**38th Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

**Review of SOMALIA**

6 May 2021

**Statement by Austria**

Austria welcomes Somalia’s UPR report and its engagement and cooperation with international human rights treaty bodies and mechanisms.

While acknowledging these efforts, the human rights situation in Somalia remains critical. In this context we consider the finalization of the establishment and operationalization of the Somalia National Human Rights Commission as an important step towards the consolidation of a national human rights framework.

Austria is alarmed about setbacks for the rights of women and girls, especially in the area of protection against sexual and gender-based violence, including FGM and other harmful practices. We call on the government to halt pending legislation that discriminates women such as the “Sexual Intercourse Related Crime Bill” and to ensure that any law that is reintroduced is in conformity with international human rights standards.

We are also concerned about severe restrictions for the work of journalists and inacceptable threats to their physical safety.

Austria offers the following recommendations:

* Enact laws and regulations that prohibit all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence, and take measures against the impunity of offenders.
* Renew efforts to sign and ratify the CEDAW.
* Ensure every person’s right to freedom of expression and media freedom, in particular by addressing intimidation, arbitrary arrests and physical attacks against journalists, human rights defenders and media workers.
* Establish a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its abolishment and ratify the Second Protocol of the ICCPR.
* Accede to the Rome Statute of the ICC.