

*Représentation permanente de la Belgique auprès des Nations Unies et auprès des institutions spécialisées à Genève*

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| **WG UPR 24 – Somalia**  ***Belgian Intervention***  22 January 2016 |

**M. Chairman,**

The Belgian delegation appreciates the presentation which was made today by the delegation of Somalia and is very much aware of the challenges for the Somali Government, particularly in the fight against the terrorist action by Al Shabaab. We appreciate particularly the progress which has been made in the prevention of recruitment of **child soldiers** in Somalia with two successive action plans and recommend to **R1** establish effective vetting procedures to ensure that the Somali national armed forces and police do not include persons under the age of 18.

As many other delegations we also note the widespread practice of **female genital mutilation** (FGM). We note that the Somali Government has prepared legislation banning this practice and **R2** recommend adoption of this legislation at the earliest possible stage.

Reports on an increase in real estate speculation in the capital Mogadishu are worrying. While this may be an encouraging sign of economic recovery it has also undesirable effects on the continuity of assistance and protection for internally displaced persons in a number of camps. **R3** We recommend that the Government takes all necessary steps to halt all **forced evictions** in all locations under its control and particularly in Mogadishu. If any evictions take place this should take place in accordance with the law, with international human rights and humanitarian law and in cooperation with relevant national and international organizations, such as UNHCR.

To conclude, we are worried about repeated reports on intimidation, attacks and murder on **journalists** and **R4** recommend that judicial investigations are carried out into these crimes and we also call on the Government to take measures in order to stop instances of arrest and intimidation of journalists. It is the task of the Government to provide protection to journalists so that media can ensure the right to information for all citizens.

**Thank you, Chair.**