

**SOMALILAND'S CIVIL SOCIETY STAKEHOLDERS' COALITION REPORT FOR THE
UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than a decade the Government of Somaliland has maintained relative stability throughout the territory it controls. It has carried out local, parliamentary and presidential elections, while serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, lack of governance, ongoing armed conflict and recurrent humanitarian crises have characterized conditions for civilians throughout southern and central Somalia. However, the Government of Somaliland has yet to firmly establish the respect, protection and promotion of specific human rights, such as those ensuring freedom of expression, including press freedom, and freedom of assembly and association. Some events taking place in 2007 and 2008 indicated a tendency to roll back respect for human rights on national security grounds.

Actions taken by government officials that have violated or threatened human rights in Somaliland have included: the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists and opposition political leaders; unfair trials; non-transparent and unlawful conduct of National and Regional Security Committees; and unnecessary restrictions on freedom of expression, particularly with regard to the media. There have also been periodic reports of violations committed against civilians by Somaliland as well as Puntland forces in armed conflict against one another in and around Las Anod in Sool and Las Qorey in Sanaag, in eastern Somaliland. Several of these concerns were at least partially resolved by January 2008, including the release of three opposition party leaders from prison; the non-enforcement of an expulsion order against Somali journalists from Mogadishu; and a government commitment to provide emergency and development assistance in eastern Somaliland to address the economic disparity fueling human rights abuses in that area. Other violations, however, have continued. Increased stability has encouraged the gradual return to Somaliland of hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled during the Somali civil war (1988-91) and the two subsequent conflicts in Somaliland. However, on 29 October 2008 three suicide bomb attacks were carried out in Hargeisa and more than 20 civilians were killed and more than 30 injured when three separate cars drove into compounds housing the president's residence, UN Development Program offices, and the Ethiopian trade mission, with the last location suffering the worst damage and the greatest number of casualties.

The October attacks have been widely interpreted both as spill-over from armed attacks by extremist opposition groups that characterize conditions in Somalia, and reaction to Somaliland's economic and diplomatic relationship with Ethiopia and western governments. The ongoing use of the National Security Committee and Regional Security

Committees, exercising extra-judicial powers, has diminished the rule of law as carried out by an already weak, under-resourced and multi-level judicial system. It has been reported that these committees have authorized the unlawful arrest and detention of some individuals, including several journalists in 2007. They have also ordered the arrest of others and held some without trial and in incommunicado detention on national security grounds.

II. METHODOLOGY

This report is compiled by the Somaliland Civil Society Coalition for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) comprising of 8 local institutions (Nagaad Umbrella, Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Somaliland, Hargeisa University Legal Clinic, Somaliland Women Lawyers association, Somaliland youth development association SOYDA) working on human rights and development issues. The creation of the coalition was facilitated by the Consortium of Somaliland Non-Governmental organizations (COSONGO). Members of the coalition were invited to attend a working session on the UPR which was facilitated by the Human Rights Unit of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS). During the session coalition members were sub-divided into various thematic clusters, including: Women, minorities, sexual and gender based violence, women and girls rights to education, child rights, situation of persons with disabilities, situation of IDPs', refugees and migrant workers, juvenile justice, human trafficking, freedom of opinion and expression and right to self determination. The information gathered by each cluster on subject areas of critical human rights concern was then collated by the Consortium of Somaliland non-governmental Organizations (COSONGO) and validated by the members of the coalition for the UPR report.

III. NORMATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION AND PROTECTION

Somaliland was still part of the State of Somalia when it ratified some of the core international human rights instruments covering the protection of all human rights including civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.¹ The State of Somalia is yet to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. As de facto authority, the Government of Somaliland has a responsibility to respect and protect human rights. Primary responsibility for the protection of human rights in Somaliland rests with the Government of Somaliland as established in its own Constitution, which provides, among other things, for the right to life and security of every person, freedom from torture and extrajudicial killings and mutilation as criminal offences (Article 24), and freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and press freedom (Article 32). Article 21 states explicitly that articles relating to fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the Constitution "shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the international conventions on human right and that the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the state and the local government of the regions and the districts, at all levels, shall be bound by these provisions." Furthermore, Article 10 states that "The Republic of Somaliland shall observe all treaties and agreements entered into by the former state of Somalia with foreign countries or corporations provided that these do not conflict with the interests and concerns of the Republic of Somaliland" and "the Republic of Somaliland recognizes and shall act in conformity with the United Nations Charter and with international law, and shall respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

¹ Namely: Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its Optional Protocol; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Specifically, therefore, Somaliland has, in its Constitution, directly expressed its commitment to international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law. On the basis of its own Constitution, the Government of Somaliland is bound to these international laws, out of which specific obligations may arise. Specifically, the Government of Somaliland has directly expressed its commitment to all treaties ratified by Somalia prior to 1991, which include the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (and Optional Protocol in which provides for individual petition to the UN Human Rights Committee), the Convention Related to the Status of Refugees, the Convention against Torture, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Beyond its own constitutional obligations, Somaliland is, like every other government entity, responsible for complying with universal norms of human rights in customary law as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Republic of Somaliland has three organs i.e. executive, legislative and judiciary organs as article 37 of the Somaliland constitution mentioned. Each one of the three organs shall be fully independent for its powers. Therefore, the legal system is comprised of three different laws i.e. Sharia, formal law and customary law. However, there is no provision of law that broadly identifies these laws as part of the Somaliland legal system. Article 5 of the Constitution of Somaliland provides that Somaliland laws shall be based on Islamic law and any other laws contrary to it are null and void. Additionally, Article 128 states that the laws promulgated by former state of Somalia shall also be applicable in Somaliland in so far as they are not contrary to Islamic law and the independence of Somaliland. The Judiciary organization law of 1962 in its article 9 states; the laws applicable in civil matters before the district court are Sharia law, formal laws and customary law.

A national Human Rights Commission (HRC) has also been formed as a body intended to monitor and ensure the transparency and accountability of actions taken by the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government and their officials. Although the HRC championed the interests of several groups of individuals whose rights had been violated in late 2007, the HRC appears to have limited independence from government influence to fulfill its oversight mandate. While an interim chairperson was appointed, the exact configuration of the HRC, its staff and mandate remain unclear. Presently, the HRC has a good working relationship with civil society organizations and endeavors to promote human rights. It is therefore hoped that it will develop in a way that enables it to function independently and effectively. We are recommending that Somaliland parliament should endorse the National Human Rights Commission Act as soon as possible.

IV. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE GROUND

DISCRIMINATION

1. Women in decision-making and Access to Justice

Somaliland women are marginalized from decision making aspects of society due to the patriarchal cultural practices. Women's role in society is neither acknowledged nor promoted. The clan system which is the pinnacle upon which Somaliland culture and practices are based is a direct barrier for the women to exercise their rights of political participation. It is a given that only men have the right to ascend the leadership ladder and make decisions in the political and public life of the Somaliland society.

Women in Somaliland have poor access to legal mechanisms and structures. They are denied their rights to access justice as cases and conflicts are resolved by men through the traditional systems. Males at the expense of females, dominate most of the justice sector administration. At this point, suffice it to say that women in Somaliland have no access to

appropriate legal advocacy mechanisms that would assist them access justice and bring their cases to court.

Recommendations: Fully enforce articles in the constitution that are ensuring the equality of men and women such as article “36” which particularly emphasizes women rights; concrete strategies should be taken to eliminate gender discrimination in all sectors and adequately address the gaps in the law and practice; Provision of legal aid to vulnerable people such as women as well as persons with disabilities, IDPs, Refugees and Migrants; Increased involvement of women lawyers in formal justice system should be encouraged as well as decentralization of formal justice systems to the grassroots.

2. Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

SGBV acts commonly occur in Somaliland include domestic violence, rape, early forced marriages FGM/C etc. Domestic violence is perpetrated by males who are, or who have been, in position of trust and intimacy and power. Violence against women is often cycle of abuse that manifests itself in many forms throughout women’s lives. Even at the very beginning of her life, the girl child acts as an assistant to her brothers. The girl-child is expected to perform heavy household work and this affects her education as she may not go to school or fail to do her school work. As a result, the girl child usually will drop out of school.

Rape incidents are more common among the disadvantaged communities due to impunity, improper shelter, difficulty of accessing immediate security/protection assistance (IDPs, Refugees, Minorities, and Immigrants etc.) - As a result of lacking the related secular laws and acts to protect victims of rape, the problem is then mostly solved on traditional basis which deprives rights of the survivor where for instance the victim is forced to marry the perpetrator. When problems concerning women are resolved by clan elders/under the tree, women are not allowed to participate. The related various facilities/institutions including health, police, and legal structures are not prepared or are incapacitated to offer the required supportive services to victims of rape. The high illiteracy level among women and inaccessibility of the needed information and awareness lead to denial, fear of stigma and under reporting which, all contribute to delays and timely referrals of victims to existing supportive services. See attached annexes for a list of SGBV cases recorded in the last four years.

Recommendation

- There is desperate need to hasten the ratification of the draft GBV policy for protecting rights of vulnerable SGBV victims. Effective monitoring mechanism is also required for ensuring the policy is functional.
- The security services should be enhanced and made more easily accessible for purposes of protecting marginalized communities.
- The state should give priority for empowering women and girls through improving their literacy levels and awareness of their rights. This will help assist them to make informed decisions especially in situations of gender based violence.
- All relevant facilities/institutions such as health, legal, security etc must be capacitated so as to secure the provisions of appropriate responsive services for the victims.
- Somaliland government should review, evaluate and revise the criminal laws codes and Procedures where necessary, to ensure their effectiveness in providing protection and redress for crimes as whole and gender based crimes in particular in accordance with international standards and jurisprudence.

3. Negative cultural practices: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) also known as Female Genital Circumcision is a deeply rooted traditional practice that needs to be addressed if health needs of women and girls are to be met. FGM has serious health consequences from childhood to menopausal stage which touches physical, psychosexual psychological implications. A series of studies conducted reveal that 99.5% of Somaliland girls have undergone some sort of circumcision, 85% have undergone the Pharaonic type of excision while 15% have undergone the Sunna type of excision. There are FGM/C counselling trauma and treatment centers established in Buroa, Hargeisa and Borama. However, a low percentage of women and girls who have undergone FGM/C and face complications seek for medical help. The major complications handled by these centres are cyst or growths, excessive bleeding, infections, fistula, wounds etc. It is reported that birth in hospitals indicated less complication of maternal as well as low child mortality during birth than before. However, the number of birth attended by Traditional birth attendance at rural, nomad areas and IDPs in major cities and towns are much greater than those who attend health facilities. FGM procedures are often carried out by Traditional Birth Attendants who also tend to pregnant women in deliveries. The instruments used are often the same and not adequately cleaned or sterilised thus causing an opportunity for the contraction and spread of HIV/AIDS.

Recommendation: There is urgent need for government to enact laws criminalizing FGM/C and providing for the prosecution for FGM/C practitioners.

4. Situation of People with Disabilities (PWDs)

People with disabilities (PWDs) in Somaliland remain among the most marginalized groups and are severely victimized by extreme poverty. People with disabilities have inherited long - run inequality in all aspects of life including rights to health, education, marriage, political and economic participation. Discrimination of children with disabilities in social life by parents and caretakers due to deep-rooted negative perceptions and attitudes is common. There is limited accessibility for people with various disabilities to inclusive education and information and to public transport and buildings. The constitution specifically violates rights of citizens with disabilities to equal political participation and employment opportunities. These articles state that job seekers and candidates for presidential election in the state should be physically and mentally fit. Women with disabilities are more disadvantaged than men in education, employment and marriage opportunities.

Recommendation

- The convention on rights of the people with disabilities must be ratified.
- The national laws contrary to the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities must be reformed accordingly.
- Relevant strategies should be developed by the State for empowering persons with disabilities in leading to the success of equal opportunities and full participation. Particular attention is to be given to creating productive opportunities to improve the livelihood of persons with disabilities.
- Government should strengthen the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise their rights on equal basis with persons with no disabilities.

5. Situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Refugees

Lack of governance, instability and armed conflict in southern and central Somalia has also taken a toll on Somaliland, while the presence of tens of thousands of displaced southern Somalis in Somaliland is some testament to the relative peace and security in this area of the volatile Horn of Africa. There are at least six settlements of displaced persons in Somaliland's capital Hargeisa. These settlements originally emerged when displaced persons from northern Somalia, who had fled to Ethiopia and other countries as refugees,

began to return from 1991. They have also been populated by impoverished members of indigenous ethnic minority communities.

Now the settlements are also crowded with people who have fled southern Somalia, who have found relative security, albeit inadequate food, health care, education, shelter or jobs there. Somaliland officials have expressed concerns that without a formal registration process the government has no way of tracking displaced persons, and they have stated that they have received little international support to provide for displaced persons from Somalia. While the Government of Somaliland does not have an official policy of accepting displaced persons from Somalia; it has allowed tens of thousands to find refuge in its territory. The status of displaced persons from southern and central Somalia who have fled to Hargeisa, the majority of whom are women with children, remains contested. In Somaliland, which functions without international recognition, UN agencies, like the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other international organizations classify them as internally displaced persons. The Government of Somaliland considers them as refugees.

Recommendations:

- The state should put in place all necessary policies and laws for IDPs and Refugees.
- It is recommended to ensure an immediate relocation of the IDPs for better planned settlements
- Somaliland Administration should arrange strategies safeguard and protect rights of migrant workers
- Development of child labor act
- Both the state and civil societies organizations should conduct widespread awareness raising for the general population on respecting the rights of persons with disabilities

6. Children's Rights

Under Somaliland formal law, a child is anyone Under 18 years of age while in Islamic law School of thought, a child is anyone under the age of 15 years. The government has to maintain the rehabilitation of children without distinction of their sex, gender, clan his/her legality.

7. Vulnerable Children

There are many children living on the streets throughout Somaliland. These children are often seen begging and sometimes reportedly engage in criminal acts like stealing in order to survive. Many children choose street life as the alternative to poverty or violence at home, some children work on street to earn money for themselves or their families. Others have little or no contact with their families and cope without adult support.

There is an increasing rate of orphaned children in Somaliland due to various causes including the protracted civil war, clan conflicts, poverty, diseases like HIV/AIDS, high consumption of Qat², child abandonment, socio-economic conditions etc. Government run institutions to care orphaned and/or abandoned children are virtually non-existence. Presently, there is only one operational institution located in Hargeisa. The conditions in this institution are poor as it provides limited basic services and other necessities.

Recommendation: Somaliland Government should adopt the required law and policies to protect vulnerable children including orphans, abandoned children and children living on

² Also known as khat, gat or miraa is an amphetamine -like stimulant which is said to cause excitement, loss of appetite and euphoria. In 1980 the World Health Organization classified qat as a drug of abuse that can produce mild to moderate psychological dependence.

the streets and establish effective monitoring mechanisms/approaches to ensure their protection; The Government needs to enhance the capacity and skills of the management and caregivers in existing child care institutions.

8. Child labor

The complex difficulties like poverty, displacement and negligence in Somaliland have led to thousands of children getting separated from their parents and caretakers. A great portion of these children do exploitative labor for means of survival. Child labor is prohibited by the three different laws of Somaliland i.e. Islamic law, formal law and customary law. Others are used as income generators by their poor families. Sometimes these children carry out hazardous tasks, for example young children carry heavy jerry cans of water from far distances, working in restaurants in flimsy structures that are at risk of fire accidents.

Recommendation: The state should enact a comprehensive child protection law.

9. Juvenile Justice

There are reports of children being detained for minor cases, for instance, parental disobedience or refusal to go to the school. While in detention, the juvenile offenders are confined with hard criminals thereby exposing them to possible abuse, physical and psychological traumas. Criminal proceedings for juvenile offenders are sometimes lengthy and hostile and do not necessarily meet the fair trial principles. Almost 99% of the police stations and other local prisons in Somaliland are not child friendly lacking separate cells for child offenders. Child protection units including psychosocial interventions are not available and soldiers and officers are not trained in child protection. The State also lacks effective rehabilitation, reformatory centers and proper traditional restoration/conflict resolution and mediation mechanisms for diverting child offenders from the unfriendly justice system.

Recommendation: The State is needed to expedite the implementation of endorsed children's law; - The establishment of friendly juvenile justice system is recommended for protecting rights of vulnerable juvenile offenders such as creating child protection units at police stations, separate cells for child offenders at all detention facilities and capacity building for duty - bearers and the public.

10. Child trafficking

There are reports of an increase in human trafficking. Since the beginning of 2010, the legal clinic received 11 cases of human trafficking. The biggest challenges of the human trafficking are that there is no law prohibiting human trafficking and police officers have limited knowledge about human trafficking.

Recommendation: Government should enact a law on trafficking in human beings, raise awareness about trafficking and especially child trafficking and build the capacity of law enforcement agencies in this field.

11. Right to self determination

The lack of recognition which means lack of respect of the international community to one of the major principals of Human rights fundamental pillars enshrined in the International doctrines (Rights of peoples to self determination) is creating anxiety among the Somaliland public and other parts of the world, fearing that such acute constraint may negatively affect the passions of the people of Somaliland.

Right to self determination is a fundamental principal in the international law, it embodies for all peoples the right to determine their destiny, own economic, social and cultural

development. It is embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights and the international Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Article 1, para 1 of these covenants provides that: "All peoples have the rights to self determination. By virtue of that right they can freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development"

Somaliland people believe that rights is a package and is not permissible to promote some while ignoring others, conceivably human rights are collective rights, and that international recognition to the self-determination of Somaliland is the most essential collective right in Somaliland today. The decision of the Somaliland people to secede from the rest of the currently defunct Somalia in 1991 was in accordance with this right to self determination.

Recommendation: in accordance with the above stated article, we are absolutely recommending to the UN member states to respect the rights of the peoples of Somaliland. Until now, despite the fact that Somaliland has completely fulfilled all requirements needed to be politically recognized, no country has officially recognized, except several friendly countries that treat Somaliland as a de-facto state

12. Unlawful Detention and Forced Deportations

In October 2008 Somaliland security officials reportedly forcibly returned an Oromo man, who had been granted political asylum under the Egal administration, to Ethiopia where he is believed to be held in detention near the Ethiopian town of Harar. The Government of Somaliland detained without access to legal remedy, then returned, five Ethiopian men originating from the Somali region of Ethiopia (known as the Ogaden) from Hargeisa to Ethiopia in October 2007, in clear violation of international human rights law.

Recommendations: Refrain from transferring in any manner anyone to the custody of another state unless that transfer is carried out under judicial supervision, in accordance with international standards, and only after any such person who is seeking protection has had access to UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the opportunity to apply for asylum.

13. Freedom of Opinion and expression

Freedom of expression in Somaliland is not quite horrific. Although the previous government arrested many journalists Article 32(3) of Somaliland constitution mentioned that "The press and other media are part of the fundamental freedoms of expression and are independent. Every act to subjugate them is prohibited" At the same time every citizen shall have freedom in accordance with the law to express his opinion orally, visually, artistically or in writing. Somaliland constitution provides the freedom of speech and press. However, there were some examples of harassments and arrest, and detention of journalists in Somaliland

The Government of Somaliland has at times arbitrarily arrested journalists it perceives as having questioned its credibility or authority, detaining them for generally short periods of time. On 5 September 2008 police arrested two Radio Las Anod Journalists, Abdiasis Ahmed Suleyman and Mohamed Ali Elmi, these journalists were reportedly been arrested for their criticism of the administration policy in the region, whom the government accused them tribalism, and clan oriented, which is forbidden in all national law. They were detained for six days. Three journalists working for Somaliland's independent Haatuf Media Network were arrested and charged on 2 January 2007. The journalists were

detained after publishing a number of articles beginning in November 2006 alleging corruption on the part of the president and his family. Editor Ali Abdi Dini was charged with "offending the honor or prestige of the Head of State" and "instigation to disobey the law." Editor-in-Chief Yusuf Abdi Gabobe was charged with "resisting a public officer" during his arrest. On 4 March 2007, Gabobe was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for "obstruction of a police officer," and Dini and Sheikh Ibrahim were sentenced to 29 months for "reporting false information about the government, discrediting the president and his family and creating inter-communal tension." On 29 March 2007 President Riyale issued a decree pardoning the three Haatuf journalists and they were released from Mandhera Prison. Freedom of expression in Somaliland is not quite horrific. The press and other media are part of the fundamental freedoms of expression and are independent on condition that it does not, in any way harm the national security and against an individual's personal reputation. Otherwise, every act to subjugate them is prohibited" At the same time every citizen shall have freedom in accordance with the law to express his opinion orally, visually, artistically or in writing. although there are several private TVs, however, the only FM station in Somaliland is the government owned Radio Hargiesa FM station in Somaliland, constitution permits independent media, the government has consistently prohibited the establishment of independent FM stations.

Recommendation: The government should respect and protect the rights to freedom of expression as stated under the Constitution. FM radio stations should also be allowed to operate.

14. Right to education and to participate

There is no legislation or policy providing for free and compulsory primary education. There are so many concerns over the quality of education at all levels and the very low level of primary completion rate. There is no unified curriculum or common accreditation or certification. Generally, schools face several constraints in terms adequate personnel and resources. Gender disparities between boys and girls in school are high - currently it is estimated that only 33% of the children in primary schools are girls and as has been experienced, the number goes on decreasing the higher they go and consequently, fewer girls reach higher education. There is a high rate of girls dropping out of school mainly due to early marriage. Lack of female teachers in school is also a contributing factor to hindering girls from attending school. No affirmative action has been taken to increase the number of girl students in higher education and neither are incentives provided to encourage girls to stay in school and complete their education. Minorities and low income families have the least access to education. Children with learning impairments do not have access to special education, facilities or trained teachers. At higher levels of education, females make up less than 50 % of the students. Females also have a high dropout rate when they reach intermediate level due to early marriage. When families are underprivileged they choose to support the male child's educational aspirations and sacrifice the females. Again this is due to cultural discriminatory practices that women are seen as subordinates and not worth the investment expenses as it is believed they will eventually marry and be supported by a man.

Recommendation: Government should enact a law or adopt a policy that provides for free and compulsory primary education. The Government should also develop a uniform school curriculum and remove all the barriers that hinder girls from fully enjoying the right to education.

V. ACHIEVEMENTS, BEST PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

Somaliland developed the best mechanisms for which have to promote the coexistence and living together with peacefully. The state accepts the establishment of multi-political parts whereby now three political parties compete to national elections. Moreover, a national electoral commission was formed to adjudicate the marked national elections. On 26th of June 2010 Somaliland people in thousands turned out to vote to elect the leader of their wish, and although wanting for international recognition, did not wait, but insisted to continue to build their country democratic with international standards. The pre-election environment and administration were generally conducive. Finally, on July 1st a new president Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud " Silaanyo" was elected, and most impressively, and the first of its kind in the African continent, the transfer of power occurred in a peaceful, professional way. In the previous government there was only one female minister out of 47 minister and vice- ministers. It is first time in the history that women succeeded to obtain more than one post in senior government officials as newly nominated cabinet women has been given three members as being Minister of education, minister of social affairs and labor and vice-minister of health. There are also three female members elected to the house of representative and house of elders.

Somaliland CSOs played a crucial role in increasing community understanding and awareness in basic principles of governance, democracy and civic rights. The number and capacity of human rights defenders increase dramatically which promoted the protecting and caring of vulnerable members. Establishment of National Human Rights Commission is a remarkable achievement that will monitor and report government practices in human rights issues. A Somaliland bill of rights has been drafted and it is expected will be endorsed soon.