



EUROPEAN UNION
Permanent Delegation to the United Nations Office
and other international organisations in Geneva

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
29th session**

**Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation
of Human Rights in Eritrea**

23 June 2015

EU Intervention

Mr President,

The European Union would like to warmly thank the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Eritrea for her Report and for her work. While continuing to regret that the Government of Eritrea does not grant her access to the country, the EU takes positive note of the signs, though still considerably few, recorded by the Special Rapporteur towards an increasing engagement of Eritrea with the international community. The EU strongly encourages the Government of Eritrea to pursue this direction. We commend the persistent efforts of the Special Rapporteur to seek collaboration with the authorities and we support the renewal of her mandate.

We welcome the focus given by the Special Rapporteur in her Report to forced evictions and demolition of houses in different parts of Eritrea, and share her opinion that the threats to the rights to adequate housing requires further attention. Beyond this specific question, the EU is deeply concerned for the severe and continuous human rights violations in Eritrea. We call on the Government of Eritrea to release all prisoners detained without charge or trial and to put an immediate stop to torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments. We invite the Government of Eritrea to fully implement without delay the measures aimed at reducing to 18 months the National Service and to provide for conscientious objectors various forms of alternative service of a non-combatant or civilian character. We also invite the

Government to reconsider its reservation on art. 20 of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

We deplore the fate of hundreds of thousands of Eritreans fleeing the Country, and who risk capture, torture and death at the hands of ruthless human traffickers and smugglers. This represents an unprecedented humanitarian emergency which requires a collective response. We encourage Eritrea to continue to participate in the Khartoum process on the in the fight against human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants, with a view to achieve rapidly concrete results.

In her Report the Special Rapporteur suggested to determine new priority areas and action points to evaluate the progress of the human rights situation in the medium term. We would be interested in knowing which might be new areas that she would like to suggest.