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Eritrean Appeal to the 44th Session of The UN Human Rights Council, Geneva

*To: Honorable Delegations of 47 Member States,
UN Human Rights Council,
44th Session, Palais des Nations, Geneva*

*To: H.E. Ms. Michele Bachelet,
Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Wilson, Geneva*

Subject: Extending the Mandate of the Special HR Rapporteur for Eritrea

15 May, 2020

Honorable UN HR Council Delegates at 44th Session,
Your Excellency High Commissioner Bachelet,

We, the undersigned Eritrean political opposition organizations in forced exile, are pleased to jointly address this memorandum on behalf of our people with the earnest aim of drawing your kind attention for appropriate action to the endless and never changing political and human rights situation in Eritrea, which is a member-state of this respected Council.

At the outset, we must acknowledge that we are grateful to this Council, whose sincere concern with the human rights situation in Eritrea, was manifested by its October 2012 action to appoint the first UN Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea and ever since extended that mandate annually in order to keep the human rights abuser state **“under close scrutiny.”** That was a solemn pledge made by this Council to Eritrean victims of human rights abuses.

It is true that the Eritrean authorities ignored implementing all recommendations of this august body and for the last eight years refused entry visa to this Council’s Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea. Yet, the Council’s aim of trying to keep the Eritrean government “under close scrutiny” was being continually achieved through the oral updates and annual reports of the mandated UN Special Envoys – Ms Sheila Keetharuth for the first six years and Ms Daniel Kravetz for the last two years.

Excellencies,

Eritrea remains a place of endless suffering to its people and a heartbreaking story to human rights activists and organizations familiar with the unparalleled human rights abuses in that country.

The extremely worrisome political, social, economic and human rights situation in Eritrea did not change from what it was last year, the year before and at least two decades before that. How come then that some of the 47 member states of the UN Human Rights Council are reportedly wavering on whether the mandate of the UN Human Rights Rapporteur for Eritrea should be extended or not?

We, the entire ensemble of Eritrean political opposition organizations in exile, therefore appeal to all Council delegates to this 44th Session to do the right thing - extend the mandate of Ms Daniela Kravetz for another term as a minimum sympathy and moral support to a six-million nation in a very dire human rights situation.

Honorable HR Council Delegates,
Dear HR High Commissioner Bachelet,

We know that you are very well aware of the Eritrean situation. But, just as a reminder, allow us to repeat that, for the last 29 years, Eritrea remains to be an internationally recognized member-state of the UN and this Council:

- Without a national constitution; without the rule of law;
- Without state institutions and functioning branches of government;
- Without national elections for over quarter of a century;
- Without freedom of the press, assembly, worship and movement;
- Without the right of visitation to its prisoners (not even by the ICRC);
- Without the right of a day at court for prisoners;
- As you know, the list is endless...

Your Excellencies also know that the fate the thousands of Eritrean prisoners is nothing but “**detention until death,**” as Ms Sheila Keetharuth told this Council a few years; that the open-ended enslavement of people under misnomer “national service” is still intact, and that about a third of the Eritrean population has been condemned to flee the country and live under the indignity of being refugees.

To conclude, we the exiled Eritrean political organizations, appeal to you to kindly extend the mandate of the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Eritrea, and also think of doing a little bit more to help change the sad situation in Eritrea.

Sincerely yours,
Chairpersons of

1. Eritrean National Council for Democratic Change (ENCDC)
2. Eritrean National Front (ENF)
3. Eritrean People’s Democratic Party (EPDP)
4. Organization of Unity for Democratic Change (UDC)
5. United Eritreans for Justice (UEJ)
6. Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization (RSADO)