

Ethiopia: The role of the international community in ending impunity and ensuring accountability for violations of fundamental rights

Side event at the 37th session of the UN Human Rights Council



Panellists

Yared Haillemariam

- Director
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Bayisa Wak-Woya

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Moderator

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- Executive Director
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Light refreshments will be provided

- **Date:** 2 March 2018
- **Time:** 11:30-13:00
- **Location:** Room XXIV, Palais des Nations

Civic space in Ethiopia has suffered severe setbacks over the last decade, with a growing clampdown on fundamental rights and freedoms. Civic space has become increasingly controlled and restricted as human rights defenders have faced threats, arrests, and detention while attempting to exercise their rights to assembly, association, and expression.

After being rocked by mass-protests since October 2015, which were met with excessive and deadly force by security officials, Ethiopia now finds itself at a crossroads. The release of many prominent political prisoners, including several journalists prosecuted under spurious terrorism charges, and the resignation of Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn in a bid to “carry out reforms that would lead to sustainable peace and democracy” signal a willingness for change. However, the declaration of a new six-month State of Emergency raises serious concerns about further suspension of fundamental human rights and the overall stability of the country.

During this side event, the Association for Human Rights in Ethiopia, together with its regional and international partners, will launch a new report examining current restrictions on civic space in Ethiopia and their impact on the country’s political crisis at this critical time. The panel will explore the role civil society can play at this critical juncture in Ethiopia, assess strategies to support accountability for violations of international human rights, as well as possible roles for the international community to support progressive change in Ethiopia.

