

Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia protest against their president

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Hundreds of Eritrean refugees living in Ethiopia are demonstrating in the capital, Addis Ababa, in support of the UN's recent human rights report into Eritrea, known as the Commission of Inquiry, that said there were systematic crimes against humanity.

"It is not law that rules Eritreans - but fear," **the report said**, which details allegations of extrajudicial killings, sexual slavery and enforced labour.

The government described the report as "politically motivated and groundless".

The protesters are carrying banners calling for Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki to be taken to the International Criminal Court.



They have also presented a petition to the African Union asking it to push for the full implementation of the report.

June 23, 2016

To: Mrs. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma
Chairperson, African Union
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Subject: Supporting the UN COIE Findings and Recommendations

Your Excellency,

We, the Eritrean refugee community in Ethiopia, represented by our respective committees, gratefully acknowledge your commitment and efforts for Africa's Human Rights, Peace and Development as enshrined in the UN Charter and AU Constitutive Act. We also appreciate that the AU has declared this year, 2016, to be the year of Human Rights in Africa. And by way of reaffirming our confidence in your esteemed office, we remind you that we, last year, have addressed you about our support for the UN Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea (COIE). We are gathered here today to give our strong support for the Commission's more rigorous findings and recommendations.

The COIE findings have established what we, the victims, had already known and felt for years. The COIE has now independently verified allegations that the Eritrean government officials have committed crimes against humanity and that they should be held responsible for their crimes of murder, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, enforced disappearance, persecution, extrajudicial imprisonment et cetera.

We believe that you recognize these injustices committed in Eritrea are indeed committed in the whole of Africa. And we invoke your responsibility to address, promote and protect Human Rights in Africa by condemning the grave violation of Human Rights thus ending impunity in Eritrea.

Moreover, we are deeply concerned regarding Sudan's refoulement of Eritrean refugees to Eritrea. We strongly urge your office to address, condemn and stop this illegal act which is endangering the lives of many Eritrean refugees.

We, therefore, firmly believe that your august office will adequately address our pleas and will act upon the recommendations of the COIE. This, in turn, will greatly contribute to the achievement of Peace and Development in Eritrea in particular and African in general.

Sincerely and Faithfully,

Representatives of Eritrean Refugees in Ethiopia

Protests are also taking place in northern Ethiopia where thousands of people who fled Eritrea over the years are now living as refugees.

Earlier this week, pro-government Eritreans protested against the UN report in Geneva, where it was being discussed.