

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	588
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Titel:	Human Rights and Democracy Report 2016 - Somalia
Udgivet:	20. juli 2017
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	30. august 2017



Human Rights and Democracy Report 2016 - Somalia

Publisher [United Kingdom: Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#)

Publication Date 20 July 2017

Cite as United Kingdom: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Human Rights and Democracy Report 2016 - Somalia*, 20 July 2017, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5982cd2ba.html> [accessed 29 August 2017]

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Human rights progress in Somalia continued to be blighted by serious violations and abuses perpetrated by state and non-state actors in the ongoing internal conflict and by a culture of impunity. The parliamentary and presidential electoral process made progress in 2016 and was largely peaceful, although there were increased Al Shabaab attacks, including against civilians. There were frequent reports of civilian casualties and a marked increase in the numbers of children in armed conflict. Sexual violence remained endemic. Access to justice remained very restricted. The Committee to Protect Journalists' annual Impunity Index named Somalia, for the second time, as the worst place in the world to be a journalist. The death penalty continued to be applied and carried out, including in Somaliland [13].

In 2016, the UK's promotion of human rights in Somalia focused on establishing effective human rights institutions and instruments and empowering women. The UK was instrumental in the achievement of a strong and constructive resolution on Somalia at the UN Human Rights Council. The African Union peacekeeping force (AMISOM) began to deploy investigative teams in relation to alleged violations. A law establishing an independent Human Rights Commission was passed in June. The UK provided ongoing support to the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to: deliver on a Human Rights Action Plan; develop and launch a national gender policy; mainstream gender objectives into the draft National Development Plan for 2017-2020; and to integrate human rights into a New Partnership Agreement between Somalia and the international community. UK political and programming support was instrumental in achieving an increase in women's political participation in Somalia, from 14% to 24% of seats in the newly elected Parliament. The UK increased its humanitarian expenditure in response to the increasingly severe humanitarian crisis, exacerbated by ongoing drought, and to address the needs of returnees to Somalia from Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.

In 2017, the UK will maintain its focus on strengthening the capacity of Somali institutions to protect and uphold human rights, particularly for vulnerable groups, and will support an enabling environment in which the media and civil society are able to hold these effectively to account. The UK will call upon the newly elected Somali leadership and government to respect its existing obligations and to make further efforts by implementing key human rights legislation swiftly and effectively. The UK will host an international conference in London to accelerate progress on security sector reform, wider governance and accountability, and economic and social development, all of which will contribute to improving the overall human rights picture. A New Partnership Agreement will link international community support to progress in these areas. The UK will encourage strengthened Somali cooperation to address modern slavery. The UK will continue to support women's economic and political empowerment, and to support survivors of sexual violence. In Somaliland, the UK will call for timely and credible delivery of delayed presidential and parliamentary elections, to uphold Somaliland's democratic credentials.

13 Somaliland is not internationally recognised. HMG's position has long been that it is for Somalia and Somaliland to decide their future, and for regional neighbours to take the lead in recognising any new arrangements

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