

52nd session of the Human Rights Council

Item 2 – Enhanced interactive dialogue on human rights in Eritrea

Benelux statement

4 March 2023

I deliver this statement on behalf of the BENELUX countries, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. We align with the EU Statement and thank the Special Rapporteur and other briefers for their updates.

We are deeply concerned about the deteriorating human rights situation in Eritrea, especially regarding the intensive forced conscription campaign. Roundups of draft evaders and reprisals against their families are allegedly continuing. We call on Eritrea immediately to end the collective punishment of relatives of those who refuse to comply and to reform its indefinite military service system.

Ongoing independent reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions of children, journalists, political opponents, government officials, and clergymen in overcrowded places of detention with inadequate food, water and medical care are disturbing. These constitute a clear violation of international human rights law and Eritrea must put an immediate end to this.

We also call on Eritrea to immediately withdraw all its troops from Ethiopia and to play a constructive role in the region.

As a member of the Human Rights Council, Eritrea is required to “observe the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights”. We therefore call on Eritrean authorities to better and fully cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms such as the Special Rapporteur and to ensure full accountability, including where these violations may amount to crimes against humanity.

Thank you.