

Human Rights Council

Eleventh Session

Item 6

Consideration of Universal Periodic Review Report on Djibouti

Read by Mr. Hassan Shire Sheikh, East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network

9th June 2009

Mr. President,

On behalf of a network of over 65 human rights organizations from the East and Horn of Africa and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies we would like to start off by commending the continued interaction and engagement by Djibouti and notably by the Djiboutian Ambassador in Geneva, His Excellency Mohamed-Siad Doualeh, with the Council. We hope that this engagement will serve as an example for other Nations from throughout Africa to enhance their own involvement with this mechanism and actively commit to the promotion of human rights throughout the continent and beyond.

We wish to commend the Djiboutian government therefore but also encourage it to build on this engagement by enhancing its collaboration with all international human rights instruments and mechanisms; notably, by extending an open invitation to the Special Procedure Mandate holders, by ensuring timely treaty-body reporting and by publicly speaking out in favour of the International Criminal Court, to which it is State Party, at a time when its initial support for this, amongst other international mechanisms, is more vital than ever before.

We would also like to encourage the government of Djibouti to pay particular attention to many of the points raised both in the Stakeholders report in particular but also during the Interactive dialogue to the issue of freedom of expression and association in Djibouti.

Without a strong, free and vibrant civil society and human rights movement current engagement with the international human rights mechanisms will be limited. Furthermore, current efforts by the government to establish a national human rights framework, which have been praised by many States during the Interactive Dialogue, will be hampered. Human rights defenders, whether activists or journalists amongst others, are a key component to the establishment of a sustainable and effective national human rights framework.

We therefore call on the government of Djibouti to respect and promote the rights of human rights defenders, notably by bringing an immediate end to the continued harassment of human rights activists, notably the President of the Ligue Djiboutienne des Droits de l'Homme, to create