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ORAL STATEMENT

Item [2]: ENHANCED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ERITREA

UNITED NATIONS MUST HOLD THE ERITREAN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

UN Human Rights Council
Fifty-second session

27 February - 04 April 2023

Mr. President,

We express our continuing concern on the human rights situation in Eritrea. For many years, the Eritrean government has shielded itself from international scrutiny for human rights violations by preventing access to independent human rights monitors, not cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms, and imposing high levels of censorship in the country.

We are deeply concerned by the lack of progress on long-standing human rights issues in Eritrea. We are particularly concerned by the mandatory indefinite compulsory military training and service in the country and its impact on children. Amnesty International and other human rights bodies have documented serious human rights violations relating to the practice of indefinite compulsory military training and service ever since its establishment. Many of these conscripts were forced to fight in the Tigray region in Ethiopia. To this day, their families have not received any official information about the whereabouts or fate of their loved ones.

We also recall the Special Rapporteur's findings in 2022 that there is mounting evidence implicating Eritrean forces in perpetrating human rights violations in the Tigray region of Ethiopia.

It is deeply concerning that despite this mounting evidence, including evidence gathered by Amnesty International, Eritrea's President Isaias Afwerki continues to deny the grave human rights violations committed by the Eritrean troops in Tigray. He dismissed allegations of human rights violations as 'a fantasy', which suggests that the Eritrean government has no intention to investigate these allegations and hold perpetrators accountable.

Thank you.