



## **Escaping violence: The Security Situation of Somali Women and Girls**

### **Background**

- Of the 1.5 million people that are currently displaced, 600,000 are women of reproductive age. (UNFPA Somalia Consolidated Appeals Process 2008)
- Lack of infrastructure makes reliable data collection difficult. (United Nations)
- One in ten women dies during childbirth. (Medicines Sans Frontières)
- 65.2% of women between the ages of 15-64 participate in the domestic labour force. (UNFPA)
- More than 80% of internally-displaced women in the South Central Zone of Somalia have no access to safe maternal delivery. (UNFPA Somalia Consolidated Appeals Process 2008)

### **Political Participation**

- In the 2004 elections, women won 21 of the 256 parliamentary seats (or 8%). (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2008)
- Currently, about 8% of Somalia's parliamentarians are women. (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2008)
- The first Women's Lawyer's Association opened in early 2008, and currently has 5 women on staff. Seventeen more women are expected to join. (UNDP, 2008)

### **Gender Based Violence**

- Violence is a major cause of death and disability for women aged 15-44 in Somalia. (UNIFEM)
- All over the world, one in three women will experience some form of gender-based violence (GBV). (UNIFEM)
- GBV can occur within the family or in the community, and includes harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). (UNIFEM)
- An estimated total of 98% of Somali women have undergone some form of FGM.(UNICEF)

### Trafficking and Smuggling of Women

- Somali women and children are trafficked to the Middle East, Europe and to other African countries. (Relief Web 2007)
- Every month 250 Somali children are trafficked outside the country to Europe and North America as “separated” and “unaccompanied” migrants. (John Hopkins University: The Protection Project)

Women that are smuggled often face sexual abuse by smugglers and by border police/security personnel. (Relief Web 2007) **Human Smuggling** is defined as the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident. (The United Nation’s Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air) In most cases, individuals will contact smugglers themselves to realize their objective of crossing a border illegally in search of a better life and improved economic prospects. In contrast, **human trafficking** is carried out against the will of the trafficked person. It is defined as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, either by the threat or use of abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion, or by the giving or receiving of unlawful payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having the control over another person.” (United Nation’s Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons)

### HIV/AIDS

- Only 2% of young Somali women (15-24 years) know that they can be protected from HIV/AIDS by using a condom. (UNFPA)
- It is estimated that 23,000 women in Somalia aged 15+ are living with HIV/AIDS. The lowest estimation is at 11,000, while the highest is at 45,000. (WHO)
- 2005 estimates for the total number of pregnant women living with HIV are 4,400. (WHO)
- 2008 estimates of the total HIV prevalence rate for young pregnant women (15-19 years) are 0.09%. (UN Country Progress Report 2008)
- An estimated 6.7% of females (adults and children) that have advanced HIV are receiving antiretroviral therapy [are only] (UN Country Progress Report 2008)