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OHCHR – UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Somalia: UN expert deplores high death toll in Laas Canood clashes

GENEVA (23 February 2023) – A UN expert today expressed alarm at the high number of civilian casualties in Somalia, following clashes between Somaliland security forces and clan members in Laas Canood, Sool region since early February.

“We deplore the killing of at least 63 people and more than 363 injured,” said Isha Dyfan, the UN Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia. Citing reports of indiscriminate or deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, she said these attacks were utterly unacceptable and in direct violation of international human rights law and humanitarian law.

“Those responsible must be held accountable,” the UN expert said, calling on the authorities to ensure impartial, effective, and independent investigations into the deaths and injuries.

“I call on all parties involved in the clashes to fully respect their obligations under international law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians,” Dyfan said.

The expert warned that ongoing clashes in Laas Canood will worsen an already dire humanitarian situation in the wider Sool region, and across the country.

According to a report by an inter-agency assessment mission conducted by humanitarian partners, the fighting in Laas Canood, which started on 6 February, has displaced more than 185,000 people – 89 per cent of whom are women and children.

“I wish to reiterate the call made by international partners for unhindered humanitarian access to urgently address the needs of those displaced and impacted by the violence,” Dyfan said.

The expert urged all parties to agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities and resolve their disputes through dialogue. “Failing to do so would be tantamount to denying access to justice and perpetuating impunity,” she said.

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Ms. Isha Dyfan (Sierra Leone) was appointed as the [Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia](#) by the Human Rights Council in May 2020. Prior to her appointment, she was the Director of International Advocacy at Amnesty International. Before joining Amnesty International in April 2018, she was the Chief of the Human Rights Section in the UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur, Sudan (UNAMID) where she served for four and a half years before retiring at the level of director. She is a Barrister-at-Law and educated in Sierra Leone and the UK where she studied History and Law respectively.

ecoi.net summary:



Sool region: UN expert alarmed at the killing of at least 63 people killed and more than 363 injured

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