



Oral statement at the 35th regular session of the Human Rights Council.

Item 4: General Debate – human rights situations that require the Council’s attention.

June 15, 2017

Mr. President,

VIVAT International would like to draw the Council’s attention to the human rights situation in Ethiopia, especially in the time after declaration of the State of Emergency, which was introduced in October 2016 for a period of six months and extended on March 2017 for an additional four months.

As a State party to the ICCPR, Ethiopia fails to guarantee the full enjoyment of the right of freedom of expression, which is a universal right and a fundamental pillar for building a democratic society and essential in supporting peace and prosperity.

Information coming out of Ethiopia is of great concern to us.

We have received a report that in several places in the country this right is disrespected.

Internet and telecommunications are accessible only in limited areas. The shutdowns prevent many people, especially youth from expressing and sharing their knowledge, perception and feelings about their life through social media. Several of them were arrested only because they shared information on the situation in the country on social media.

Therefore, we recommend that the government of Ethiopia:

1. Uphold its international obligations to guarantee the right to freedom of expression including through social media.
2. Respond positively to the request from the UN Special Procedures to conduct country visit to Ethiopia.

Thank you, Mr. President.