

The Role of Somaliland Lawyers in Human Rights Protection

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Abstract: This looks in summary to the role and responsibilities of Somaliland lawyers in human rights protection. This article begins with an introduction of the problem at hand with an overview of human rights in Somaliland, after that it moves into defining exactly what human rights are, and defining who the human right protectors are and what they do to protect human rights and how they themselves deserve to be protected while performing their duties, as well as an overview of the available mechanisms for human rights protection both locally and internationally, after that the article takes a look at the historical context of the human rights situation in Somaliland and conceptualizes human rights protection in Somaliland looking at the foremost important components of human rights including children's rights, women's rights, prisoner's rights, and minority rights. The thesis takes a look at the effective strategies that should be employed by lawyers and law firms to protect human rights and fight against violations.

On the basis of research findings, the following recommendations are put way forward to empower Somaliland lawyers to protect human rights, awareness at the community level, increase the awareness arising on human rights, help people get access to their rights and increasing government engagement to the stake holder outside of urban areas. Develop agents of human rights protection among traditional leaders, elders, community leaders, teachers, politicians, government officials and international agencies.

Keywords: Human rights protection, Human rights violations, Lawyers

INTRODUCTION

A lawyer is a professional who goes by many names, including "Solicitor," "Barrister," "Counsel," "Advocate," "Legal Practitioner," and "Attorney." A person who is qualified under the terms of this Act to practice as a barrister or as a barrister and solicitor, either generally or for the purposes of any specific office or proceedings, is referred to as a "legal practitioner" under the Legal Practitioners Act 7 [1]. "The Court-room Advocate, Judges inclusive, are readily the chief image-makers of the profession and, therefore, bear a proportionately heavy burden in the context of the human rights struggle. For our purposes, we would classify Lawyers into four main groups, namely: Lawyers on the Bench, Lawyers at the Bar, Lawyers in Public Administration, and Lawyers in the Academia" [2]. As a result, applying human rights law mostly entails providing humanitarian aid. In these situations, the

lawyer should be more concerned with ensuring justice than with reaping financial rewards. Unfortunately, the majority of attorneys are more focused on making money. Prior to the recent establishment of formal human rights organizations, human rights advocacy was carried out by a small number of lawyers without the backing of any national or international organizations [3]. Human rights have become a common language of humanity everywhere. Human rights are real and they matter. They shape states policies and give legitimacy to governmental actions [4]. Acts of impunity are fiercely opposed when human rights breaches are corrected. Respecting and defending human rights are how civilized states defend their survival. However, none of the legal guarantees, including those pertaining to women's equality and free and fair elections, are secure or valuable unless the populace is willing to fight for them and to assist others in doing the same, especially when it is not convenient to do so [5]. Human rights are inalienable

rights that belong to every person, irrespective of their gender, color, country, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other characteristic [6].

The desire of people and nations to reassert and restore the essential worth and dignity of man after the numerous genocides and human crimes in that war led to the initial roots of human rights as we know them today in the late 1940s, following World War II. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General session on December 10, 1948, marking the first session to debate human rights [7]. However, the theoretical foundations of human rights trace back to the Religious texts such as The Holy Quran [8] and the Torah, as well as subsequently in the 12th-century Natural Law Theories. Although there have been significant advancements in the protection and enhancement of human rights worldwide, some nations continue to commit heinous violations of these rights, such as North Korea, where people are denied their freedom, their right to self-expression, and their right to information, and Syria, where the Bashar al Assad regime has committed numerous atrocities. Sexual offences against women and girls are a persistent problem in India.

Many African dictators, like Museveni of Uganda and Afwerki of Eritrea, subject their people to grave human rights atrocities. Even with more focused reforms in African nations and the establishment of organizations like administrative justice agencies, human rights violations remain rampant [9].

Declaration on Human Rights Defenders

This article takes its starting point from the “Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of individuals, groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and fundamental Freedoms” (hereinafter “the declaration”), commonly known as the Declaration on Human Rights defenders. In the 1980s, there were increasing concerns about threats faced by human rights defenders [10]. Concerned by these developments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) demanded that the United Nations and other international organisations act to close the protection gap for human rights advocates. As a result, the UN Commission on Human Rights, which is now the Human Rights Council, started pleading with governments to defend and advance human rights, stressing the necessity of defenders' protection for the successful execution and realisation of human rights. A working group was formed by the Commission in 1985 to develop a declaration regarding the protection of human rights defenders. The UN General Assembly adopted the declaration as Resolution A/RES/53/144 in 1999, following around 14 years of talks [11]. By acknowledging the presence of human rights defenders and the necessity of their protection, the proclamation established a precedent. More than fifty

people made up the working group that was entrusted with drafting the declaration. These participants included several international NGOs as well as members of the UN Commission on Human Rights, which has since been superseded by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Reaching a consensus on this declaration was not a simple undertaking for nations with divergent opinions. The cold war era was causing tensions between the east and the west at the time the proclamation was being drafted. As a result, it is well known that members of the working group have conflicting goals [12].

Defining the Human Rights Protectors and their Functions

Human rights defenders are those who actively promote, uphold, and safeguard the fundamental rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a nonviolent manner. The human rights of the average citizen are far more in jeopardy when civil rights activists are killed with impunity, even though a far greater number of unknown peasants, workers, students, indigenous people, and refugees may always be more at risk than well-known human rights activists. These protectors may include activists in human rights organizations and NGOs [13]. According to Sundkvist (2023), student associations, youth groups, and women's rights organizations are also important human rights defenders. They have a significant influence on the advancement of women's and children's rights in many societies. Women's rights activists use the constitution as a key tool in the fight for gender equality and have demanded a gender equality model that goes beyond the sameness/difference paradigm[14]. When it comes to protecting human rights, religious organizations can be used both to uphold and defend those rights as well as to oppress and abuse them. One example of this is Catholic Charities USA, which funds initiatives to end homelessness and oversees the provision of food and shelter services across the country[15]. Among the most well-known instances of religious organizations violating and suppressing human rights are the rape scandals involving Jim and Tammy Fay Bakker in the 1980s. Jim and his spouse were well-known televangelists who both financially and sexually mistreated their followers. [16]. There is also the case of Gilbert Deya, a Kenyan evangelist in the United Kingdom who sold olive oil claiming it cured HIV and cancer, as well as being heavily involved in abducting and trafficking children [17].

In addition, community-based organizations (CBOs) such as farmers' associations and nomad associations, as well as politicians, trade unions, lawyers, journalists, academics, teachers, doctors, and other health professionals, as well as victim support groups, can all be considered human rights

protectors.

Investigating and publicizing human rights breaches, such as the horrifying war crimes in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Myanmar, Burundi, and Yemen, is one of the vital tasks carried out by human rights protectors [18]. Another function of human rights protectors is to make recommendations and seek remedies for abuses, promoting awareness of human rights and public discussion, lobby government officials and political authorities and finally supporting other human rights defenders. A democratic context makes it easier for human rights defenders to operate and incentivizes them to continue activities and pursue information that puts them at risk [19].

The Range of Somaliland Human Rights Protectors' Work and their Achievements

Some of the work of human rights protectors in Somaliland include freedom of opinion, association and expression - including press freedom, democracy, free and fair elections, NGO activities, justice and the rule of law – against arbitrary detentions, kidnappings, disappearances, unfair trials, torture, inhumane treatment of prisoners, the death penalty, extra-judicial executions and political killings. Human rights defenders in Somaliland protect women's rights – against violence and against women and female genital mutilation, working for empowerment and non-discrimination of women. Somaliland has minority groups who have their equal treatment rights tirelessly protected by Somaliland human rights defenders. Development and humanitarian activism - poverty reduction, child rights, disability advocacy, HIV/AIDS, environmental protection, refugees and internally displaced persons as well as promoting peace and reconciliation.

Human rights protectors achieved great things in Somaliland including influencing the government and faction leaders to make human rights a priority, making officials accountable to the law and citizens, exposing and stopping abuses, supporting victims of abuses, creating better public awareness of rights, building a dynamic and responsible civil society, seeking justice and compensation for victims of abuses, dealing with abuses of the past for the sake of the future as well as supporting and protecting other human rights defenders. Despite many problems and the dearth of external involvement, Somaliland human protectors have achieved much with very little outside assistance [20].

History of Human Rights Violations in Somaliland

Repression in the Siad Barre Era

After a botched military campaign against Ethiopia in 1977–1978—which was followed by a coup attempt in 1978—and the emergence of two significant armed rebel groups, SSD

and SNM—the regime of Somalia's dictator Siad Barre was severely undermined in the late 1970s. The latter was formed as a result of numerous human rights violations by the dictator's regime, including unequal political representation, unfair economic practices, uneven distribution of development resources, and growing hostility from refugee paramilitary groups armed by the Somali government. The latter group was primarily from the Isaq clans in Northern Somalia, or what is now known as Somaliland [21]. The government suppressed SNM incursions. Students in the northwest city of Hargeisa protested against the Hargeisa Group's arrest and conviction in February 1982. In Hargeisa and other North West cities, a curfew was enforced and some 200 students were placed in jail. The military and police were granted tremendous powers under harsh emergency legislation. These were employed to suppress the Issaq community who were thought to be SNM supporters. There was an establishment of a Mobile Military Court and Regional Security Council with the authority to make arrests and execute people. Civilians began to distrust the Hangash, a police agency that was created after 1978 to keep an eye on the military. These security forces operated nationwide in 1982–1991 and made large-scale arrests and detentions without trial, extrajudicial executions and torture [22].

Government repression and counter-insurgency tactics took various forms. Freedom of movement was restricted with the introduction of identity cards in 1986 by the military governor, General Mohamed Said Hersi ('Morgan'). Vehicle owners had to obtain written permission to travel between towns. Issaq businessmen suffered discriminatory practices. Livestock was taxed and confiscated along with other property. In March 1983 *qaat* was banned and *qaat* producers had their farms destroyed. As the pastoral economy was considered the source of manpower and economic base of the SNM, the rural population in the North West was subjected to a scorched-earth military campaign of asset stripping, killings, destruction of water reservoirs, burning of farms and planting of landmines. Issaqs faced discrimination in employment and access to services. 'Self-reliance' became a political imposition as parents were forced to pay education fees to supplement teachers' pay and equipment [23].

In the North West, the military established itself as the ruling class and used violence to hold onto power and privileges. But they had other interests outside politics. Perversion was rampant. Military transfers to the North West became highly sought-after after 1982 as a means of generating income. Arrests made without cause were a typical way to obtain money. Bribes were paid in exchange for better prison circumstances, to avoid torture, or to be released from jail. The Hargeisa police station, often known as the "meat market" or *saylada dadka*, served as a hub for negotiations [24]. It is

estimated that some 10, 000 people were killed. Human rights organizations have estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 civilians had been killed by January 1990. The flight of 400,000 to 500,000 Somalis from the North West to Ethiopia and surrounding countries was one of the fastest and largest forced movements of people recorded in Africa. Many thousands also fled southwards.

Human Rights in Somaliland Post Independence from Somalia in 1991

The state of human rights in Somaliland is noticeably better than in other parts of the former Somalia. Although Somaliland experienced a brief localized civil war from 1994 to 1996, it has escaped the vicious factional conflict that has plagued Mogadishu and several areas of the south. Rehabilitating the political, social, and physical infrastructure has advanced significantly under the leadership of the Somaliland government in Hargeisa. The Somaliland constitution's Chapter I, Part III, provides protection for human rights.

Human Rights Watch claims that the Somaliland government has committed grave abuses of human rights, such as the forcible deportation of 1,750 individuals, including women and children, from Laascaanod [25] while amnesty international reported that the displaced people were between 154,000 to 203,000 who fled to neighboring towns and villages in Somalia with some crossing the border to Ethiopia [26]. Amnesty International also criticized the persistence of the death penalty in Somaliland [27]. The authorities of Somaliland restricted freedom of expression in the media and arrested journalists such as the arrest of journalist Bushaaro who was sentenced to one year in prison on August, 15, 2023 [28]. That's why it's important to study the protection of human rights in Somaliland and the role of lawyers in its protection.

Children's Rights

'States parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development'.

Article 29 of the Somaliland Constitution

It is the duty of the Somaliland government to care for and educate children, particularly those who have no parents or guardians. The children left orphaned during the conflict are the responsibility of the government. The protracted period of war and turmoil in Somaliland has had a severe negative impact on the lives of numerous youngsters. Health systems, which fell apart in 1988, struggle to give newborns and young children even the most basic of care. A lack of basic drugs, inadequate infrastructure and equipment,

health workers who urgently need to upgrade their knowledge and skills, and low childhood vaccination rates resulted in high infant and under-five mortality rates as well as illness from poverty-related and preventable diseases. Many metropolitan centers have community efforts aimed at reestablishing educational opportunities, but few children, especially girls, have access to education. A "lost generation" of young people who were unable to obtain basic or technical education due to the civil war has been produced. Many young individuals in urban areas increase their usage of qaat because there aren't enough sports or recreation facilities available. For many families, child labor—especially for girls—is a necessary financial need.

There are between 150 and 350 boys living on the streets of Hargeisa, Boroma, and Berbera; street children have emerged as a new urban phenomenon. There is evidence to imply that these children are living on the streets either because their families have abandoned them during the conflict or because they work there to support their families. Many chew qaat, smell glue, and are easily taken advantage of. High levels of anxiety, sadness, and war trauma are reported in children as well as in the general population, according to unpublished research on the effects of war on 144 children and adolescents in Somaliland. Because the legislation is silent and because court officials and judicial power are compromised, vulnerable children in Somaliland are subject to abuses of their children's rights by bribery from victimizers [29].

Somaliland has a disproportionately high number of street children. This phenomenon is caused by the presence of a sizable population of refugees from Ethiopia, Yemen, and Syria as well as internally displaced people, which leaves many impoverished children without the necessary support network to stay off the streets. Addiction to substances like sniffing glue and Qat, which are regrettably common in Somaliland, is another issue. A significant contributing element is also the parents' lack of education. Lastly, a few additional significant causes of the problem of street children in Somaliland are misbehavior, violence in the home, orphanages, and peer pressure [30]. Due to the underdevelopment of support facilities for children and the lack of prioritization by the government of Somaliland for this issue, street children in Somaliland suffer from all manors of human rights violations. These children resort to child labor to support themselves and are often assaulted by older street children and robbed off their hard earned money, they face countless health issues due to sleeping in the bitter weather conditions and on the hard concrete or paved roads, and they usually resort to narcotics further exacerbating their mental and physical health issues.

Minority Rights

‘States shall take measures where required, to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law [31]

Most people believe that Somali society is homogenous with regard to religion, language, and ethnicity. Nonetheless, there are minority groups in the populations of Somalia and Somaliland; traditionally, their standing in society seems to have been derived from their lack of ties to major clan lineages and their professional specializations. Three major ethnic groups are regarded as minorities in Somaliland, where pastoral nomadic living is the predominant way of life and culture: the Tumul, Yibir, and Gaboye. They endure social and economic marginalization as well as social segregation. Historically, the Tumul people were skilled blacksmiths who crafted weapons such as knives, swords, arrowheads, amulets, and charms from metal. Traditionally, the Yibir and the Gaboye were hunters and leather workers who created decorations, saddles, amulets, belts, and prayer mats. All three groups were historically prohibited from owning property or animals, were not allowed to marry outside of their minority clans, and were not allowed to have political representation. The Tumul, Yibir, and Gaboye are viewed by the larger Somali community as "out-caste." In Somali poetry and proverbs, the terms "Midgan," "Yibir," and "Tumul" are derogatory and demeaning.

It is only lately that representatives of minority groups have started to push for change and fight for their rights, despite the fact that these groups have been the targets of prejudice for millennia. There is a fresh resolve that minority groups' voices should be heard, and a number of local NGOs focused on enhancing the social and economic circumstances of minority groups have formed (some of whom attended the workshop). These events demonstrate Somaliland's encouraging new openness to candidly and constructively address long-standing human rights challenges. There are countless cases of atrocious human rights violations committed against minority groups in Somaliland, for instance if a young person from the minority groups happens to marry or form a romantic relationship with an individual from the main clans, it is common for them to be brutalized, violently assaulted or even in many cases imprisoned, this happens because of the fact that children, especially boys, are a continuation of their clan's lineage, and for a clan's lineage to be intermixed with a minority group is seen as unspeakably vile and disgusting.

According to Mona Liban (2021) in an article describing the imprisonment of 14-year-old Subeida who married a Gabooye

boy "The Gabooye tribe face discrimination, unlimited access to public services and prejudice in the justice system". Mrs. Liban also noted that "it is not uncommon for parents to turn to the criminal justice system to punish 'disobedient' children" [32]

A report by Amnesty International (2005) details a protest lead by hundreds of individuals from minority clans in Hargeisa after the unjust killing of a prominent Minority community leader named Khadar Osman Dhabar by a Somaliland police officer, the protests lead to mass arrests of individuals deemed to be involved with the protests. Amnesty International described the prisoners as 'prisoners of conscience'.

According to a news report by Berbera Today (2017), Rooda Mukhtaar Yusuf, a girl from the Isaq clans of Somaliland who was engaged to be married to a Gabooye man, was kidnapped by her own family. Her hands, feet and neck were bound by rope and she was hanged off the roof by her hands. Rooda remained in that condition for 3 days [33].

A report by EUAA (2022) declared that "members of the Gabooye enjoy limited protection throughout Somalia. They are considered 'unclean' by dominant clans and they experience discrimination as a consequence. State institutions, which are dominated by majority group members do not offer protection to Gabooye for injustice and violations they experience (including sexual violence, looting or physical assaults), especially in Somaliland." The report adds "Furthermore, the Gabooye lack access to formal education (except Islamic learning), to economic resources and are largely politically excluded. Inter marriages between them and members of majority groups are shunned." [34]

Women's Rights

‘State parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men’ [35]

Article 57 of the Somaliland Constitution

- Women and men are equal as far as the rights, freedom and responsibilities outlined in the Somaliland Constitution are concerned;
- The Government should promote the rights of women to be liberated from customs and traditions which are against the Shari'a and which affect their body physically and psychologically;

- Women have the right to own, manage, supervise, use and donate their assets in accordance with Shari'a;
- To enhance knowledge and income, women have the right to education including skills training and adult education. [36]

In Somaliland nowadays, women's circumstances are changing significantly. Somali women have historically been denied equal access to fundamental rights, excluded from official political participation, and only given half of the inheritance rights granted to their brothers in a largely patrilineal and conservative society. Boys still receive preference in schooling these days, especially in rural regions, and female literacy rates are low. Somaliland has one of the worst rates of maternal death in the world due to a devastated health infrastructure and a high birth rate that contributes to health issues for mothers. The custom of female circumcision, also referred to as female genital mutilation (FGM), inflicted on an estimated 98 per cent of Somali girls between the ages of six and 10, is a violation of human rights and leads to immediate and longer term physical and psychological problems.

The society in Somaliland usually gives men preferential treatment, although the constitution of Somaliland doesn't condone this treatment and promotes equality among individuals, however, the human rights of women in Somaliland is limited by their limited legal literacy and the fact that the legal system does not reach a considerable percentage of Somaliland women who live in rural areas. On a policy level, the Somaliland Ministry of Education developed its National Education Policy with inclusion of girls in mind through affirmative action, and the Ministry reported a noticeable increase in girls in schools and they attributed this to mainly two reasons. first the involvement of women diaspora, and secondly the efforts of sensitization of the ministry to community members to end discrimination against girls in education.

In an economic front, the constitution of Somaliland state that "women's economic empowerment is human right" [37]. Women are free to participate in the job market and to own property and manage businesses. However, due to lack of progressive standards in society women face unparalleled discrimination in the employment market and are subject to various manners of discrimination.

Increasing numbers of women, moreover, are becoming the household breadwinners, in particular within the retail and petty trading sectors. While some interpret this change as a contributory factor to the rising divorce rate and breakdown of families, it seems certain that it increases women's economic

independence and allows a more equal balance in economic decision-making at the family level [38]. Many Somali women feel strongly that their social, political and economic gains during the war period must now be consolidated for real progress.

Prisoner's Rights

According to Somaliland's interim constitution, laws passed before Siad Barre took office in 1969 remain in effect. These are a synthesis of multiple legal systems, including as Islamic shari'a law, Somali penal code prior to 1960, and traditional and customary law. The codes that regulate criminal proceedings are based on legislation from Italy, Britain, and India. At the moment, Somaliland has eight major prisons: two in Berbera and one each in Borama, Gabiley, Hargeisa, Burao, Erigavo, and Las Anod. In 1996, the approximate number of male inmates was 2,000, while the approximate number of female inmates was 20 [39], now the prisoner population grew to around 15,000 inmates. Prisoners are locked up for crimes such as larceny, livestock theft, wounding and murder. Some individuals with mental problems are held in prison for the lack of any other facility to keep them. They are mostly 'forgotten people'. Seventy percent of prisoners were awaiting trial in January 1999 as a result of drawn-out judicial proceedings and a dearth of judges. A rapid spread of TB is occurring with overcrowding in police stations and prisons. Pardoning of prisoners by the president eases jail overcrowding during Eid, or national holidays. Prisoners are not fed on a regular basis, though the World Food Programme (WFP) does provide some food to the prisons. Families of prisoners bring them meals. The fact that many employees in Somaliland's prison, police, and security services haven't changed in the previous 20 years is a major source of anxiety for many.

The prison service during the era of Siad Barre was synonymous with arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and torture. With no reform or training program in human rights for prison personnel and security officers, many fear that past attitudes and methods of working have not died out. An additional concern is the existence of a special security committee, which can order an arrest without a warrant and pass sentence without a trial. According to human rights groups, this procedure was used to detain approximately 100 individuals during 1998.

Somaliland has recently gained a reputation for mass juvenile detention; unfortunately, young individuals are sentenced to long terms in prison that often do not match the severity of the crimes they committed. Moreover, the crimes punishable by imprisonment for juveniles in Somaliland seem to be undefined and arbitrary. Children are often detained for indefinite terms for disobeying their parents. A possible factor for the lack of leniency of the government towards juvenile criminals is the

fact that many juveniles are engaged in the theft and robbery sometimes while armed with knives or mobile phones. However, sentencing children for up to 2 to 4 years for stealing a mobile phone has been described as cruel by many critics, as in the case of Somaliland opposition party leader Abdirahman Mohamed who in a visit to the largest and most populated prison in Somaliland described the condition of the inmates, especially the children as 'gross violation of the detainees human civil rights' [40].

Practical Guidance for Lawyers and Law Firms in Human Rights Protection

It is expected of solicitors and legal firms to offer guidance that is consistent with the Guiding Principles, which include considering possible effects on human rights in addition to the "letter of the law." Clients will increasingly look to their solicitors to help them comprehend "what is right" in addition to "what is legal." Members of the legal profession have a difficult job here. But bar associations and other organizations have created materials for solicitors and legal firms to help them comprehend their human rights responsibilities and incorporate their human rights knowledge into their regular work.

In order to assist attorneys and law firms in better serving their clients and continuing to support Somaliland's human rights protection efforts, this research has put together a few useful guides. The law firm should draft a human rights policy that is approved by all of the partners or shareholders and made available to the public. One of the partners or shareholders, or a committee within the firm's existing governance structure, should be formally tasked with carrying out the policy and other pertinent policies and procedures (e.g., the ethics committee). In addition to the human rights policy, the organization should actively and consistently communicate pertinent rules and procedures (such as internal organization and duty descriptions) to all employees through workshops, training sessions, and one-on-one mentorship. To identify and assess the risks that the company may cause, contribute to, or be directly linked to negative human rights impacts, the firm should do human rights due diligence in accordance with the Guiding Principles. Internal routines and procedures related to the intake of new clients and assignments, as well as the follow-up of the assignments, should be based on the due diligence assessments. When accepting new clients and tasks, the firm should consider the risks that, should it take the assignment, it may directly cause negative effects or contribute to possible negative effects. If the client, against the advice of the lawyers, is unwilling to act to prevent or mitigate impacts, and the firm has taken on an assignment where there is a risk of serious adverse impacts to people's human rights or where serious impacts occur, the firm should think about whether it should withdraw from the

assignment. A lawyer or law firm must counsel clients on their obligations to respect human rights and adapt internal procedures within the firm to comply with the UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights and the Somaliland Constitution. These tasks are difficult and call for expertise in unfamiliar fields if they are to meet the goal of developing capacity to assist clients in respecting human rights. Nonetheless, it is imperative that all solicitors and legal firms advise and counsel their clients to uphold human rights and refrain from violating the rights of other people or groups. Should a client choose to disregard the counsel, then an attorney or law business should terminate that relationship with that client.

Law Firm Human Rights Policies and Statements

The following are suggested components of a legal firm's human rights policy: a clear declaration that the firm and its solicitors would uphold human rights within the parameters of their legal practice, including fundamental ethical standards and guidelines for the legal industry; a breakdown of the internal procedures put in place to guarantee compliance and handle implementation-related problems, as well as who is in charge of carrying out the policy; The firm's standards for upholding human rights among solicitors and staff; and the firm's expectations to its business relationships, including to the firm's clients in connection with the assignments that the firm accepts [41]. While law firms are free to use model policies created by bar associations and policies that their peers have adopted and disseminated publicly, it is crucial to base the policy and any supporting internal procedures on a thorough analysis of the actual and specific impacts that the firm and its clients have on the human rights of those impacted by the firm's operations.

CONCLUSION

Human rights are not a recent concept, it is a concept that was preached and practiced for thousands of years. However, in Somaliland, human rights protection has suffered due to many reasons, including lack of support for human rights by the government, a weakness in judicial authorities and law associations, lack of planning and strategizing for human rights protection and most importantly, poor efforts by the human rights defenders. The overall aim of this study is to deeply explain the role of lawyers in protecting human rights, this includes defining exactly who human rights protectors are, defining the range of Somaliland human rights protectors' work, what they can achieve and what their risks could be. Human rights protectors need defending and protection themselves, because of the important and sensitive work they are doing they are usually oppressed and persecuted themselves, this thesis discusses the types of protection they are entitled to from the government and from international

organizations. The history of human rights in Somaliland before and after independence bears huge relevance to the current situation of human rights protection in Somaliland as well as the future, and the conceptual understanding of human rights is crucial to know exactly what are we protecting and how valuable is it. This thesis delved deeply into the strategies and tactics crucial for human rights protection and provided invaluable tips and advices to lawyers and law firms in the duty they owe to the client and their nation in the protection of human rights, which includes, having clear human rights objectives for a lawyer or a law firm, to include a human rights vision in every political organization in the country, to increase the reach of human rights lawyers to each and every person of group in need of them, and to build a capacity to elevate and protect human rights in every lawyer and law firm. It can never overstated how important it is for a lawyer or a law firm to have a policy and a policy statement on human rights including basic ethical rules and principles for the legal profession, a description of who is responsible for the implementation of the policy, and the internal processes that are established to ensure compliance and to address issues related to the implementation, without a clear an explicit policy on human rights it is difficult for a law firm to make any noticeable impact in human rights protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of research finding the following recommendations are put way forward to empower Somaliland lawyers to protect human rights:

Awareness at the community level: Increase the awareness arising on human rights, help people get access to their rights and increasing government engagement to the stake holder outside of urban areas. Develop agents of human rights protection among traditional leaders, elders, community leaders, teachers, politicians, government officials and international agencies. Increase community-level engagement in human rights protection, promote neighborhood associations and local community organizations, to uphold human rights and report violators and abusers. Develop creative mechanisms to prevent and reduce human rights violations. Create concrete opportunities for greater cooperation and collaboration between government officials and local organizations and lawyers and law firms.

Conduct a policy review of legal gaps and barriers to implementation of human rights protection. Strength the laws and policies, such as bills of discrimination and human rights abuse, bills of sexual offences bill, policies against violation of human rights and other related laws and policies. The government passes those laws and policy to get institutional framework against human rights violations. The law should state clearly that it is mandatory for the State to provide free legal representation to a victim of human rights violations. The proposed law could also provide that a lawyer should be drawn from the national bar association and that costs of the legal representation would be undertaken by the State, perhaps from the consolidated fund. Legal support: the government may ensure the availability to access to lawyer for those human rights violations survivors to get access justice.

Policy Making: every law firm and lawyer engaged in human rights law must formulate an all-encompassing policy outlying all the decisions and strategies designed for maximum protection of human rights and the strongest guard against their violations Human rights lawyers should never pick-pocket their vulnerable clients, or stand to leverage any kind of situation for their own monetary benefits against the course of justice. Human rights lawyers must serve as an ambassador for their clients, they must represent the morals, ethics and good conduct of their clients in the best light. By representing a client, lawyers carry on their shoulders a huge burden of responsibly, lawyers must conduct themselves accordingly. To guarantee fair trials, the government of Somaliland must stop intervening with the rights of lawyers in representing their clients as well as intervening with the course of trials of law for political and personal reasons of government officials. The independence of professional organizations of law must be respected, and disbarment must only be an administrative measure aimed at ensuring professional and ethical standards of the law profession in Somaliland. Disbarment should never be weaponized against lawyers for representing clients against the government of against powerful local individuals. Leaders in all sectors of society must acknowledge publicly the important and legitimate role of human rights lawyers in promoting human rights, democracy and rule of law, and avoid stigmatization of human rights lawyers.

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