



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER

Speaking for those who are not heard

ANNUAL REVIEW OF HUMAN RIGHTS CENTRE 2024



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Human Rights Centre 2024

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Foreword

As Chairperson of the Human Rights Center, I am pleased to present our annual report on the state of human rights in Somaliland. The Human Rights Center defends human rights based on the Somaliland Constitution and International Human rights law. Throughout this year, we documented human rights abuses and incidences in Somaliland. This report is grounded on thorough evidence gathered and analysis, providing critical insights into the political landscape while highlighting the urgent need for stronger human rights protections. This report offers a comprehensive analysis of the current human rights situation, highlighting the political instability that has resulted in both advancements and setbacks. While Somaliland has garnered international recognition for its one-person, one-vote electoral system, significant challenges remain in protecting fundamental rights. Issues such as inequality, arbitrary detention, and unlawful arrests continue, despite Somaliland's professed commitment to the rule of law. Our findings emphasize pressing concerns, including the suppression of freedom of expression and the lack of oversight over security forces. This has allowed the Somaliland Intelligence Agency to operate with impunity and engage in unlawful actions beyond its mandate. We hope this report serves as a call to action for the new administration, urging them to investigate the violations committed by security forces.

We remain hopeful that the new administration will review this report and take decisive action to ensure those who have abused their power are held accountable. This can be achieved through thorough investigations and establishing an independent oversight body to restore accountability, transparency, and justice mechanisms, reinforcing Somaliland's democratic processes. We trust this report will spark a broader conversation on human rights protection and the reinstatement of accountability measures in the new administration's policies and actions. Ultimately, we hope this report acts as a catalyst to meaningful change in protecting human rights in Somaliland, drawing attention to the decline in human rights safeguards within the region.

Acknowledgments

Human Rights Center thanks the dedicated volunteers, members, and staff who made this publication possible. We are grateful to all of them and appreciate their immense contributions and support.

HRC is also grateful to the individuals and organizations who have joined us in the many advocacy trainings held, their lived experiences, and stories to be included in this report. Thank you to the many organizations and all the people who have helped us in different ways during this report or the activities conducted for advocacy purposes. Thank you all very much.

Executive Summary

This annual report presents the progress and findings of incidences by the Human Rights Center. This report details human rights violations across Somaliland regarding freedom of expression, press media, and gender-based violations. HRC uses a database to record and monitor the general situation of human rights along with secondary evidence such as court charges, primary sources of witnesses and victims of violations, and investigation tools to follow through. In response to violations committed against civilians, journalists, and opposition members of the government, the Human Rights Center advocates through policy initiatives and outreach efforts. HRC has recorded 40 cases of violations targeting journalists, civilians, and opposition members, the lowest number of violations Post-Covid 19. Human Rights Center reflects on the considerable work needed to foster a more inclusive democracy. The ongoing consistent violations reveal a necessity for continued reform in all institutions and greater commitment to ensuring that democratic processes are fair and accessible. Addressing political repression and safeguarding freedom of expression is essential for building a more robust and inclusive democratic system. Issues such as arbitrary detentions and arrest of opposition members, civilians, and journalists along with the aftermath of the postponement of presidential elections following the expiration of the current president's term have highlighted critical concerns affecting Somaliland's political freedom and democratic legitimacy. Additionally, the lack of transparency and accountability for a multitude of violations committed by the Somaliland security forces has stressed the need for a complete overhaul of institutions in Somaliland, one that works for citizens for the protection and safety of democratic values in the country, including strengthening the rule of law and a higher need for inquiries and investigations against security forces. As such, the center reiterates a greater protection mechanism for institutions in Somaliland against militarized behaviors and calls for investigations into violations in which there should be a clear indication of the rule of law being administered but has not. Furthermore, the Center has outlined recommendations to ensure that Somaliland protects human rights, upholds the laws of the land, and establishes an oversight method for violations committed by security forces, the Human Rights Center emphasizes a need for the judicial and executive branches of the government to accelerate and pass every pending bill that is currently stagnant in Parliament to be accountable to the citizens. Human Rights Center is publishing this report to inform people and the government of Somaliland of issues that rightfully need

improvement in proper governance and the further protection of human rights in Somaliland. This year's violations have severely impacted freedom of expression and highlighted the failure of accountability and transparency mechanisms. Furthermore, Legal frameworks aimed at ensuring the safety and security of women have been largely neglected or inadequately legislated, leading to widespread impunity and, ultimately, femicide as a consequence, a new reoccurring phenomenon. As such, this report highlights violations of freedom of expression, arbitrary arrests of journalists and citizens, the ongoing conflicts in the eastern regions, and the current conditions of internally displaced persons in Somaliland.

The areas covered in the report include:

- 17 individuals arrested in Borama related to freedom of expression
- 12 journalists arrested for simply doing their job
- 7 women activists arrested in Borama for planning to demonstrate against the arrest of MP Mohamed Abib
- Three opposition party members arrested
- The plight of IDPs in Somaliland
- Inter-clan clashes in Erigavo

Overall, the human rights situation has significantly worsened, as evidenced by numerous violations committed by the government. When human rights are disregarded, democratic processes are often undermined and fail to serve the people, as demonstrated by the overreach of Somaliland's security forces. The delay in presidential elections and the extension of the president's term have fueled growing unrest in Somaliland, escalating regional tensions, especially between the government and the Sool region. This has sparked clashes in Erigavo, driven by the instability in Sool. As a result, the protection of human rights and adherence to international human rights standards in Somaliland has sharply declined, leading to multiple humanitarian crises, widespread displacement, and increasing insecurity across various regions.

Recommendations

To the government of Somaliland:

- Implement the Rape and Sexual Offences Act; Adopt an implementation strategy to implement to ensure the law is fully enforced and acts are criminalized/decriminalized
- Respect articles related to the freedom of expression enshrined in the Constitution,
- Decriminalize opinion sharing on any media, and halt the detentions and prosecutions of journalists and citizens.
- An oversight committee must be established for accountability against violations committed by security forces and police impunity.
- Carry out comprehensive reforms in the police and justice sectors to comply with fair trial practices.
- Arbitrary detentions and arrests must be cataloged for investigation purposes and address the issues of arbitrary detention and arrest
- Implement the Press Law to ensure vague articles are not applied to detained journalists or media house suspensions or closure.
- Provide necessary aid to IDP centers. These services are health, education, security, legal, and protection services.

To Donors and Civil Society organizations:

- Advocacy of freedom of expression should be implemented in your advocacy campaigns
- Appoint social workers, conflict mediation specialists, and crisis and humanitarian coordinators to areas affected by conflicts in Erigavo, LasAnod, and the rest of the eastern regions of Somaliland.
- Provide immediate aid relief to conflict-affected areas, including shelter, food, and other essential supplies, as a large-scale displacement has occurred in the Sool and Sanaag regions.
- Establish GBV centers in conflict-affected areas to distribute aid, dignity kits, medical supplies, and other essentials.

Methodology

This report is the result of mixed-method research conducted throughout all regions of Somaliland. HRC regularly monitors and documents human rights abuses in the region through local monitoring efforts and the collection of recorded information. HRC carried out interviews and used both primary and secondary sources, in addition to conducting pre- and post-assessment training interviews for journalists and civil society organizations on the human rights situation in Somaliland on capacity building training. The collected data is then analyzed for multiple objectives, such as raising awareness, ensuring accountability and transparency, and tracking trends in human rights within Somaliland. HRC focuses on establishing reliable and consistent methods, gathering and investigating information through detailed interviews. Our advocacy is centered on obtaining verifiable data to report on incidences and human rights abuses. However, HRC faces challenges during the research and verification process, particularly in accessing victims of abuse due to privacy concerns, and at times, interviews are conducted under duress.

Background

Somaliland is a self-declared independent country in the Horn of Africa, bordered by Djibouti and Ethiopia. Formerly a British protectorate, Somaliland united with Italian Somaliland in 1960 during the colonial era. However, following the collapse of Somalia's central government and the ensuing civil war, Somaliland unilaterally declared independence in 1991, re-establishing its borders and adopting a system of governance rooted in “peaceocracy.” This model has enabled the region to maintain relative stability and foster resilience. Despite still being in its early stages, Somaliland has achieved significant milestones, such as the peaceful transfer of power, and has maintained peace and stability, distinguishing itself from other regions in the Horn of Africa, establishing a constitution through a referendum held in 2001 and a one person one vote system. In its formative years, Somaliland stands out as a unique case, defined by a complex role in international relations, a mix of stability and persistent challenges, all while striving to build a nation where peace and dialogue are central to its democratic values.

Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression is protected by Article 32 of the Somaliland constitution, which incorporates Article 19 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights into Somaliland law, as stipulated by Article 10(2)¹. Freedom of expression is deemed one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, nonetheless, it is crucial to highlight the decreasing rate at which the Somaliland government has violated this freedom. Authorities have subjugated the right to exercise freedom of expression to a total of 28 people during this reporting period, excluding journalists. Most notably, Somaliland authorities often use intimidation tactics and harassment, actively suppressing these rights with authorities engaging in actions that stifle public discourse and dissent². Freedom of expression in Somaliland has encountered growing challenges, marked by restrictive laws, harsh government crackdowns, and a widespread climate of fear that suppresses free speech and human rights. In analyzing Somaliland's democratic index, it stands at 43%, classifying the region as partly free according to Freedom House data on political rights and civil liberties³. One indication of this freely partial right is the suppression of civil demonstrations in Somaliland. Somaliland citizens have limited access to information about state actions, as this right has been suppressed, leading to questionable government decisions. This includes arbitrary arrests related to discussions surrounding the MOU agreement with Ethiopia and the political instability caused by the SSC Khaatumo and Erigavo clashes. While Somaliland has experienced significant changes, both positive and negative, many citizens remain uninformed, especially regarding the controversial MOU agreement with Ethiopia. Other indicators of Somaliland's partly free democratic processes include the disregard for the rule of law, such as the lack of investigations into widespread arbitrary arrests, fair trial practices, the use of illegal detention facilities by Somaliland's intelligence forces, and the country's record of impunity. The right to criticize the government is often met with retaliation and intimidation, as demonstrated by the actions of Somaliland security forces aimed at silencing critics. This is particularly evident in the case of Somaliland lawyers, who have faced suppression not only from security forces but also from the National Lawyers' Association⁴, which colluded to silence them. These lawyers were targeted for highlighting abuses of power by security

¹ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body_somaliland_constitution.htm

² Public demonstrations were suppressed in 2022 for postponement of elections

³ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/somaliland/freedom-world/2024>

⁴ Republic of Somaliland Lawyers Licensing and Disciplinary Committee 2024 charge sheet

forces, specifically regarding the existence of designated torture detention facilities and other abuses such as using military courts for civilians.

Detention and persecution of journalists

Many journalists arrested in Somaliland have been detained while performing their journalistic duties and reporting on important issues⁵. Press law 2004 clearly states that no journalist shall be detained for performing their journalistic duties unless ordered by a competent court, which is often a key factor missing in detainment and arrest, as stated in article 8(1)⁶. Furthermore, Article 25(2) upholds that no person may be arrested, searched, or detained without an arrest warrant, despite this, journalists are often detained without a court warrant. However, the repressive climate, along with the intimidation and harassment of journalists, is primarily driven by the absence of legal safeguards and abuse of power. In Somaliland, articles used to “criminally” charge journalists often involve defamation and slander, rather than upholding the right for journalists to report impartially and without bias. Furthermore, journalists are frequently detained and released without justification, highlighting the collapse of the judicial system in Somaliland. Article 33 of Somaliland’s Constitution upholds the protection of freedom of the press and asserts that the press shall not be subjugated and can be regulated in the case of public order, national security, and morality⁷. However, that is not the case. Throughout this reporting year, journalists have often experienced harassment and intimidation by officials and security forces without justification, and there has been no investigation into the arbitrary arrests of journalists. HRC did not record any journalist arrests before or after the presidential elections, as the government's focus was on other priorities. Impunity has undermined accountability in Somaliland, particularly by targeting journalists through repressive crackdowns, including suspensions and the closure of media outlets. This has allowed government officials, security forces, and other powerful entities to operate without consequence, contributing to the significantly increasing number of journalist arrests each year. It has also led to a decline in trust in institutions across Somaliland and weakened the rule of

⁵ <https://hrcsomaliland.org/the-arbitrary-detention-of-journalist-mohammed-abdi-sheikand-social-activist-abdimalik-sheik-muse-coldoon/>

⁶ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Xeerka_Saxaafadda.pdf

⁷ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body_somaliland_constitution.htm

law⁸, emboldening further abuses and fostering a culture of corruption, as evidenced by the numerous infractions committed by the security forces.

Table Figure: List of arrested journalists from January 2024-December 2024

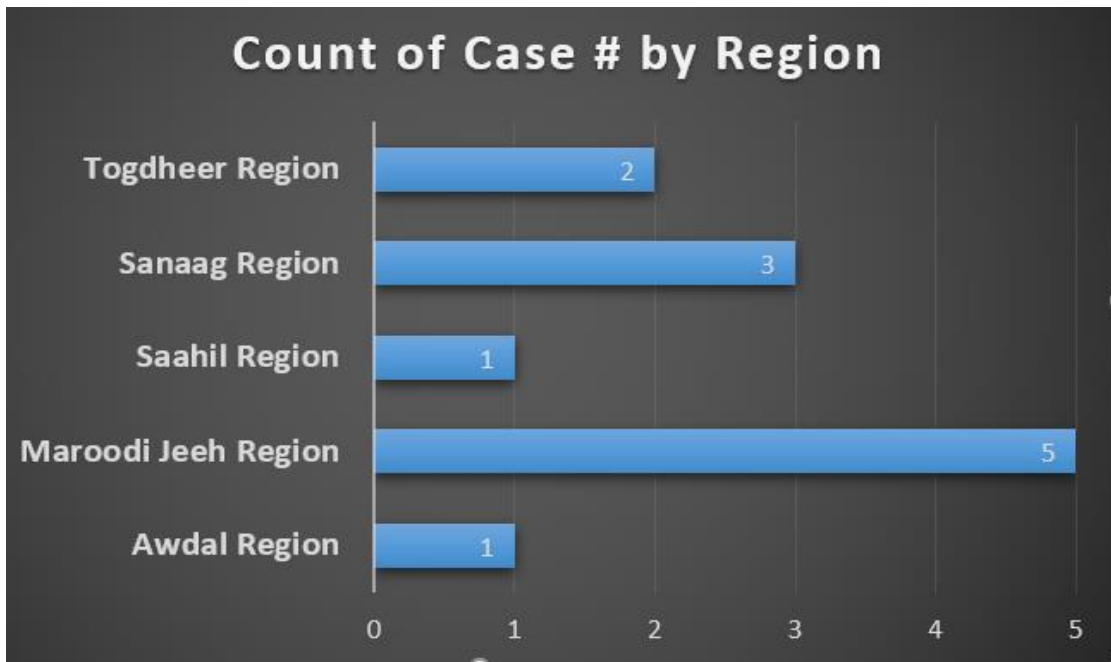
Case #	Name	Arrest Date	Release Date	Description	Media Affiliation	Region	Location
1	Mohammed Ilig	7-Jan-24	18-Feb-24	On January 7 th , Somaliland security forces raided the office of MMTV and arrested the Owner Mohammed Ilig, journalists Mohammed Abdi Abdillahi(Anddar), and technician Ilyas Abdinasir. Mohammed Abdi Abdillahi (Anddar) and Ilyas Abdinasir were released on 9 January arbitrarily. Mohamed Ilig was charged with a different criminal procedure Articles 200 (Political or Military Espionage) and Article 220 (Offending the Honour or Prestige of the Head of the State) and released later by negotiations on 18/02/2024. Allegations of improper security misconduct were shared by MMTV surveillance video in which one journalist can be seen being slapped by a member of the intelligence force.	MMTV	Maroodi Jeeh Region	Hargeisa
2	Mohammed Abdi Abdillahi (Anddar)	7-Jan-24	9-Jan-24	On January 7 th , Somaliland security forces raided the office of MMTV and arrested the Owner Mohammed Ilig, Ilyas Abdinasir, and Mohammed Abdi Abdillahi (Anddar). Mohamed Andar and Ilyas Abdinasir, were released on 9 January arbitrarily. Mohamed Ilig was charged with a different criminal procedure of the penal code and released later by negotiations on 18/02/2024. Allegations of improper	MMTV	Maroodi Jeeh Region	Hargeisa

⁸ Post-training assessment conducted by HRC on justice sector 2024

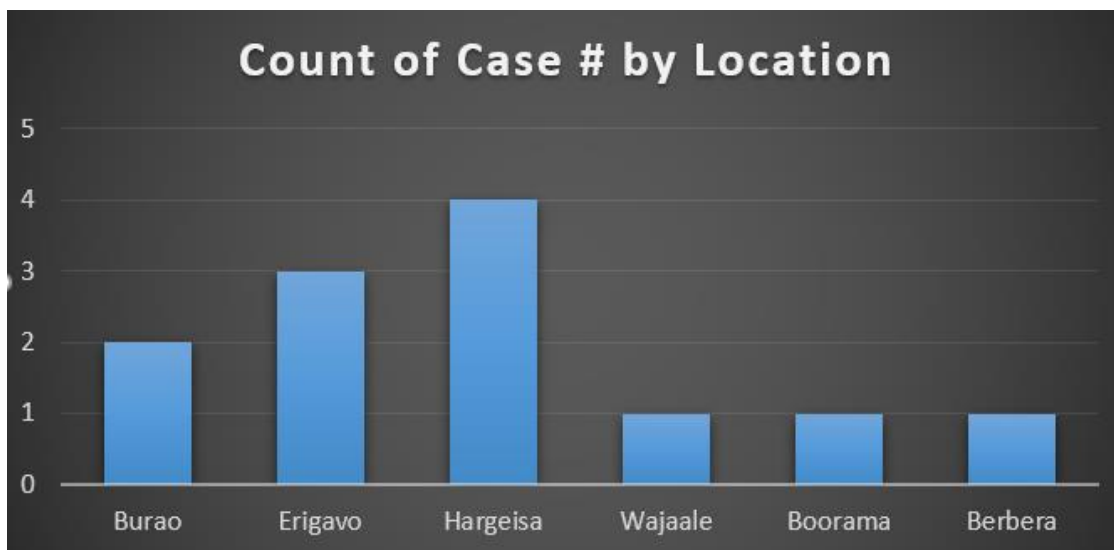
				security misconduct were shared by MMTV surveillance video in which one journalist can be seen being slapped by a member of the intelligence force.			
3	Ilyas Abdinasir	7-Jan-24	9-Jan-24	In January, Somaliland security forces raided the office of MMTV and arrested the Owner Mohammed Ilig, and two other journalists Ilyas Abdinasir, and Mohammed Abdi Abdillahi (Anddar). Mohamed Abdillahi and Ilyas Abdinasir were released on 9 January arbitrarily. Mohamed Ilig was charged with a different criminal procedure of the penal code and released later by negotiations on 18/02/2024. Allegations of improper security misconduct were shared by MMTV surveillance video in which one journalist can be seen being slapped by a member of the intelligence force.	MMTV	Maroodi Jeeh Region	Hargeisa
4	Abdirashid Abdiwahab	14-Jan-24	14-Jan-24	Abdirashid Abdiwahab, a Universal TV reporter, was arrested on 14 January 2024 and released the same day.	Universal TV	Maroodi Jeeh Region	Hargeisa
5	Khadar Dhaylo	10-Oct-24	19-Oct-24	Khadar Dhaylo was arrested in Wajaale on 15 January and released on 16 January 2024.	Sky TV	Maroodi Jeeh Region	Wajaale
6	Ahmed Mohamoud Ibraahim	16-May-24	17-May-24	Ahmed Mohamoud Ibraahim (Boqore), a reporter for CBA based in Burao, was arrested on May 16, 2024, following a report he published about the mismanagement at Burao General Hospital. He was released on May 17, 2024.	CBA	Togdheer Region	Burao

7	Ali Idirid Farah	6-Apr-24	21-Apr-24	Ali Idirid Farah (Ali Hajar) who was part of Awdal media and now is an independent journalist was arrested on April 6, 2024, for a Facebook post criticizing the governor of Awdal region. He was released on April 21, 2024, after apologizing based on negotiations he made.	Independent	Awdal Region	Borama
8	Seciid Haaleys	28-May-24	28-May-24	Seciid Haaleys, a reporter for Sky TV, from Burao, was arrested on 28 May 2024. He was detained while carrying out his journalistic duties and was released without criminal charges.	Sky TV	Togdheer Region	Burao
9	Abdirahman Mohamed Ige	2-Feb-24	5-Feb-24	Abdirahmaan Mohamed Ige, a reporter for Horyaal TV, was arrested on February 2, 2024, over Facebook posts and was released on February 5, 2024, without facing any charges.	Horyaal TV	Saahil Region	Berbera
10	Warsame Abdirashid Adam	3-Sep-24	9-Sep-24	Warsame Abdirashid Adam from MMTV in Erigavo was arrested on September 3, 2024, for a Facebook post. He was released on September 9, 2024.	MMTV	Sanaag Region	Erigavo
11	Mubarak Mohamed Adan	3-Sep-24	9-Sep-24	Mubarak Mohamed Adan from Horyaal TV was arrested on September 3, 2024, for a Facebook post in Erigavo, and subsequently released.	Horyaal TV	Sanaag Region	Erigavo
12	Abdirahman Mohamed Hidig	20-Sep-24	21-Sep-24	Abdirahman Mohamed Hidig was arrested for a Facebook post on September 20, 2024. He was released on the same day, arbitrarily.	Independent	Sanaag Region	Erigavo

Graph 1: Journalists arrest records by region



Graph 2: Journalists arrest records by location



Civil Liberties violations

Somaliland entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ethiopia during this reporting period. However, the terms of the agreement were not made transparent. As a result, critics of the MOU faced arbitrary arrests and detentions. Abdimalik Sheikh Muse Coldoon, a well-known critic of the Somaliland government who has been previously arrested, was detained in

Burao on January 8, 2024, and released on February 20, 2024. Government officials previously accused Abdimalik of having a history of inciting violence. However, his arrest was connected to his comments about the MOU between Somaliland and Ethiopia this time. Criticism of the MOU agreement has also resulted in violations of freedom of expression. HRC documented the arrest of 17 individuals in Borama, who were detained on January 11, 2024, and released on March 12, 2024. Their arrests stemmed from protests against the MOU agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia. They were released without court proceedings, violating their constitutional rights to free and fair trial procedures.

Further troubling developments in violations in Somaliland highlight the erosion of the rule of law, particularly the silencing of lawyers who have been advocating for victims of the Somaliland Intelligence Agency's abuses. The Somaliland Lawyers' Association formed a special committee to investigate the growing complaints and arbitrary arrests of civilians held in illegal detention facilities. The special committee's report revealed that victims were being detained in unrecognized facilities, separate from official jails and prisons, and were subject to wrongful convictions in military courts. The investigation found that the Somaliland Intelligence Agency had been acting beyond its mandate, violating both its jurisdiction and the constitution of Somaliland. In response, the Somaliland Intelligence Agency brought charges against the lawyers, filing a complaint to the Republic of Somaliland Lawyers Licensing and Disciplinary Committee. The Somaliland Lawyers Licensing and Disciplinary Committee subsequently fined each lawyer involved one million Somaliland shillings on 30/06/2024.

On September 3, 2024, seven members of Xays Organisation, a local civil society group, were arrested in Borama. The Somaliland government accused them of organizing protests against the detention of Mohamed Abib, an MP who had been arrested unconstitutionally on September 2, 2024. All of the above individuals were released on, September 7, 2024, from the Borama Central Police Station. The detained members of Xays Organisation were:

- A'isha Osman Nur
- Deka Khalif Muse
- Malyun Dahir Igeh
- Nimco Jama Warsame
- Kaafiya Farah Nur
- Habiba Abdi Dahir
- Fatima Hussein Are

Mohammed Abdirahman Eidle was arrested on 05/03/2024 in Burco without a warrant and then transferred to Hargeisa Central Prison. Mr. Eidle had been in different detention facilities since transferring to Hargeisa. He was held for a Facebook post criticizing the Somaliland government on “Anti-Nationalist Propaganda” charges. Since his transfer, he has been seen by the prosecutor’s office but has not appeared before the court, violating his constitutional rights in a closed session. Article 27(2) stipulates that a person shall have the right to be brought before a court within 48 (Forty-eight) hours of his arrest, clearly violating his constitutional right to a free and fair due judicial process. Additionally, he suffered bodily injury and developed teeth issues due to being captured by the Somaliland security forces⁹ in Burao and has not received medical attention, further exacerbating his injuries. He was sentenced to a year and 6 months, and released on December 24, 2024.

Political Opposition Members

MP Mohammed Abib Yusuf was detained at Egal Hargeisa International Airport on September 2, 2024. He was subsequently transferred to Mandheera maximum security prison located in the Sahil region of Somaliland. MP Mohamed is an opposition member of the House who is critical to the government of Somaliland. The Office of the Attorney General requested Parliament to remove immunity privileges from MP Mohammed Abib Yusuf Jama to detain and criminally charge him. The House of Representatives rejected to remove the immunity from the MP. According to Article 49(3) of the Somaliland constitution, “no member of the House of Representatives shall be investigated, questioned, arrested, imprisoned or otherwise subjected to any other acts relating to punishment without the consent of the House of Representatives”. On September 3rd, 2024, the House of Representatives held a session to remove immunity privileges from MP Mohammed Abib Yusuf Jama, and the Parliament rejected removing immunity from MP Mohammed Abib Yusuf Jama in a majority vote¹⁰. As such, Parliament did not strip his immunity, and his detention and imprisonment violated member privileges and constitutional due process of law. The MP was taken to prison without a court or parliamentary acceptance, making his detention arbitrary. According to the Constitution of Somaliland, no person can be detained or arrested without due process of

⁹ Interview with the victim at the Hargeisa Regional Court March 2024

¹⁰https://hiiraan.com/news4/2024/Sept/197832/update_somaliland_lawmakers_dismiss_impeachment_case_against_arrested_mp_mohamed_abib.aspx

law. The arbitrary detention of the MP without constitutional review emphasizes a lack of direction in upholding the rule of law in Somaliland and a disregard for the system of checks and balances, particularly in the actions of the security forces in detaining the MP. The Supreme Court ordered and upheld the rule of law, despite the prolonged inaction by Parliament and the judiciary branch over several weeks of detention for MP Mohammed Abib.

Abdinasir Ali Saleebaan, who is politically affiliated with the Waddani Party, was arrested on March 28, 2024, for criticizing the government and released on April 1, 2024, after issuing an apology. Incidents of this nature are commonplace in Somaliland.

Khadar Jamac Mohamed, Sports Secretary of the Waddani party, was arrested on April 8, 2024, and released on April 23, 2024, without court charges.

Erigavo Clashes

Escalating tensions in Erigavo had been building since August 2024, primarily due to political and clan disputes arising from the SSC administration's breakaway from Somaliland¹¹. Several conflicts erupted across the region, notably between Somaliland and the SSC forces in Erigavo. These clashes led to severe humanitarian crises, including the deaths of innocent civilians, widespread displacement, and the worsening of climate change-related challenges¹². On December 14, 2024, violent confrontations broke out in Erigavo involving the SSC administration militias. Clan infighting triggered further clashes between militias affiliated with SSC Khaatumo and residents of Erigavo. The fighting escalated with mortar fire, leading to the death of a young girl killed by indiscriminate firing, Hinda Jama Mohammed Jama and five others. The fighting intensified the following day, leading to 16 reported injuries. The violence prompted mass displacement, as many residents fled to various parts of the Sanaag region, including Ceel Afweyn. Others sought refuge in Las Anod, different areas of the Sool region, and Bossaso. Although the situation has calmed, there is still unrest. Despite the conflict, no direct ammunition has been fired at civilians during the clashes between militias in Erigavo, who were using residential houses as positions for their attacks. Monitoring reports indicate that the presence of armed civilians is a significant issue, contributing to the conflict¹³. Although clan elders in Erigavo have expressed

¹¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somalia-armed-violence-ceerigaabo-town-sanaag-region-flash-update-no1-18-december-2024>

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/somaliland-improving-camp-coordination-mechanisms>

¹³ Interviews with the local residents by HRC local field monitors

their support for peace based on their respective clans, they have collectively called for peaceful dialogue and negotiations to resolve the crisis following a clan meeting in Elbuh town, Sanaag¹⁴. The clan meeting intended to address the conflict demonstrates exclusionary practices, in particular the inclusion of women. This exclusion undermines human rights mechanisms and fails to provide justice for victims, particularly concerning issues like mass displacement, looting, and property damage as the unrest in Erigavo is fueled by deep-rooted inter-clan rivalries, compounded by unresolved grievances and political competition, particularly with SSC Khatumo's efforts to seize control of the Sanaag region from Somaliland¹⁵.

The plight of IDPs in Somaliland

The information in this report is derived from interviews conducted by staff and local field monitors in IDPs across Somaliland. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somaliland face ongoing displacement, forced evictions, and neglect from the government regarding necessities. This is mainly a result of the lack of a functioning legal system, inadequate policy implementation, and insufficient assistance for IDPs. Despite the constitution mandating equal rights for all citizens, IDPs experience heightened insecurity and social isolation. Many live in remote areas, far from essential services, and often lack a stable income, making it difficult for them to access the cities¹⁶. Borama district hosts six IDP centers; Farahyod, Qorgab, Hayayabe, Sh. Osman, Siite Wabar, and Boon IDP centers. These camps accommodate 1,936 households affected by droughts, cyclones, and economic challenges and an overview of the gaps to showcase available services, and pressing needs in the IDPs.

Farahyod IDP Camp:

This IDP camp is located in northern Borama City. The residents were displaced by droughts and the Sagar Cyclone, which hit the western coasts of Somaliland in 2020. The camp is home to 360 households. There is limited access to basic education and healthcare services.

Hayayabe IDP

¹⁴Clan elders addressed Erigavo clashes

<https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2025/Jan/199645/warsangeli-clan-declares-unity-amid-mounting-conflict-in-erigavo.aspx#:~:text=However%2C%20Somaliland%20has%20defended%20its,affected%20communities%20in%20the%20region.&text=%22Our%20displaced%20families%20face%20hunger,no%20matter%20what%20lies%20ahead.%22>

¹⁵ <https://www.somalidispach.com/latest-news/ssc-khatumo-leaser-vows-to-take-erigavo/>

¹⁶ Interview, November 2024, IDPs camp residents in Erigavo

The camp, located in the southern part of Borama city, is home to 306 households and marginalized communities, most of whom own the land where they have settled. This community faces various forms of discrimination and is highly vulnerable due to a lack of social, political, and economic protections

Boon IDP Camp

Boon is a village located within the Borama district, to the west of the city. It is home to 120 IDP households. The camp lacks essential facilities such as a school, MCH center, and police station, and instead depends on shared services with another IDP. Access to clean water is also unavailable. Residents of this IDP camp face numerous challenges, including poverty, unemployment, limited access to education, and frequent incidents of crime.

Challenges and Gaps Faced by IDPs abovementioned.

- Lack of basic education and healthcare services.
- Limited water utilities.
- Inadequate electricity services.
- Insecurity and lack of law enforcement.
- High poverty and unemployment rates.
- Lack of land planning and limited housing

Durdur IDP camp in Burao

Durdur IDP camp is located in the northwestern part of Burao city, just a few kilometers from the city center. The camp is officially recognized and is home to around 1,150 families, including those displaced recently and in 2022. Most residents have fled from the Togdheer and Saraar regions, with some families coming from the Sool region. Internally displaced persons in Somaliland face a range of humanitarian crises, both natural and human-made. This region has suffered from natural disasters, including heavy rainfall and droughts, alongside human-induced conflicts, such as the large-scale displacement caused by the Sool conflict and the Erigavo clashes¹⁷. These events have intensified the crisis, creating significant challenges and gaps in the delivery of aid to displaced persons in Somaliland. Currently, residents lack proper housing, with only 67 families receiving

¹⁷ Interview, 14 march 2024, Durdur IDP camp Burao

shelter. Families in the Durdur IDP camp have no source of income and are living in harsh conditions. However, it is important to note that incidents of rape have decreased this year¹⁸ .

Lacks essential facilities Basic Necessities including:

- Maternal and Child Health (MCH) center
- School
- Police station
- Water facilities

Ali Hussein IDP

On September 15, 2024, HRC conducted interviews with residents and the head of the Ali Hussein IDP camp in Burao. The camp is home to 3,646 individuals, who often face insecurity due to limited economic opportunities and lack of police protection. Residents mentioned that a jail station had been constructed by NRC, but their request for police personnel was not granted by government officials in Burao¹⁹. In a recent follow-up, the head of the IDP camp stated that they were provided with two personnel, but this is insufficient to ensure adequate protection for the camp against animal invasions and criminal robberies. A major concern the residents wish to raise with authorities in hopes of bringing about change is waste management. They have expressed that, despite their best efforts to clean up waste, they lack adequate waste management services in their area, especially rubbish collection. Due to the lack of rubbish collection, residents are forced to burn their trash within the camp, leading to environmental hazards and health concerns, as reported by the residents. Additionally, they often burn waste near their neighbors, since there is no designated area for waste management, causing disturbance to those nearby.

Prevalence of SGBV cases in Somaliland

Sexual gender-based violence remains a critical challenge and a recurring epidemic affecting women, girls, and vulnerable groups in Somaliland. Despite this, SGBV continues to be widespread in Somaliland due to a fragile legal system and the lack of effective legal policies. The Sexual Offenses Bill is stalled in the legislative process due to the outcry of religious and traditional elders,

¹⁸ Interview, 15 Decemeber 2024 Durdur IDP camp Burao

¹⁹ Interview, 15 September 2024 Ali Hussein IDP camp Burao

and conviction rates for reported cases remain low. However, the number of unreported and undocumented cases far surpasses the number of officially reported incidents. In practice, ineffective legal policies further undermine the safety and security of women, girls, and vulnerable groups in Somaliland. Without effective enforcement of SGBV laws, perpetrators are emboldened and allowed to continue committing crimes. On June 24, 2024, former President Muse Bihi issued a directive prohibiting further interference from traditional elders in criminal cases involving rape, stating that such cases should be handled solely by the courts²⁰, a sentiment acknowledged by lawyers, prosecutors, and justice sector professionals that voiced concerns about the interference of traditional elders in legal matters, despite presidential decree and previous Attorney General statements. The involvement of traditional elders remains a significant factor in rape cases being mediated and settled outside Somaliland's court system, often resulting in decisions that do not prioritize the rights of the victims. This practice undermines the judicial system and signals a troubling dereliction of duty. In the annual briefing of the Somaliland Police Commission's review of crimes on October 20, 2024, there were 321 reported cases of rape²¹. However, this figure only includes victims who have accessed services and does not account for unreported, underreported, or undocumented cases of sexual and gender-based violence in Somaliland. The actual number of incidents may be higher, but due to various barriers such as lack of awareness and limited accessibility, the true extent remains unknown. Baahi-Koob is a key leading figure in addressing gender-based violence and ensuring victims have access to care and justice. However, Baahi-Koob operates in only three regions in Burao, Borama, and Hargeisa, often overlooking crucial data from the other regions. Comprehensive data collection for Somaliland does not provide an accurate picture of impunity, the absence of protective mechanisms in implementation, or the overall state of gender-based violence in the country. The 2023 annual report from the Human Rights Commission shows that out of 752 reported cases, only 271 were referred to prosecution, suggesting that many cases were resolved outside the judicial system²², pointing to significant challenges in the Somaliland judicial system while contributing to a widening gap in accountability and fostering impunity for violations.

²⁰Presidential Decree <https://madaxtooyadajsl.com/presidential-decree-8/>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?mibextid=wwXlfr&v=1107741514102941&rdid=JWoiYKhYAGwxWpFd>

²² <https://x.com/slnhrc2/status/1765660872133800416>

About Human Rights Centre

Background

The Human Rights Centre (HRC) is a non-profit organization established in January 2013 with the aim of contributing to the protection and promotion of human rights in Somaliland. HRC was founded by lawyers who are inspired by the Bill of Rights in the Somaliland Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is registered with the Somaliland government as a non-profitmaking and non-governmental organization. HRC was formed to cover the need for documentation and advocacy on human rights to help maintain the gains made by Somaliland's nascent democracy. The central policy of the Human Rights Centre is to create and foster a culture of voluntary human rights activism where committed human rights defenders with passion contribute to the protection, promotion and realization of human rights.

Vision

For Somaliland, place where human rights are protected, promoted, respected and fulfilled.

Mission

Human Rights Centre exists to defend and protect the rights of human beings in Somaliland.

Our Values

We uphold the values of honesty, justice, and integrity for all. We aim to work with transparency and accountability, commitment and discipline. We encourage creative participation in understanding the need for sustainability and respect for all. We will continue to strive for impartiality and independence while placing great value on confidentiality. We also appreciate the importance of volunteering which forms the foundations of our organization.

Areas of Operation

HRC helps and works for the people of Somaliland. It focuses on vulnerable people, women, the poor, minority clans and victims of human rights abuses. HRC directs most of its attention to abuses committed by the state. The areas HRC works on include, but are not limited to, police brutality, freedom of media and expression, sexual and gender-based violence, illegal detentions, the death penalty, and freedom of assembly.

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