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IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251 OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”

**Written statement* submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of
the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic & Other Minorities, a non-governmental
organization on the Roster**

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

[16 June 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Statement on Somaliland

The right to self-determination, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and International Covenants of Human Rights, states that “all peoples have the right of self-determination” and that by virtue of that right they are free to determine their political status to pursue their economic, social and cultural development.¹

The UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June 1993 affirmed the right to self-determination, as part of international law of human rights. Intrinsically, it has been recognized that respect for the right to self-determination is a fundamental condition for the enjoyment of other human rights and fundamental freedoms, be they civil, political, economic, social or cultural.

IFPRERLOM, whilst reaffirming the principles enshrined in the UN Charter concerning the sovereign equality, political independence, territorial integrity of States, self-determination of peoples and the non-use of force or threat of use of force in international relations, calls upon the Human Rights Council (HRC) to pay special attention to cases in which peaceful movements for self-determination are met with suppression and subject to grave human rights violations.

Reaffirming also that by the virtue of the principle of self-determination, all peoples have the right to determine freely their political status and to pursue freely their economic, social and cultural development; IFPRERLOM is concerned at developments that contribute to decreasing stability and threatening peace and security.

IFPRERLOM furthermore requests the UNHRC to consider the adverse effects of lack of international recognition in the case of Somaliland and urges all States to support its peaceful initiatives to find a stable solution for its people, consistent with the right to self-determination worldwide.

The Case of Somaliland

The former British Somaliland Protectorate became independent on 26 June 1960² and was the first Somali country to become a member of the UN. Shortly thereafter Somaliland and the former *Somalia Italiana* united to form the Somali Republic. However, the initially hopeful union ended with tragedy culminating in a brutal ten-year war lasting until 1991, when the former Somali Republic disintegrated. Subsequently, the people of Somaliland proclaimed the political independence of Somaliland as it existed within the boundaries of the former colonial territory of the British Somaliland Protectorate. Gradually order was restored; refugees started to return and Somaliland embarked on the long process of rebuilding. In 2001 voters opted in “a free and fair election for a new constitution that boldly proclaimed the case for independence”.³

¹ http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm

² The State of Somaliland received independence from Great Britain on 26 June 2006 by Royal Proclamation of HM Queen Elizabeth II

³ Jeffrey Herbst, Princeton University in The Washington Post, 2 January 2004

Somaliland's commitment to peace and stability of the region and good neighbourly relations includes full respect for the unity and territorial integrity of states. It stands neither for cessation, nor for the revision, of Africa's borders.⁴ Its demand for recognition therefore affirms unreserved respect of the borders received at independence from Great Britain, and is consistent with principles of the African Union.

Despite the lack of rule and troubled fate of Somalia, Somaliland has accomplished extraordinary achievements in a wider environment beset with instability and poverty. Since 1991 it has carefully started to build and strengthen civil society and put in place modern democratic institutions to govern the country.

Somaliland has accomplished peace and has established a stable society based on the rule of law, and is as one commentator labelled "a bulwark against extremist international anarchy and terrorism."⁵ However, the lack of international recognition continues to present hurdles; seriously hindering economic development, discouraging the burgeoning private sector and eroding public trust in the country's future. Some observers fear this may bring about a political downturn resulting in social anarchy and lawlessness.

On the basis of not being dragged into war and instability with the spill-over effects of regional insecurity, Somaliland calls for international recognition to secure the goals of peace, stability and good governance and further develop existing pillars of stability and democracy.

Fifteen years after Somaliland declared its independence; it has yet to be formally recognised by any country. This has meant that Somaliland cannot sign agreements with multilateral donors such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund, and has furthermore prevented meaningful bilateral development assistance from other governments, including substantive loans to rehabilitate a rundown infrastructure.

In its transition programme to democracy, Somaliland held successful internationally monitored local government and presidential elections in 2002 and 2003 respectively. Furthermore, peaceful multi-party elections were held in Somaliland in September 2005, demonstrating the determination of the people and their government to preserve hard-won peace and stability.⁶

In context of the current and dramatically deteriorating situation in Somalia and its capital Mogadishu, as widely reported by international media during May and June 2006, IFPRERLOM recognises that the current situation in Somalia demands the urgent attention of the world community.

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), an organization promoting human rights and democracy in its Member regions worldwide, stated in a press release on 08 June 2006 that the descent into further instability and hostility in Somalia; "...demonstrates the need for a renewed approach by the UN and the international

⁴ Hon. Edna Adan Ismail, G8 Arena, available at: <http://www.somalilandgov.com/G8Somaliland.pdf>

⁵ Analysis by Dr. Bob Arnot, NBC News, 18 May 2001, available at: http://www.somalilandnet.com/somaliland_news/somaliland/april2001/9187.shtml

⁶ UNHCR Global Appeal 2006, Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=4371d1a70&page=home>

community as a whole. In particular, the current situation in Somalia should serve as a wakeup call for a reviewed international approach to Somaliland.” UNPO goes on to emphasise that Somaliland, in stark contrast to the situation in Somalia, “has managed to establish and develop a stable form of government and continues to enjoy stability and progress as a functioning constitutional democracy. Yet, the international community has so far failed to recognize the efforts of Somaliland and its strong commitment to democratic governance, peace, stability and respect for human rights.” The statement concludes that reconsidering international recognition of Somaliland and acknowledging, as well as assisting to further build on its achievements, could represent an important alternative solution to bring about durable stability and peace in the Horn of Africa.⁷

IFPRERLOM urges the international community

to invite experts to elaborate a working paper on the content, applicability and implementation of the right to self-determination as a contribution to international peace, stability and security; to lead to a possible re-conceptualization of the right to self-determination in a broader sense, and reflect how treaty bodies and other UN mechanism can effectively implement this right with a view towards conflict prevention;

to request the UN as a whole to pro-actively engage itself in the prevention and resolution of conflicts involving states and peoples or minority communities and in doing so respect and promote the implementation of self-determination in the broad sense;

to support Somaliland in its efforts for peace and stability and struggle for development and human security; to promote friendly relations between Somaliland and neighbouring areas;

to provide concrete development assistance to enable conditions to promote economic, social and human development; and

to recognize the notable progress made in Somaliland within its de facto borders, and to see Somaliland as a starting point for a stabilization, and ultimately democratization, process for the larger region.

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⁷ http://www.unpo.org/news_detail.php?arg=60&par=4654