



UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW
SUBMISSION FOR THE REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

NGO Submission

New York, April 2023

Prepared and submitted by:
The Human Rights Foundation
Center for Law and Democracy

Human Rights Foundation
350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4202
New York, NY 10118
www.hrf.org

ABOUT HRF

The Human Rights Foundation (HRF) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes and protects human rights globally, with a focus on closed societies. HRF unites people in the common cause of defending human rights and promoting liberal democracy. Our mission is to ensure that freedom is both preserved and promoted around the world.

HRF's Center for Law and Democracy (HRF-CLD) is a program of HRF. HRF-CLD promotes legal scholarship in the areas of comparative constitutional law and international law, with a focus on international human rights law and international democracy law.

INTRODUCTION

This submission was prepared by HRF for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Republic of Djibouti. In this submission, HRF evaluates Djibouti's implementation of recommendations made during its previous UPR as it relates to the current human rights situation in the country, which is characterized by systematic, widespread, and gross violations of human rights, including restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression, and of the press, and arbitrary arrests, detentions, violations of due process, and transnational repression.

FOLLOW-UP ON THE PREVIOUS REVIEW

1. The most recent UPR of Djibouti by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council took place on May 10, 2018. A total of 203 recommendations were made to Djibouti, with the government accepting 177 recommendations and noting 26.¹

¹ U.N. Human Rights Council, Working Grp. on the Universal Periodic Review of the Thirty-Ninth session, *Report on the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Djibouti, Addendum Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review*, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/39/10/(Aug. 28, 2018), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/reports/report-working-group-universal-periodic-review-djibouti-addendumviews-conclusions>

However, Djibouti has not made significant progress in implementing these recommendations.

2. One of the most common recommendations was that Djibouti should ratify international conventions. Primarily, Djibouti has yet to ratify the:
 - a. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
 - b. Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
 - c. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; and
 - d. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.²

3. As a UN Member State, Djibouti has committed to protecting, promoting, and respecting the individual rights and fundamental freedoms laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Djibouti has also ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.³

4. The 1992 Constitution of Djibouti (*hereafter* Constitution) formally enshrines the protection of several human rights. However, despite these formal constitutional guarantees, individuals in Djibouti are routinely subjected to human rights violations by the very existence of laws that criminalize and impinge upon their fundamental freedoms.

DJIBOUTI'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

5. The Constitution contains several key provisions relating to the protection of the

² *Id.*

³ *Ratification Table: African Charter on Human And Peoples' Rights*, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, <https://achpr.au.int/en/charter/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights>.

fundamental rights and freedoms of its citizens.⁴

6. In relation to arbitrary arrests, *Article 3* of the Constitution states:

The Republic of Djibouti as composed of the entirety of the persons that it recognizes as members and who have accepted the duties, without distinction of language, of race, of sex or of religion.

The national sovereignty belongs to the Djiboutian people who exercise it through their representatives or by way of referendum. No fraction of the people nor any individual may arrogate the exercise of it.

No one may be arbitrarily deprived of the status of member of the national community.

7. In relation to due process, *Article 10* of the Constitution states:

All accused persons are presumed innocent until their culpability has been established by the competent jurisdiction.

The right to a defense, and including that of assistance by the attorney of one's own choice, is guaranteed at all the stages of the procedure.

8. *Article 15* of the Constitution enshrines the right to freedom of expression:

Each has the right to express and to disseminate freely their opinions by word, pen, and image. These rights may be limited by prescriptions in the law and in respect for the honor of others.

9. *Article 16* of the Constitution addresses the right or prohibition of torture:

No one may be submitted to torture, or to inhuman, cruel, degrading or humiliating actions or treatment.

Any individual, any agent of the State, or any public authority rendered culpable of such acts, either on their own initiative, or on instruction, shall be punished in accordance with the law.

⁴ Djibouti Constitution, 1992 with Amendments through 2010, Const. Project (2010), https://menarights.org/sites/default/files/2016-12/DJI_Constitution2010_ENG.pdf.

10. In relation to arbitrary detention, *Article 74* of the Constitution states:

No one may be arbitrarily detained. The judicial power, guardian of individual liberty, assures the respect for this principle under the conditions provided by the law.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

11. Historically, the territory known today as Djibouti was composed of a group of sultanates consisting of two main ethnic groups: the Afars and the Issas.⁵ In 1896, France's colonial empire conquered the territory, which became known as the colony of French Somaliland.⁶

12. In May 1977, the territory gained independence by referendum under the leadership of Hassan Gouled Aptidon and his African Popular League for Independence movement.⁷ The following month, a power-sharing arrangement between the Afars and Issas was established, and the national assembly elected Hassan, from the majority Issa tribe, as president, while Ahmed Dini from the minority Afar tribe was elected prime minister.⁸

13. In 1981, Hassan made his party, the People's Rally for Progress (RPP), the sole legally authorized political party in the country, turning the country into a one-party state.⁹ That same year, he ran unopposed in the country's first elections.¹⁰

14. In 1992, the government approved constitutional amendments reintroducing multi-party democracy but still restricted the number of opposition parties to four.¹¹ In 1993, the first multi-party vote in the country since independence took place, and Hassan won by a wide margin against the four opposition

⁵ Djibouti Country Report 2022, BTI, <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/DJI>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Message à la nation du président Hassan Gouled Aptidon à l'occasion du 8 mai 1977: Paix-Unité-Fraternité*, Imprimerie Administrative (1977), Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008700217/>.

⁸ *Djibouti EPR Atlas*, GROW^{up}- Geographical Research On War, Unified Platform, ETH Zurich (2020), <https://growup.ethz.ch/atlas/pdf/Djibouti.pdf>.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ Kaye Whiteman, *Obituary: Hassan Gouled Aptidon*, The Guardian (Dec. 4, 2006), <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/dec/05/guardianobituaries.world>.

¹¹ *Id.*

candidates.¹²

15. In 1999, after nearly 22 years in power, Hassan announced that he would not run for another presidential term, and Ismail Omar Guelleh, Hassan's nephew, won the ruling RPP nomination¹³ and election with 74% of the votes.¹⁴ Six years later, in the 2005 election, Ismail was re-elected with 100% of the votes, as opposition parties boycotted the polls, which they deemed unfree and unfair.¹⁵
16. In 2010, Ismail's regime pushed a constitutional amendment abolishing presidential term limits, allowing him to run for a third term.¹⁶ Influenced by the Arab Spring, Djiboutians took to the streets in protest.¹⁷ In 2011, Ismail was re-elected with 81% of the votes in polls that were boycotted by all major opposition parties.¹⁸ In 2016, he was again re-elected with 85% in polls preceded by repression and a partial opposition boycott.¹⁹
17. In 2021, Ismail was re-elected for a fifth term with 98% of the vote in an election again boycotted by the main opposition party.²⁰ Protests spread throughout the country denouncing his re-election efforts,²¹ and the government responded aggressively by arresting peaceful protestors, banning demonstrations, and using live ammunition to disperse crowds.²²
18. Most recently, major opposition parties boycotted the February 2023 legislative elections, citing their lack of trust in the government to organize free and fair

¹² *Five Presidential Candidates*, Africa Intelligence (Apr. 17, 1993), <https://www.africaintelligence.com/eastern-africa-and-the-horn/1993/04/17/five-presidential-candidates,19604-art>

¹³ *Djibouti, History*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Djibouti/Multiparty-politics-and-civil-war>.

¹⁴ Stephen Smith, *Large victoire de Guelleh à la présidentielle de Djibouti*, Libération (Apr. 12, 1999), (https://www.liberation.fr/planete/1999/04/12/large-victoire-de-guelleh-a-la-presidentielle-de-djibouti_270935/).

¹⁵ *Djibouti leader wins one-man poll*, BBC (Apr. 9, 2005), <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4421515.stm>.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Djibouti: Allow Peaceful Protests*, Human Rights Watch (Apr. 4, 2011), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/04/04/djibouti-allow-peaceful-protests>.

¹⁸ *Djibouti opposition boycotts election*, afrol News (Mar. 11, 2011), <http://www.afrol.com/articles/37560>.

¹⁹ *Djibouti President Ismail Omar Guelleh wins fourth term*, BBC (Apr. 9, 2016), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-35995628>.

²⁰ *Djibouti veteran ruler Guelleh wins election landslide*, RFI (Apr. 4, 2021), <https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20210410-djibouti-veteran-ruler-guelleh-wins-election-landslide-africa-politics-elections>.

²¹ *Protests break out against President Ismail Omar Guelleh*, Civicus (Mar. 12, 2021), <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2021/03/12/protests-break-out-against-president-ismail-omar-guelleh/>.

²² *Id.*

elections.²³

FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY, ASSOCIATION, AND EXPRESSION

19. Though Djibouti's Constitution enshrines the freedom of assembly, association, and expression, they are curtailed by a series of vaguely-worded, sweeping, and repressive laws.
20. Djibouti's legal framework allows the regime to criminalize legitimate criticism of the government. For example, Article 188 of the Criminal Code imposes a maximum jail sentence of two years and a fine for contempt toward the President of the Republic, with contempt defined as "anything of a nature to undermine the dignity or the respect of the public office holder."²⁴ Article 179 of the Criminal Code includes an offense called "felonious participation in a gathering" and vaguely bans a congregation of people "likely to disturb the public order."²⁵ Moreover, the regime restricts freedom of assembly through the Ministry of Interior, which requires permits for protests.
21. Djibouti's intelligence agency, Service de Documentation et Sécurité (SDS), which directly reports to the president and operates without any public oversight,²⁶ arbitrarily confiscated the passport of Kadar Abdi Ibrahim, leader of the Movement for Democracy and Freedom opposition party, after he returned from advocacy meetings in Geneva, ahead of Djibouti's Universal Periodic Review in May 2018.²⁷
22. In March 2020, the Interior Minister denied permit requests filed by the opposition party, Rally for Action, Democracy, and Ecological Development

²³ *Djibouti to hold parliamentary vote snubbed by opposition*, Africanews with AFP (Feb 23, 2023),

<https://www.africanews.com/2023/02/23/djibouti-to-hold-parliamentary-vote-snubbed-by-opposition/>.

²⁴ Code Pénal, Article 188 (1995), <https://www.africa-laws.org/Djibouti/Criminal%20law/Code%20P%C3%A9nal.pdf>.

²⁵ Code Pénal, Article 179 (1995), <https://www.africa-laws.org/Djibouti/Criminal%20law/Code%20P%C3%A9nal.pdf>.

²⁶ *Djibouti 2019 Human Rights Report*, United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (2019), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/djibouti/>.

²⁷ *Human rights defender faces continuous reprisals in Djibouti*, MENA Rights Group (May 7, 2019), <https://menarights.org/en/caseprofile/human-rights-defender-faces-continuous-reprisals-djibouti>.

(RADDE), to stage protests against Ismail's intent to run for a fifth term.²⁸ Organizing banned demonstrations or protests without permits is a criminal offense punished by a maximum sentence of one year in prison and a fine, under Article 182 of the Criminal Code.²⁹

ARBITRARY ARRESTS, DETENTIONS, AND VIOLATIONS OF DUE PROCESS OF THE LAW

23. Djibouti's domestic law requires arrest warrants and limits detention without charge to 48 hours, which is only renewable with the approval of a prosecutor, and stipulates that detainees must be tried within eight months.³⁰ Furthermore, Djibouti's Criminal Code includes specific provisions that impose criminal penalties on public officials found guilty of violating the rights of citizens in the exercise of their official duty, including arbitrary or abusive detention (Articles 195-198).³¹ However, SDS carries out systematic arbitrary arrests, abusive detention, and violations of due process against members of civil society and the opposition, with total impunity.
24. The case of the late political prisoner, Mohamed Ahmed Jabha, remains a grim milestone in the regime's history of abusive detention practices, violations of due process, and ill treatment of prisoners. Mohamed was arrested in 2010 on charges of being an Eritrean agent and held without trial for seven years before being sentenced to 15 years in prison. His health deteriorated behind bars, and despite repeated appeals from his lawyers for adequate medical care, he died in 2017.³²
25. In October 2018, SDS agents arrested Abdisalam Ismail, a member of the opposition party RADDE, after he distributed flyers showing the president

²⁸ *Opposition members face increasing restrictions ahead of 2021 elections*, Civicus (Apr. 28, 2020), <https://monitor.civicus.org/updates/2020/04/28/opposition-members-face-increasing-restrictions-ahead-2021-elections>.

²⁹ Code Pénal, Article 182 (1995), <https://www.africa-laws.org/Djibouti/Criminal%20law/Code%20P%C3%A9nal.pdf>

³⁰ Code de Procédure Pénale (1995),

<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/92316/107449/F-1995265301/DJI-92316.pdf>

³¹ Code Pénal, Articles 195, 196, 197, 198 (1995), <https://www.africa-laws.org/Djibouti/Criminal%20law/Code%20P%C3%A9nal.pdf>.

³² *Djibouti: mort de l'opposant Mohamed Ahmed, dit Jabha*, RFI (Aug. 3, 2017), <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20170802-djibouti-mort-opposant-jabha-mohamed-ahmed>.

sleeping at the Arab League Summit in March 2017.³³ He was held incommunicado for 11 days at SDS headquarters and subsequently transferred to Gabode prison.³⁴ He was convicted of “insulting the president” and sentenced to six months in prison.³⁵

26. Another example of grave violations of due process is the case of Fouad Youssouf Ali, a former air force pilot and political prisoner. In June 2020, demonstrators took to the streets after the release of a video taken by Fouad, which showed a dirty, windowless isolation cell, and his severe skin condition resulting from prison conditions.³⁶ According to Fouad’s family members, he was denied legal representation at the beginning of his arrest, and they did not know of his whereabouts.³⁷ Moreover, Fouad’s attorney stated that he was unlawfully detained for over 48 hours and denied due process.³⁸

27. In September 2022, plainclothes SDS agents arrested Abdikader Idris Moussa, founding member of the civic organization Action de la jeunesse pour le changement (Youth Action for Change), without a warrant and without informing him of a reason for his arrest.³⁹ SDS kept Abdikader in incommunicado detention for three weeks and released him without charge.⁴⁰ His family believes his arrest was in retaliation for sharing a video highlighting the lavish lifestyle of the relatives of President Ismail. SDS had previously detained Abdikader in June 2022 for one week.⁴¹

TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

³³ *Member of Djibouti’s opposition party detained for insulting country’s president*, MENA Rights Group (Dec. 4, 2018), <https://menarights.org/en/caseprofile/member-djiboutis-opposition-party-detained-insulting-countrys-president>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Djibouti: Protect Jailed Air Force Pilot’s Rights*, Human Rights Watch (Jul. 2, 2020), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/02/djibouti-protect-jailed-air-force-pilots-rights>.

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ *Djibouti: Incommunicado detention of youth activist between September 15 and October 6, 2022*, MENA Rights Group (Sept 21, 2022), <https://menarights.org/en/case/abdikader-idris-moussa>.

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

28. The Djiboutian regime has repeatedly persecuted critics living in exile and has conducted reprisals against family members in the country.
29. In August 2019, plainclothes SDS agents arrested Filsan Souleiman Samireh,⁴² an assistant of the Secretary General of an opposition party named Mouvement pour le Renouveau Démocratique et le Développement (Movement for Democratic Renewal and Development).⁴³ The SDS agents arrested Filsan without a warrant and without informing her of a reason for her arrest, but they interrogated her specifically about the cyber activism of her husband, Samatar Ahmed Osman Omar, a well-known critic of the regime who is currently exiled in Kenya.⁴⁴ The SDS released Filsan without charge the day after her arrest but accused her of pushing her husband to criticize the regime.
30. In December 2019, police raided the home of Bourhan Ali Mohamed and confiscated his cell phones without a warrant.⁴⁵ He was held in a police station for four days without charge before being transferred to incommunicado detention in the border town of Moulhoulé, until his release on January 15, 2020.⁴⁶ Bourhan's family believes his detention was in retaliation for his aunt's work running the Paris-based opposition web radio, Radio Boukao.⁴⁷
31. In April 2020, the government of Djibouti extradited former Djiboutian air force pilot Fouad Youssouf Ali from neighboring Ethiopia, where he had fled and demanded asylum.⁴⁸ The extradition came after Fouad released a video denouncing systematic corruption and discrimination in the military and called for an armed revolt against the regime. Fouad was charged with treason, cooperating with the foreign country of Eritrea, defamation of the military, and

⁴² *Member of Djibouti's opposition party subjected to reprisals for her husband's cyber-activism*, MENA Rights Group (Aug. 7, 2019), <https://menarights.org/en/caseprofile/member-djiboutis-opposition-party-subjected-reprisals-her-husbands-cyber-activism>.

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ *Djibouti: Relative of the speaker of an opposition radio secretly detained for three weeks*, MENA Rights Group (Jan. 8, 2020), <https://menarights.org/en/caseprofile/djibouti-disappearance-relative-speaker-opposition-radio-december-23-2019>.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.*

⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch, *supra* note 36.

encouraging hateful protests.⁴⁹ In November 2021, the court found Fouad guilty of calling for armed revolt and attempting to steal military equipment.⁵⁰ Consequently, he was sentenced to ten years in prison and ordered to pay a fine of 300,000 Djiboutian francs (approximately \$1,700 USD).⁵¹

FREEDOM OF PRESS

32. There are no independent media outlets based in Djibouti since the country's last privately-owned newspaper *L'Aurore* was suspended by a court order in 2016 over its coverage of a deadly security crackdown on a religious ceremony the prior year.⁵² The government operates all media outlets in the country, including the sole newspaper, *La Nation*, and all broadcast stations.⁵³
33. A 1992 freedom of information law⁵⁴ reaffirmed the unrestricted exercise of fundamental freedoms of thought, opinion, and expression guaranteed by the Constitution, but in 2020, amendments to this law stipulated that freedom of the press must be exercised in compliance with what the government deems to be "the ethics of information."⁵⁵ The law proscribes any information the government deems to undermine vague concepts such as peace, national security, public order, or the "superior interests of the nation."⁵⁶ The law also imposes accreditation requirements on journalists, requiring them to apply for a press card and sign a code of conduct with the National Communication Commission (CNC), which is a branch of the Ministry of Communication.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*

⁵¹ *Djibouti: Freedom in the World 2022 Report*, Freedom House (2022), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/djibouti/freedom-world/2022>.

⁵² *Djibouti: Suspension of the Newspaper "L'Aurore" and Suspended Prison Sentence for Publication Co-Director*, Alkarama (Jan. 27, 2016), <https://www.alkarama.org/en/articles/djibouti-suspension-newspaper-laurore-and-suspended-prison-sentence-publication-co>.

⁵³ *Djibouti*, Reporters Without Borders (2022), <https://rsf.org/en/country/djibouti>.

⁵⁴ Law N°2/AN/92/2eL relative à la liberté de communication (Freedom of Communication Law) (1992), <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/35458/68364/F546069324/DJI-35458.pdf>.

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ *La Commission Nationale de la Communication (National Communication Commission)*, Facebook account: Connâître les institutions publiques, privées et associatives de Djibouti (Getting to know the public, private and associative institutions of Djibouti) (Jun. 21, 2016), <https://www.facebook.com/977876908949077/posts/la-commission-nationale-de-la-communication-cncfinalment-la-commission-national/1077559728980794/>.

34. La Voix de Djibouti (LVD), an opposition Web TV and radio station broadcasting into the country from Europe, is the only source of independent information.⁵⁸ But the regime consistently obstructs the station by blocking its website and harassing its reporters in the country.⁵⁹ For example, on May 3, 2020, World Press Freedom Day, Charmarke Saïd Darar, an LVD correspondent, was arrested while reporting on a fire in an impoverished area of the capital and detained for five days without charge.⁶⁰ In July 2020, Charmarke was again arrested over his coverage of the case of the detained dissident air force pilot Fouad Youssouf Ali.⁶¹ During his imprisonment, Charmarke was denied legal representation and subjected to torture and food deprivation.⁶² After one month in detention, Charmarke was finally released; he was never charged with a crime.⁶³
35. In June 2020, two other LVD correspondents, Kassim Nouh Abar and Mohamed Ibrahim Wais, were detained for three days for covering the case of the imprisoned dissident pilot.⁶⁴ Two months later, police detained journalist Mahamoud-boulhan Osman, a correspondent with the Somali language service of the BBC, for three days over his reports on clashes between the Afar and Issa communities in the capital.⁶⁵

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. HRF calls on the government of Djibouti to:

⁵⁸ *Djibouti*, Reporters Without Borders (2022), <https://rsf.org/en/country/djibouti>.

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Djibouti arrests reporter on World Press Freedom Day*, Reporters Without Borders (May 6, 2020), <https://rsf.org/en/djibouti-arrests-reporter-world-press-freedom-day>.

⁶¹ *Another Voix de Djibouti reporter arrested in Djibouti City*, Reporters Without Borders (Jul. 21, 2020), <https://rsf.org/en/another-voix-de-djibouti-reporter-arrested-djibouti-city>.

⁶² Freedom House, *supra* note 51.

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Djibouti releases two journalists*, Reporters Without Borders (Jun. 11, 2020), <https://rsf.org/en/djibouti-releases-two-journalists>.

⁶⁵ *Id.*

- a. Unconditionally release all prisoners of conscience and end systematic violations of due process, including arrests without a warrant, arbitrary detention, and deprivation of legal counsel;
- b. Guarantee humane treatment for detainees and provide prisoners with adequate living conditions, and offer a standing visit invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- c. Cease the systematic detention and intimidation of opposition members, activists, and journalists who criticize the government. Enforce laws, such as Loi n°127/AN/16/7ème L and Articles 195-198 of the Criminal Code, which impose penalties on officials involved in violating the rights of citizens;
- d. Bring all laws restricting fundamental rights and protections enshrined in the constitution in line with international norms;
- e. Reform legal provisions which give the Minister of Interior, a member of the executive cabinet, disproportionate power and authority over the legal registration of political parties, the approval of public demonstrations, and the organization of elections;
- f. Reform legal provisions which give the Ministry of Communication complete authority over the accreditation of journalists and permissible information for publication;
- g. Create a mechanism of judicial control over the detention powers of the Service de Documentation et Sécurité (SDS), and investigate the agency's abusive detention practices;
- h. Protect, respect, and promote, without reservation, the rights of all individuals to freedom of assembly, association, and expression, and pledge that activists, journalists, and opposition groups can peacefully and safely operate within Djibouti; and
- i. Commit to ratifying critical international human rights instruments, including, but not limited to: the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or

Degrading Treatment or Punishment.