

UN Human Rights Council
24th Session of the UPR Working Group
2nd Cycle Review Review Somalia, 22 January 2016

Statement by AUSTRIA

Austria welcomes H.E. and the Delegation of Somalia and thanks them for the presentation of the national report.

At the outset, Austria would like to commend the Government of Somalia for its constructive engagement with the HRC at this UPR session. We acknowledge Somalia's commitment to improving the human rights situation in the country, under extraordinarily difficult circumstances and urge Somalia to keep up and intensify these efforts.

The adoption of a national human rights roadmap in August 2013 was an important step forward but the human rights situation in Somalia remains critical. We are particularly concerned by restrictions on press freedom in the form of arbitrary closings, censorship, unjustified court cases, attacks against Journalists and media workers along with the tabling in Parliament of a very controversial press law.

We are also concerned with the reports of violence against women including Female Genital Mutilation which remains a widespread practice in Somalia. Implementation of the government's pledges to tackle the alarming levels of sexual violence by endorsing an action plan is still slow and protection of the most vulnerable communities remains weak.

Austria would like to offer the following recommendations:

- 1) Release all Media Workers and HRDs arrested and detained on the basis of their human rights activities and allow the reopening of closed media outlets.
- 2) To immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty and to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR.
- 3) Sign and ratify CEDAW
- 4) Enact and enforce legislation prohibiting all forms of violence against women encompassing prevention, protection and support, including legal remedies

for victims with special attention being paid to the protection of minority women's rights and adequate punishment of perpetrators.