued to reject the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, refusing to engage with the mandate holder or to grant him access to the country. Consequently, the Special Rapporteur was unable to conduct an official visit to Eritrea. He has also been unable to gain access to East and North Africa, despite numerous requests to visit sent since he assumed the mandate in November 2020.
8. 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 seven 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. In the light of the lack of access to Eritrea and the region, the Special Rapporteur expresses deep gratitude to the individuals and

¹ [A/HRC/29/42](#).

organizations that contributed to the report, and expresses particular appreciation to the survivors, witnesses and victims' families who shared their experiences.

9. 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 the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva to provide the Government with an opportunity to submit factual comments on the findings of the Special Rapporteur.

III. Activities

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

11. The Special Rapporteur visited Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 22 January to 2 February 2026. He thanks Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom 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 continues to express concern about the lack of response to his requests to visit several countries in East Africa. On 29 October 2025, the Special Rapporteur participated in an interactive dialogue of the Third Committee during the eightieth session of the General Assembly.

12. On 29 May 2025, the Special Rapporteur submitted a letter to the Government of Eritrea requesting to meet with its representatives in Geneva. On 17 October 2025, he submitted a request to visit the country. However, as at 22 April 2026, he had not received any responses.

13. 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 with 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

14. In January 2025, Eritrea acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the decision of the Government to fulfil its reporting obligations and its willingness to submit its initial report, due in February 2027.

15. During the presentation of the draft resolution by which the Human Rights Council was renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, the Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Eritrea to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva made a statement,² declaring that Eritrea categorically rejected the draft resolution and describing the draft resolution as "politicized" and full of "misrepresentations, double standards, and deliberate omissions". The Special Rapporteur emphasizes the importance of extending the mandate, as it remains

² Available at <https://shabait.com/2025/07/05/statement-by-mr-habtom-zeraï-on-unhrc-resolution-a-hrc-59-l-7/>.

the only international mechanism responsible for independent monitoring, documentation and reporting on rights violations in Eritrea. He notes that this ensures ongoing oversight and is a vital step towards holding Eritrean authorities accountable.

V. Regional developments

16. Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia continue to be characterized by increased military mobilization and more aggressive political rhetoric from both sides. In November 2025, the Special Rapporteur received reports indicating significant recruitment and deployment of the Ethiopian National Defence Forces to areas that border with Eritrea and to the disputed regions of Tigray in Ethiopia. The Special Rapporteur urges Eritrea and Ethiopia to stop their respective military build-ups and calls on the international community to actively engage both parties to prevent further escalation, which could have devastating human rights and humanitarian consequences across the region.

17. Rising tensions with Ethiopia, sparked by the renewed rhetoric by Ethiopia over Red Sea access, have led to increased military deployments along the border between the two countries since mid-2025, heightening fears of renewed confrontation. Eritrea has reinforced its positions near the Djibouti tri-border area, while Ethiopia has mobilized forces in the Tigray and Afar regions. These developments, coupled with inflammatory rhetoric from both sides and reports of intensified conscription in Segheneyti and Nakfa, Eritrea, have raised serious concerns about a potential return to conflict and about the revival of mass round-up (*giffa*) campaigns for forced recruitment, targeting youth in particular.

VI. National/military service

18. During the reporting period, no measures were taken to reform the national service. Since November 2020, the Special Rapporteur has persistently raised serious concerns about its detrimental impact on the fabric of the Eritrean society.³ Recommendations from international human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies and African mechanisms, and those emanating from the universal periodic review process for Eritrea in 2024, have persistently called for reform of the national service. Eritrean authorities have notably resisted any calls for reforms to the national/military service.

19. The Special Rapporteur also found no evidence or indication that any measures have been taken to address the serious human rights violations associated with the national service, including allegations of rape and other sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, arbitrary detention and torture. He is deeply concerned about the fate of conscripts who have died or disappeared in the Tigray conflict, and by the families' lack of reliable information about their loved ones' whereabouts.⁴

20. The ongoing lack of information and transparency about the identities and circumstances of missing conscripts continues to cause profound suffering for their families. The Special Rapporteur urges the Government of Eritrea to release complete information about these conscripts and to take concrete steps to protect the rights and well-being of all affected individuals.

21. In the context of the rising tensions with Ethiopia, the Special Rapporteur has continued to receive reports of increased conscription and mass round-ups by Eritrean authorities in July, August and December 2025, particularly in the Segheneyti subregion of Debub, for example in the villages of Hadidah, Tikamra, Mehmbret, Degra, Dekemhare, Merhano and the Mereta area. Forcible recruitment appears to be closely linked to the authorities' invocation of security and sovereignty concerns to justify expanded mobilization in response to the narrative put forward by Ethiopia about access to the Red Sea.

³ See, for example, [A/HRC/59/24](#). See also [A/HRC/47/21](#), para. 82.

⁴ It is estimated that thousands of Eritrean conscripts have perished or sustained severe injuries in Tigray since the conflict broke out in November 2020 ([A/HRC/56/24](#), para. 32).

22. In the Segeneyti subregion, the Special Rapporteur also received credible information indicating that entire communities have been affected, with families displaced due to State-imposed sealing of family homes and intimidation by Eritrean security forces. In some cases, individuals, mainly young men, returned from hiding only to secure the release of detained relatives or to prevent further punitive actions against their families.

23. These operations aim to identify and recruit draft evaders and reinforce existing patterns of the country's indefinite national service. Security forces participate in these efforts by conducting systematic house-to-house searches. Many Eritreans were conscripted regardless of age, gender or prior service, with reports of older citizens and previously demobilized individuals being forcibly re-recruited. In one case, a former soldier who had served for about twenty years was forcibly redeployed during the Tigray conflict after his home was sealed off by the State, highlighting patterns of re-recruitment and redeployment by security forces and reinforcing the indefinite nature of the national service.

24. The Special Rapporteur is deeply concerned that the consistent patterns documented over the years in his previous reports are recurring and bear striking similarities to those demonstrated by the Eritrean authorities during the Tigray conflict,⁵ where widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law were committed. He emphasizes that arbitrary and indiscriminate use of national service effectively deprives individuals of their fundamental civil and political rights and freedoms, including the right to family life, the right to liberty and security of person, freedom of movement, and economic and social rights, including the rights to education, employment and property.⁶

25. In Eritrea, the national service is indefinite, and the authorities persistently use it as a tool for social control, coercion and repression. This environment continues to foster fear, mistrust and forced obedience under the threat of punishment. The national service has led to large-scale migration, as many Eritreans, especially young people, to flee to avoid conscription. It continues to deprive generations of Eritreans of the chance to build a future and has significant psychological and social effects, as people live constantly under the threat of conscription.

VII. Rule of law and the administration of justice

A. Institutional framework

26. The country's institutional infrastructure and legal framework for upholding the rule of law are seriously flawed and remain ineffective in protecting and upholding fundamental human rights. Eritrea has yet to implement its Constitution, ratified in 1997, resulting in the absence of: democratic institutions; a separation of powers; an elected legislature; an independent judiciary; a free press; and independent civil society.

27. The President, Isaias Afwerki, continues to exercise legislative authority through proclamations and presidential decrees without any institutional checks or balances on his power. The justice system lacks independence, and administration of justice, including due process rights, continues to be systematically violated. Impunity for human rights violations is entrenched.

B. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance

28. Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance remain widespread, systematic and critically severe in Eritrea. They are used to consolidate power, suppress dissent and instil fear among citizens. These practices are deeply entrenched and affect people across political, religious and social groups, especially those with views that oppose or differ from those of the Government.

⁵ A/HRC/53/20, paras. 33 and 34.

⁶ Ibid., paras. 35–41.

29. Eritreans who have been subjected to enforced disappearance are frequently targeted for perceived dissent, religious activities or attempts to avoid national service. In many cases, the treatment of detainees and disappeared persons is marked by arrest without a warrant, detention without charges or trials, denial of legal counsel and the consistent withholding of information from families about the detainees' fate or location.

30. During the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur was informed that, reflecting previously identified trends, Eritrean authorities continued to subject detainees to frequent transfers between various facilities, such as Mai Serwa prison, Adi Abeito prison, Sembel prison, Tsetserat prison, Wi'a prison and the Karcheli detention centre in Asmara, as well as informal and undisclosed locations. These transfers serve to obscure detainees' whereabouts and contribute to the overlap between arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance.

31. Enforced disappearance remains a key tool of repression used by the Government to silence dissent, suppress opposition and instil a climate of fear in Eritrean society. Victims are frequently held incommunicado by operatives and kept in undisclosed locations, with no official acknowledgment of their detention. Authorities often refuse to disclose the fate or whereabouts of detainees, transfer individuals between facilities without notice and deny families contact and access to legal counsel. Families are repeatedly denied formal detention records and information about their loved ones and sometimes face intimidation. These practices cause ongoing psychological harm and collective suffering, extending the violation beyond the individual detainee.

32. The Special Rapporteur received credible reports confirming that acts of enforced disappearance continued to be perpetuated, with a concentration in July 2025. In that month, two prominent Muslim religious leaders, Sheikh Adem Shaban and Sheikh Hasan Shenetti, were forcibly disappeared. The Special Rapporteur also received reports of ongoing incidents involving the deaths of detainees kept in prolonged incommunicado detention, often associated with torture, ill-treatment or inadequate medical care. In one documented case, a detainee arrested in 2024 had been transferred to Halibet hospital in critical condition and later died; his body was returned to the family without any explanation.

33. The Government persistently employs prolonged detention without trial to suppress dissenting or alternative views, especially targeting high-profile detainees such as journalists, political activists, human rights defenders and other notable figures, including four prominent Orthodox Christian leaders and leaders of the Muslim faith, and former senior members of Government (who had been among a group of members of Government arrested in 2001, known as the G-15), who have been held for decades without charges or a trial, with their locations unknown.

34. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the December 2025 release of 13 long-term detainees, including former officials, businessmen and security personnel, who had been held for nearly 18 years without charge or trial. He also acknowledges the recent release of Biniam Solom, a well-known Eritrean satirical cartoonist and former physics teacher, who was arbitrarily detained in Asmara in 2011 and held for 15 years without charge or trial.

35. While the recent release of detainees during this reporting period is a positive step, the Special Rapporteur is deeply concerned that many Eritreans remain incommunicado, and arbitrarily detained without charge or trial, in several prisons and detention facilities across the country, including journalists, critics of the Government, and members of religious communities, including Muslims, Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses.

36. The Special Rapporteur notes that the Government's continued policy of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance exposes Eritreans to the risk of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, and extrajudicial killings. He calls on Eritrean authorities to take significant steps to immediately and unconditionally release all persons who are arbitrarily detained, including long-term detainees, and to disclose the fate and whereabouts of those still held in detention across the country who have been detained for more than two decades without charge or trial, in violation of their rights to liberty, due process and a fair trial.

C. Accountability

37. The Special Rapporteur notes that the Government has failed to provide victims of human rights violations with access to justice and redress. The lack of access to independent justice institutions that Eritreans can resort to for redress has contributed to the perpetuation of a systematic practice of enforced disappearance, which amounts to crimes against humanity.

38. Accountability for human rights violations in Eritrea remains weak, as authorities continue to operate within a framework of structural impunity. To date, the Government has shown no willingness to investigate allegations or hold perpetrators accountable. Ten years after the initial report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea, the Eritrean authorities continue to find new ways to suppress dissent, further restricting fundamental rights and fostering an atmosphere of fear.

39. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that the ongoing lack of accountability measures continues to have serious consequences for victims in Eritrea. He notes that, in a system where the State lacks an independent judiciary, effective complaints processes, prosecutorial independence and transparency about detention, victims are systematically denied access to truth, justice and reparations.

VIII. Detention and prison conditions

40. The detention and prison conditions in Eritrea remain severely harsh and degrading. The Special Rapporteur continues to receive direct information from witnesses confirming that detainees are exposed to inhuman or degrading treatment and, in some cases, torture. While various testimonies describe varying detention conditions, they mostly highlight severe overcrowding, poor ventilation, particularly during the sweltering summer, insufficient food and water, unsanitary conditions, lack of medical care, and the routine use of physical abuse and punitive isolation, including the practice of keeping detainees in solitary confinement.⁷

41. The deliberate use of detention facilities in Eritrea as a tool for punishment, intimidation and coercion, paired with conditions designed to physically and psychologically break detainees, aims to force obedience, confessions or the disavowal of any perceived dissenting beliefs or actions.

42. Mai Serwa prison, situated near Asmara, remains one of the most frequently cited detention centres in the country. It continues to serve as the place of incarceration for political prisoners, religious detainees and individuals detained for security reasons. The facility has both standard prison cells and container-based detention units, with the latter reportedly used for extended periods.

43. Former detainees often describe container-based detention units as metal shipping containers located within the large prison compound. Detainees in these units are frequently exposed to extreme heat during the day; conditions are very cramped, with minimal airflow and inadequate ventilation. In these containers, detainees frequently lack proper bedding and must sleep on the floor, with poor sanitation and limited opportunities to bathe. Food consists primarily of bread and lentils, often served once a day or in small portions. Family visits and outside communication are generally not allowed.

44. The Special Rapporteur was informed that approximately 270 detainees from faith-based groups remain in Mai Serwa prison, and reports indicate that the prison population exceeded 400 before some releases in late 2025.

45. Wi'a prison, situated in the coastal lowlands near Massawa, is often described as one of the country's most notorious facilities, known for severe conditions. This reputation is mainly due to its underground structure and the area's hot, coastal Red Sea climate. The

⁷ A/HRC/56/24, para. 39.

prison is partly underground, with some detainees confined to subterranean rooms that lack sufficient oxygen and ventilation.

46. According to information received, the Wi'a prison underground detention rooms hold about 17 detainees each, with total occupancy estimated at 500 to 600 in some periods. Conditions are extremely overcrowded and suffocating, with detainees struggling to breathe due to poor airflow. Detainees are kept barefoot at all times, including during outdoor punishments or torture, where the rough terrain, filled with stones, thorns and cactus plants, heightens the risk of injuries. In some cases, detainees described being forced to run barefoot over this terrain as a form of punishment, while others were severely beaten and tortured.

47. The Special Rapporteur also received reports about the construction of around 17 small confinement units inside the prison. Each unit, many no larger than a small dog cage, is reportedly used for isolation and coercion. These units are intended to pressure some detainees into confessing and renouncing their religious beliefs.

48. Torture in Wi'a prison was especially severe: inmates were beaten with plastic rods, caned, forced to roll on gravel and stones, suspended in painful positions, and repeatedly subjected to group torture sessions at night carried out by masked security personnel trained in torture techniques.

49. Sembel prison is among the country's largest detention centres, with some sections often exceeding their intended capacity. The facility is organized into 12 main divisions – 11 for detainees and 1 for correctional officers accused of misconduct.

50. The Special Rapporteur also received information describing divisions with large single rooms, about 15 metres by 10 metres, which sometimes hold between 170 and 200 detainees. Each division reportedly has shared toilet facilities and communal sleeping spaces. Sembel prison conditions were characterized by severe overcrowding and a lack of privacy and hygiene necessities; frequent incidents of torture or mistreatment have led to an undisclosed number of deaths.

51. Sembel prison was also reported to be used for specific categories of detainees, including underage detainees, military detainees, political detainees, and detainees accused of charges related to religious practices or expression. Division 7 is used for underage detainees, whereas divisions 10 and higher house individuals accused of political or military crimes.

52. Tsetserat prison in Asmara, once a military facility, now serves as a detention centre. It is divided into four main sections, each containing a number of cells. Each section typically holds about 20 to 25 detainees, although occupancy can increase during waves of arrests. The standard cells measure around 12 metres by 4 metres, with only three small windows, each roughly the size of a laptop screen, providing ventilation. The facility is described by many as extremely hot and poorly ventilated; prisoners are forced to take turns standing by the windows to breathe.

53. At this facility, solitary confinement cells are about 1 metre by 2 metres, deliberately built in such a way that detainees cannot lie down fully and must sleep in a seated or crouched position. Reports indicate that detainees in isolation are given reduced food rations, receiving only two pieces of bread per day, and are allowed outside only once daily for toilet use, under guard supervision.

54. Reportedly, at Tsetserat prison there are frequent beatings, and detainees are subjected to extended isolation and various torture methods, often employed as punishment or coercion.

55. Wenjel prison, in Asmara, was frequently described as a large facility that held around 350 to 400 detainees during the reporting period, including political prisoners, journalists, religious detainees and former senior government officials. It consists of 13 divisions, with detainees often kept in groups within shared cells.

56. The Special Rapporteur was informed that certain detainees, including prominent religious leaders, are reportedly held in Division 13, in cells measuring roughly 7 metres by 5 metres. These detainees have supposedly been confined there since 2006 with little to no movement or transfer.

57. Food and overall treatment at Wenjel prison were described as generally similar to that of other detention centres; meals were described as consisting of four small portions of bread, and sanitary conditions were described as inadequate. Religious detainees are reportedly not allowed to pray or have religious texts.

58. The Special Rapporteur is deeply concerned that prison and detention conditions in Eritrea represent serious violations of the country's international human rights obligations and customary international law. The country is obligated to uphold, *inter alia*, the prohibitions against torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment set out in article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and in article 5 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as the standards outlined in the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and the Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Africa (the Robben Island Guidelines) and other African human rights norms and standards.⁸

IX. Freedom of conscience and religion or belief

59. During the reporting period, freedom of conscience and religion or belief in Eritrea continued to be heavily restricted and systematically undermined by State-controlled systems that criminalize independent religious practices.

60. Across multiple religious communities, violations have continued to include arbitrary arrest and detention of religious leaders and other members of the religious communities, the closure and seizure of places of worship, the prohibition of independent religious education, and interference in the internal governance of religious institutions. The Special Rapporteur notes that these measures collectively suppress both the individual and collective dimensions of freedom of religion or belief.

A. Religious persecution of Muslims

61. Muslim communities continue to face deep-rooted structural repression, such as systematic targeting of religious leaders, imams and scholars, the closure of Islamic educational institutions, including religious schools, and seizure of their property, and the dismantling of independent religious instruction.

62. On 22 July 2025, Eritrean authorities arrested two prominent religious leaders, Sheikh Adem Shaban and Sheikh Hasan Shenetti, from the town of Ghinda. Their enforced disappearance is part of a decades-long pattern of repression by Eritrean authorities and attests to the continuation of that pattern of repression and control. The Special Rapporteur calls for their immediate release and urges those responsible for enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial execution to be held accountable.

63. The targeting of Muslim communities and institutions has remained a systematic and concerted policy since 1991. As documented in the Special Rapporteur's previous report,⁹ Eritrean authorities abducted, imprisoned or executed without trial hundreds of religious leaders, mosque imams, schoolteachers and community figures during the periods 1991–1997 and 2005–2006, and in 2013, particularly in the Gash-Barka and Northern Red Sea regions. The abduction of Sheikh Adem Shaban and Sheikh Hasan Shenetti is indicative of the continuation of this policy of enforced disappearance of prominent Muslim leaders detained in the past, including Qadi Mohamed Maranat, a judge in Ghinda and Agordat and

⁸ See, for example the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa; the Guidelines on the Conditions of Arrest, Police Custody and Pre-trial Detention in Africa; and African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, general comment No. 4 on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: the right to redress for victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment (article 5). See also Committee against Torture, general comment No. 3 (2012).

⁹ [A/HRC/59/24](#), para. 38.

a teacher at the Keren Ma'had religious school, who was detained in July 1991, and Sheikh Mohammed-Ibrahim Shedali.

64. Eritrean authorities have systematically targeted Islamic educational institutions, including shutting down and seizing Qur'an memorization centres, many of which predated the country's independence and had functioned peacefully for years. The Special Rapporteur is deeply concerned about government efforts to restrict Arabic-language education, including the removal of Arabic from public school curricula and limits on its use in religious teaching.

65. The Special Rapporteur is also concerned about the closure of Islamic institutions and places of worship, including mosques and religious schools, such as the Agordat Islamic Institute, the Ashab Alyameen Islamic Institute, the Anseba Islamic Institute and the Ghinda Islamic Institute. These closures reflect a systematic effort to dismantle the Muslim population's religious, educational and cultural infrastructure in Eritrea. Also, multiple historic mosques, some more than a thousand years old, have been destroyed, closed or rendered structurally unsafe through deliberate neglect. Authorities routinely deny renovation permits and obstruct access to external funding. The Special Rapporteur notes that the arrest and prolonged detention of Muslim leaders, along with government interference in religious affairs and institutions, remain pervasive, institutionalized and central to the State's system of control over society.

B. Religious persecution of Christians

66. The Special Rapporteur welcomes the release of several individuals as a positive step, including the release of 100 Christians between May and June 2025 and 177 Christians between November and December 2025. However, reports suggest that these releases were conditional and coercive, with detainees required to sign documents renouncing their faith, admitting to wrongdoing for belonging to banned denominations and promising not to practise their faith.

67. Notably, there was no change in the situation of seven Christian leaders who have now been held in arbitrary detention and incommunicado for over two decades. They are: Kidane Weldou, who was a senior pastor of the Full Gospel Church in Asmara; Haile Naizge, who was Chair of the Full Gospel Church of Eritrea; Kiflu Gebremeskel, who was Chair of the Eritrean Evangelical Alliance and a visiting lecturer at the former University of Asmara; Meron Gebreselassie, a leader of the Rhema Evangelical Church in Massawa; Futsum Gebrenegus, who, at the time of his arrest was the country's only psychiatrist; Tekleab Menghisteab, a highly respected physician; and Gebremedhin Gebregorsis, an expert theologian. All are from the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

C. Religious persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses

68. Jehovah's Witnesses are imprisoned for refusing military service for religious or moral reasons and also for peacefully practising their religion. In some cases, their detention exceeds 20 years, effectively amounting to life imprisonment without a trial.

69. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights ruled on 20 August 2025 that Eritrea had violated the fundamental rights of three Jehovah's Witnesses.¹⁰ The Commission found that Eritrea had violated articles 5, 6, and 7 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights regarding the prolonged, incommunicado and arbitrary detention of Jehovah's Witnesses for conscientious objection to military service, found that the treatment amounted to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and ordered compensation for the victims. This ruling reinforces the international legal recognition of the gravity, persistence and unlawfulness of the treatment of conscientious objectors by Eritrea. It underscores the country's obligation to ensure access to justice and effective remedies for victims.

¹⁰ *Eyassu, Mogos and Teklemariam v. Eritrea* (communication No. 716/19).

X. Civic and democratic space

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

70. Freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, and the right to participate in public affairs are systematically suppressed. In 2025, Eritrea was again ranked as the worst country for press freedoms worldwide.¹¹ It continues to operate without democratic governance, elections, independent political parties or genuine avenues for public participation. As outlined by the Special Rapporteur in previous reports, Eritrea has no independent media, civil society or opposition groups.¹² Persons who express dissenting and critical views continue to face arbitrary arrest, prolonged and incommunicado detention, torture and other forms of inhuman or degrading treatment. This has been the State policy for over three decades.

71. The civic and democratic environment in Eritrea remains characterized by a closed political system where the State maintains full control over public life. The right to participate in public affairs remains non-existent, as citizens are effectively excluded from decision-making at both the national and local levels.

72. Eritrea remains marked by extensive surveillance and informant networks, especially in smaller towns and villages. Dissenters are often branded as “traitors”, leading to social exclusion, stigmatization and isolation from communities. This environment encourages widespread self-censorship and deters people from participating in public and communal activities to avoid attracting the authorities’ attention. The loss of trust among community members and the constant fear of being reported have severely damaged social cohesion, further restricting civic participation.

73. The Special Rapporteur notes with concern that the ability of independent civil society to operate remains restricted. Non-governmental organizations and national associations can operate only if they are affiliated with the Government. Such organizations include the National Union of Eritrean Women, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students, the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers, the four national associations for persons with disabilities, and BIDHO (association of persons living with HIV/AIDS).

74. The country’s restrictive and intrusive approach to the civic space in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operate requires fundamental legal reform. The Special Rapporteur has raised these concerns in previous reports,¹³ and African human rights mechanisms have also expressed concerns about the restrictive regulation of civil society organizations in Eritrea.¹⁴

75. The operational independence of civil society organizations is heavily regulated and primarily restricted to relief and rehabilitation activities. Eritrea has stated that Proclamation No. 145/2005, which governs the operations of civil society organizations, was enacted in the light of the country’s historical and developmental context, including the impacts of prolonged conflict, frequent droughts and dependency issues. It has further stated that the Proclamation does not ban activities by civil society organizations and that both local and international NGOs are explicitly permitted to operate in Eritrea, provided they register with the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare and demonstrate their capacity to deliver effective relief and rehabilitation services.¹⁵

¹¹ See <https://rsf.org/en/index>.

¹² A/HRC/59/24, para. 62.

¹³ See, for example, A/HRC/53/20, para. 49.

¹⁴ African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, concluding recommendations on the report of Eritrea on the status of implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, January 2017. Available at https://www.acerwc.africa/sites/default/files/2022-06/Concluding_Observations_Eritrea.pdf?

¹⁵ Proclamation No. 145/2005, arts. 8 and 9.

76. The Special Rapporteur notes that excessive government restrictions on humanitarian NGOs, whether local or international, including burdensome registration fees and intrusive State control, violate the rights to freedom of association. While regulation may serve legitimate aims, such measures must be lawful and necessary and must not hinder the work of groups providing humanitarian assistance.

77. The Special Rapporteur is also deeply troubled by other aspects of the Government's ongoing policy of restricting civic space, which extends beyond its borders. Individuals, both within the country and abroad, who are suspected of ties to opposition groups such as the Brigade N'Hamedu, also known as the Blue Revolution movement, are often targeted. These measures affect not only them but also their families inside Eritrea. The State frequently uses tactics such as denying exit visas, arbitrarily detaining relatives, sealing off homes and restricting livelihoods to deter political engagement in the diaspora. These tactics create an environment that effectively hampers meaningful participation in governance and public life.

78. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes his ongoing concern that such practices significantly affect civic participation both inside and outside Eritrea. The Government's actions continue to create a coercive climate that leads to self-censorship among individuals and critics of the Government, who fear harm or reprisals against their families in Eritrea if they participate in public or political activities in the diaspora, or even if they are perceived as opposing the Government. This situation not only infringes on the right to engage in public affairs but also breaches core principles of international human rights law. Furthermore, punishing family members for the acts or perceived acts of others may constitute persecution under international legal standards.

B. Transnational repression

79. Transnational repression refers to acts conducted or directed by a State, or by actors acting on its behalf, to deter, silence or punish dissent, criticism or human rights advocacy expressed from outside its territory.¹⁶ In Human Rights Council resolution 59/1, the Council expressed concern at acts of transnational repression, as reported by the Special Rapporteur, including the targeting of human rights defenders, journalists and government critics outside of Eritrea.

80. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that transnational repression remains a significant and evolving issue in international human rights. This trend illustrates how Governments, including the Government of Eritrea, extend their coercive measures across borders to control, monitor and silence their citizens abroad. Eritrea, through its organized and institutionalized strategies, aims to maintain political control over its citizens and diaspora communities worldwide. The Special Rapporteur continues to document cases of transnational repression, such as surveillance, threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion, economic pressure, physical attacks, smear campaigns, social isolation, censorship, reprisals against families of dissenters inside Eritrea, and ongoing denial of consular services.

81. The Government, in its broader political strategy, views the diaspora as an extension of the domestic political arena, where loyalty is enforced and dissent is actively suppressed. Human rights defenders, pro-democracy activists, independent journalists and political opponents abroad continue to face threats and harassment from individuals or groups connected to the Government of Eritrea.

82. Most Eritreans who interacted with the Special Rapporteur stated that Eritreans abroad continued to be targeted and subjected to threats and harassment by individuals or groups linked to the Government of Eritrea. They observed that the system of overseas repression served several interconnected goals, including preventing the build-up of political opposition abroad, silencing dissent within Eritrea by punishing family members, and maintaining ideological influence over Eritrean community structures.

¹⁶ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Transnational repression", Civic Space Brief, June 2025.

83. In October 2022, the Federal Administrative Court of Germany issued a landmark ruling, stating that Eritrean nationals with subsidiary protection in Germany are not obligated to obtain an Eritrean passport from the Eritrean embassy if doing so requires signing a declaration of remorse or regret – declarations admitting to criminal wrongdoing for having fled Eritrea unlawfully.¹⁷ In the ruling, the Court also noted that forcing individuals to sign such a declaration effectively amounted to self-incrimination, and found that the requirement to sign such a declaration in order to obtain travel documents was unreasonable and violated fundamental legal protections. As a result, German authorities are mandated to issue travel documents for Eritrean individuals without requiring the individuals to contact Eritrean consular services. Although this ruling recognizes the coercive and repressive extraterritorial jurisdiction exercised, and the administrative action taken, by Eritrea, the Special Rapporteur continued to receive information that the Court's decision has not been implemented widely and effectively, thereby enabling Eritrea to execute its transnational repression tactics through host-State administrative systems. In October 2025, the Federal Supreme Court of Switzerland also issued a landmark ruling, building on similar jurisprudence. It stated that Eritreans should not be forced to sign a letter of regret to access residence documentation, as such a requirement constituted compelled self-incrimination and violated essential legal protections.¹⁸

84. The ongoing use of coercive administrative and financial methods, especially through Eritrean embassies and consulates, remains concerning. The majority of Eritreans who engaged with the Special Rapporteur during the reporting period reported that Eritreans abroad continued to be subjected to the 2 per cent Recovery and Rehabilitation Tax, often referred to as the diaspora tax, and to be required to sign a letter of regret to access essential consular services to obtain, among other things, passports and civil documents, including birth and marriage certificates and academic records, and, sometimes, in order to arrange the burial of deceased Eritreans abroad. The imposition of such a coercive taxation system is intended to keep the Government afloat and to serve as a key financial tool to secure offshore revenue from its global diaspora.¹⁹ The Special Rapporteur observes that these cruel practices effectively link the enjoyment of fundamental rights, such as the right to identity, freedom of movement and the right to family life, to the obligation to comply with State requirements. Significantly, the lack of real alternatives makes such compliance inherently coercive, raising concerns about economic pressure and the denial of rights.

85. The Special Rapporteur is deeply concerned about the repressive practices outlined above. He notes that such practices and tactics of transnational repression through the abuse of consular services often fall into a legal grey zone, facilitated by the manipulation of international law and the exploitation of legal gaps.²⁰ They are difficult to detect and have negative consequences for the international human rights framework and for human rights. The refusal to issue official documents to individuals unless they pay the Recovery and Rehabilitation Tax and sign a letter of regret is a way to target dissenting citizens living abroad and violates human rights. However, it is often left unaddressed as an act of transnational repression.

86. Those measures are further reinforced through coercion by proxy, where family members in Eritrea face ongoing harassment, detention or other punishment if their family members abroad fail to comply. This system of pressure effectively shifts the consequences of non-compliance onto relatives and extends the reach and power of State control.

87. The transnational repression exerted by Eritrea extends into diaspora communities through community associations ("*mahbere koms*"), youth groups and religious organizations, all serving as extensions of the State. These structures reportedly enable surveillance, mobilization and fundraising while influencing community interactions to

¹⁷ Case No. 1 C 9.21, Judgment, 11 October 2022. Available at <https://www.bverwg.de/111022U1C9.21.0>.

¹⁸ Case No. 2C_64/2025, Judgment, 21 October 2025.

¹⁹ A/HRC/59/24, para. 72.

²⁰ Niki Siampakou, "The use of transnational repression in the name of security: implications and concerns", International Centre for Counter-Terrorism Policy Brief, August 2025.

suppress dissent. Access to community events, services or religious ceremonies is also often contingent on meeting State demands, such as paying the Recovery and Rehabilitation Tax.

88. The ongoing reliance on religious institutions, especially within Eritrean Orthodox Christian communities, highlights how social and cultural activities are closely tied to the wider system of political control. The Special Rapporteur observes that these practices directly undermine civil society's independence and limit the ability of individuals to participate freely in community life.

89. Eritrean authorities and their affiliated networks continually conduct systematic surveillance of diaspora communities, monitoring their political activities, social media use and personal connections. Many Eritreans who interacted with the Special Rapporteur also reported having experienced online harassment, smear campaigns with fabricated claims, and false accusations of criminal or extremist behaviour. Such acts harm reputations and, in some cases, create a chilling effect that leads some individuals to self-censor their civic and political participation.

90. The Special Rapporteur is especially alarmed by credible reports of organized groups linked to the Government of Eritrea engaging in acts of intimidation and violence within diaspora communities, including in Germany, indicating a rise in transnational repression tactics. Some Eritreans who spoke with the Special Rapporteur mentioned such groups, for example "Eri-Blood". These groups are often described as organized networks that frequently provide security at pro-government events and festivals, act as enforcers against those perceived as opponents of the Government, and are often involved in or facilitate physical assaults, intimidation and harassment of activists and journalists. This contributes to a pervasive climate of fear among the diaspora community.

91. Those groups often operate with the approval of or coordination from State-affiliated entities, such as the country's diplomatic missions, embassies and community organizations. Their activities are frequently part of larger events, such as cultural festivals, which serve as platforms for mobilization and oversight. In Germany, for example, incidents connected to Eritrean festivals and political gatherings, such as in Giessen in 2022 and Stuttgart in 2023 and 2024, have led to violent clashes. Organized groups linked to pro-government networks, including Eri-Blood, have increasingly played a role in fuelling tensions. The participation of these groups underscores efforts by the State to continue its repression in different forms, including the outsourcing of its tactics to non-State actors. Although these actions complicate the direct linking of violations to the Government, they do not absolve the State of responsibility.

92. In some host States, administrative and legal practices unintentionally strengthen transnational repression by forcing many Eritreans to interact with Eritrean authorities against their will. This often happens because of requirements involving identity documents, citizenship and family reunification. In some cases, nationals of Eritrea have had to obtain documents from consulates, exposing them to coercive practices, despite legal rulings that limit these requirements in certain contexts.

93. Furthermore, disinformation and false accusations spread by some Eritreans in the diaspora, including claims of terrorism against pro-government groups, have sometimes led to law enforcement actions in host countries across Europe. These events underscore the danger that transnational repression poses when it intersects with and exploits the systems of host States, resulting in unintended consequences for human rights protection.

94. The Special Rapporteur urges host States to adopt a clear national legal framework that defines acts of transnational repression to enable their prosecution and prevention, enhance the protection of victims and ensure that domestic laws align with international human rights standards. Few States are held accountable for committing transboundary human rights violations, and there is an urgent need to address the protection gaps faced by victims.

XI. Situation of Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers

95. Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers continue to face serious protection and human rights challenges. According to UNHCR, more than 679,000 Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers were recorded globally as of December 2025.²¹ This number continues to increase and reflects the persistent conditions that drive Eritreans to flee, including indefinite national service, arbitrary and prolonged detention and the suppression of fundamental rights and freedoms.

96. The Special Rapporteur is concerned that the region's protection landscape remains affected by systemic failures in registration, documentation and access to asylum, exacerbating international protection gaps. During the reporting period, he received reports that registration systems remained suspended in key host countries, such as Ethiopia and Uganda, while settled refugees and asylum-seekers in the Sudan were displaced by the armed conflict. In Kenya, refugee registration was suspended through an administrative directive issued on 31 July 2025 by the Commissioner for Refugee Affairs, mainly affecting individuals from Ethiopia and Eritrea. This directive was challenged by civil society in the High Court of Kenya at Nairobi, as it was regarded as discriminatory and unconstitutional, and as violating the obligations of Kenya under refugee law, including the non-refoulement principle. In response, the High Court issued a conservatory order directly suspending the directive, citing credible risks of harm to the asylum-seekers affected if registration were to remain halted.²² The Special Rapporteur notes that the ongoing uncertainty in Kenya severely undermines access to asylum procedures and raises concerns regarding compliance with international protection standards, especially the principle of non-refoulement.

97. In Ethiopia, during the reporting period, the protection environment was characterized by widespread round-ups, arbitrary detention and enforcement practices driven by corruption, primarily involving mid- to low-level security personnel targeting Eritrean refugees, especially those without UNHCR documentation. The Special Rapporteur was informed that arrests often occurred without warrants or due process, in both public and private spaces, frequently for vague "national security" reasons, violating legal safeguards that mandate prompt judicial oversight. Testimonies also revealed that corruption plays a central role in enforcement, with detainees having to pay between \$200 and \$3,000 to secure their release. The lack of registration limits access to basic services and livelihoods, forcing refugees to adopt irregular coping mechanisms and increasing their risk of trafficking and exploitation. Conditions in refugee-hosting areas, especially in Tigray and Amhara, remain severe, with reports of insecurity, sexual and gender-based violence, kidnapping and deaths among refugees, highlighting the lack of effective protection mechanisms.

98. Significantly, the Special Rapporteur received credible reports of ongoing insecurity, including killings of, infliction of serious injuries on, and kidnappings of Eritrean refugees perpetrated by gangs near the Alemwach refugee site in Dabat, Amhara, Ethiopia. He received reliable reports that between November 2022 and December 2025, at least 11 refugees had been killed, 20 had suffered serious or permanent injuries, and several children and adults had been abducted for ransom. During that period, Eritrean refugees had faced attacks while attending school, travelling or worshipping. In some cases, families reportedly had to sell possessions or go into debt to secure the release of kidnapped relatives. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that the lack of effective investigations, accountability and relocation measures highlights a grave failure to protect refugees from foreseeable harm.

99. In the months before November 2025, the Special Rapporteur was informed of serious risks of refoulement and forced onward movement faced by Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, with reports of many individuals being deported from the country. He emphasizes that such deportations significantly increase the danger of persecution upon their return to Eritrea, where they face arbitrary detention, torture enforced disappearance and forced conscription. The danger of refoulement is exacerbated by the criminalization of irregular entry and stay,

²¹ See www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics.

²² See *Refugee Legal Networks & 4 others v. Commissioner for Refugee Affairs & 2 others*, KEHC 16858, Ruling, 18 November 2025.

including the imposition of detention and fines without proper assessment of protection needs, thereby violating the principle of non-penalization under international refugee law.

100. The regional protection crisis worsened due to cross-border exploitation and trafficking networks, often enabled by inadequate protection systems and corruption. Eritrean refugees trying to move on, especially towards Kenya, have been detained at border crossings and, at times, allegedly handed over to traffickers or smugglers. These illegal networks span several countries, including Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda, putting refugees at risk of ransom, abuse and forced movement. This situation highlights a broader failure to provide safe and legal avenues for protection.

101. In Egypt, the Special Rapporteur continues to receive reports indicating that Eritrean refugees still face arbitrary arrest, detention and extortion, even if they have valid UNHCR documentation. Information was received indicating that, as of November 2025, in some cases, their release was contingent on paying approximately 5,000 Egyptian pounds. Those unable to pay risk prolonged detention and possible deportation. The Special Rapporteur observes that this situation fosters arbitrary detention and increases the risk of deportation, violating international human rights and refugee law.

102. The role of international protection actors remains significantly limited. Reports indicate that UNHCR registration efforts in Ethiopia have not fully resumed, and that access to services in countries such as Egypt is hindered by operational and communication issues. Many individuals who engaged with the Special Rapporteur indicated that they were unable to access the UNHCR protection system, particularly in serious cases of refoulement to Eritrea. The Special Rapporteur is concerned that this challenging situation for refugees in Egypt has diminished their ability to access timely and effective protection. Many Eritrean refugees remain unregistered, undocumented and excluded from official protection systems and face deportation, as documented by the Special Rapporteur during the reporting period.

103. Without effective protection mechanisms, Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers depend on informal, community-based and refugee-led networks to secure their release from detention, gain access to basic services and navigate administrative procedures. Although these networks offer critical support, they are often inadequate to address systemic vulnerabilities and typically function in environments marked by legal uncertainty and limited protection.

104. The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that these developments highlight a widening gap between international protection standards and their actual implementation in reality, raising serious concerns about compliance with the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Special Rapporteur stresses that resolving this issue urgently requires coordinated efforts to restore registration access, to bolster protection mechanisms by mandated refugee agencies, to prevent refoulement and to ensure that Eritrean refugees can freely exercise their rights without coercion, exploitation or fear.

XII. Conclusions and recommendations

105. The Special Rapporteur urges the Human Rights Council to continue the mandate of this special procedure mechanism, as it is the only available means to monitor the human rights situation in Eritrea. The country's human rights situation remains severe, marked by widespread and systemic violations. This is evident in the lack of democratic governance and rule of law, severe restrictions on fundamental freedoms, indefinite national service, arbitrary and prolonged detention, and enforced disappearances. These patterns sustain a system of institutionalized repression, fuelled by impunity and a lack of accountability. Although some detainees have been released during the reporting period, the Special Rapporteur emphasizes that this does not demonstrate any substantial reform by the Government. In this context, he believes there are still reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity are ongoing in Eritrea. The expansion of State control beyond Eritrea through various transnational repression tactics also remains a significant concern, illustrating how Eritrea extends coercive measures across borders to control and silence its citizens abroad.

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

- (a) Carry out thorough legal and institutional reforms. These reforms should focus on implementing the Constitution, enhancing judicial independence, and guaranteeing access to justice, accountability and redress for victims;
- (b) Work towards ending the system of indefinite national/military service by setting clear term limits, ensuring demobilization and acknowledging the right to conscientious objection, including the option of alternative civilian service;
- (c) Immediately put an end to all arbitrary and prolonged detention and enforced disappearances. This includes releasing all individuals held without charge or trial, including members of the political opposition, journalists, prisoners of conscience, persons of faith and draft evaders, and providing information on the fate and location of all those who have been disappeared;
- (d) Fully cooperate with international and regional human rights mechanisms, including by granting access to the Special Rapporteur to monitor the situation on the ground.

107. The Special Rapporteur recommends that Member States:

- (a) Exercise universal jurisdiction over alleged crimes against humanity and initiate legal proceedings against individuals responsible for committing international crimes and violating human rights law and international humanitarian law;
- (b) Exert maximum pressure on the Government of Eritrea to end the decades-long practice of enforced disappearance, torture and arbitrary and incommunicado detention;
- (c) Guarantee full adherence to the principle of non-refoulement and ensure that Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers have access to fair and efficient asylum procedures;
- (d) Refrain from making access to documentation or services contingent on engaging with Eritrean authorities if doing so could subject individuals to coercion or reprisals;
- (e) Investigate and prevent transnational repression, including reports of intimidation, surveillance and coercion by Eritrean State actors;
- (f) Adopt a legal framework that defines acts of transnational repression, in order to enable their prosecution and prevention and to enhance the protection of victims.

108. The Special Rapporteur recommends that the United Nations and the Human Rights Council:

- (a) Keep Eritrea under close scrutiny until consistent, verified and tangible improvements in the human rights situation have been made;
- (b) Exert maximum pressure on Eritrea and certain Member States in the region to cooperate with the mandate;
- (c) Enhance protection measures for Eritrean refugees and asylum-seekers by advocating for better access to registration and documentation services and for protection-sensitive policies;
- (d) Continue to monitor and strengthen oversight of the human rights conditions in Eritrea, including by renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.