



Oral Statement by the International Bar Association

55th Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, Switzerland

Enhanced ID on human rights in Eritrea

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The Urgent Need for Justice and Accountability for the Eritrean Government's Human Rights Violations in Eritrea and Tigray

The IBA's Human Rights Institute (the IBAHRI) welcomes this opportunity to engage in this enhanced interactive dialogue on human rights in Eritrea.

The IBAHRI is concerned about the ongoing impunity for human rights violations as perpetrated by the Eritrean Government in the country, and as perpetrated by the Eritrean troops in Tigray, including after the cessation of hostilities agreement in November 2022.

Before and throughout the Tigray War, the Eritrean Government forced thousands of Eritreans to fight in the war which was one of the deadliest wars in recent years. Among those killed in the war are thousands of Eritreans. To this day, their families do not know what happened to them. Those who attempted to evade conscriptions were subjected to a litany of abuses including torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings. Furthermore, their families and whole communities were subjected to collective punishment by the Eritrean Government. The Eritrean Government also conscribed and deployed children with the number of child soldiers having increased around the Tigray War.

The human rights situation in Eritrea continues to deteriorate, especially violations based on religion or belief, with members of faith groups being arbitrarily detained, including Catholic priests, Orthodox monks, and teachers and students at the Orthodox theological college in Asmara.

Despite the cessation of hostilities agreement in November 2022, Eritrean troops continue to be present in Tigray and continue to perpetrate atrocities, including sexual violence, the kidnapping and enforced disappearance of civilians, extrajudicial executions, and looting, among others.

The IBAHRI calls upon Eritrea to immediately stop all atrocities and gross human rights violations in Eritrea and the Tigray region.

The IBAHRI calls upon UN Member States to:

- Ensure independent investigations of the human rights violations in Eritrea and of the atrocities perpetrated by Eritrean troops in Tigray;
- Establish an investigation and accountability mechanism to collect and preserve evidence of the atrocities, to ensure that the evidence could be used in the future to prosecute the perpetrators and counter growing impunity; and support grassroots organisations collecting the evidence;
- Identify avenues for ensuring justice and reparation to victims in Eritrea and the Tigray region.

Thank you.

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