

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	1211
Land:	Somalia
Kilde:	Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights
Titel:	Maat for Peace' Report submitted to the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism regarding Somalia
Udgivet:	31. oktober 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	12. juni 2026

Maat for Peace' Report submitted to the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism regarding **Somalia** **October 2025**

Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights presents this report ahead of Somalia's fourth review under the Universal Periodic Review mechanism. This report discusses the human rights situation in Somalia during the period following the third review of the mechanism. Despite positive developments such as the roadmap for conducting the first direct elections in decades in 2026, the allowance of peaceful assembly, and the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Maat still has concerns regarding various issues, including the lack of a national human rights institution compliant with the Paris Principles, violations related to the right to life, the incomplete judicial reform plan, and the increase in child labor due to the lack of capacity building for labor inspectors in Somalia.

1. National Human Rights Institution

During the third review of the Universal Periodic Review, Somalia received four recommendations regarding the establishment of an independent national human rights institution that aligns with the Paris Principles. The Somali government fully accepted these recommendations, which emphasize the need to expedite the completion of the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission and ensure its independence, as well as providing it with adequate human and financial resources to enable it to effectively carry out its mandate.

In response to these recommendations, the Somali government has taken some positive steps towards forming a National Human Rights Commission. On July 3, 2025, the Somali Cabinet approved a list of nine candidates for membership in the independent National Human Rights Commission according to Law No. 16 of 2016. This is considered a positive development in promoting human rights and establishing principles of transparency and accountability. However, despite the importance of this step, it has faced criticism due to government interference in the nomination process, which may delay the commission's independence and affect the authorities' commitment to ensuring the commission's independence from any



political intervention that could impact its oversight role.¹ Maat notes that the adoption of the candidates' list is a positive step towards implementing the accepted recommendations from the third periodic review, but it remains insufficient unless the remaining procedures to activate the commission's work and ensure its administrative and financial independence are completed, along with obtaining accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) to ensure full compliance with the Paris Principles and its ability to effectively fulfil its role.²

2. Political Participation

Maat appreciates the positive developments regarding the Somali government's roadmap for conducting the first direct elections in decades in 2026. The Somali president recently announced a positive initiative to implement a direct electoral system based on the principle of "one person, one vote," moving beyond the long-standing power-sharing agreements based on clan affiliations.³

This presidential decision has faced criticism from opposition parties, civil society organizations, and traditional leaders, who believe the decision jeopardizes the political balances in the state. Opponents argue that the decision was not made based on a consultative or inclusive process, leading to further concentration of power in the hands of the executive and threatening Somalia's fragile federal system. Consequently, protests and political debates have erupted, amid fears that this may lead to violence and political exclusion. Critics of the president described his initiative as unproductive, accusing him of undermining the existing power-sharing framework based on clan foundations. Maat also expresses concerns regarding the challenges facing the security sector in Somalia due to terrorist attacks by Al-Shabaab against security personnel, which could weaken the security of the electoral process.

3. The Right to Life

¹ Despite the differences... Somalia is proceeding with the formation of the Human Rights Committee, Somali Observatory for Humanitarian Affairs, July 4, 2025, <https://tinyurl.com/25tffhaw>

² The number of GANHRI members, <https://ganhri.org/membership/>

³ Somalia: Quarter II (Q2) 2025 Human Rights Situation Report, <https://cshrds.org/somalia-quarter-ii-q2-2025-human-rights-situation-report/>



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt

Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawharet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi **WWW.MAATPEACE.ORG**



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) **25266026**

00(20) (2) **25266019**



+201226521170



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

The right to life is one of the fundamental inalienable rights, guaranteed by the provisional Somali constitution. However, this right continues to face severe violations in Somalia due to the ongoing armed conflict between the federal government and armed groups, particularly the terrorist group Al-Shabaab. Maat has documented numerous incidents of indiscriminate killings, significantly contributing to the rise in civilian casualties. From 2014 to 2024, explosive devices planted by Al-Shabaab in conflict areas in Somalia resulted in the deaths and injuries of over 14,000 people, with 61% of them being civilians. This reflects the devastating impact of these attacks on innocent populations and highlights the indiscriminate nature of violence targeting civilians without regard for international humanitarian law.⁴

In August 2024, the capital Mogadishu witnessed a tragic incident when a member of Al-Shabaab detonated himself on a beach frequented by government officials and businessmen, followed by indiscriminate gunfire from other members, resulting in the deaths of over 37 civilians and injuries to 64 others. This attack exemplifies the repeated methodology used by the group to inflict the highest possible number of civilian casualties and spread terror and chaos.⁵

On March 18, 2025, Mogadishu experienced another incident when a landmine exploded as the convoy of Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud passed through the "El-Gaabta" intersection near the presidential palace in the "Hamar Jajab" neighbourhood of the capital. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for this attack, which killed at least 8 civilians and injured others, while the president and his entourage escaped unharmed. This attack reflects the ongoing targeting of urban areas and vital facilities by armed groups, including attacks that pose direct threats to civilians, in violation of international human rights standards, including the right to life.⁶

4. Independence of the Judiciary and Fair Trial Guarantees

During the third review of the Universal Periodic Review, Somalia received 19 recommendations regarding the management of the judicial system and guarantees for fair

⁴ The Somali army is expanding...and Al-Shabaab increases attacks using explosive devices, African Defence Platform, <https://2h.ae/uaxk>

⁵ At least 37 people were killed in a suicide attack on a beach in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, France 24, <https://2h.ae/gQnO>

⁶ Crises surround Sheikh Mahmoud: How did Somalia become on the brink of abyss? African Readings, <https://2h.ae/bHPI>



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt

Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawharet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi www.maatpeace.org



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) 25266026

00(20) (2) 25266019



+201226521170



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

trials. The Somali government accepted 17 of these recommendations in full while rejecting two. These recommendations focused on the need to reform judicial institutions, enhance their capacities, ensure judicial independence, provide adequate training for judges and law enforcement agencies, combat impunity through independent and transparent investigations into human rights violations, protect press freedom, and ensure accountability for crimes against journalists, as well as enhance access to justice, particularly through the activation of legal aid policies and mobile courts, and ensure respect for fair trial standards in terrorism cases and capital punishment.⁷

Maat notes that the Somali authorities have taken several positive steps in response to these recommendations, most notably the adoption of a judicial reform framework through the launch of the "Justice Sector Strategy 2025–2029." This strategy aims to enhance the capacities of judicial and justice institutions and ensure coordination between national and international efforts aimed at reforming the justice system. This strategy represents a pivotal step towards translating international recommendations into measurable implementation plans, thereby enhancing the prospects of building a more independent and effective judiciary in line with international human rights standards.⁸

Despite this, the judicial system continues to face fundamental challenges that hinder the achievement of comprehensive justice and fair trial guarantees. Among the most significant challenges are the limited judicial independence due to political and clan interference, the lack of qualified human resources, and inadequate judicial infrastructure, including a shortage of trained judges and legal staff. This situation leads to delays in judicial proceedings,⁹ in addition to the legal inconsistencies and weak legal structures and institutional frameworks. Furthermore, security risks and corruption, along with limited resources and infrastructure, exacerbate these challenges. These issues necessitate the adoption of comprehensive judicial reforms and the launch of initiatives aimed at enhancing the independence of the judiciary and improving its efficiency, ensuring justice and protecting citizens' rights in accordance with

⁷ Ibid, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/so-index>

⁸ The launch of the Somali Justice Sector Strategy 2025-2029 represents a turning point in the history of justice and the establishment of the rules of law in Somalia, Mogadishu Press, <https://tinyurl.com/49dmnzx8>

⁹ Somalia Country Report 2024, Rule of Law, https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/SOM?utm_source=chatgpt.com#pos5



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt

Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawharet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi **WWW.maatpeace.org**



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) **25266026**

00(20) (2) **25266019**



+201226521170



international human rights standards.¹⁰

5. Respect for Human Rights in the Context of Counterterrorism

Maat positively evaluates the campaign led by the Somali government against the terrorist group Al-Shabaab and the strategy implemented by the government in July 2025 to improve security in areas experiencing terrorist activities. However, Maat has concerns regarding reports indicating that airstrikes and attacks have resulted in civilian casualties and internal displacement.¹¹ Maat hopes that the Somali government will lead discussions to establish a regional coalition to combat terrorism.

6. The Right to Peaceful Assembly

The right to peaceful assembly is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Somali constitution and national laws. However, exercising this right in Somalia faces significant challenges due to the armed conflict with terrorist groups, political tensions, and internal divisions, which impose practical restrictions on citizens' ability to assemble and protest freely and safely.

Despite these challenges, Maat has observed that the Somali government has allowed peaceful demonstrations on several occasions. For example, on August 7, 2024, the government organized a massive demonstration on a beach in Mogadishu, attended by hundreds of citizens, to condemn attacks by Al-Shabaab, just days after a terrorist assault that resulted in the deaths of 37 people. This event aimed to rally public support against the armed group and demonstrate unity behind the government in the face of terrorism.¹²

On another note, in January 2024, thousands of Somalis participated in spontaneous marches across several provinces, protesting what they considered an illegitimate agreement between a foreign government and the "Somaliland" administration regarding the use of a port. The protesters expressed their rejection of what they described as a violation of the sovereignty

¹⁰ Judicial Independence in Somalia, 31 march 2024, <https://ejournals.org/gjplr/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2024/03/Judicial-Independence-in-Somalia.pdf>

¹¹ Somalia: Quarter II (Q2) 2025 Human Rights Situation Report, <https://cshrds.org/somalia-quarter-ii-q2-2025-human-rights-situation-report/>

¹² Demonstration in Somalia against Al-Shabaab after an attack on a popular beach, <https://tinyurl.com/cj4sw5jw>



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt

Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawharet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi www.maatpeace.org



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) 25266026

00(20) (2) 25266019



+201226521170



and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia.¹³

7. Children's Rights

Maat appreciates the positive developments regarding children's rights in the period following Somalia's third review. Among these developments is the approval by the Federal Parliament's House of Representatives on October 1, 2025, of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, with a majority of 130 votes in favor, 10 against, and 5 abstentions. This ratification and the implementation of the Charter's provisions are expected to enhance and protect children's rights in Somalia, taking positive steps in areas such as education, health, social welfare, and preventing all forms of abuse against children,¹⁴ who make up approximately 46.7% of Somalia's population, according to World Bank data, encompassing newborns to children aged 14 years.¹⁵ The federal government has attempted to promote children's rights through various measures, collaborating with the International Labour Organization on a program for decent work for children. However, different parties continue to recruit children and exploit them in forced labor, including the terrorist group Al-Shabaab.¹⁶ Reports indicate that between January and June 2024, over 370 children were recruited by conflicting parties, representing an estimated 20% increase compared to the same period in 2023. Al-Shabaab is the primary entity responsible for child recruitment, forcibly compelling children as young as 10 years to participate in hostilities, work at checkpoints, and perform supportive roles for armed militants, such as personal guarding and cleaning.

Despite the Somali government's promises to adopt a children's bill, no concrete steps have been taken to enact this bill by the end of 2024, raising concerns about the seriousness of its commitment to protecting children's rights in Somalia.¹⁷ In related contexts, children have been victims of military attacks and explosions, leading to fatalities or serious injuries, especially

¹³ Massive demonstrations in the Somali city of Burma denouncing Ethiopian ambitions, available at the following link: <https://2h.ae/pfff>

¹⁴ Somalia becomes 52nd African country to ratify charter to better protect child rights, <https://tinyurl.com/44tx3p55>

¹⁵ Somalia - Population Ages 0-14 (% Of Total), <https://tinyurl.com/kxxdyjvh>

¹⁶ ILO, Somalia seals a deal to advance decent work agenda in the country, <https://www.festu.org/i-lo-somalia-seal-a-deal-to-advance-decent-work-agenda-in-the-country/>

¹⁷ Somalia Child Protection Area of Responsibility: Mid-Year Bulletin (January – June 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-child-protection-area-responsibility-mid-year-bulletin-january-june-2024>



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt

Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawhareet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi www.maatpeace.org



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) 25266026

00(20) (2) 25266019



+201226521170



during military operations or due to landmines and explosives.

Maat also expresses concerns regarding the high rates of child labor in Somalia. Although the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has organized awareness campaigns targeting local communities to raise awareness about the dangers of child labor, focusing on hazardous sectors such as agriculture, fishing, and domestic work, child labor remains prevalent in Somalia. This is due to the weak capacity building of labor inspectors, which has hindered their ability to perform their duties, including the lack of a tracking system, inspection plan, and formal mechanism for receiving public complaints regarding potential child labor. Additionally, reports claim that federal security forces have detained children previously associated with armed groups in both formal and informal detention centers. Somalia also lacks laws prohibiting child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and their use in illegal activities.

Recommendations

- Complete the process of establishing the independent National Human Rights Commission and ensure its administrative and financial independence, enabling it to fulfill its oversight role in accordance with the Paris Principles.
- Work towards obtaining accreditation for the Commission from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions to ensure its compliance with international standards and enhance civil society and public trust in its work.
- Expedite the adoption of the Children's Law that the Somali government promised to issue, addressing issues such as child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illegal activities.
- Study the situation of children associated with armed groups held in informal detention centers and adopt rehabilitation and reintegration programs for them in Somali society.
- Establish a governmental mechanism in cooperation with the private sector to receive complaints from the public regarding child labor.



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt

Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawharet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi www.maatpeace.org



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) 25266026

00(20) (2) 25266019



+201226521170



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights

- Implement the Justice Sector Strategy 2025–2029 to enhance judicial independence, provide necessary training for judges and law enforcement agencies, and ensure the protection of press freedom and accountability for human rights violations.
- Align national legislation related to children with the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- Address the shortage of human resources and judicial infrastructure, including the establishment of mobile courts and activating legal aid policies to facilitate citizens' access to justice.



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
Maat For Peace, Development, and Human Rights



Headquarters: 148 Misr Helwan El-Zyrae Road, El Matbaa Sq, Hadayek El Maadi, 4th Floor, No 41, Cairo, Egypt



Maat Training Center: 380 Corniche El Nil St., Gawharet El Maadi Tower, 38th Floor, Tower B, Cairo, Egypt



490 El Maadi www.maatpeace.org



maat@maatpeace.org



00(20) (2) 25266026

00(20) (2) 25266019



+201226521170