

## EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS NETWORK

Public Statement

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**KAMPALA: EHAHRD-Net welcomes the appointment of Dr Shamsul Bari as the new Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia and calls on the new interest in Somalia to be maintained.**

The human rights situation in Somalia and in particular the violations being committed against human rights defenders have been of utmost concern to the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project/Network (EHAHRDP/Net).

The international community has until now largely failed to take action in response to the persistent and wide-scale violations being committed.

On the closing day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council, EHAHRD-Net on behalf of its members welcomes however the new interest in the deplorable human rights situation in Somalia shown by many key actors in the international community during this session of the Council.

Issues raised and decisions made during the Council, notably during the interactive dialogue, the mandate review and during a side-event that EHAHRDP organized along with Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), all suggest that the hard work and advocacy of key actors have paid off.

EHAHRD-Net would like to welcome in particular the renewal of the mandate of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia and the Council's decision to appoint Dr Shamsul Bari as the new mandate-holder.

“We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Ghanim Alnajjar. We have worked intensively with Dr Alnajjar and are highly appreciative every time of his commitment to the human rights situation in the country and to the mandate. His willingness to serve as a defender for ordinary Somali civilians is unique” Hassan Shire, Chairperson of EHAHRD-Net, declares. “We would also like to thank Dr Alnajjar for having paid specific attention in his most recent report to the targeted violations being committed against Somali journalists.”

EHAHRD-Net is deeply convinced that Dr. Shamsul Bari, a Bangladeshi national who has had a long and successful career at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), will continue to build on the work of his predecessor and will play a key role in the promotion of human rights and a human rights presence in Somalia.

Mr Shire concludes: “We hope that Dr Bari will use his expertise in protection to serve as a mouthpiece for the Somali population and to ensure that the protection of civilians will be at the heart of all future international attention and engagement with Somalia. We look forward to working closely with the new mandate-holder and hope he will join our efforts to help bring an end to impunity in the country.”

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