

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **A catalogue of human rights violations continue in Eritrea despite commitments made during UN human rights review**

#### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome***

Amnesty International is gravely concerned by the persistence of serious human rights violations in Eritrea. Having failed to implement any of the major recommendations received at its first review in 2009, the government must now ensure progress on essential reforms, including through the timely implementation of recommendations received during its second UPR earlier this year.

Eritrea has again rejected recommendations to end arbitrary detention.<sup>1</sup> Thousands of people are currently held incommunicado in arbitrary detention for questioning government policies, for their work as journalists, for practicing a religion not recognized by the state, or for evading national service conscription. Amnesty International considers many of those detained to be prisoners of conscience who should be released immediately and unconditionally. These detainees have never been charged with a crime, tried or brought before a judge; in countless cases their detention amounts to enforced disappearance. Hundreds have been held for nearly 20 years.

Amnesty International calls on Eritrea to immediately end the use of arbitrary detention without charge or trial, incommunicado detention without access to the outside world, and detention in secret detention centres, as recommended by several states.<sup>2</sup>

Torture and other forms of ill-treatment are widespread in Eritrea, and systematically used against prisoners of conscience and political prisoners, for the purposes of punishment, interrogation and coercion. Prisoners are tied with ropes in painful positions for extended periods, beaten with sticks, whipped with electric wires, forced to walk barefoot on sharp objects or to roll on the ground over sharp stones or rough terrain. As recommended by many States during the review, Eritrea should sign and ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and immediately end such practices.<sup>3</sup>

National service is mandatory for all men and women between 18 and 50 years of age. All schoolchildren are required to complete their final school year at Sawa military camp, effectively involving the conscription of children into the military. The initial 18 month period of service is frequently extended indefinitely and amounts to forced labour. Amnesty International calls on Eritrea bring an end to indefinite, involuntary conscription for national

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/13/2 paragraphs 66 (Slovenia), 91 (Austria), 92 (Ireland); A/HRC/13/2/Add.1, paragraph 30; A/HRC/26/13, paragraphs 122.140 (Spain), 122.145-146 (France, Germany), 122.164 (Czech Republic)

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/26/13, paragraphs 122.140 (Spain), 122.145-146 (France, Germany), 122.164 (Czech Republic).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, paragraphs 122.3 (Lithuania), 122.5 (Australia), 122.6 (Uruguay), 122.7 (Latvia), 122.8 (Slovakia), 122.9 (Paraguay), 122.10 (Estonia), 122.11 (Denmark), 122.12 (Czech Republic), 122.13 (Austria), 122.14 (Italy), 122.15 (Brazil), 122.51 (France), 122.52 (Kenya), 122.120 (Djibouti), 122.121 (Tunisia), 122.140 (Spain).

service and to ensure that no-one under the age of 18 is conscripted, as recommended by a number of states during the review.<sup>4</sup>

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Eritrea on 20 June 2014 during its 26<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in Eritrea: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR64/007/2013/en/83658bd4-e37c-439b-a641-9b1f588d4330/afr640072013en.pdf>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, paragraphs 122.56-57 (Australia, USA), 122.59-60 (Italy, Germany), 122.66 (Canada), 122.123 (Switzerland).