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### Technical assistance and capacity-building

## Situation of human rights in Somalia

### Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan\*

#### Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/27, in which the Council extended the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia for one year and requested the Independent Expert to report to the Council at its sixtieth session, and to the General Assembly at its eightieth session. The present report covers developments from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025.

In the present report, the Independent Expert provides updates on key developments in human rights, politics and security, with a focus on freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests and detentions, extrajudicial executions, the death penalty, displacement, the rights of women and children, the impact of climate change, and the humanitarian situation.

The Independent Expert is alarmed by the deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation and the slow progress in building strong institutions and adopting legislative and accountability measures to uphold fundamental rights amid the ongoing United Nations and African Union transitions to hand over key responsibilities to Somalia. She calls upon the United Nations to adopt a pragmatic and comprehensive approach to address both the immediate and long-term concerns in order to achieve lasting peace and stability in Somalia.

\* The present document was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline so as to include the most recent information.



## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 57/27 of 10 October 2024. In that resolution, the Council extended the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia for one year and requested the Independent Expert to assess the human rights situation in Somalia and report to the Council at its sixtieth session and to the General Assembly at its eightieth session.
2. During the current reporting period, the Independent Expert undertook an official visit to Mogadishu from 4 to 11 May 2025.<sup>1</sup> With a view to assessing the human rights situation, deepening her understanding and following up on previous discussions with the Government regarding achievements and challenges, she discussed a broad range of issues with the members of an interministerial committee,<sup>2</sup> other government officials<sup>3</sup> and other stakeholders.<sup>4</sup> In this regard, the Independent Expert is extremely grateful to the Government of Somalia and all other stakeholders for providing her with the valuable support and information that she requires to deliver on her mandate.
3. In the present report, the Independent Expert highlights her concerns about the human rights situation in the country, with numerous, ongoing violations and abuses, including increased insecurity and violence, extrajudicial killings, displacements, severe restrictions of freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests and detentions, discrimination, the continued imposition and application of the death penalty, lack of accountability, and inadequate access to essential services.
4. The Independent Expert acknowledges that the present report does not cover all human rights topics. This should not be interpreted as a lack of concern or diminished attention to the issues in question. Rather, the report is focused on the most pertinent issues within the current context.
5. In the present report, the Independent Expert also assesses the implementation status of the benchmarks set out in her previous reports.<sup>5</sup> She regrets that little progress has been made in implementing these benchmarks and other human rights recommendations.
6. The Independent Expert is concerned about the ongoing downsizing and forthcoming withdrawal of the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia, given the rising threat from Al-Shabaab and persistent political instability, which continue to hinder human rights protection and the stability of Somalia.

## II. Methodology

7. In the present report, the Independent Expert builds on her previous reports and employs similar methodologies. The report is informed by first-hand interactions with government officials, civil society representatives, representatives of United Nations and African Union entities, and members of the diplomatic community during her visits to Mogadishu, Nairobi and Addis Ababa in May 2025. In addition, stakeholder submissions

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<sup>1</sup> The Independent Expert also conducted a visit to Nairobi, on 13 May 2025, and Addis Ababa, on 14 May 2025, to discuss regional developments affecting Somalia with stakeholders, including representatives of relevant African Union and United Nations organs.

<sup>2</sup> The committee included officials from the Ministry of Family and Human Rights Development, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and the Office of the Attorney General.

<sup>3</sup> Senior Officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the National Disability Agency and the National Independent Election Commission, a member of the House of the People and members of the panel for the recruitment of commissioners of the national independent human rights commission.

<sup>4</sup> The Independent Expert met with representatives of civil society organizations, journalists, social media activists, women, and representatives of minorities and other marginalized groups. She also interacted with representatives of United Nations entities and the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia and wider diplomatic communities in Somalia.

<sup>5</sup> [A/HRC/45/52](#) and [A/HRC/45/52/Corr.1](#), para. 94; and [A/HRC/48/80](#), paras. 61–74.

received in response to the public call for inputs issued in April 2025, along with official reports by various United Nations organs and other actors, have contributed to the development of the present report.

8. The Code of Conduct for Special Procedure Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council and the Manual of Operations of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council were strictly followed in documenting and verifying the findings.

9. A draft version of the present report was shared with the Permanent Mission of Somalia to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva on 6 August 2025. As at 11 August 2025, no feedback had been received.

### III. International legal frameworks

10. The Independent Expert notes that the Government of Somalia is a party to most of the core international human rights instruments and commends it for its standing invitation to special procedures and its ongoing constructive engagements with her and other mandate holders. Nonetheless, Somalia has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and some of the optional protocols to the human rights treaties, including the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, despite multiple recommendations by the Human Rights Council, treaty bodies and the Independent Expert. She reiterates her call to the Government to ratify and apply these unratified instruments in line with the recommendations that have consistently been made.

### IV. Key developments

#### A. National political developments

11. Significant and concerning internal political developments that adversely affect the security and human rights landscape of Somalia have emerged over the current reporting period. The actions of the Federal Government to implement its long-standing agenda of a “one person, one vote” election system<sup>6</sup> have had an impact on the political and security situation in the country. Although the Federal Government has been taking positive steps towards implementing this initiative, including by establishing the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission<sup>7</sup> and launching a voter registration system in some parts of the country, some regional administrations, such as the regional states of Puntland and Jubbaland, have continued to defy the initiative due to disagreements on election processes and constitutional interpretation. In fact, they withdrew their participation in the National Consultative Council<sup>8</sup> and stopped their cooperation with the Federal Government, raising tensions, and thus diverting the country’s resources and attention from tackling more pressing security, economic and humanitarian issues.<sup>9</sup>

12. The armed confrontation between forces of Jubbaland State and the Federal Government on 11 December 2024, in Raas Kaambooni in the federal state of Jubbaland, following opposition to the deployment of federal forces, and an “armed clash” that broke out on 5 February in the Baardheere area over control of Baardheere town, as well as other

<sup>6</sup> The National Consultative Council on 30 October 2024 announced that local district elections and federal member state assembly and leadership elections were planned for June and September 2025, respectively.

<sup>7</sup> Somali National News Agency, “Somali Parliament approves independent electoral commission to strengthen democracy”, 27 November 2024.

<sup>8</sup> Considered as a high-level forum that brings together senior leaders of both the Federal Government and regional state governments to discuss the key issues facing the country and take decisions.

<sup>9</sup> European Union Agency for Asylum, “Somalia: security situation 2025”, May 2025, p. 18.

instances of inter-clan clashes in Hirshabelle and other areas, are serious indicators of the country's fragile political and security situation.<sup>10</sup>

13. The Federal Government is often perceived as prioritizing the formation of, or collaboration with, new regional administrations over engaging in inclusive and transparent dialogue with all stakeholders. The Independent Expert is also concerned about the rigid political positions of some regional governments, which have contributed to avoidable tensions and divisions among political actors. Given the current polarized political and security environment, the Independent Expert further notes that holding fair and participatory elections, capable of producing broadly accepted outcomes, may prove challenging.

14. The Independent Expert urges both the Federal Government and regional governments, with the support of the international community, to prioritize inclusive dialogue and consensus-building over unilateral actions that risk deepening divisions, mistrust and insecurity.

15. In the meantime, the Independent Expert acknowledges a positive development in "Somaliland", namely, the conducting of a largely peaceful presidential election on 13 November 2024, the results of which were accepted by all candidates.

## **B. Developments involving the relationship of Somalia with other stakeholders**

16. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Ethiopia and "Somaliland" at the beginning of 2024, which reportedly granted Ethiopia access to the sea, diplomatic tensions between the Governments of Ethiopia and Somalia increased. As a result, the Government of Somalia threatened to expel the Ethiopian armed forces, in a move that triggered strong opposition from Ethiopia and concerned local communities in different parts of Somalia.<sup>11</sup> However, this concerning development was later de-escalated as a result of mediation by Türkiye, which resulted in the signing of a declaration in Ankara in December 2024, ending a rift between the two countries.<sup>12</sup> The Independent Expert welcomes the signing of the declaration and calls for its implementation to avoid any dispute that may have an impact on the fight against terrorism.

17. The Independent Expert notes that the Government of Somalia has disregarded the group of international partners known as C6+, which, since 2010, has been providing guidance and support to Somalia on issues relating to elections and political and dispute resolution processes to transit towards peace and stability. The position of the Government to distance itself from this group has been met with resistance by opposition groups,<sup>13</sup> and is considered by them as a strategy to circumvent mounting pressure on the Government to engage in an inclusive national political consultation and dialogue, including on the election process.

18. The United Nations and the African Union are undergoing a phased transition, with the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia replacing the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia. This shift, which began in late 2024, is in line with the request by Somalia for a two-year transition period in which the functions of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia are transferred to the United Nations country team, as endorsed by the Security Council in October 2024.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the Security Council endorsed the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to replace the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia with the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia from 1 January 2025.<sup>15</sup> As such, the African Union Support

<sup>10</sup> S/2025/194, paras. 15 and 16.

<sup>11</sup> Horn Observer, "Somali regional states oppose plan to remove Ethiopian peacekeepers", 6 June 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Signed on 11 December 2024 by the leaders of Ethiopia and Somalia, and facilitated by Türkiye.

<sup>13</sup> Somaliland Standard, "Somali opposition groups strongly oppose the decision of the gov't to suspend C6+", 13 June 2025.

<sup>14</sup> Security Council resolution 2753 (2024), paras. 1 and 2.

<sup>15</sup> Security Council resolution 2767 (2024), para. 16.

and Stabilization Mission in Somalia is currently in the process of a phased withdrawal from Somalia.

19. With a new and smaller presence, the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia is taking over some of the responsibilities of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. Following these developments, the African Union and Somalia have reportedly reached an agreement on the allocation of troops to the newly reconfigured African Union mission. According to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia concept of operations, the authorized strength of the Mission is set at up to 11,911 personnel.<sup>16</sup>

20. The Independent Expert takes note of the serious financial challenge faced by the African Union in Somalia, including funding shortfalls that prevent it from effectively delivering on its newly configured transitional mandate. The Independent Expert is particularly alarmed by information that she received about the downsizing of the Civilian Casualty Tracking, Analysis and Response Cell of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia, which has played a key role in identifying and reporting civilian casualties, among other roles. These developments are a watershed moment, as the Somalia security forces are assuming greater responsibility, despite rising instability and threats by Al-Shabaab, with profound ramifications for the protection of civilians and enjoyment of fundamental human rights.

### C. Rising insecurity

21. The Independent Expert is alarmed by the upsurge in conflict, including recently observed advances by Al-Shabaab, despite considerable progress made by the Government's forces in the recent past. In recent months, areas previously recaptured by the Federal Government and its affiliates have reportedly fallen back into Al-Shabaab control, in a development that raises concerns about the strategy to secure lasting solutions to the ongoing conflict.

22. Al-Shabaab launched a major push that reversed some of the hard-won territorial gains and started to control some areas in central and southern Somalia.<sup>17</sup> These offensives included attacks in the Shabelle Hoose and Shabelle Dhexe Regions, as well as repeated attempts to encroach upon Mogadishu, during the reporting period. They reportedly resulted in civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of livelihoods.

23. Moreover, Al-Shabaab continues to carry out raids, including in Mogadishu and other parts of the country. Examples of these significant attacks include a complex attack against civilians at a restaurant in Lido Beach, Mogadishu, on 2 August 2024, with over 284 casualties reported, including nearly 100 people killed, multiple attacks on security forces and checkpoints, including an attack on 21 August 2024 involving two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices that were successfully intercepted by the National Intelligence and Security Agency,<sup>18</sup> a rocket attack on 3 November 2024 against the Aden Adde International Airport zone in Mogadishu, protected by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, that resulted in the deaths of two African Union Transition Mission in Somalia soldiers and the injury of a third person, and the firing of at least nine 107-mm rockets towards the Aden Adde International Airport moments after the official visit of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia on 27 February 2025. Al-Shabaab also launched an attack against the convoy carrying the President of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, using a large roadside explosive device in Mogadishu on 18 March 2025, which reportedly caused deaths and destruction of properties in the area.<sup>19</sup> Most recently, an Al-Shabaab suicide bomber allegedly killed at least 10 people queuing at the Damanyo military base in Mogadishu, allegedly to register for recruitment, on 18 May 2025.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., para. 19.

<sup>17</sup> War on the Rocks, "Flailing State: the resurgence of al-Shabaab in Somalia", 3 June 2025.

<sup>18</sup> S/2024/748, para. 11.

<sup>19</sup> S/2025/194, para. 14.

<sup>20</sup> NBC News, "Mogadishu suicide bomber kills at least 10 at army recruitment drive", 18 May 2025.

24. The Somalia National Army, supported by the “community defence forces”, and its international partners have continued to conduct operations in Hirshabelle, South-West and Galmudug States. Similarly, Puntland security forces, with the support of international partners, has continued to battle with Da’esh, although Al-Shabaab appears to remain in control of some areas in the Shabelle Hoose and Shabelle Dhexe Regions.<sup>21</sup>

25. Overall, these developments are indicative of the deteriorating security situation in the country in the context of the phased withdrawal of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia, leaving the people of Somalia much more vulnerable to human rights abuses and violations. This situation confirms the genuine fears expressed by members of Somali civil society to the Independent Expert in May 2025. The Independent Expert notes that the worsening conflict reportedly led to an increase in human rights violations and humanitarian protection concerns, including sexual and gender-based violence, child recruitment and early marriage issues.

## V. Human rights situation

### A. Arbitrary arrest and detention, and extrajudicial executions

26. Civilians have continued to be victims of routine arbitrary arrests and detentions, as well as extrajudicial executions, perpetrated by armed groups and government forces. The Independent Expert was told by various informants that Al-Shabaab and its affiliates are responsible for most deadly attacks against civilians, violating the rights to life, and liberty and security of person. The Independent Expert notes with concern that an overwhelming number of victims of arbitrary arrest and detention are journalists and citizens exercising their right to freedom of expression.

27. Reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions linked to counter-terrorism measures have continued to grow.<sup>22</sup> The Independent Expert received information, including about the arrest of an opposition figure in Baidoa District, Bay Region, and his detention from 15 February until his reported release on 12 May without his being brought before a court of law. There are also reports of the arrest and detention of individuals, allegedly associated with Al-Shabaab and “high-level Al-Shabaab prisoners”, in “safe houses”, as well as in other, authorized detention facilities, without access to a lawyer or notification of their families.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, 291 children (275 boys and 16 girls) were detained for their alleged association with armed groups, mostly by federal government security forces (273) and regional forces (17). A total of 144 children were released.<sup>24</sup>

28. Ordinary citizens, including women and children, continue to be victims of extrajudicial executions in the context of the ongoing conflicts, as well as in areas not affected by conflict. The Independent Expert notes with serious concern the increasing numbers of violations in the country. For example, the United Nations recorded 402 civilian casualties, of whom 179 were killed (132 men, 26 women, 12 boys and 9 girls) and 223 injured (140 men, 44 women, 21 boys, 10 girls and 8 unspecified) from 23 September 2024 to 23 March 2025 alone.<sup>25</sup>

29. The Independent Expert has continued to receive disturbing news about the killing of civilians by Al-Shabaab, government forces and clan militias and during clashes between clans in different part of the country. For example, the Independent Expert received information about the alleged execution of five male civilians on 29 June 2025 in the town of Ceelbur, Galguduud Region, by Al-Shabaab following a ruling by a self-proclaimed “Al-Shabaab court” for their alleged collaboration with the Federal Government. Similarly,

<sup>21</sup> [S/2025/194](#), para. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Coalition of Somali Human Rights Defenders, “Somalia: quarter II (Q2) 2025 human rights situation report”, 30 June 2025.

<sup>23</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, “Country visit to Somalia: end of mission statement”, 21 May 2025.

<sup>24</sup> [A/79/878-S/2025/247](#), para. 161.

<sup>25</sup> [S/2025/194](#), para. 38.

the Independent Expert was informed about an alleged air strike, by an unconfirmed actor, that reportedly killed two male civilians and injured two others in a village in Bari Region on 2 June 2025.

30. The Independent Expert remains concerned about the lack of accountability measures for most of the reported arbitrary arrests and detentions and killings perpetrated by armed groups, government security forces or clan-based actors. She renews her call to the Government to step up its efforts in protecting the rights to life, and liberty and security of person and to take concrete accountability measures.

## **B. Freedom of expression**

31. The Independent Expert is alarmed about the shrinking space for exercising the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart useful information. Freedom of expression and the press have continued to be severely restricted. Over the reporting period, Al-Shabaab has continued to target, kill and intimidate journalists and media workers to suppress reporting critical of its activities and narratives. She has also continued to receive credible information according to which journalists and other individuals exercising their rights to freedom of expression on different platforms continued to face intimidation, harassment, beatings, and arbitrary arrests and detentions by security forces acting with impunity. The Independent Expert is also dismayed at the lack of action to review and stop the use of provisions of the outdated Penal Code<sup>26</sup> to prosecute and punish journalists in a manner contrary to the principles established in international human rights law.

32. Official and unofficial remarks made by some authorities demanding that journalists refrain from reporting on security and political issues or requesting them to base their reporting only on government sources, as well as confiscation of media equipment and deletion of recorded information, have become the norm. The Minister of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism reportedly made a statement on 6 March 2025 to announce that publishing statements or news that could threaten national security was prohibited.<sup>27</sup> The Independent Expert is aware of the widespread practice of arrest and detention of journalists as a strategy to intimidate and block the free flow of information to the public. For instance, journalists who reportedly came to report on the explosion of a roadside bomb that reportedly targeted the convoy of the President and ended up killing a fellow journalist, in Mogadishu, on 18 March were arrested and detained.

33. The report of the Secretary-General on Somalia further reveals the arrest and detention of five journalists and media workers by intelligence agencies in Mogadishu and Jubbaland from September to December 2024.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the arrest, detention and harassment of 41 private media journalists by Somali security personnel between mid-March and May 2025 was reported by the Committee to Protect Journalists.<sup>29</sup>

34. The Independent Expert is appalled by reports of several incidents of sexual assault and intimidation targeting female journalists. In one instance, the United Nations documented the assault by security forces of a female journalist who was reportedly covering a demonstration by people whose homes had been demolished.<sup>30</sup> The Independent Expert is deeply concerned that all these restrictions and violations have created a climate of fear and self-censorship, discouraging journalists from reporting on issues related to security and

<sup>26</sup> The provisions of the Penal Code (Legislative Decree No. 5 of 16 December 1962) frequently used in this regard include arts. 215 (subversive or anti-national propaganda), 269 (insult to a political, administrative or judicial body), 326 (intimidation of the public), 328 (publication or circulation of false, exaggerated or tendentious news capable of disturbing public order), 321 (instigation to disobey the laws), 452 (3) (defamation committed by means of the press) and 505 (non-observance of orders of the authorities).

<sup>27</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “‘Alarming escalation’: at least 41 journalists targeted since March in Somalia”, 15 May 2025.

<sup>28</sup> [S/2025/194](#), para. 40.

<sup>29</sup> Committee to Protect Journalists, “Alarming escalation”.

<sup>30</sup> [S/2025/194](#), para. 40.

conflict, and leaving the people in the dark about critical information that they need to protect themselves.

### C. Death penalty

35. The Independent Expert is disturbed by the continued application of the death penalty<sup>31</sup> throughout Somalia, despite her repeated calls to the Federal Government to adopt a moratorium on the application of capital punishment and discussions with representatives of the Federal Government on the matter. As stated by the Human Rights Committee, the death penalty cannot be imposed for crimes that “do not meet the threshold of the most serious crimes” within the meaning of article 6 (2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.<sup>32</sup>

36. The Independent Expert received information about the alleged executions of three civilian men by firing squad by South-West State security forces on 12 and 13 February 2025 in Baidoa District, Bay Region, following their conviction and death sentences for the crime of murder by a court in Bay Region. While they were represented by a lawyer during the trial, they were reportedly denied their right to appeal. Three other men who were allegedly affiliated with Al-Shabaab were reportedly sentenced to death and executed on 18 February 2025 in Caabudwaaq District by a joint security force consisting of the South-West State Darwish force and the National Intelligence and Security Agency in Buurhakaba District. They were not allowed to appeal the death sentences, although they were represented by a lawyer during the trial. The Independent Expert is also aware of the reported execution of a civilian by the Galmudug police force and the National Intelligence and Security Agency on 8 March 2025 and the reported execution of 10 former Al-Shabaab fighters, including four children, by firing squad following the death sentences imposed by a military court in Puntland in August 2024.<sup>33</sup>

37. Without prejudging the accuracy of the information made available to the Independent Expert, she wishes to express her concern at the continued enforcement of the death penalty, including on minors, following judicial procedures that may not provide the strict fair trial guarantees required under international human rights law. The Independent Expert calls upon the Government to implement its commitment made to the Human Rights Council to place a moratorium on the application of the death penalty.

### D. Rights of persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalized communities

38. The human rights situation of persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalized communities continues to be of concern. Reports of persistent discrimination and neglect of the issues that matter most to them were raised during various interactions with key actors and affected groups. These communities are disproportionately affected, as they continue to bear the brunt of the conflict and insecurity, with widespread displacement, inadequate access to protection and basic services, and high levels of poverty and inequality. For example, more than 72 per cent of the persons with disabilities surveyed had no access to humanitarian assistance due to lack of information, physical inaccessibility and fear of physical or verbal attacks.<sup>34</sup>

39. The Independent Expert is concerned about the lack of a clear understanding of who is considered to belong to a minority group, despite the consensus as to their presence in the country. According to a study conducted by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, minority and marginalized communities are estimated to make up 30 per cent of the

<sup>31</sup> Article 90 (1) of the Penal Code included the death penalty as a punishment for crimes that included intentional homicide, bearing arms against the State, war crimes and the misuse of State secrets.

<sup>32</sup> [CCPR/C/SOM/CO/1](#), paras. 21 and 22.

<sup>33</sup> The Jerusalem Post, “Somalia executes 10 al Shabaab insurgents, police say”, 17 August 2024; and [A/79/878-S/2025/247](#), para. 170.

<sup>34</sup> [S/2025/271](#), para. 28.

total population.<sup>35</sup> However, the Independent Expert is concerned about the lack of interest in fully including persons with disabilities and minority groups in crucial decision-making processes. Representatives of minority clans, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities have shared information with the Independent Expert about the grave situations in which they find themselves as a result of targeted attacks and displacement by Al-Shabaab and the impact of natural disasters, further aggravated by the lack of recognition and protection by the Government.

40. The Independent Expert welcomes the signing into law of the national disability bill, which protects the rights of persons with disabilities, by the President on 2 December. On 9 February, the Minister for Women, Family Affairs and Human Rights Development of South-West State distributed mobility aids, including wheelchairs, crutches and canes, to 500 persons with disabilities.

41. The Independent Expert urges the Government to embark on concrete legal and institutional measures to safeguard and prioritize the needs of vulnerable groups and enhance inclusivity and equality for all groups of the community.

## **E. Women's and children's rights**

42. The Independent Expert welcomes the inclusion of the definition of a child as person below the age of 18 years in the Provisional Federal Constitution and the endorsement, by the Cabinet, of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which is pending approval by Parliament. Nevertheless, she remains concerned about the lack of action by the Parliament to complete its review of and adopt overdue bills, including the offences of rape and indecency bill, the juvenile justice bill, the child rights bill and the anti-female genital mutilation bill.<sup>36</sup> The Independent Expert urges the House of the People, the Senate and the President to break the persistent lack of action by passing these bills into law after making sure that they are in line with relevant international human rights standards.

43. The Independent Expert is further alarmed by the human rights situation of children, who continue to be victims of conflict, humanitarian crisis, harmful traditional practices and other forms of violations and abuses. Children continue to be killed and injured because of the ongoing conflict, including by the use of explosive devices and remnants of war in several instances. According to the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, there were 856 verified cases of grave violations against 668 children (505 boys and 163 girls) committed from September to December 2024 alone. Verified violations included abduction (278 incidents), recruitment and use (269), killing and maiming (229), rape and other forms of sexual violence (64), attacks on schools (11) and denial of humanitarian access (5).<sup>37</sup>

44. The Independent Expert is alarmed by credible reports of children being subjected to sexual violence by various actors in Somalia. According to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, in 2024, sexual violence was perpetrated against 267 children (265 girls and 2 boys), including by Al-Shabaab (120), unidentified perpetrators (110), government security forces (14), and the Somali National Army (11).<sup>38</sup>

45. The Independent Expert noted that understanding the situation of women and children in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab was difficult, as access to information was very limited, and there was a fear of retaliation, stigma and discrimination. However, sexual and gender-based violence continues to affect vulnerable groups, such as children, adolescent girls and women, internally displaced persons, minorities and single heads of households.<sup>39</sup>

46. The Independent Expert commends the Government of Somalia for progress made towards enhancing the participation of women, including by establishing the 30 per cent

<sup>35</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Somalia 2025", January 2025.

<sup>36</sup> The bills were passed into law by Galmudug State.

<sup>37</sup> [S/2025/194](#), para. 46. According to the same report, 66 per cent of all violations were attributed to Al-Shabaab.

<sup>38</sup> [A/79/878-S/2025/247](#), para. 163.

<sup>39</sup> [S/2024/748](#), para. 184.

quota for women in elections. Efforts are being made to develop regulations and guidelines to implement this quota system within the context of the proportional electoral system. However, the Independent Expert was informed of genuine concerns by various stakeholders about the use of the 4.5 clan system, entrenched in the governance structure of the country, which would determine the eventual outcome of the election process. She therefore demands that the Government ensure that the regulations and guidelines result in the practical application of this provision.

47. The Independent Expert remains concerned about the ongoing conflict that continues to have an adverse impact on the rights of women and children. The United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia verified conflict-related sexual violence against 11 women and 10 girls.<sup>40</sup> As highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia, there is a strong link between conflict, displacement and governance challenges in relation to gender-based violence in Somalia.<sup>41</sup>

48. The Independent Expert welcomes the initiative to establish forensic laboratories and one-stop survivor centres, as well as the organization of training for security officers on the investigation of sexual violence. However, only limited actions have been taken to investigate and punish violence against women and children. The Independent Expert urges the Federal Government and regional governments to take concrete actions to enhance women's participation, protect them from violence and hold perpetrators accountable.

## **F. Internal displacement**

49. The Independent Expert has observed significant displacement trends due to a combination of conflict, drought and flooding. During the reporting period, 640,000 people were reported to have been internally displaced due to conflict and insecurity.<sup>42</sup> The internally displaced persons were reportedly further exposed to forced evictions. For example, 150,000 internally displaced persons were reportedly evicted between 23 September 2024 and 23 March 2025.<sup>43</sup> The majority of internally displaced persons are settled in and around the urban centres of Banaadir Region, mostly on private land and without security of tenure, with an increased risk of ongoing forced eviction by the Government.

50. It is also reported that women and children, who face high risks of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, account for more than 80 per cent of displaced persons in Somalia.<sup>44</sup> As such, women and girls living in displacement sites face multiple protection risks, including rape, intimate partner violence, and other forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.<sup>45</sup> A significant portion of internally displaced persons and other population groups face food insecurity and a health crisis, as, in most areas, supply routes were cut off and service provider facilities suspended operations due to the lack of funding and ongoing clashes, cutting off access to essential healthcare and emergency services.

## **G. Humanitarian situation and climate change: impact on socioeconomic rights**

51. The Independent Expert is alarmed by the rapidly changing humanitarian situation and lack of commensurate funding to respond to the needs. She is also troubled by the impact of recurrent climate shocks, which include floods and drought. The situation is further exacerbated by widespread conflict resulting in the displacement of people and disruption of lives and livelihoods. Somalia is among the countries that are severely affected by recurrent climate shocks, such as floods and droughts.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>40</sup> [S/2025/194](#), para. 47.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 57.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 52.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 52.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 52.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 57.

<sup>46</sup> [S/2025/271](#), para. 24.

52. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, flash floods killed 17 and “affected” more than 84,000 people in different parts of the country, including in Mogadishu, between mid-April and mid-May 2025.<sup>47</sup>

53. Overall, according to the 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, 5.98 million people were estimated to be in need of humanitarian and protection assistance in 2025.<sup>48</sup> This is concerning given the funding crisis unfolding globally, which is reflected in the decision of the United Nations country team in Somalia to deprioritize protection assistance to focus on other interventions, involving food assistance, nutrition programmes, water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives and livelihood support, due to the lack of sufficient funds.

54. The Independent Expert notes that, in a recent report, the World Bank highlighted the concerning impact of climate change and reduced humanitarian aid. In that report, the number of people facing acute food insecurity was projected to increase from 18 per cent of the population in the second quarter of 2024 to 24 per cent in the second quarter of 2025.<sup>49</sup>

55. The Independent Expert notes the continued challenge faced by some humanitarian organizations to access and deliver assistance to people in need in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab, primarily due to concerns about potential prosecution for violations of counter-terrorism legislation enacted by Somalia and many other countries. This is owing to the criminalization of interactions with individuals or groups deemed to be associated with terrorist organizations.

56. The Independent Expert is seriously concerned that people who need humanitarian and protection assistance, particularly vulnerable groups, including women, children, minority and marginalized groups and persons with disabilities, will, furthermore, be exposed to human rights violations due to the above-mentioned challenges. She encourages the international community to do its best in supporting the efforts of the Government of Somalia to address the root causes of the crisis, including the conflict, climate change, and poverty, in addition to providing humanitarian and protection assistance to the most vulnerable.

## **VI. Updates on the implementation of the seven benchmarks**

### **A. Benchmark 1: promoting security, peace and reconciliation for the protection of civilians in conflict**

57. The Independent Expert noted with concern the absence of meaningful progress towards ensuring security and peace for civilians. The intensity of and geographical area affected by the conflict have continued to grow recently. In addition to the increased attacks and frequent use of explosive devices by Al-Shabaab, there is a trend towards the increased use of heavy weapons, drones and air strikes by the Government and its partners. At the same time, the phased withdrawal of and financial challenges faced by the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia have continued to make protection of civilians a challenge.

58. In terms of peace and reconciliation, lines of communication between Somalia and “Somaliland” started to open, with the appointment by the President of a special envoy for talks between Somalia and “Somaliland”, leading to the prospect of dialogue and the flow of goods and services between the two, despite ongoing challenges. The second revision of the National Reconciliation Framework was also completed. It emphasized collaboration across different sectors, including the justice and police sectors, and among diverse civil society groups. In this connection, 970 data collectors were trained to support national reconciliation

<sup>47</sup> OCHA, “Somalia: 2025 Gu (April to June) seasonal floods – flash update No. 3 (as of 13 May 2025)”.

<sup>48</sup> OCHA, “Somalia 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) – summary”, December 2025.

<sup>49</sup> World Bank, “Boosting domestic revenue mobilization to enhance service delivery and strengthen the social contract”, June 2025, p. 2.

processes, and 12 inter-clan conflicts were reported to have been resolved in five states, including Galmudug and Jubbaland.

59. Workshops on countering violent extremism were conducted in Kismaayo and Baidoa and attended by government representatives and a cross section of society to strengthen coexistence between defectors and communities during the process of rehabilitation and reintegration of former Al-Shabaab associates.

60. The Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism visited Somalia in May 2025 and expressed concerns about excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, and the lack of due process safeguards in counter-terrorism efforts, and recommended, inter alia, that Somalia progressively adopt and apply international counter-terrorism conventions to ensure improved human rights compliance.<sup>50</sup>

## **B. Benchmark 2: strengthening the rule of law, accountability and transitional justice**

61. The Independent Expert notes with concern that there is still no regulatory body in the judicial sector or clear separation of powers in practice between the judicial sector and the executive, and no merit-based appointment of judges and prosecutors. Some judges are reportedly still not paid. There is no formal justice sector structure with oversight mechanisms, threatening its independence and creating the risk of its ongoing use for political gains. Compared with other sectors, the budget of most justice sector institutions has either decreased (as is the case for the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, for which the budget decreased from \$13,904,355 in 2024 to \$13,839,235 in 2025) or received an insignificant increase (as is the case for the judicial authorities, for which the budget increased from \$5,990,452 to \$6,429,232) during the 2025 budget year.<sup>51</sup>

62. The Joint Justice and Corrections Programme recently developed a justice sector strategy for Puntland and another for the rest of Somalia. There are also ongoing discussions on the demilitarization of the corrections model, as well as ongoing training of justice and corrections staff in the states, including in newly recovered areas. The training covered alternate dispute resolution mechanisms to enhance access to justice.

63. In December 2024, the Prime Minister launched the Justice Sector Strategy 2025–2029, which is now awaiting endorsement by Parliament. On 10 March 2025, the juvenile justice bill was approved by Parliament and is now pending assent by the President. Since the amendments to and adoption of articles 5 to 9 of the Provisional Federal Constitution in December 2024, the constitutional review process has stalled. The Federal Government reported that departmental consultations are ongoing on the rule of law sections of the provisional constitution with a view to the submission of a draft.

64. United Nations agencies and the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia, with the support of donors, have supported capacity-building training and workshops targeting federal ministries, federal member states and civil society on the new justice and corrections model, age verification, and prison management. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia drafted a standard operating procedure for responding to and investigating cases of gender-based violence for the state police of Jubbaland to enhance capabilities and implement the new policing model.<sup>52</sup> The United Nations Development Programme reported that 8,800 people had gained access to justice and that 580 survivors of gender-based violence had received assistance through one-stop centres.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, “Country visit to Somalia: end of mission statement”, 21 May 2025.

<sup>51</sup> See the Appropriation Act for the 2025 Budget, available at <https://mof.gov.so/publications/appropriation-act-2025-budget>.

<sup>52</sup> [S/2024/698](#), para. 31.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Development Programme, “Annual report 2024: United Nations Development Programme – Somalia”, 2025.

65. As part of its efforts to promote system-wide implementation of the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces, the human rights due diligence policy task force adopted a methodological guidance note on human rights due diligence policy monitoring. The note is aimed at supporting and promoting synergies among United Nations entities that provide assistance to non-United Nations security forces, particularly in monitoring the conduct of recipients of United Nations support.

66. Although local-level accountability programmes working with women and youth were reported to have been impactful in building trust in recent years, no meaningful actions are being taken to ensure accountability for violations of freedom of expression, arbitrary killings, sexual and gender-based violence and arbitrary arrests and detentions.

### **C. Benchmark 3: ensuring respect for the freedoms of opinion and expression and of assembly and association**

67. No meaningful progress has been made towards legislative reforms, policy developments or ending the impunity of federal and state authorities in order to protect and promote freedom of opinion and expression in law and practice.

68. The National Union of Somali Journalists published a legal analysis<sup>54</sup> examining how the Penal Code and anti-terrorism law of Somalia continue to criminalize and suppress freedom of opinion and expression. The analysis was presented to the Supreme Court with the request that action be taken to decriminalize journalism in Somalia.

69. The special prosecutor in charge of investigating and prosecuting those responsible for the alleged killings of journalists has not reported on any developments since the appointment was made in 2020.

### **D. Benchmark 4: promoting women's rights and gender equality in all aspects of society**

70. Women have continued to face a disproportionate adverse impact from conflict, displacement and discrimination. There is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality in public and private spaces in Somalia.

71. The Somali Police Force, with the support of the European Union, developed a new phase of the Joint Police Programme, spearheaded by the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations partners and federal member states to strengthen police and community collaboration and promote gender equality in the police.<sup>55</sup>

72. In line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the associated strategy developed by the Prime Minister and women in Parliament, a critical mass of women has been trained in leadership and non-violent communication, with the training organized by the United Nations Development Programme under the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme.

73. Only the regional states of Jubbaland and Galmudug have passed laws criminalizing female genital mutilation to date. Unfortunately, the rape and indecency bill is still pending at the Cabinet level.

<sup>54</sup> National Union of Somali Journalists, "Assessing the criminalisation of journalism and freedom of expression in Somalia", April 2025.

<sup>55</sup> United Nations Development Programme, "Second phase of the Joint Police Programme launched in Somalia with European Union funding", 13 December 2024.

## **E. Benchmark 5: ensuring respect for children's rights and promoting youth empowerment**

74. As highlighted in the present report, children and youth continued to suffer from grave violations and lack of proper protection measures. Although the Parliament approved the juvenile justice bill in March 2025, the child rights and the juvenile justice bills are still in the hands of the Council of Ministers and the Federal Parliament, respectively.

75. The United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia, in collaboration with federal and state authorities, carried out several capacity-building activities for the Somali National Army and police personnel at both the federal and state levels to prevent grave violations against children, including efforts to advance the implementation of the 2019 road map.

76. On condition that Somalia continue to implement the action plan and road map, and decrease violations, earlier in 2025, the Secretary-General delisted the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force for the violation of recruitment and use of children.<sup>56</sup> However, they remained listed for the crimes of killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence, against children.

## **F. Benchmark 6: promoting economic, social and cultural rights – improved access to healthcare, water, sanitation, hygiene and an adequate standard of living**

77. The people of Somalia are still struggling to enjoy their basic rights to an adequate standard of living due to forced evictions and displacement caused by worsening conflict, and flooding and other forms of climate shocks. It is expected that, by 30 September 2025, there will be 4.1 million internally displaced persons.<sup>57</sup> These citizens are mostly aid-dependent and mostly settle in areas without basic services, including food, water, shelter and healthcare facilities.

78. In February 2025, new food security assessments indicated that 4.4 million people, nearly a quarter of the population, could face “crisis” levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3 or above) between April and June 2025, marking a sharp increase from the 3.4 million people experiencing acute hunger at the time.<sup>58</sup>

79. In addressing climate vulnerability, Somalia has secured funding to support adaptation, sustainable water management, environmental governance and biodiversity conservation. Clean energy initiatives and irrigation systems are benefiting households by improving livelihoods. Three dams have reportedly been constructed to improve agriculture and water security. The hydro-metrological station is now fully operational, providing weather and climate forecasts to agropastoralists, reducing climate-related risks and enhancing disaster preparedness.

80. The Government of Somalia has increased its health budget from \$52 million in 2024 to \$91 million in the 2025 financial year, representing a \$39 million increase. This enhanced investment is reportedly a step towards addressing the healthcare challenges of Somalia, particularly in maternal and child health. Despite this increase, current health spending in Somalia, estimated at 7 per cent of the total government budget for 2025, remains below the 15 per cent target set in the 2001 Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases.

81. The Government and its partners increased the construction of wells and catchment areas in rural areas, and near schools and residential areas. Implementation status reports

<sup>56</sup> A/79/878-S/2025/247, para. 343.

<sup>57</sup> See the Somalia Movement Projections Dashboard of the International Organization for Migration (<https://dtm.iom.int/somalia-movement-projections-dashboard>).

<sup>58</sup> UN News, “Somalia faces escalating crisis amid drought, conflict and price hikes”, 26 February 2025.

indicated that, since August 2024, of the 100 targeted water points in several federal member states, 21 had been completed, 14 were under construction, and 11 were under procurement.<sup>59</sup>

## **G. Benchmark 7: protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalized communities**

82. On 2 December 2024, the President signed into law the national disability bill, aimed at eliminating barriers to the full enjoyment of the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring their inclusion in society, including for persons with disabilities from minority and marginalized communities.

83. The National Transformation Plan for 2025–2029, launched in March 2025, places strong emphasis on improving access to justice for marginalized groups. The plan is aimed at building a more inclusive and rights-based future for Somalia. However, persistent practical challenges remain across all sectors. The National Disability Agency is underfunded, and persons with disabilities and minorities continue to face various forms of discrimination and mistreatment, including by government institutions and public officials.

## **VII. Conclusions**

84. As outlined in the present report, the situation of human rights in Somalia should remain a matter of serious concern for the Human Rights Council and the international community. The Independent Expert notes with concern that the overwhelming majority of the recommendations of human rights mechanisms and her own benchmarks remain largely unimplemented. Security, political and human rights conditions continue to be troubling.

85. Compared with the previous reporting period, instability, political disagreement and uncertainty are growing alarmingly, while, at the same time, the handover of security responsibility from the United Nations and African Union missions to Somalia is ongoing. The political instability and recently renewed fighting with Al-Shabaab have led to an increase in human rights violations and humanitarian protection concerns. Moreover, drought and flooding, and clan and resource-based conflicts, have further exacerbated the human rights abuses and violations.

86. At the same time, the Independent Expert is encouraged by initiatives undertaken by the Government and its international partners to accelerate efforts towards adopting laws and policies that fulfil the human rights obligations of Somalia, particularly those related to the seven benchmarks and related indicators. She notes that laws, policies and strategies are critical to achieving the transformative vision expressed by the authorities, provided that they are accompanied by adequate budgeting, sustained monitoring, meaningful accountability, and inclusive campaigns aimed at changing mindsets and ensuring the realization of rights.

87. The Independent Expert is encouraged by the organization of the National Human Rights Summit and the recent approval by the federal Cabinet, on 3 July, of the nine candidates selected to be commissioners of the national independent human rights commission. She notes that the remaining major steps required to meet the requirements of the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) are equally crucial to operationalizing the institution. Setting up an independent, capable and functional human rights commission requires a serious, well-defined process and adequate budget. In this regard, the Independent Expert notes with concern the lack of budget allocation or total removal of the budget line for the national independent human rights commission in 2024 in the Appropriation Act for the 2025 Budget.

<sup>59</sup> World Bank, “Somalia Water for Rural Resilience (P177627) Barwaaqo Project, Somalia and Somaliland Implementation Support Mission, February 17–20, 2025”, p. 2.

88. The Independent Expert regrets that, in their approach to the ongoing internal conflict, reinforced by terrorism, successive Governments have prioritized the military response over determined reconciliation, a strategy that has neither resulted in the protection of civilians nor advanced peace and security.

89. The Independent Expert also regrets that no progress has been made to improve the situation with regard to freedom of opinion and expression. Serious challenges remain, affecting access to information by all. Intimidation, arrest and detention lead to self-censorship by journalists and media outlets, undermining the enjoyment of human rights and democracy.

90. No progress has been made by the Government with regard to establishing a moratorium on the death penalty.

91. On the protection of women and girls from gender-based violence, including sexual violence, in conflict, the Independent Expert remains concerned that, despite extensive efforts, the bill that would protect women and girls from the most pervasive of violations of their rights has not been passed. The Independent Expert acknowledges the adoption of the 30 per cent quota for the representation of women in the electoral law, yet no effort has been made to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

92. The Independent Expert urges all parties to end, prevent and respond to grave violations against children and comply with their obligations under relevant international law. She welcomes the establishment by the Federal Government of an investigative committee for accountability for grave violations attributed to the security forces and for integrating child protection into military training.

## VIII. Recommendations

### A. To the Government of Somalia

93. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders, to implement the recommendations set out below.

#### 1. Benchmark 1: promoting security, peace and reconciliation for the protection of civilians in conflict

94. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To conduct an inclusive, transparent and participatory political dialogue to genuinely resolve the current political tension among the various stakeholders. All state governments and opposition figures should prioritize cooperation over disagreement;

(b) To continue and strengthen cooperation with the United Nations on the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces;

(c) To harmonize efforts and provide the Somali Police Force and other rule of law agencies with sufficient funds and resources, including the proper equipment, legal and institutional framework and training to enable them to promote and protect human rights and improve their investigation and prosecution capabilities, including into sexual violence crimes;

(d) To finalize the national and local reconciliation mechanisms to reduce clan violence and establish a civilian casualty tracking system to ensure accountability, in line with paragraph 11 of Security Council resolution 2628 (2022) and publish the results to ensure transparency;

(e) To conduct a national dialogue on adopting a moratorium on death penalty;

(f) To continue to emphasize that all bilateral forces fighting in Somalia, regardless of rank or nationality, are bound by international law and must conduct prompt, thorough and impartial investigations, hold perpetrators accountable and pay reparations for deaths and injuries caused to civilians.

**2. Benchmark 2: strengthening the rule of law, accountability and transitional justice**

95. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To finalize the constitutional review process and adopt all outstanding legislative measures, including the sexual offences bill, female genital mutilation bill, juvenile justice bill and child rights bill, in compliance with human rights norms and standards, by the end of 2026;

(b) To establish a fair and transparent process for selecting, vetting and appointing members of the justice sector, including the Judicial Service Commission, constitutional courts, and anti-corruption commission, so as to reduce corruption and build confidence in the legal system;

(c) To establish the law reform commission, in line with accepted international standards and practices;

(d) To take concrete action to put in place a fully operationalized the national independent human rights commission by securing sufficient funding, ensuring transparent, merit-based and inclusive staff recruitment procedures and developing relevant manuals and documents;

(e) To increase the national budget for the justice sector with a view to promoting and achieving a gender-responsive approach;

(f) To ensure that procedures for a fair trial are respected in all cases;

(g) To ensure that all enforcement operations comply with relevant international standards, including the Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and that law enforcement officials undergo appropriate training.

**3. Benchmark 3: ensuring respect for the freedoms of opinion and expression and of assembly and association**

96. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To protect journalists and media workers and promote an independent press;

(b) To declare a moratorium on the use of articles of the Penal Code of 1964 that are not in line with human rights obligations relating to freedom of opinion and expression;

(c) To ensure that human rights violations and abuses perpetrated against journalists and human rights defenders by various forces are thoroughly investigated and prosecuted and the victims compensated;

(d) To review, by the end of 2026, the amended media law of 2020, in line with the international obligations of Somalia to uphold human rights standards and ensure that the establishment of the Media Council is in line with international standards.

**4. Benchmark 4: promoting women's rights and gender equality in all aspects of society**

97. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To take urgent measures towards ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and harmonize national laws with these instruments to better protect women and girls by the end of 2026;

(b) To increase access to justice for women and apply the 30 per cent quota for the representation of women in elected and appointed positions, including in the recruitment of women to professional and administrative staff positions in the federal and state justice systems;

(c) To integrate human rights and gender issues into the curriculum for all justice actors and conduct training for all staff by the end of 2026.

**5. Benchmark 5: ensuring respect for children's rights and promoting youth empowerment**

98. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To finalize the adoption of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict;

(b) To invest, by the end of 2026, in a nationwide education system and ensure universal and equal access to and completion of primary education for all children, including girls;

(c) To end, prevent and respond to grave violations against children, enact legislation prohibiting sexual violence and increase the availability of holistic services, reparations and redress for survivors;

(d) To systematize and establish a quota for the participation of youth in all aspects of political, peace and security processes.

**6. Benchmark 6: promoting economic, social and cultural rights – improved access to healthcare, water, sanitation, hygiene and an adequate standard of living**

99. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To immediately adopt a moratorium on forced evictions and provide adequate compensation and viable relocation or local integration options to reduce evictions by 50 per cent by 2026;

(b) To prioritize a multifaceted approach to protect vulnerable communities from loss of their rights to food, shelter, healthcare, education and an adequate standard of living as a result of conflict and climate change and increase efforts to access financial resources.

**7. Benchmark 7: protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, minorities and marginalized communities**

100. The Independent Expert urges the Government, in cooperation with its international partners and stakeholders:

(a) To adopt, by 2026, comprehensive legislation to eliminate all forms of discrimination against minorities and marginalized communities;

(b) To allocate a sufficient budget to the National Disability Agency to ensure its meaningful operation;

(c) To take all measures necessary to eliminate discrimination against minority clans and marginalized communities and promote their participation and representation in political structures and decision-making bodies, by establishing a quota for their representation.

## **B. To the Human Rights Council and the international community**

101. Somalia stands at a critical juncture, grappling with serious security and political challenges that continue to undermine human rights and the protection of civilians. Considering the largely unimplemented benchmarks and the potential termination of the United Nations mission in 2026, the Independent Expert strongly recommends that the Human Rights Council and the international community:

(a) Continue to closely monitor security and political developments, as well as the human rights situation in Somalia, to prevent further deterioration and ensure sustained engagement until verified and tangible improvements are achieved;

(b) Consider including the followings elements in the mandate of the Independent Expert:

(i) Assessing the impact of the United Nations transition on human rights protection;

(ii) Advising the Council on the necessary steps and mechanisms to be adopted, during and after the United Nations transition, to ensure that the human rights situation improves;

(c) Conduct advocacy with the authorities of Somalia to promote human rights-based solutions to pressing security and political issues, including by putting human rights concerns at the core of all engagements;

(d) Provide financial and technical assistance to the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia and the Government of Somalia to ensure that the objectives of the current United Nations and African Union transitions are met without compromising the protection and promotion of human rights;

(e) Ensure that the ongoing United Nations and African Union transitions are implemented in a manner that addresses the current grave security and political challenges, as well as long-term concerns, to achieve lasting peace and stability;

(f) Provide financial and technical support to Somalia to enhance the capacity of its rule of law, security and human rights institutions, including to support the operationalization of the national independent human rights commission;

(g) Provide sustained funding to meet the basic needs of the people of Somalia, including for humanitarian assistance and for measures to alleviate the impact of conflict and climate shocks.

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