

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Human Rights Council: Oral statement by Amnesty International regarding Somalia**

Insufficient attention is being paid by the international community to the inter-linked human rights and humanitarian crisis in Somalia, currently one of the worst in the world. Serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have taken place in the last year, particularly in the worsening conflict between the Transitional Federal Government and allied Ethiopian armed forces against armed opposition groups in Mogadishu and other areas.

In the near-total absence of the rule of law and effective institutions of governance, over 6,000 civilians were killed in the past year. Over a million are now internally displaced, including at least 600,000 who fled Mogadishu in the past year. Women and girls, as well as journalists and human rights defenders, have been frequently subjected to unlawful killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detention or pillage perpetrated with impunity.

Amnesty International has spoken to many survivors of the conflict in Mogadishu who have fled after witnessing civilian relatives being killed by different groups, including the TFG and Ethiopian forces. Amnesty International repeats its urgent call to all parties to the conflict to abide by international human rights and humanitarian law. The international community should not appear to tolerate violations by remaining silent.

In the process of peace-making, the political dialogue should include urgent attention to the protection of the rights to life, personal security, and freedom of expression and association.

In support of the valuable work of the Independent Expert, Amnesty International calls on the Human Rights Council to adopt a resolution that:

- o renews the mandate of the Independent Expert, set up in 1993 and which includes reporting to the Council on the human rights situation, because the desperate human rights situation in Somalia warrants a dedicated human rights mechanism;
- o requests the international community to allocate sufficient resources to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor and report on the situation of human rights, provide technical assistance and advice to the Transitional Federal Institutions and international agencies, and support Somali human rights defenders;
- o urges that the African Union's Peace Support Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) and any succeeding UN peace-keeping mission be mandated to protect civilians - particularly women, children, discriminated Somali minorities and internally displaced persons - and also to include a strong human rights component with the capacity to monitor, investigate and publicly report on human rights violations;
- o calls on the Transitional Federal Government to remove any obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian assistance and ensure the safety of local and international humanitarian workers;

- o supports calls for an independent international investigation under UN auspices, as soon as conditions allow, into serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, in particular in Mogadishu in the past year, as well as mapping past war crimes and crimes against humanity.

There should be no further delay in establishing appropriate mechanisms to end the impunity which has prevailed in Somalia for decades and perpetuates the crisis.

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