



**30th Session of the
Human Rights Council**

Item 10

**ID with IE on Somalia
30 September 2015
Delivered by Renate Bloem**

Thank you Mr. President,

CIVICUS welcomes the very comprehensive report of the Independent Expert, its analysis and wide ranging recommendations. We share his concerns about the still regressing situation of women, about unhindered sexual and gender based violence and exploitation, the abuse by AMISOM troops, and equally express alarm about the killings of numerous civilians, including women and children, during military operations against Al-Shabaab.

Aware of the fragility of the Government, its enormous need of support for capacity and resources, we welcome nevertheless the indication of a road map for human rights. CIVICUS calls on the Government of Somalia, as the primary duty bearer to create an enabling environment for civil society to operate, in accordance with the rights ensured by the ICCPR and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. At a minimum, the following conditions should be safeguarded: freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, the right to seek and secure funding and the state's duty to protect. In light of this CIVICUS specifically asks:

- All human rights defenders and civil society activists detained for exercising their rights to freedom of assembly, association, or expression should be unconditionally and immediately released. Their cases should be reviewed to prevent further harassment.
- Articles 215 “subversive or anti national- propaganda”, 321 “instigation to Disobey the Laws”, 326 “intimidation of the public” and 328 “publication or circulation of false, exaggerated and tendentious news capable of disturbing public order” of the Penal Code of Somali should be suitably amended or repealed to ensure that they don’t impede freedom of expression
- A standing invitation should be extended to all UN Special Procedures, particularly to the Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Expression and Human Rights Defenders.

Thank you Mr. President