



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law

PRESS STATEMENT

THE UN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON ERITREA FINDS CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN THE COUNTRY

10 June 2016

The Centre for Human Rights (CHR), Faculty of Law, University of Pretoria welcomes the publication of the [report of the Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea](#) (COIE) confirming that crimes against humanity have been committed in Eritrea. This report comes a few weeks after Eritrea's jubilant 25th independence anniversary, during which the country celebrated its liberation after a long struggle.

The report of the COIE established that crimes against humanity had been committed in Eritrea since 1991. These crimes include enslavement, torture, enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings, rape and murder. The COIE found that "crimes against humanity have been committed in a widespread and systematic manner" over the past 25 years and estimates that between 300 000 and 400 000 people have been enslaved in Eritrea since 1991.

The COI's mandate, given to it by the UN's Human Rights Council in July 2015, was to "investigate systematic, widespread and gross violations of human rights in Eritrea with a view to ensuring accountability, including where these violations may amount to crimes as against humanity." This followed the publication of its [first report](#) which documented grave human rights violations perpetrated by the state.

While the CHR applauds this important work of the COIE, it is concerned about the limited options for accountability within Eritrea for these crimes. As the COIE concluded: "There is no genuine prospect of the Eritrean judicial system holding perpetrators to account in a fair and transparent manner." However, this provides an opportunity for global and regional human rights bodies to take action to ensure accountability and an end to crimes against humanity in Eritrea.

For more information, please contact:

Prof Frans Viljoen

Director, Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria

Tel: +27 (0) 12 420 3228 / 3810

Mobile: +27 (0) 73 393 4181

Email: frans.viljoen@up.ac.za

Centre for Human Rights
Faculty of Law,
University of Pretoria,
Pretoria, 0002, South Africa

Tel +27 (0)12 420 3810
Fax +27 (0)12 362 1525
Email chr@up.ac.za
Web www.chr.up.ac.za

