

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Somalia: Amnesty International's statement to the UN Human Rights Council**

Serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law continue to take place in Somalia amid insecurity and sporadic violence. In this context it is imperative to maintain an international human rights focus on Somalia. Reconstruction efforts to remedy the breakdown of the state in 1991 have only just begun.

Amnesty International reiterates its call, made elsewhere, for a strong human rights component, including protection of civilians, to be included in the mandate of the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and any follow-on United Nations operation. We also reiterate our call for all parties to the present conflict to abide by the applicable norms of human rights and international humanitarian law.

In the process of peace-building, the National Reconciliation Congress, currently being prepared, should give urgent attention to protecting the rights to life, personal security, and freedom of expression and association.

Amnesty International now presents five specific recommendations for the better protection of basic human rights in Somalia:

- o The mandate of the UN Independent Expert for Somalia should be extended.
- o Amnesty International requests the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to expand its field mission to Somalia, currently based in Nairobi, so as to provide technical assistance and advice on human rights to the Transitional Federal Institutions of Somalia and international agencies, and to support Somali human rights defenders.
- o The Transitional Federal Institutions should develop a strategy and action plan to ensure respect for human rights, including protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children, the discriminated minorities and internally displaced persons. The international community should assist them in doing this.
- o The Transitional Federal Institutions should guarantee international humanitarian agencies safe and unrestricted access to assist some 800,000 internally displaced persons.
- o Effective mechanisms should be developed for independent and impartial investigation of past war crimes and crimes against humanity, and serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law (especially during fighting in Mogadishu in recent months). We believe that the United Nations could contribute to such processes, when security permits.

#### **Background**

Amnesty International presented the above statement to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 12 June 2007, in support of the report by the UN Independent Expert for Somalia, Dr Ghanim Alnajjar.

Amnesty International asked the Independent Expert for Somalia and the UN Human Rights Council to support these recommendations.