

**Statement by Foreign Minister Osman Saleh at the High-Level Segment of the 61st Session of the Human Rights Council – 24 February, 2026**



**Mr. President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is an honour to address this Council at the opening of its sixty-first session.

Since my last address to this body, the global landscape continuous to undergo through extraordinary changes. While the multilateral system has faced challenges before, we must acknowledge that it is now under unprecedented strain. Where the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations is violated, wars are waged in blatant violation of the prohibition of the threat or use of force. The international community has fallen short of its collective commitment and purposes and principles contained in the UN Charter.

The United Nations, as a whole, is not fully living up to the mandate entrusted to it. This reality cannot be attributed solely to the current liquidity crisis confronting the Organization. It also compels us to reflect critically on the structural and political dynamics that have shaped the functioning of the system over time.

**Mr President,**

The Human Rights Council, in particular, bears a distinct and significant responsibility for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human

rights and fundamental freedoms. Yet it must be acknowledged, with sincerity, that the Council has not consistently fulfilled this responsibility. At times, its work has been diverted to serve narrow political interests rather than the universal principles it was established to uphold. This trajectory must be reversed. The unheeded continuous erosion of trust among States and the weakening of commitment to multilateral cooperation would be difficult to repair.



At the same time, there exists a genuine will among States to address issues that directly affect the lives and livelihoods of their peoples. In a recent nationally broadcast interview, President Isaias Afwerki stated: *“The universal aspiration of the peoples of the world is clear: to live in peace and dignity, to benefit fairly from their labour, and to support one another in solidarity.”* This aspiration should guide our collective work. Absent such a shared commitment, we cannot credibly claim to be advancing or safeguarding the human rights of all peoples.

The very existence of Eritrea is rooted in the aspiration of its people to chart their own future, free from external interventions, and to shoulder the responsibility of nation-building in pursuit of an equitable society. The sacrifices made by the Eritrean people to reach this point are profound and enduring. They continue to inspire our resilience and determination in the face of adversity since the attainment of our independence.

**Mr. President,**

Eritrea’s vision is clear. We remain firmly committed to building a prosperous and self-reliant nation in which fundamental rights and freedom including the right to development are promoted, protected and respected.

In conclusion, Eritrea reaffirms, with unwavering conviction, its commitment to constructive engagement with this Council and its members with the aim of fostering long-term genuine partnership in the spirit of mutual respect for sovereignty and development. We stand ready to contribute in good faith in the work of this Council, to promote international cooperation, and to work collectively towards the shared ideals of peace, justice, and the inherent dignity of all human beings.

**I thank you, Mr. President**  
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