

UN Human Rights Council 45: statement for resolution L.52, Assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights

The UK is proud to present this resolution, L.52, with the Permanent Mission of Somalia to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on Somalia.

We commend Somalia for the recent progress it has made in the field of human rights and recognise that Somalia's recovery from over 25 years of conflict is ongoing. We also recognise the additional 'triple threat' challenge facing Somalia for the past year: flooding, locusts and COVID-19.

Despite these challenges, we welcome the ways in which human rights have been upheld, and political processes strengthened. We particularly commend the work by the Ministry for Women and Human Rights Development in championing human rights, including those of women and girls who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

This resolution does not shy away from the many challenges that remain, and we commend Somalia for its continued engagement with this Council in facing up to them. The resolution calls for support to Somalia's institutions to build a stable, peaceful and prosperous state.

The resolution expresses serious concern at the recently tabled 'Sexual Intercourse Bill' and calls for Somali lawmakers to instead consider a bill that is compliant with Somalia's international obligations and commitments on the protection of children, women and girls. The resolution also raises concerns about continuing attacks against the media in Somalia, including journalists, especially in the form of harassment, arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention. It calls on Somalia to promote freedom of expression and end a prevailing culture of impunity.

We recognise Somalia's sincere desire to transition towards deeper engagement with OHCHR and other thematic experts, including Special Procedures. We look forward to engaging further with the Independent Expert and we stand ready to work with Somalia to identify specific areas that require attention.

The cooperation shown by Somalia with a range of international mechanisms, and this Council, demonstrates a willingness to move forward and improve the human rights situation. We are struck by the level of positive engagement Somalia has shown on this resolution and we hope that this can translate to improvements on the ground.

We will continue to support Somalia, and call upon the international community to do the same. We hope this resolution can be adopted by consensus by this Council.