



Human Rights Watch
Item 6 - Adoption of the UPR on Somalia
June 23, 2016

Thank you Mr. President,

Human Rights Watch welcomes the adoption of the outcome of the UPR on Somalia, yet regrets that most recommendations accepted during the country's last review remain unimplemented.

Somalia's UPR took place against the backdrop of ongoing abuses against its internally displaced population, with large-scale forced evictions, including by government forces in Mogadishu and other government controlled towns. It is important that Somalia meets its commitments to improving the dire conditions faced by the displaced population.

Government forces, clan militias, and Al-Shabab insurgents have continued to commit serious violations of the laws of war with no accountability. Fighting has resulted in civilian deaths, injuries, and destruction of property.

Human Rights Watch takes note of some steps taken by the government to tackle widespread sexual violence, including the adoption of action plans and work around a sexual offences bill. Yet, alarming rates of sexual violence continue to be reported, implementation of reforms has been slow, and protection of the most vulnerable communities non-existent.

Somalia's ratification of Convention on the Rights of the Child and its commitments to end child recruitment are important developments. However, all Somali parties to the conflict continue to commit serious abuses against children, including recruitment, killings and sexual violence. According to the UN, recorded abuses against children increased by 50 percent in 2015.

Somalia has regrettably not established a moratorium on the death penalty, despite pledges made during its first UPR review in 2011. The government relies on the military court system to prosecute defendants for a broad range of crimes in proceedings that fall short of international fair trial standards. The military court has imposed the death sentence in a number of cases.

Despite Somalia's repeated commitments to investigate killings and attacks on journalists and pass media legislation in line with international standards, the authorities have used various abusive tactics to curtail media coverage, including threats, arbitrary arrests of journalists, and forced closures of media outlets. The authorities have failed to adequately investigate and appropriate prosecute those responsible for abuses. In January, the president signed a new media law that includes many vague restrictions on the media.

The government has issued a standing invitation to Special Procedures. However, the parliament has not passed legislation to establish a strong national human rights commission and taken no steps to follow-up on commitments made during Somalia's previous UPR to set up an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate grave abuses committed by all parties to the conflict.

Thank you.