

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1200
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Titel:	Contribution for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report. Universal Periodic Review: Fourth Cycle, 52nd Session. Somalia
Udgivet:	30. september 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	12. juni 2026

Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
For the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report
Universal Periodic Review: *Fourth Cycle, 52nd Session*

SOMALIA

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Federal Republic of Somalia has been a State party, without reservations, to the *1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its *1967 Protocol* (hereinafter jointly the *1951 Convention*) since 1978. Somalia has signed, but not yet ratified or acceded to *1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*. The State is neither a party to the *1954 Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons* nor the *1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*. Somalia has acceded to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)*, the *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)*, and the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)*. Somalia has also ratified the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*.¹

In March 2020, Somalia deposited its instruments with the African Union (AU) for ratification of the *AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (the 'Kampala Convention').

Population profile

As of August 2025, Somalia hosted a total of 20,407 registered refugees and 25,043 asylum seekers, of whom 65 per cent were Ethiopian, 29 per cent were Yemeni and the remaining originating from more than more than a dozen other countries. Approximately 43 per cent of the refugees and asylum seekers are female, and 42 per cent are children. Since December 2014, a total of 140,974 Somali refugees have voluntarily returned to their areas of origin in Somalia.

Somalia has one of the largest internally displaced populations globally. With an estimated 3.5 million IDPs, displacement has largely been triggered by conflict and climatic factors (droughts and floods). Women and children constitute a significant portion of the internally displaced population.

The number of stateless persons or persons at risk of statelessness in Somalia is unknown due to mapping limitations. Gaps in the national legislation, gender discriminatory provisions in the nationality laws, limited access to Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) documentation, and cumbersome administrative practices, all create increased risks of statelessness in the country.

It is worth noting that Somalia is a country of origin, transit and return. Forcibly displaced persons, including unaccompanied children, move within mixed flows enroute to Europe via Sudan/ Libya (Northern route), to and from the Gulf Countries (Eastern route), or towards South Africa (Southern route).

General context

¹ Somalia acceded to both ICCPR and CAT on 24 January 1990, and the ICERD on 16 April 2012, and ratified the CRPD on 6 August 2019.

Somalia is a Federal State with a decentralized system of governance, established by the Provisional Constitution of Somalia (2012).² The system divides power between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), aiming to accommodate the country's diverse clans, regions, and local interests. This structure is intended to provide local autonomy while maintaining national unity, but its effectiveness depends on addressing underlying political and social challenges.³ Each regional state has its own institutional focal point in charge of refugees and IDPs and initiates the development of its own laws, while the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI) is the federal institution with country-wide jurisdiction mandated by the federal parliament. While Somalia has accomplished significant milestones to establish and develop its asylum system, the status and treatment of refugees in Somalia is governed under different laws and structures, depending on location in the country.

The specific posture of Somaliland vis-à-vis Somalia poses a particular challenge. While the Federal Government of Somalia's Constitution considers Somaliland part of the Federal State, the Constitution of Somaliland considers Somaliland as an autonomous country, without reference to Somalia.

In line with its GCR pledges,⁴ the Federal Government of Somalia launched the [National Solutions Pathways Action Plan \(2024 – 2029\)](#) in September 2024, which aims to provide durable solutions for approximately 1 million IDPs across diverse regions, focusing on six solutions priority areas: government leadership; access to basic services, access to employment and livelihood opportunities; legal documentation, housing, land and property and justice; addressing climate change and building resilience; and data utilization for solutions. These priority areas will be implemented through the engagement and collaboration of local authorities and displacement-affected communities. Embedded within the [National Transformation Plan \(2025-2029\)](#), the Solutions Action Plan is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, emphasizing three interconnected goals: achieving durable solutions, ensuring protection and assistance, and preventing future displacement, while emphasizing coordinated government leadership and the integration of displaced persons' experiences into national policies.

The political and security situation remains volatile and unpredictable, not only from the persistent reality of terrorism but also the weak rule of law and the fragile relations between the Federal Government and the Federal Member States. The conflict in Somalia is two-fold: armed conflict between government forces versus non-state armed groups on the one hand, and clan-based violence that has resulted in localized/short-term displacement on the other hand. As a consequence, there are currently an estimated 5.9 million people requiring humanitarian and protection assistance in 2025.⁵

The current security environment significantly hinders the delivery of aid assistance, especially in hard-to-reach areas. The human rights and protection situation is heavily

² The Provisional Constitution of Somalia (2012) serves as the foundational legal framework for the Federal Republic of Somalia. It was adopted on August 1, 2012, by a National Constituent Assembly and is intended to guide the country during its transition from decades of conflict toward stability and democracy. As of January 2025, Somalia's constitutional review process has experienced both advancements and setbacks. In early 2024, the Federal Parliament approved amendments to the first four chapters of the Provisional Constitution, enhancing presidential powers and establishing a multi-party system. However, the process has faced challenges, including Puntland's withdrawal from the federal system in April 2024, citing disagreements over the amendments.

³ The North-Eastern State (formerly SSC-Khaatumo) was acknowledged by the Federal Government of Somalia as Federal Member State in northern Somalia on 30 July 2025. It includes parts of the Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer regions (combined under the acronym "SSC"), disputed territories bordered to the west by Somaliland, and to the east by Puntland State which does not recognize the new State.

⁴ [2019 Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\) Pledge - Coordination for the Enhancement of Durable Solutions in Somalia](#): "The Federal Government of Somalia commits to strengthening the provision of durable solutions to all displaced persons and refugee-returnees through developing an inclusive and rigorous National Durable Solutions Strategy, and reinforcing the National Durable Solutions Secretariat, including strengthening coordination mechanisms in the Federal Member States to implement impactful durable solutions interventions."

⁵ [Somalia 2025 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan \(HNRP\) | OCHA](#)

affected by and intertwined with the protracted humanitarian context, driven by conflict and climate shocks (drought and floods), resulting in persisting high patterns and trends of serious human rights and international humanitarian law violations and abuses, displacement, damage to livelihoods, and food insecurity. Protection actors have documented incidents of abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect in the wake of Al-Shabaab's territorial advances, particularly affecting children, women and adolescent girls during flight and in displacement sites. Lack of freedom of movement, forced evictions and absence of secure shelters have exacerbated exposure to sexual violence while family separation has increased the risk to recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. Some of the most vulnerable groups include women and children, IDPs, persons with disabilities and minorities, who face additional barriers because of structural discrimination and stigmatization. Additional protection concerns include smuggling, trafficking, deportations, collective expulsions, and threats of refoulement, particularly in the context of counterterrorism and security operations, which continue to undermine the rights and safety of affected populations.

Mixed movements from Somalia to neighbouring countries, the Gulf, and beyond (Europe) continue to be shaped by conflict, lack of opportunities, and protection risks, particularly among youth. Young people face heightened risks of forced recruitment by Al-Shabab, ISIS, and other non-state actors, with displacement and lack of viable alternatives making them more vulnerable to exploitation.

Somalia has shown commitment, albeit with little capacity and resources, to develop local and national institutions/laws/policies to address humanitarian challenges. The Government's efforts to sustain security and promote reconciliation have, however, met with many security, political and economic challenges which call for a continued focus on improving human rights and for continued humanitarian intervention and support from all stakeholders.

II. ACHIEVEMENTS AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS⁶

Positive developments linked to the UPR 3rd Cycle recommendations

Adoption of a national refugee law and effective access to asylum⁷

The Federal Government of Somalia enacted the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Act in February 2024, which has incorporated new developments at global level, including the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in its approach to the RSD process across Somalia. UNHCR is working jointly with the National Commission for Refugees and IDPs (NCRI) on the development of administrative regulations on refugees and complementary protection, serving as by-laws to the Act.

Domestication of the Kampala Convention⁸

Somalia's Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons Bill (the IDP Bill) was approved by the House of the People of the Federal Parliament in May 2025. It is a landmark piece of legislation aimed at providing a comprehensive legal framework for the rights and assistance of internally displaced persons, aligned with Somalia's National

⁶ The following is a non-exhaustive summary of recent achievements and/or positive developments that may serve to strengthen the protection of the human rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

⁷ See, Recommendations 132.271. Adopt legislative measures to strengthen the protection of the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons (Togo)

⁸ See, Recommendation 132.268. Develop and adopt a national law domesticating the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Malawi)

Transformation Plan. The Bill ensures access to essential services, outlines mechanisms for durable solutions like resettlement and return, and seeks to address issues of eviction and land tenure. It now moves to the Upper House for further review before being signed into law.

Enhancing protection of forcibly displaced and stateless persons through documentation⁹

On 13 March 2025, Somalia launched a Refugee and Asylum Seeker Identification Issuance Program aimed at providing identification documents to over 34,000 refugees and asylum seekers residing in the country, lauded as a significant step towards improving the legal and social status of refugees and asylum seekers in Somalia. The ID program, implemented in collaboration with UNHCR will help ensure that these individuals have access to essential services, such as healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, easing their inclusion into national systems and enhancing their protection.

UNHCR is working to support designation of a technical expert within the Civil Registration Department under the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MolFAR) to enhance civil registration and documentation, and complement advocacy on constitutional and citizenship law reform, including accession to international statelessness conventions, and establishing a strong legal framework for the prevention and reduction of statelessness.

III. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT¹⁰

Issue 1: Gender-based violence and access to justice¹¹

In view of the worrying situation of women and girls in Somalia, and despite recommendations received within the framework of the UPR, Somalia has still not ratified the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* nor the *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. Intimate partner violence and domestic violence, sexual abuse, child marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and rape feature among the most common forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). Many survivors lack access to justice, and with fear of retaliation, stigma and discrimination, and a culture of impunity, most GBV cases go unreported. The Government is urged to take all measures necessary to strengthen its capacity for the investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence, to promote a safe environment in which victims and survivors can report crimes without any fear of reprisal or stigma.

Recommendation:

- 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*, harmonize national laws with these instruments to better protect women and girls, and ensure that survivors are protected and have access to justice and effective remedies.

Issue 2: Protection of children in armed conflict¹²

⁹ See, Recommendation 132.273. Strengthen cooperation with OHCHR and UNHCR to achieve a comprehensive approach to the human rights situation of internally displaced persons, refugees and stateless persons (Argentina)

¹⁰ The following is a non-exhaustive list of recommendations which, if supported and implemented by the State, may help to improve the protection of the human rights of forcibly displaced and stateless people.

¹¹ Linked to previous 3rd cycle UPR recommendations, inter alia, no. 132.3. Ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Angola) (Burkina Faso) (Burundi) (Côte d'Ivoire) (Egypt) (Eswatini) (Namibia) (Rwanda) (Senegal) (Spain) (Togo)

¹² Linked to previous 3rd cycle UPR recommendations, inter alia, no. 132.21. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Belgium) (South Africa) (Slovenia)

While Article 29 of the Provisional Constitution protects children in armed conflict, persistent and widespread violations of children's rights by non-State, and to a much lesser extent by State actors, are alarming. Further, significant practical challenges remain in age verification, hampered by the absence of birth registration or identity documents, the inaccessibility of areas of origin, and lack of expertise and resources.¹³

Recommendation:

- Take action to prevent the forced recruitment and use of children by all parties, and ensure the immediate identification, separation, and handover of children associated with armed groups in line with Somalia's commitments under International Humanitarian Law and existing standing operating procedures.

Issue 3: National IDP Bill¹⁴

As noted above, measures are now being taken by the Government of Somalia to ensure development of policy frameworks including the launch of the National Solutions Pathways Action Plan towards concrete improvements for the lives of IDPs in Somalia. Enactment of legislation and facilitating public participation of forcibly displaced populations is critical in this process.

Recommendation:

- Expedite the enactment of the IDP Bill, while ensuring the increased participation and representation in decision-making bodies of displaced and marginalized communities.

Issue 4: Prevention and reduction of statelessness

UNHCR believes that many people are at risk of statelessness in Somalia due to the nationality/citizenship legislation and challenges in terms of accessing documentation. Somalia's nationality legislation does not provide for dual nationality and discriminates on grounds of gender – which, coupled with the lack of a proper and functioning civil registration system can lead to people becoming stateless. Those at risk of statelessness are the most vulnerable, including children from mixed marriages with non-Somali fathers (including refugees and returnees), IDPs and other undocumented individuals.

During the High-Level Segment on Statelessness in October 2019 Somalia made two pledges: 1) to accede to the *1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* and to the *1961 Convention Relating to the Reduction of Statelessness*; and, 2) to conduct a study to better understand the situation of stateless groups and those at risk of statelessness, including an analysis of domestic laws. The commitment envisaged the finalization of both pledges by 31 December 2020.

Recommendation:

- Accelerate efforts, in line with its commitments, to accede to the *1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* and to the *1961 Convention Relating to the Reduction of Statelessness*.
- Amend the Citizenship Law to remove the gender-discriminatory provisions that prevent women from conferring nationality to their children on the same basis as men.

Issue 5: Access to territory and asylum

¹³ UN Human Rights Council, [End of Mission Statement, Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, Somalia, 21 May 2025](#).

¹⁴ Linked to previous 3rd cycle UPR recommendation 132.272. Take steps to actively engage with internally displaced persons to get a better understanding of their level of participation in public and political affairs (Afghanistan)

Somalia is a key origin and transit country for refugees and migrants moving along the Eastern Route towards the Arabian Peninsula. Without access to protection sensitive entry systems, asylum seekers may face some hurdles accessing asylum. Acknowledging Somalia's concern and comprehensive approach towards the issue of national and international security and counterterrorism measures being undertaken, UNHCR is concerned about the full establishment of a protection-sensitive border management, safeguarding the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in an increasingly mixed nature of migration flows.¹⁵

Recommendation:

- Ensure that the State upholds its obligations under international refugee law, and relevant human rights standards, to ensure effective access to territory and to asylum procedures for those who may be in need of international protection.

This report has been prepared by UNHCR Somalia. It is non-exhaustive and highlights only the main issues that the Office wishes to bring to the attention of the Universal Periodic Review process.

**UNHCR
September 2025**

¹⁵Mixed Migration Center MMC-UNHCR, September 2024 Survey - [Somalia: Mixed Movements - Dangerous locations, smuggling dynamics and access to information and assistance](#).