

Statement by Latvia on Somalia
24th Session of the UPR Working Group
January 2016

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Mr. President,

Latvia warmly welcomes the Minister HE Ms. Zahra Ali Samantar and her delegation and thanks it for the presentation of the national report. We appreciate the efforts made since the last UPR to address human rights concerns despite ongoing challenges resulting from the fight against terrorism. We welcome the 2014 national action plan to end sexual violence in conflict and the two 2012 action plans to prevent and halt the recruitment of children as soldiers, but regret that implementation of these plans has been slow. Latvia is also concerned that since 2011, at least 35 media professionals have been killed and about reports of intimidation, arrest and prosecution of journalists and media workers. We therefore welcome the Government's commitment to create secure working conditions for journalists and encourage it to make good use of the expertise that the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and other mandate holders have to offer.

We have the following recommendations for Somalia:

1. Extend a standing invitation to all Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council
2. Ensure the prompt, impartial and effective investigation of all attacks and violence against journalists in order to bring perpetrators to justice and provide remedies for the victims and their families and, to reform the Penal Code to bring it in line with international standards on Freedom of Expression;
3. Ratify the Rome Statute of the ICC to ensure accountability for, prevention of and justice for the victims of human rights violations.

Thank you!