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2015 was another year of serious concern for human rights in Somalia. Civilians continue to be killed, wounded and displaced by indiscriminate attacks and violations committed by various sides in the ongoing internal conflict. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is endemic and access to justice is severely restricted, if not completely unattainable, for many of Somalia's most vulnerable people. The death penalty continues to be carried out, despite previous support at the UN by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) for establishing a moratorium. Attacks on freedom of expression are on the increase, with the Committee to Protect Journalists' annual [Impunity Index](#) recently naming Somalia, for the first time, as the worst place in the world to be a journalist. Concerns have also been raised over the recently adopted Media Law, which, depending on its implementation, could see the freedom of journalists further restricted.

Somalia's broad human rights problems are underpinned by impunity, resulting from a lack of capacity to monitor and gather information, and to report, investigate and prosecute violations when they occur.

Though lacking capacity to effect wholesale improvement, the FGS continued to demonstrate a commitment to improving human rights throughout 2015. In May, the FGS endorsed an Action Plan for their Human Rights Road Map. Bills on establishing an independent human rights commission and on sexual offences made progress in Parliament. Somalia also increased its engagement with international human rights instruments by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of the Child in October.

In 2015, the FCO's human rights priorities in Somalia focused on addressing wider security and impunity; establishing effective human rights institutions and instruments; and empowering women. In 2015, the FCO funded five technical advisers to increase the capacity of the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to deliver its action plans, and provided support to a preventing sexual violence programme in Mogadishu. Given the deep-rooted nature of Somalia's human rights issues, the FCO's objectives are long term. Assessing whether the objectives are having a tangible impact upon human rights in Somalia will therefore take time.

However, in the short term, the FCO will continue to focus on helping to build the foundation for long-term human rights protection.

2016 will be a pivotal year in Somalia's journey towards stability. The country's upcoming elections offer fresh opportunities for greater inclusion of women in decision-making processes. Federal and regional leaders have committed to a gender quota in both Houses of Parliament. Ensuring this happens in practice will be a FCO priority in 2016. Somalia's electoral process will, however, consume much of the country's limited capacity, potentially diverting attention from human rights commitments. A desire for a smooth electoral process may also see freedom of expression come under increasing pressure. The FCO will continue to encourage and support Somalia to fulfil and deliver upon its national and international human rights commitments throughout 2016.

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