

## **Human Rights Council: FORM for Submitting an NGO written statements**

NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC (General, Special or Roster status) may submit written statements to the Human Rights Council (HRC).

The written statement is formatted and issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting NGO. English, Spanish and French versions can be published at this time.

In order for your statement to be published before the session, the deadline for submission is exactly two weeks prior to the start of a session. See the deadline on the web site. All submissions are final.

Please fill out **this** FORM and CHECKLIST to submit your statement and send it to the address indicated below. Your information goes after each arrow.

1. Please indicate the contact information for representative submitting written statement (i.e. name, mobile, email) here: → Ulrich Delius, 0049-16095671403, asien@gfbv.de

2. Indicate the Standing Agenda item number (1-10) of statement here: → 10

3.a) If this is an individual statement, indicate here your organization's name as in the ECOSOC NGO database and indicate its consultative status in brackets (i.e. General, Special, or Roster).

→ Society for Threatened Peoples (Special Consultative Status)

or,

3.b) If this is a joint statement, list here the co-sponsoring ECOSOC NGO as they appear in the ECOSOC database and status (in brackets): Group all General NGOs first, group the Special second and group the Roster third. →

4. Indicate here any non-ECOSOC NGO(s) supporting this statement (they will appear as a footnote to the statement title): →

5. Indicate the exact TITLE for this statement here: → Humanitarian crisis and war in Somalia

### **Please make sure that:**

This statement is in MS WORD document format (Font Times New Roman 10; no bold; no underline; no italics).

Check word count: (Go to Tools, Word count, # of words) Indicate the length of text (including footnotes/endnotes) here: →

-NGOs in general consultative status are allowed 2,000 words

-NGOs in special consultative status and on the roster are allowed 1,500 words

Please use the Spell/grammar check on your text. (Go to Tools, Spelling & Grammar)

Different language versions of one statement should be sent in the same email, but using **a separate form** for each.

Email this document to: [hrcngo@ohchr.org](mailto:hrcngo@ohchr.org)

**PLEASE PASTE THE FINAL TEXT BELOW:** ↓

War, massive human rights violations and drought are forcing more than 30,000 people to flee from Somalia every month. Mostly women and girls are searching for protection in neighbouring countries. They are especially vulnerable to abductions, rape, illness and death on their journey. Many women set out on their journey alone with their children, leaving husbands behind. They sometimes walk for weeks in search for safety. Since January 2011, approximately 70 per cent of all refugees arriving in Dadaab camps in neighbouring Kenya are women and children. Between January and July 2011, cases of sexual violence have quadrupled, with 370 incidents among female refugees from Somalia in comparison with 75 during the same period in 2010. Furthermore, women refugees are suffering from disastrous psychological effects of the humanitarian crisis and war. Aid agencies are reporting of high levels of anxiety, panic and trauma due to loss of family members along the way and women are sharing stories of rape, violence and hunger.

More than 750,000 Somalis have fled overseas. A further 1.5 million people are internally displaced in Somalia, most of them in the volatile south-central region. Nationwide, some 3.7 million Somalis are in need of humanitarian assistance, with 3.2 million people in need of immediate, lifesaving assistance. An estimated 61 per cent of those in need are located in the southern regions. Almost 80 per cent of the malnourished children are living there. The number of malnourished children in Somalia has increased from 476,000 to 554,000 in the first half of 2011 and is expected to increase further in the next weeks.

Feeding the starving can only be a temporary solution. Only a political solution to stop war and conflict in Somalia could provide a long-term perspective to end the suffering of the civilian population. For many Somalis, the famine perpetuates the misery and creates more instability and violence.

International policy to stabilize Somalia has been a total failure. In the year 2000, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was established by the international community to provide a legitimate government to Somalia. But still today, the TFG is neither federal nor transitional, nor even really a government which is committed to ensure the safety and livelihood of its own people. Despite years of fighting and substantial international military aid the influence of the TFG only could be extended to the outskirts of the capital Mogadishu. Local population has refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of TFG due to its incompetence, corruption and weak leadership.

Despite massive national and international criticism, the United Nations Security Council claims that the TFG is on the good track to broaden its support by the civilian population and to extend its influence beyond the capital. The obvious failure of the TFG to ensure good governance, peace and stability in Somalia has been ignored by the UN Security Council, which in June 2011 reiterated in a presidential statement the need for comprehensive and inclusive strategy to bolster the restoration of peace and stability in the whole country, emphasizing that a peace agreement signed in Djibouti in 2008 remains the basis for resolving conflict in Somalia. Instead of starting dialogue with all conflict parties, the International Contact Group on Somalia has insisted on its special relationship to the TFG. Some EU countries even are providing military assistance and training to the army of TFG.

At least some 1.3 million people are living as internally displaced people (IDP) in South and Central Somalia. The capital Mogadishu is hosting some 370,000 old IDP's and 100.000 IDP who have moved to the city since June 2011. They are living in more than 188 scattered camps in and around the city. A satellite-based analysis of Somali IDP shelter concentrations showed that some 23,000 shelter structures for IDP have been concentrated in the western areas of the capital. Most IDP are suffering from malnutrition and a lack of sanitation and medical care.

Despite the disastrous humanitarian situation the security forces of the TFG in cooperation with AMISOM (the African Union Mission in Somalia) have launched military offensives against the Al Shabaab militia with heavy shelling of residential areas in Mogadishu. In August 2011 new air strikes against Al Shabaab were announced by the TFG. In May 2011, 15 civilians were killed and 80 wounded when Bakara Market was shelled by mortars. The logistics manager of the Somali radio station "Radio Simba", Farah Hassan Sahal, was killed at the AMISOM-controlled Bakara Market on August 4, 2011. Furthermore, health centres and schools were destroyed by shelling from both conflict parties. The indiscriminate firing of heavy artillery into markets and residential areas of the capital constitutes a war crime and has forced tens of thousands to flee. Even AMISOM participated in the shelling of civilian areas of Mogadishu, reported credible witnesses. International Humanitarian Law and the Law of War prohibit deliberate attacks on civilians.

Somalia faces the worst humanitarian crisis in 20 years. Humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate due to increasing insecurity and armed conflict, inter-clan fighting, refusal of humanitarian access, population displacement, diseases, food insecurity and the deterioration of livelihood. Conflict and increased attacks targeting humanitarian organisations have resulted in food aid suspensions and limited humanitarian access to those afflicted by conflict.

Some 80 per cent of the 554,000 malnourished children in Somalia (up from 376,000 in January 2011) are living in areas controlled by Al Shabaab. Most of Southern and Central Somalia, where the drought is worst, is controlled by the militia. Humanitarian assistance in these areas has been blocked by insecurity and by the deliberate use of landmines and roadblocks by Al Shabaab. In recent weeks Al Shabaab commanders have denied the disastrous humanitarian situation in the areas they are controlling. Humanitarian access for many international aid agencies has been restricted. But the ICRC and the Somali Red Crescent were able to deliver humanitarian aid to people in need in Al Shabaab controlled areas. On July 6, 2011, the militia has announced to lift the restrictions, but many NGOs still are prohibited to deliver humanitarian aid in South and Central Somalia.

Credible witnesses reported that Somali civilians were prevented by Al Shabaab fighters from fleeing their villages in disaster areas. International law protects the right to freedom of movement. Al Shabaab must stop deliberate arrests and intimidations of civilians searching for protection and humanitarian aid outside of the regions controlled by the militia.

The plight of internally displaced people, the humanitarian crisis and increasing poverty are facilitating the recruitment of children as soldiers by Al Shabaab. The militia has been responsible for forced recruitment of boys and girls. Families were urged by the militia to ensure that most of their boys are joining Al Shabaab. Teenagers were forced to join the militia or to leave their towns and villages. Most children taken to fight appear to be aged between 12 and 18 years old, but in some cases children as young as eight have been recruited. Especially in refugee camps in Kenya, Yemen but also in southern Italy and Europe, young Somalis have registered a growing number of abuses of child soldiers by all conflict parties. UNICEF estimates that there are thousands of child soldiers in Somalia. The abuse of child soldiers has dramatically increased in 2011.

The strict application of Muslim Sharia law in areas controlled by Al Shabaab and other Islamist groups has raised many concerns about the respect of basic human rights. Civilians fleeing from Al Shabaab controlled areas are reporting widespread human rights violations: Public beheadings and floggings, deliberate arrests of women for not wearing special veils or of teenagers who watched films on their mobile phones.

Impunity prevails for all crimes which were committed by Ethiopian soldiers during their military intervention in Somalia (December 2006 to January 2009). Furthermore, no personnel of state security forces was brought to justice for intimidating, torturing and murdering human rights defenders, the staff of NGOs and journalists.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the Human Rights Council to urge all conflict parties in Somalia:

- to guarantee free and unhindered access for national and international humanitarian organisations to all civilians,
- to create humanitarian sanctuary zones providing shelter for civilians from armed combat,
- to ensure the respect of international humanitarian law especially with regards to the protection of the civilian population,
- to guarantee basic human rights, especially to stop intimidation, torture and murder of human rights defenders and journalists,
- to immediately stop indiscriminate shelling of residential areas in conflict zones,
- to stop abusing child soldiers,
- to end impunity.