**Statement by Bulgaria**

United Nations Human Rights Council

46-th session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

***Review of Eritrea***

6 may 2024

Mr. President,

Bulgaria welcomes the Delegation of the Eritrea and thanks for its presentation of the national report.

Bulgaria notes the efforts mentioned in the report regarding access to education through the construction of new schools, reviewing existing education curriculum and enhancing the capacity of teachers.

We do remain, however, concerned about the deteriorating overall situation of human rights in the country. We are appalled by the restrictions placed by Eritrean authorities on fundamental freedoms and the suppression of civil society and human rights defenders. Bulgaria underlines the serious negative impact of mandatory national service towards all layers of society, notably women.

Bulgaria would like to make the following recommendations to Eritrea:

1. Grant access and cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea;
2. Exert efforts to establish a legal framework for the comprehensive protection of women’s rights, with a focus on addressing discrimination against women;
3. Take measures to prevent the removal of school-aged children from schools and their recruitment into the armed forces.

We wish the Delegation of Eritrea a successful outcome of the review!

Thank you, Mr. President.