

# Eritrea rejects the Statement made by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights

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البعثة الدائمة لدولة إريتريا لدى  
الأمم المتحدة  
نيويورك

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

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## **Eritrea rejects the Statement made by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights during the Enhanced Interactive Dialogue held during the 55<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council.**

At a time when the global community is calling for equity and justice in international institutions, when the UN Human Rights Council is trying to tackle the issues of selectivity and double standards, it is regrettable that once again, certain officials of the United Nations, misrepresenting facts and regurgitating unsubstantiated allegations against Eritrea, including of terminated mandates by the Human Rights Council.

On 28 February 2024, Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris, UN assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, delivered a Statement to the Human Rights Council, that was taken verbatim from the many reports containing unsubstantiated allegations, that Eritrea has repeatedly responded to. Among other things, the Assistant Secretary-General depicts Eritrea as a lawless country, “which suffers from an acute lack of rule of law with no independent judiciary or other accountability mechanisms”.

Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris heaps insults on the National Services without scant examination and reference to the underlying rationale; statutory regulations; and policies and perspectives of the Government. She alludes to persecution of Christians; oblivious to Eritrea’s acknowledged track-record of exemplary and

harmonious customs of religious tolerance and respect, in a region that is often racked by ethnic and religious strife.

The Assistant Secretary General gullibly borrows a leaf from, and parrots TPLF disinformation to falsely assert “reported presence of Eritrean troops in the Tigray Region”. In this respect, she has wittingly, or unwittingly endorsed TPLF’s rejection of the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commissions (EEBC) final and binding border ruling, in contravention of international law and the position of the UN itself.

Obviously, the intention was not to engage Eritrea, but to add to the negative campaign against the State of Eritrea, its leadership and people. Nothing in the statement reflects the facts on the ground which could have been easily verified by members of the UN Country Team in Eritrea and by the repeated responses presented by the Eritrean Government. The UN official chose instead to use the platform to advance politically motivated agendas of certain quarters, which have nothing to do with the promotion of human rights of the Eritrean peoples.

It is disheartening to see the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) being used as a tool to target certain nations, loudly proclaiming unverified allegations, while having mute responses on evident violations elsewhere. The recent actions of the OHCHR in joining what appears to be a campaign of vilification against Eritrea, based on unsubstantiated claims, are irresponsible and fail to meet the objectives of the office set out in Resolution 48/141.

Repeating erroneous allegations re-enforces the reservation that member states have about the UN Human Rights Council, especially the perception of selectivity. When the world bears witness to atrocity crimes, the choice to divert attention by picking on a small developing state, which has committed no such crimes is unacceptable. The reality of a country and people whose history is based on struggle for liberation and human rights cannot be erased or tarnished by such irresponsible Statements.

Instead of lauding unfounded allegations, the Office should prioritize balance, engagement, technical cooperation and dialogue based on areas of priorities for

countries concerned. This method is more likely to establish understanding and result in meaningful cooperation on the promotion of human rights.

The fact that the Assistant Secretary General decided to bring to surface unsubstantiated allegations made from a previously defunct Commission of Inquiry, seven years past the dissolution of its mandate, by the Human Rights Council, was a manifestation of the Office's politicization. Eritrea deemed the reports to be without any professional fact-finding methodology and based on selected "testimonies" that were unverifiable and contradictory.

Eritrea from the beginning rejected the resolution that established the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea stating the UN Human Rights Council was flouting "the Council's impartiality and admissibility criteria" as the outcome was not a result of "impartial process of fact gathering and ascertaining". Eritrea was not given the opportunity to provide essential information and evidence, and what it has been able to present in the very limited time was "ignored". The whole process was "carried in a hasty manner" and was "based on a biased approach of swallowing the charges by Eritrea's detractors and ignoring Eritrea's replies and evidence".

Eritrea calls for the ending of all politically motivated mandates established without the consent of the country concerned. The UN Human Rights Council should cease from being used as a platform for geopolitical maneuvering. The Council should establish credibility and effectiveness in advancing human rights on a global scale, free from undue geopolitical influences. It should engage in genuine cooperation with states in the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Permanent Mission of Eritrea is ready to engage with all UN entities