25 November 2026

JOINT STATEMENT

Joint Statement on Violence Against Women and Girls

Somali women-led organisations, activists and allies call on the Federal Government of Somalia to reconsider its vote on the UN resolution on violence against women and girls.

On 17 November 2026, at the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, 175 States voted in favor of draft resolution **A/C.3/81/L.16/Rev.1**, *"Intensifying efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls, as a whole"*. The draft resolution focuses on gender-related killings of women and girls, including femicide. **The Federal Government of Somalia cast the only vote against it.** Six States abstained: Argentina, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

Every abstention on a resolution against violence against women and girls weakens a commitment that the international community has built over decades. **Protection from violence is a fundamental human right for every woman and girl.** Upholding it requires a clear commitment from every State. Somalia's vote against the resolution is particularly concerning given the persistent levels of violence experienced by women and girls in the country.

We, organisations led by Somali women, activists and allies working across the Somali region of the Horn of Africa and throughout Europe, express our deep concern about this vote and our full solidarity with Somali women and girls. Many of our organisations are founded and led by Somali women, whose knowledge, lived experiences, courage and leadership shape our work and strengthen our collective commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls, in Somalia, elsewhere in Africa and across Europe.

This vote sends a worrying message to all the organisations that work every day, in Somalia and across Europe, for women's rights and to end violence against women and girls. Women activists, community leaders, health workers, lawyers and survivors help protect women and girls and push for change, often at great personal risk. They need clear political support from their own institutions. A vote against a global commitment to end violence undermines their voices and safety, and erodes trust in the communities they serve.

The effects of this vote extend beyond Somalia's borders. Somali women and girls live around the world. The Somali Government's decisions affect their safety and the work of those who protect them from violence.

LEGAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

Somali women and girls continue to face very high levels of violence, including female genital mutilation, child and forced marriage, intimate partner violence and conflict-related sexual violence. In April 2024, the Federal Government adopted its first National Strategy to End Violence against Women and Girls (2024–2029). In November 2025, the Minister of Family and Human Rights Development launched the national campaign for the 16 Days of Activism. In October 2026, the House of the People approved, by 132 votes to 3, a long-awaited bill on rape and sexual offences, and a bill on female genital mutilation was presented to Parliament. These steps were achieved

through years of advocacy by Somali women. The vote of 17 November sends a contradictory signal at the very moment these laws must be completed, published and implemented.

For years, Somali women's organisations have campaigned for a comprehensive legal framework. Protecting women and girls from violence is a universal commitment and a shared responsibility of every State. The international community has built this commitment over decades through instruments such as the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda.

CALLS TO ACTION

The draft resolution now goes to the General Assembly plenary. We call on the following governments and institutions to act.

The Federal Government of Somalia

- Publicly explain the reasons for its vote.
- Reconsider its position and join the global consensus in the plenary vote.
- Complete the adoption of the Sexual Offences Bill, publish its final text, adopt the bill on female genital mutilation without further delay and strengthen protection from child and forced marriage.
- Recognise, protect and involve the women's rights organisations and activists working in the country.

The European Union and its Member States

- Raise this vote in their political dialogue with the Somali authorities.
- Maintain and increase support for Somali women's rights organisations and for survivor services, including health, legal and psychosocial care.
- Support the organisations led by Somali women in Europe, which act as a vital bridge of knowledge, prevention and care.

All UN Member States

- Confirm and strengthen their commitment to the resolution in the plenary vote.
- If they abstained, join the global consensus and vote in favor in the plenary.
- Put the resolution into practice through concrete measures, resources and accountability at national level.

On 25 November, as the 16 Days of Activism begin, we raise our voices together. Somali women and girls have the right to live free from violence, and they deserve laws, institutions and a world that stands with them. Somali women who lead change every day deserve to be heard.

Action must be taken. Now.

SIGNATORIES

Signatory	Country
Nosotras APS	Italy
Belt of Somali Women (BSW)	Kenya
Save a Girl Save a Generation	Spain
Somali Awareness and Social Development Organization (SASDO)	Somalia
Somali women equality organization (SOMWE)	Somalia
Shamsa Araweelo (International Activist)	United Kingdom
Deko Ali Omar Somali Women Voices Organisation (SOWOVO)	Somalia
African Women's Rights Advocates (AWRA)	Kenya
Associazione Donne Africa Subsahariana e II Generazione	Italy
Federatie Somalische Associaties Nederland (FSAN)	Netherlands
Hawa Feminist Coalition	Somalia
Girlkind Kenya	Kenya
Stichting Asiya	Netherlands
Stichting Libin	Netherlands

SIGNATORY LOGOS