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Widespread human rights violations require action by Eritrea and the Human Rights Council

On Tuesday 21 June the Human Rights Council heard a very disturbing presentation by the Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea. Amnesty International is alarmed by the crimes under international law and human rights violations that continue to be committed in Eritrea. The findings by the Commission of Inquiry of crimes against humanity, arbitrary detention, gender- and ethnically-based discrimination, lack of rule of law, and denial of the right to participate in public affairs and freedom of expression, are all consistent with Amnesty International's own findings over the past 25 years.

Unfortunately, the Eritrean authorities remain uncooperative with the UN and its human rights mechanisms, consistently keeping its doors closed to the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea and to the Commission of Inquiry. Despite this, the Commission has been able to confirm that crimes of enslavement, persecution, enforced disappearance, rape, torture, and murder, among others, have been committed on a widespread and systematic basis since May 1991, and that these violations continue. Amnesty International deeply regrets that those suspected of criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity continue to enjoy impunity and have done so for so long.

Amnesty International endorses the Commission's findings and urges the Council to ensure follow up to the Commission's recommendations, including by renewing the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea, keeping the situation of Eritrea on its agenda, and supporting the establishment of a structure by the OHCHR to assist in ensuring that all those suspected of criminal responsibility for crimes against humanity and human rights violations are brought to justice in fair trials without recourse to death penalty. Amnesty International also urges Eritrea to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur, implement her recommendations, and those of the Commission of Inquiry, the UPR and other human rights mechanisms.

It is imperative also that the human rights situation in Eritrea remains central to States' assessment of Eritrean asylum claims and that receiving States, particularly States within the European Union, integrate the Commission's findings into their resettlement status determination assessments.

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