

CONSCIENCE AND PEACE TAX INTERNATIONAL

ORAL STATEMENT

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, 52<sup>nd</sup> SESSION

ITEM 2: ENHANCED INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ERITREA

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Everything we have heard this morning indicates that the situation regarding military service in Eritrea has got even worse in the last year.

It had been hoped that peace with Ethiopia in 2018 would be followed by a major demobilisation and demilitarisation. This did not happen. The last significant demobilisation took place in 1994, at the end of the independence war. Even that generation is not safe – it was targeted in a new reserve mobilisation last September!

Nor has the situation of conscientious objectors become any better. Some, including the three who had been locked up since 1994, were released at the height of covid, but four remain in prison where they have languished for six, thirteen, sixteen and over seventeen years, respectively.

Meanwhile the hundreds of thousands who have fled the country to avoid military service, including for reasons of conscience, are forced to pay a special tax of 2% of their income, on threat of losing their citizenship.

It is essential that this Council keep the situation in Eritrea under close and continuing review.