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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[03 February 2020]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Human rights defenders in Somalia and South Sudan

Preamble

The environment in which human rights defenders live in remains threatened in both Somalia and South Sudan, despite government claims in both countries to the contrary. The situation in both countries Somalia and South Sudan is similar due to the spread of armed conflict in them which led to the suppression and restriction of freedoms of opinion and expression, as well as the restriction on human rights defenders in General.

Hence, Maat association for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) presents this written intervention to figure out developments takes place regards human rights defenders in both countries.

Developments in the area of human rights defenders

The internal repression mechanism continues to confront the reform advocates regards human rights defenders in both countries in recent years.

In fact, Somalia face various challenges regarding human rights defenders and other independent actors who work in the same field. Lawyers act as human rights defenders as they defend human rights defenders by providing legal advice or defending them in court. If they don't act like that then the entire society will suffer from its consequences, which indicate that defending human rights consider as a crime.

Maat association warns that suppress journalists, human rights defenders and political leaders will negatively affect the upcoming elections that probably will takes place in 2020. As human rights defenders are responsible to follow and monitor the integrity of upcoming elections which is not accepted by the federal authorities it is also appear during last constitution drafting process.

This is the same thing happened in the previous elections in 2016 – 2017 when 13 tribal leaders and election delegates were killed in addition to the continued violent attacks on the participants in the electoral process which led to killing 29 from tribal leaders and election delegates including three women. In addition to A number of journalists, human rights defenders and political leaders were attacked and face other forms of harassment and Intimidation, Till Now only two of the 44 documented cases of killings have been investigated. Hence we warn that the continued human rights situation in Somalia may lead to a repeat the same scenario in the 2020 elections.

As for journalists who are responsible to report human rights violations, information had been delivered to Maat association about a number of Journalists arrested who work in the area of detecting corruption, also this ensured in the recent campaign launched by the federal government on journalists in 2019.

According to Information gathered by the Secretary-General of the Syndicate of Journalists in Somalia" Abdullah Ahmed Moamen" the government has arrested an unprecedented number of Somali journalists which is reached to 38 one, most of them were arrested while their Media coverage of the militant attacks, The rest were arrested because of the publication of reports on corruption. These journalists were either beaten, shot or threatened by government security force.

On July 30, 2019, police in Somaliland arrested four journalists from the private television channel "Ariel" due to corruption complaints about the National Service which is part of a government program for employment.

Maat Association also points to the narrowing of the blogger "Abdel-Fattah Hassan Ali", lately he was arrested by police for 6 hours at Kismayo police station this took place in early 2020 just because of arranging a workshop for community members also he was not allowed to contact his lawyer or His family.

In South Sudan, despite the government's decision there in early 2020 to release 31 prisoners, including prominent economist "Peter Pierre Ajac" who was sentenced in June 2019 to a two-year prison for disturbing peace after his interviews with foreign media this happened After

his arrest for Treason which was later gotten done. However, Maat still expresses its concern about the information that is still being reported about the arrest, tracking and detention of the human rights activists, journalists, and suspected by the National Security Agency.

Also, justice is still absent from the case of human rights lawyer Killing his name is "Dong Samuel Lawak " and The political opponent "Agri Idre" who were kidnapped from the Kenyan capital "Nairobi" three years ago. However that the government of South Sudan denied knowing their Current Place the responsibility of Investigation is Fully rests on it. Maat Association also call for investigation with the five persons listed by the US Treasury who were responsible for the disappearance and murder in this case.

Besids, The authorities in Juba continue to follow "Bill Botros" who is director of the South Sudan Human Rights Association for the Defense Human Rights which is a non-profit organization based in Juba that monitors and documents human rights violations in South Sudan.

Recommendations

Maat Association for Peace, Development and Human Rights calls on the governments of Somalia and South Sudan to:

- In accordance with the South Sudan Peace Agreement of 2018, Maat calls the government of South Sudan to abide by the articles of the agreement that prisoners of war and detainees Should be released immediately. Also abide by the terms of Hostilities end agreement which was signed by the two parties on December 21, 2017 that require the immediate release of political prisoners.
- We recommend the a fair investigation regarding the case of human rights defenders killing "Dong Samuel Luac" and political opponent "Agri Idri".
- We call on the Somali government to stop suppressing and prosecuting human rights defenders, as well as opening a safe work environment for their work, especially in the elections that will take place in 2020 in Somalia.
- We call for ending the suppressing practices over journalists who Work in human rights field and also end the last campaign against them which began in 2019.