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Resolution UN Commission of Inquiry Eritrea (report to be discussed at UNHRC sitting 21/06/2016)

June 8, 2016

As representatives of European civil society and faith based groups we welcome the comprehensive and carefully researched report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea.

The report, building on the UN Commission's first report, provides a devastating and authoritative critique of the gross human rights abuses that have occurred in Eritrea. The UN Commission's findings are in line with the evidence we have gathered from our own sources and networks. While it is deeply regrettable that the Government of Eritrea refused to co-operate with the UN Commission or provide it with access to the country, as required by the U.N. resolution that gave the UN Commission its mandate, we believe that this does not undermine or invalidate the findings of the UN Commission. The painstaking evidence that the UN Commissioners have gathered provides a clear picture of the flagrant violations of the standards of behaviour which are required of every member of the United Nations and the African Union.

We believe that the UN Commission's findings require an immediate and unequivocal response from the European Union, European Commission and its members' Governments. The report must be a spur to further action and not the end of a process.

As European citizens we call for the European Parliament and the European Commission to:

- 1) welcome the COI report, endorse its findings and undertake to implement its recommendations;
- 2) undertake to systematically gather information of past, present and future Eritrean human rights violations and to regularly report on the progress that has been made on this process, with material shared with the UN, African Union and distributed to EU citizens, with adequate specialised staffing and a budget to carry out these activities;
- 3) ensure that an effective Court or Tribunal is charged with prosecuting those named by the UN Commission, or implicated by future evidence, so that Eritreans who have committed gross violations of human rights up to and including crimes against humanity are brought to justice;
- 4) rethink the current policy and new cooperation with Eritrea as laid down in the "Khartoum Process" and related papers, and only act - if at all - based on strong benchmarking and full implementation.

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