

EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

Public Statement

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GENEVA: EHAHRD-Net welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi at the UN Human Rights Council today

The UN Human Rights Council today voted to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Burundi for another year after several days of uncertainties and speculations as to the future of the Mandate.

During the Council's interactive dialogue yesterday the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) along with its Burundian partners called on the Burundian authorities and Council members to renew the Mandate of the Independent Expert.

In its joint-statement to the Council EHAHRD-Net highlighted the important role which the Independent Expert has and can continue to play in the promotion and protection of human rights defenders in Burundi. The influence which the Mandate holder could exert in order to ensure that the institutional framework necessary for the protection and promotion of human rights was established- notably the establishment of an independent human rights commission- was stressed.

The Mandate was also depicted as being of particular importance given the current deteriorating situation facing human rights defenders notably increasing cases of threats, harassment, arrests and trials of defenders and the increasing violations of freedoms of associations and expression against members of the political opposition as well as defenders.

“This marks a significant victory not only for Burundi and for Burundian human rights defenders facing increasing challenges within their country but also for defenders throughout the East and Horn of Africa and the whole UN Human Rights Framework given the increasing attempts by many States to bring an end to the mandates of Special Procedures on Country-Specific situations” stated Mr Hassan Shire Sheikh, Chairperson of the East and Horn of Africa Network.

EHAHRD-Net would like to thank its Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies for its support during this initiative.