



**Item 6 - Adoption of the UPR on Ethiopia
19 September 2014**

Human Rights Watch welcomes the adoption of the outcome of the UPR on Ethiopia, which reflected many important recommendations to address human rights concerns in the country.

We welcome Ethiopia's stated commitment to rights-based development and the government's important efforts to improve respect for the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, and migrant workers, as well as its longstanding support for up to 500,000 refugees.

However, the Human Rights Council's review of Ethiopia comes at a time of increasing concern about the rights situation in the country. Ethiopia's government refuses to acknowledge, much less investigate and respond to, many credible allegations of serious human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, torture and ill-treatment by the state security forces.

Fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Ethiopian constitution and international human rights law, particularly freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, have come under sustained and systematic assault by the government in recent years. Despite Ethiopia's assertion that freedom of expression is thriving, the number of journalists, activists and opposition members arbitrarily detained on spurious terrorism charges continues to rise, while the number of independent media decline as media workers flee the threat of arbitrary detention and prosecution. The government has not, to our knowledge, investigated the many claims from detainees of mistreatment during detention.

Ethiopia regrettably refused to accept specific recommendations regarding amending the Charities and Societies Proclamation and the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation. Revision of this legislation remains urgent and essential for meaningful activity by independent media and nongovernmental organizations, including election-related activities that could help improve the environment in advance of the 2015 elections. Rejecting recommendations to revise these laws quashes hopes that Ethiopia could seriously implement the general recommendations it accepted on freedom of expression, association and human rights defenders.

Finally, Human Rights Watch urges Ethiopia to strongly consider the repeated recommendation made by states at the UPR that Ethiopia welcome and invite the UN special procedures and ratify the Rome Statute, the Optional Protocols to the Convention against Torture, ICCPR, and other important treaties. As a member of the Human Rights Council, Ethiopia is expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights. We regret that Ethiopia has missed the important opportunity created by the UPR to make more concrete pledges to address key shortcomings raised by many states during the UPR debate.