

THE IGO ANNUAL NEWSLETTER IS A PRODUCT OF THE INTEGRATED GENDER OFFICE | UN TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION IN SOMALIA (UNTMIS)

Highlights

- Advocacy for attaining a minimum 30 per cent Women's Quota.
- United Nations in Somalia Celebrates International Women's Day.
- Women Leaders Advocate for Inclusion in Puntland Government.
- Empowering Women in Somali Politics.
- Strengthening Women's Advocacy through Capacity Building.
- Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme Delivers for Somali Women.
- Women Call for Climate Action.
- UN marks the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign in Somalia.
- Global Open Day on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).
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- Consultation with Women in the Public Sector.



Somali Women Leaders Push for the 30 per cent Quota for Women

February – April 2024 | Mogadishu

Between February and April Somali Women leaders ramped up their advocacy for the minimum 30 per cent quota for women's political representation, calling for more inclusion in decision-making roles across all levels of government. The push for greater women political participation is part of broader effort to challenge historical gender inequalities and ensure that Somali women participate in influencing the future of their country.

During this period, UNTMIS played a vital role in supporting these efforts by organizing dialogues, capacity-building workshops and media campaigns. These activities were designed to empower women leaders, train female candidates and raise public awareness about the importance of women's political participation. By fostering engagement between women leaders and local communities the UN in Somalia has been instrumental in advocacy for gender parity in governance, contributing significantly to Somali women's push for meaningful representation.

On **18 February** in Mogadishu, the women's caucus chairs in the Senate and House of the People -Senator Saredo Mohamed Hassan and Honorable Suhur Haji Culusow (respectively) – held a meeting with members of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission (ICRIC) committees to present women priority issues including the inclusion of a minimum 30 per cent quota in the constitution. Following intense dialogue, ICRIC agreed to consider the inputs and contributions made by the women leaders.

On **19 March**, in a bold move, women MPs led by Senator Saredo Mohamed Hassan staged a protest parliamentary proceeding in Mogadishu. This protest highlighted the frustration

The Integrated Gender Office [IGO] provides technical leadership and guidance for the Mission's work on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. UNTMIS is mandated to ensure women's full and meaningful participation in peace and political processes, including mediation, reconciliation efforts, peacebuilding, elections and security sector reform. The IGO is led by a Senior Gender Advisor (SGA), who serves as the principal advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary General SRSG and provides technical advice, strategic guidance and support to the Deputy SRSG-Political, the DSRSG/RC/HC, UNSOM components, and the UN Gender Theme Group.

The IGO works closely with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to support government and civil society partners advance the WPS agenda in Somalia, including in all peace and political processes.

This 2024 Annual Newsletter highlights key achievements and ongoing efforts made in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda for a more inclusive and equitable Somalia.



Note: The UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSO) closed its operations on 31 October 2024, and was succeeded by the UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) as of 1 November 2024, in line with the UN Security Council's resolution 2753.



with the lack of transparency in consultations regarding the proposed 30 percent quota. The protest served as a powerful reminder of the obstacles women face in their fight for representation as well as a call to action for Somali women to unite and defend their political rights.

This period of intensified advocacy demonstrates both the resilience of Somali women and the critical importance of continued support from national and international actors. The combined efforts of Somali women leaders and the UN in Somalia have laid the groundwork for a more inclusive political landscape, though the path to true equality remains a difficult journey.

Somali women's sustained advocacy to ensure a women's quota in the legal framework resulted in the adoption of Article 47(7) which provides for "Ensuring women's participation in legislative assemblies and political parties, with quotas regulated by laws enacted by the Federal Parliament of Somalia." In November 2024, Somalia enacted the following three election-related laws, which all contain the 30 per cent quota for women: the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Law, the Political Associations /Political Parties Law and the National Electoral Law. The legal provisions in the three election-related laws aim to enhance women's participation in political and public life, promoting equitable representation and power-sharing within Somali society.



UN Somalia Commemorates International Women's Day

13 March 2024 | Mogadishu

United Nations in Somalia celebrated International Women's Day by spotlighting the importance of investing in women for a more inclusive society. The event, themed "Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress", highlighted the resilience and contributions of Somali women, raised awareness about gender discrimination and called for greater investment in women and girls to promote gender equality.

The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Raisedon Zenenga and UNSOS Officer-in-Charge, Ms.

Qurat ul-Ain Sadozai stressed the need for initiatives like capacity building and work environment improvement for women. The event also featured the "Girls Take Over" initiative and an art exhibition showcasing Somali women's challenges such as high maternal mortality rates. UN officials reiterated the urgency of accelerating progress towards gender equality, especially as women and girls in Somalia bear disproportionate impact from conflict and displacement.

Women Leaders Advocate for Inclusion in Puntland Government

7-8 January 2024 | Puntland

On **7 and 8 January**, women leaders, including former minister and presidential aspirant Zainab A. Jama Elmin Shamhaad, gathered to advocate for a more inclusive political environment in Puntland. The women leaders met with newly elected president Said Abdullahi Deni to discuss the inclusion of women in government and other public roles, despite challenges, including of financial barriers and patriarchy to women candidacy and leadership. The leaders pushed for greater female representation. Again, on **29 January**, women advocacy groups gathered to meet with President Said Abdullahi Deni. The women urged the President to include them in key leadership roles within the government, highlighting the significant challenges they faced due to the clan-based selection process, which often excluded women from such positions. The president has accepted the request of the women, due to the advocacy efforts in Puntland, the cabinet has six female ministers, three ministers and three deputies for the first time in the history of Puntland.

On **May 27**, an awareness event was held in Garowe to promote women's political participation ahead of district council elections in Nugal, Puntland. The event was organized by the Ministry of Women Development and Family Affairs, along with several women's civil society organizations, including HAYDI, Hanbile Youth Initiative, Somali Development Organization, Somali Women Legal Advocacy, and Somali Women in Law, with support from the UNTMIS Integrated Gender Office. Female candidates had the opportunity to present their manifestos to the media and engage with the public. Key speakers, including Deputy Minister of Women Mrs. Saido Hussein, Commissioner Ubah Abdullahi, and Deputy Chair of Puntland Non-State Actors Association Mr. Mohamed Ali, encouraged support for female candidates to ensure greater women's representation in local governance. This initiative is part of ongoing efforts to strengthen women's meaningful participation in Somalia's political landscape.

On **20 October**, in Gardo Puntland, on retreat of PEC Puntland election commission, which invited all election stakeholders, Amina Abdulkadir of PDRC and member of the civil society advocacy group presented, and in her presentation she emphasized and highlighted the importance of legalization of women quota and the minority groups, the civil society advocacy group developed strategy to support women political participation and inclusive politics in Puntland with the support of UNTMIS.

Empowering Women in Somali Politics

14 January 2024 | Mogadishu



Fawzia Yusuf Haji Aden
Nominated for AU Commission Chairperson

The Federal Government of Somalia's nomination of Hon. Fawzia Yusuf Haji Adan as a candidate for the chairperson of the Africa Union Commission was a significant step in breaking gender barriers. She

was the first Somali woman to run for the presidency in 2022 and her nomination was significant in that it demonstrated the Federal Government of Somalia's support for a female candidate for an important position. However, the Federal Government of Somalia's subsequent withdrawal of her nomination sparked public criticism, with many viewing it as a setback for women. Women's rights groups expressed disappointment, seeing the decision as a missed opportunity to elevate female leadership both nationally and across Africa.

Puntland Appoints Three Female Ministers to Cabinet

28 February 2024 | Garowe

In a significant move, Puntland's newly re-elected President Said Abdullahi Deni appointed three women to his 21-member cabinet heading ministries of Women and Family Affairs, Aid and Humanitarian Affairs, and the Youth and Sports. This marks the first time three full female ministers have served in the Puntland Cabinet, reflecting a significant step towards gender equality and the inclusion of women in high-level decision-making roles within the region. Also, this appointment demonstrates a commitment to diversifying leadership and ensuring women's voices are represented at the highest levels of government, which is crucial for fostering inclusive governance and addressing gender-specific issues effectively.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S ADVOCACY THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING



Media training for women parliamentarians and CSO women leaders

1 April 2024 | Mogadishu

On **1 April**, in Mogadishu, UNTMIS delivered a media training session for members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and civil society leaders to enhance their communication skills in advocating for the 30 per cent minimum quota for women. The training equipped participants with techniques to handle interviews, craft compelling messages, and navigate media interactions effectively. Emphasizing the power of the media in shaping public opinion, the session reinforced the need to sustain campaign momentum and leverage media platforms to amplify their advocacy efforts.



CSO Women leaders training on electoral systems and Temporary Special Measures

23-24 April 2024 | Mogadishu

On **23 and 24 April**, in Mogadishu, the Integrated Gender office and Integrated Electoral Support Group Office (IESG) facilitated a two-day training in Mogadishu for 31 women civil society leaders on electoral systems and temporary special measures. The session aimed to enhance understanding of strategies to promote women's representation in elected bodies. This initiative is part of the UNTMIS ongoing support to strengthen women's political participation and inclusion in Somalia.





Women in Security trained on Women, Peace and Security

28 May 2024 | Baidoa

On **28 May 2024**, UNTMIS IGO facilitated a gender and women, Peace and Security training engaging six women in security professionals from the police, correctional and prosecution sectors. A meeting with women leaders from 11 civil society organizations discussed ongoing programs, women-led initiatives to combat gender-based violence and enhance women's participation and representation in various spheres.

Clan Elders Sensitized on Women's Right to Participation

28 May 2024 | Garowe

In another effort to support women participation in governance, a two-day workshop was held in Garowe, focusing on educating clan elders about the importance of women's political participation. The workshop aimed to reinforce the role of women in traditional decision-making process and to advocate for their meaningful contributions to society.



Women MPs trained on Electoral Systems and Temporary Special Measures

19 November 2024 | Mogadishu

UN Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) Integrated Gender Office and Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) facilitated one-day knowledge exchange session on Temporary Special Measures (TSM) and Electoral Systems, at the Airport Hotel in Mogadishu. The session aimed to strengthen the capacity of Somali women parliamentarians to advocate for the inclusion of TSM, such as quotas and reserved seats, in election-related legislation, promoting greater women's representation in governance.

Integrating a gender perspective in local mediation processes

18 December 2024 | Beletweyne, Hirshabelle

On **18 December**, the Integrated Gender Office briefed forty (eight women, 32 men) participants on integrating gender and women's participation into the design and conduct of the ongoing conflict mediation process between the Adan Dhiblawe and Subiye Dhiblawe of Mohamed Muse sub-clans of the Abgal clan, Ara Hun village, Raga Ele district, Middle Shabelle region, Hirshabelle state. Participants were sensitized to ensure that an analysis of the conflict draws out its differentiated impact on men, women, boys, and girls. The need to consult women and girls on their needs, concerns and priorities was emphasized. Participants were informed of the need to ensure that women, men, boys and girls are all represented and participate in decisionmaking and monitoring of the reconciliation process equally and safely in an inclusive manner, without leaving anyone behind. The briefing highlighted the need to attain a minimum of 30 per cent of women's quota in representation and participation.



Women, Peace and Protection Joint Program delivers for Somali Women

19-20 May 2024 | Baidoa

On **19 May**, the women Peace and Protection Joint Programme, in collaboration with the Southwest state Community Peace Working groups, made significant strides in strengthening peacebuilding coordination efforts across the region.

On **20 May 2024**, Somali Girls Right development and Hear Foundation launched an impactful awareness and advocacy campaign across three IDP camps in Baidoa focusing on promoting gender equality and increasing women participation in peacebuilding and security initiatives.





11 July 2024 | Mogadishu

On **11 July**, in Mogadishu Ms. Asha Abdulle Siyad, the chair of the civil society Reference group of the Women, Peace and Protection (WPP) Joint Programme, virtually briefed the Peace building Global Group of Friends Meeting in New York. The objective of the briefing was for participants to hear from a civil society representative the impact of the WPP joint Programme to advocate for its contribution.



Women Civil Society Call for Climate Action

3 June 2024 | Mogadishu

On **3 June**, a virtual meeting was organized by Integrated Gender Office in Mogadishu for Civil society Women leaders to discuss the critical issues of "women, climate, peace, and security." They highlighted Somalia's vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather conditions, emphasizing the urgent need for preventive measures and concrete solutions. They also pointed out that frequent and intense droughts, floods, and food insecurity, along with increased competition over scarce resources, adversely affect marginalized groups and fuel tensions, impacting stability and security in Somalia.

The participants urged the UN and the international community to support civil society organizations in advancing the climate change agenda and addressing its negative effects on communities, particularly where women and girls bear the brunt of these vulnerabilities. They requested the UN to provide training for policymakers to integrate climate change issues into their policies and assist with mapping the Green Climate Fund to enable resource access for their work. Additionally, the women called for regular meetings with the UN and demanded a meeting with the international community to discuss climate change.

This event underscores the importance of collective action and support to combat climate change and its impacts, ensuring a more secure and stable future for all.

Special Representative James Swan emphasized the need for legislation to criminalize GBV and ensure justice for survivors.

Under the global theme "UNITE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls," the campaign called for greater financial and policy commitments. Throughout the 16 days, the UN collaborated with the government and civil society to advocate for stronger protections for women and girls, reaffirming its commitment to a violence-free future.

High-Level Global Open Day on Women, Peace, and Security

4 December 2024 | Mogadishu

The Global Open Day on Women, Peace, and Security was co-hosted by the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General [ASRSG] for Somalia, James Swan together with the Minister of Family and Human Rights Development [MFHRD], His Excellency Lt General Bashir Mohamed Jama, Federal Government of Somalia. The event was also graced by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of African Union Transition Mission [ATMIS], Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, Deputy Minister [MFHRD], women leaders and members of senior UN leadership. The event highlighted Somalia's progress in women's political participation: ASRSG Swan celebrated Somalia's progress milestones, including the adoption of four chapters of the amended constitution, mandating future legislation for a women's quota, and the NIEBC law ensuring a 30% women's quota. He commended the advocacy efforts

UN Somalia Launches 16 Days of Activism Against GBV

26 November 2024 | Mogadishu

The United Nations in Somalia launched the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, urging authorities to increase investment in combating GBV. Acting UN





of the women's parliamentary caucus and civil society organizations and urged the full implementation of the 30% quota across all levels, while reaffirming UN's commitment to supporting Somalia's efforts for women's participation in peace and decision-making processes. Amb. Souef emphasized women's active roles in peacebuilding and leadership, noting their increasing representation in ATMIS peacekeeping contingents. He also highlighted ATMIS's commitment to preventing and responding to gender-based violence (GBV), supporting displaced communities, and empowering women and girls. Minister Jama called for prioritizing women's inclusion in peace processes, achieving the 30 per cent electoral quota, and strengthening legal protection against GBV. He stressed empowering women to lead climate action and participate in economic decision-making. He also emphasized finalizing the implementation of UNSCR 1325 Action Plan and ratifying CEDAW. The Minister called for collective efforts across sectors to advance gender equality. Women leaders - parliamentarians and civil society – called on the leaders to enhance women representation at all levels (appointed, elected and nominated positions) and mechanisms for implementing the women's quota. The event underscored the collective efforts needed to advance gender equality and empower women in Somalia.



Senior Leadership Advocacy Model Against Gender Based Violence (SLAM-GBV) Initiative Launched

4 December 2024 | Mogadishu

Senior leaders from the UN, African Union, and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) launched the Senior Leadership Advocacy Model Against Gender Based Violence (SLAM-GBV) initiative in Mogadishu. This initiative aims to accelerate advocacy and strengthen accountability to end gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girls in Somalia. The leaders - UN's Acting Special Representative of the Secretary General, James Swan, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of African Union Transition Mission [ATMIS], Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef, and Minister of Family and Human Rights Development [MFHRD], Federal Government of Somalia, His Excellency Lt General Bashir Mohamed Jama, pledged to collaborate with all stakeholders to address threats and vulnerabilities faced by women and girls. They committed to advocating for policies and enhancing programs that prioritize the protection and empowerment of Somali women and girls. These events mark significant steps towards creating a safer and more equitable future for women and girls in Somalia.



Meeting of Women in the Public Sector

22 December 2024 | Mogadishu

On **22 December**, UNTMIS (ROLSIG and the Integrated Gender Office) convened a meeting of Women in the Public Sector to discuss barriers to women's professional development as well as identify support mechanisms to enhance women's professional development goals and leadership skills. Participants highlighted their key challenges; capacity development need, including leadership, negotiation, and gender-responsive planning; and the value of coaching/mentorship as well as public outreach. The meeting agreed for future meetings to be organized in ministries so as to explore support mechanisms.