



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - 48th SESSION

Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on situation of human rights in Somalia

Ms Isha Dyfan - Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia:

- *Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia: [A/HRC/48/80](#)*

The Independent Expert expressed concerns over the **slow progress** in the implementation of the new timetable for the **electoral processes** at the various levels and was disappointed that the Federal Electoral Law of 2020 **did not include a 30% minimum quota for women's representation**, shows how deeply **patriarchal the political system** remains. The Expert encouraged the authorities to move promptly towards the holding of inclusive, credible and transparent **one-person-one vote elections**.

The underrepresentation, or, in Somalia's case, **the absence of women**, persons belonging to **minorities and marginalized communities**, **persons with disabilities** and the **youth** in **decision-making** processes, **undermines the legitimacy of these processes**, and leaves them behind.

Despite the efforts from Somali security forces, with the support of the **African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM)** and international partners to **secure the territory**, the situation remains dire. **Attacks against the civilian population** and objects are daily occurrences in Somalia. The high number of **civilian casualties** as a result of the **ongoing armed conflict**, **frequent terrorist attacks** and **inter-clan conflict** over access to and control of land, water and other resources remains concerning.

Thus far in 2021, the UN documented **889 civilian casualties, with 401 civilians killed and 488 injured**. **Al-Shabaab** is responsible for over **60% of these civilian casualties**, conducting indiscriminate attacks using **weapons**, including **improvised explosive devices** and other tactics **to terrorize the population**. Conflict related **sexual violence and grave violations against children** continue to be on the rise. The withdrawal of AMISOM forces, if not carefully managed, may create important **security vacuums**, which will continue to be **exploited by Al-Shabaab**, clan militias and other groups.

Journalists, media workers and human rights defenders continue to suffer from **attacks, including extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions**. There was no investigation conducted or prosecution for the **killings of over 50 journalists** over the years.

The **lack of concrete action** and follow-up from the Government on human rights has resulted in increased **violations and abuses against civilians**, emboldened perpetrators to continue with **impunity** and left survivors without **access to justice**. It has also weakened the country's fragile institutions. The Expert urged Somalia to swiftly adopt the protection of civilians policy and counterterrorism bill and to ensure their full compliance with human rights norms and standards.

The protracted delay in enacting human rights laws and policies and appointing members to crucial human rights institutions **puts into question the political will of the Somali authorities to advance progress in the field of human rights**.

The **COVID-19 pandemic, desert locust infestation**, and repeated **climatic shocks**, have exacerbated the **humanitarian situation**, leaving many, including persons with disabilities, minority communities and marginalized groups, and youth bereft of social programmes and at risk of food insecurity.

The **international community's must continue its support to fund the Humanitarian Response Plan and other relief efforts**. Somalia's road to reconstruction and the realization of the **Sustainable Development Goals** might be yet another broken promise if urgent action is not taken by the leadership. It will be important for the Somali authorities not to squander this faith.



Delegation of Somalia – Speaking as the country concerned:

The present report of the Independent Expert provides an **overview of situation in Somalia**. During the period covered, Somalia faced significant **challenges** due in part to the **COVID-19**. This affected Somalia's efforts to protect human rights. Yet, the government worked with all relevant institutions to ensure that existing protection framework is functioning.

Somalia would like to **reaffirm its commitment to implement the recommendations** provided in the report of the Independent Expert. The government will work with all stakeholders to this end. The **guidance and assistance of the Human Rights Council will be vital in this process**. Somalia thanks the Expert for her **important work** and look forward to **welcome her in Somalia** for her first mission.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE

Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (20 statements)

States: European Union, Denmark *on behalf of Nordic-Baltic States*, Qatar, Egypt, France, Netherlands, Venezuela, Russian Federation, United States, China, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Yemen, United Kingdom, Ireland, Botswana, Mauritania, Sudan, Sri Lanka. *UN Agencies:* UNICEF

Delegations taking the floor welcomed the **efforts made by Somalia** to cooperate with the **Independent Expert**, engage in the **UPR process** and **strengthen human rights** despite the current challenges faced by the country, including the **COVID-19 pandemic** and a **humanitarian crisis**.

Several countries were concerned over the **human rights violations occurring in Somalia**, including **sexual and gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, torture**, continued application of the **death penalty**, lack of protection of **IDPs, attacks, arrests** and **harassment against human rights defenders, journalists and media workers**.

Several delegations denounced the **grave violations of children rights in Somalia** with **early and forced marriages, FGMs, recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, detention of children, rape and sexual violence**. UNICEF said that Somalia was the **most dangerous conflict for children** and that **3.8 million** children were in need of **humanitarian assistance**.

Several States called on the OHCHR, with the support of the international community, to continue **providing technical assistance and capacity building to Somalia** to help the country strengthen its human rights situation.

7 NGOs took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue:

International Union of Journalists, Minority Rights Group, Elizka Relief Foundation, East horn of African Human Rights Defenders Project, Institut International pour les Droits et le Développement, Amnesty International, United Nations Watch.

NGOs taking the floor condemned the **grave human rights violations** occurring in Somalia. *The International Union of Journalists* condemned **attacks on journalists** and media workers. *Minority Rights group* denounced the **situation of minority clans in Somalia** and the current voting system, discriminating minorities. *Elizka Relief Foundation* said that Somalia needed assistance to improve its legal framework regarding **women's rights**. *East Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Projects* denounced human rights violations, demanded review of the **penal code and restrictive laws**. Institut *International pour les Droits et le Développement* highlighted the **importance of foreign investment** into Somalia as a potential solution to the humanitarian crisis. *Amnesty International* denounced **violations of freedom of expression and opinion and repression of journalists**. *UN Watch* asked for **stronger leadership** from the government of Somalia to **protect women and children's rights**.

Watch the full Interactive Dialogue with the Independent Expert on Somalia on [UN WebTV](#)