

Human Rights Council
27th Session
UPR of Ethiopia

Delivered by Regont Pula

Thank you, Mr President.

UN Watch is concerned with the human rights situation in Ethiopia, where a government dominates the political scene by detaining political opposition, silencing free media and restricting independent civil society.

UN Watch is disturbed to find that many important UPR recommendations have been rejected by Ethiopia. These relate to the freedoms of assembly, opinion and expression, and include recommendations to end the arrest of journalists, to promote an independent civil society and to seek advice from the Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Peaceful Assembly.

There have been numerous reports of journalists charged with false terrorism offences, as well as many legislative and financial restrictions on the activities of NGOs. We call upon the government to end such measures and allow for media and independent NGOs to operate freely.

UN Watch is also concerned by the fact that Ethiopia has rejected recommendations to decriminalize homosexuality, which is punishable by up to 15 years imprisonment. The government has a responsibility to end all restrictions on an individual's sexual orientation and gender identity.

Last but not least, Ethiopia has rejected recommendations relating to torture, which contradict the government's declarations about having zero tolerance for torture. There have been allegations that political detainees have been subjected to torture at detention centres in Addis Ababa. If the government is serious in its commitment to end torture, its proclamations must be matched with concrete measures.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, UN Watch regrets the fact that the most meaningful recommendations in the report before us have been rejected by the government of Ethiopia. Accordingly, we see no alternative at this point but for the Council to take action under item 4, and create a Special Rapporteur to monitor the alarming situation of human rights in Ethiopia.

Thank you.