

*Organization*  
*Voice of Somaliland*  
*Women Minority*



# Voices of Somaliland Minority Women Organization

## Organizational Profile of VOSOMWO

### 1. Background

The Republic of Somaliland formerly British Protectorate and (North west Somalia) declared its independence from united Somalia after the total collapse of Somalia on 18 May 1991 and the country still awaits international recognition. The population of Somaliland is estimated at 3 million people according to National statistics figures, Somaliland people settled their internal disputes using traditional peace-building methods and are now rehabilitating and reconstructing their damaged country. There is a gradual and steady competitive and democratic political system which begun in 2001 with the constitutional referendum, 2002 municipal elections, 2003 presidential election and 2005 parliament elections, which are all the key political institutions the district councils, the parliament and the presidency have been subjected to popular vote. On 29 September 2005 the population of Somaliland elected a new parliament, the total national parliament members of 82 MPs were democratically elected from 246 candidates from three political parties. Unfortunately, there is no one single representative from the three outcast minorities (the Goboys, Tumals and Yibirs)

In Somaliland, where nomadic pastoralist is the dominant way of life and culture, three clan-groups of the society are considered minorities (Tumals, Yibirs and Gaboye) they suffer from low social and economic status and experience segregation within the Somaliland society. The communities from the three outcast minorities who are locally called (the Goboys, Tumals and Yibirs), are politically discriminated, socio-economically segregated, culturally marginalized, and economically excluded, they face a severe tribalism and cultural based denials of all their basic and fundamental human rights, Such as the exclusion from the political participation,

The outcast minorities are believed descendants of the above indigenous groups that are locally known as the "Gaboye, Yibirs and Tumaals" which implies a concept of "inferior people", While they are described with a social stigma as "Untouchables" which defines them as "Sub humans. They are socially segregated, culturally marginalized and economically excluded as denials of their overall human rights. Thus, the three outcast minority groups are the poorest of the poor in Somaliland, as they are excluded from all public and political participation, and due to having no access to the socio-economic affairs of their country.

The rigorous poverty among the minority communities leads to low access to information about their political rights, thus often gained through informal paths, such as discussions with community members and leaders, etc. The residential segregation; combined with the negative practice of clan based voting and political system in Somaliland make minority communities feel vulnerable in their relation to participation in decision making and links to authorities, because of this situation, many minority communities prefer not to vote at all. The minority communities are substantially less active in political decision making process and remain less likely to vote, that may reflect differences in the distribution of various determinants of their political participation,

Referring to international Human Rights protection mechanisms, the political participation constitutes an important aspect of minority rights protection, as a consequence, the promotion of minority rights can be supplemented by the concept of political participation as a part of minority rights. The realization of a better level of political participation for minorities in Somaliland should be conceived of as an instrument of

minority rights protection. So the improved chances of political representatives from minority communities as they can successfully partaking in the political system of Somaliland is therefore for the interest of Somaliland stability and can be assistance for the provision of political inclusion of minorities, in order to avoid the consequences of exclusion. The general public and policy makers should realize that the political Participation of minority communities in politics and Public Life of Somaliland can be an essential component of a peaceful and democratic system in society.

The political participation is considered as the larger concept of minority rights is intended for that other rights and prevention of discrimination of minorities cannot be effectively ensured, unless the minority themselves are actively partaking in the political decision-making processes in the country, which preside over the protection of minority rights. Considering that without participation other mechanisms of minority rights protection can be substantially weakened also the minorities can't run from the risk of being excluded from the political system without special protective measures. The problem of minorities' lack of representation is a very complex matter, which has its roots in the low level of minority communities' participation in public life.

## **2. VOSOMWO Organization**

Voice of Somaliland minority women organization acronym as (VOSOMWO) was officially launched on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2004 in Hargeisa, the capital city of Somaliland, registered as a non-governmental, and non profit and voluntary Human rights organization. VOSOMWO is 100% women owned organization so all major and leadership decision-making positions are filled by women. VOSOMWO for all times is working for ensuring the protection and promotion of human rights for all and with its center of attention in minority group's empowerment socially, economically and politically

After we have recognized that reaching developmental goals implies within people to become actors of their own development, where as the minorities in Somaliland are the least disadvantaged sectors of Somaliland society, whereas the minority women and child are the most vulnerable groups who needs a great care, concern and protection. Minorities in Somaliland have been discriminated and isolated most of the time these people haven't got access to education, health, political participation, jobs and other social developmental service.

## **3. Vision statement:**

VOSOMWO is seen as human right voluntary organization working to realize that the minority People enjoying with the respect and dignity they deserve in their communities for equal rights, opportunities. Especially minority women and children enjoying an ideal social justice and living better life than today. The vision of the Organization is to see the minority community (Gabooye, Tumals and Yibers) in Somaliland empowered and have an improved quality of life and their basic constitutional rights and fundamental freedoms.

#### **4. Mission statement:**

VOSOMWO's mission shall be to empower and improve the welfare of the minority women and children in Somaliland especially.

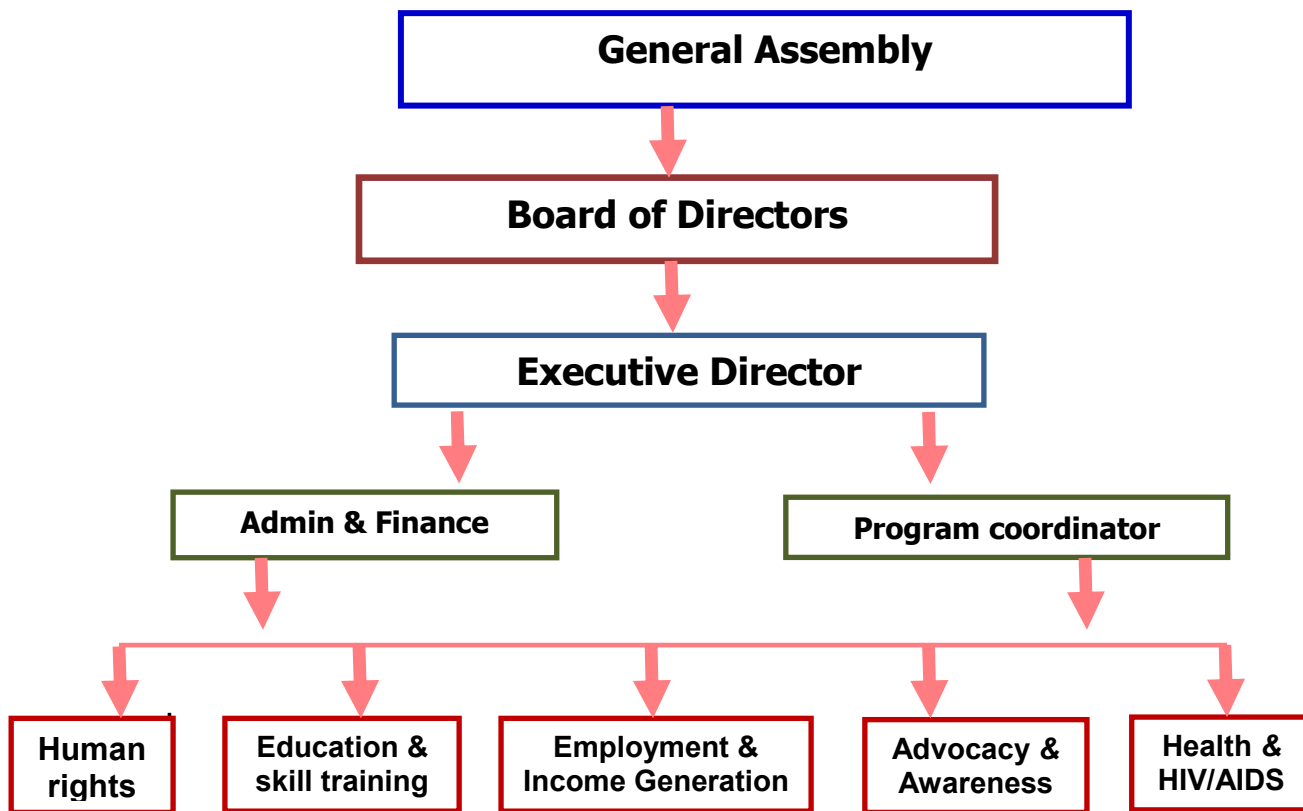
VOSOMWO's mission to improve the Lives of the minority communities through Human right advocacy campaign, Education, skill training, income generation, health, Sports and culture, Research and development, Mass media, publications and film programs production and Participation at all levels.

VOSOMWO has the principle of insuring respect of equal rights and access for all, promotion and protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and dignity of people for all including the minority communities.

Inline with our mission statement targeted to positively change the social negative attitudes and cultural based discriminations of Somaliland's communitis hosting the minority communities through empowering of women from minority communities through education, skill trainings, advocacy, community awarness-raising for the full social participation and promotion of equal rights and access for women from the minority communities in this country. VOSOMWO service provision reaches and benefitted for all the members from three outcast minority communities the Goboys, Tumals and yibirs in all six regions of Somaliland

VOSOMWO is officially registered at the Somaliland's Ministry of Planning and coordination, the office of the attorney general of Somaliland. And has institutional structure that illustrates various job organs of well-defined and itemized organizational management spectrum. VOSOMWO struggles to ensure minority group's empowerment socially, economically and educationally and women empowerment so as to participate political standard, although it constantly faced with a lot of challenges on behalf of the promotion and protection of minority rights as well as many financial constraints, but ironically VOSOMWO played vital role on supporting the minority communities specially victimized women and child in Somaliland regions.

**5. The VOSOMWO organizational structure is as follows:**



**6. The Names of the Board of Directors**

<b>N</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Sex</b>
1	Nimo Iid Salan	Chairperson	Female
2	Sahra Ese Muhumed	Secretary	Female
3	Khadra Ali Ahmed	Member	Female
4	Safiya Abdi Osman	Member	Female
5	Nura Ismail Jama	Member	Female

The VOSOMWO organization has constantly faced with a lot of challenges on behalf of the minority issues such as human rights promotion and protection and struggles to ensure minority group’s empowerment socially, economically and educationally and women empowerment.

VOSOSMWO is dedicated to defend the rights of the minority communities and lobbying for equal rights for all as well as elimination of all negative social attitudes that marginalized and stigmatized the people and women from the minority communities from all spheres of life.

## **7. Organizational Strategies**

The basic approaches to projects will be operated at grass root level as compelled by the needs of the minority women and children in the health sector, education sector, Sports and culture sector, research and development sector, Mass media and film programs production sector, income generation sector, human right advocacy sector, for minority community whenever necessary to achieve in long run, and self-reliance development. Voices of Somaliland minority women also seeks relevant information and relationship to all minority organizations and civil society, participate in international workshops and conferences, international forums, UN, INGOs and LINGOs, minority women in diasporas, all human right advocates and activists . Voices of Somaliland minority women know how to improve the productivity of targeted sectors for overall sustainability

## **8. Core values as the basic Organizational Principles of VOSOMWO**

- VOSOMWO upholds, promotes mutual understandings, Cooperation, friendship and respect national, regional and global characters for basic human rights
- VOSOMWO will collaborate and work with developmental actors, governments and grass root communities that respect *VOSOMWO* principles.
- VOSOMWO focuses vulnerable groups (women and children) and will provide assistance in trust and rely on their strength. VOSOMWO brings help with social –justice.
- The movement of VOSOMWO is independent, but willing to perform healthy partnership
- VOSOMWO achieves it's operations by teamwork,
- Building trust and works on commitment to transparency and accountability to the stakeholders
- VOSOMWO has got good management and accountable staffs who are professionals.

## **9. Organizational Programs**

### **i. Human rights**

- To advocate minority women and child, to promote and protect the rights of minority women and child
- To get right balance of minority women and children
- Lobbying and advocacy for upgrading morality of minority women and children
- Monitoring and documentation of human right violations against the outcast minorities community in Somaliland

### **ii. Education and skill training**

- To empower unskillful minority women with employable skills and make them acceptable in Somaliland job market.
- Support, facilitate and provision where available of basic education, fundamental literacy and marketable skills to the woman and girls from the three outcasted minority communities and other members of their families.
- Train and supporting capital as the first tools grant to at least 45 women and girls from the three outcasts minority communities in every and each year

### iii. **Health**

- Offering fundamental health literacy skills to the families such as first aid, family planning and nutritional management.
- Hygiene and sanitation mobilizations. Construction of latrines in minority villages
- FGM and HIV/AIDS campaigns and awareness raising
- Establishing counseling and STI centers, Helping people living with HIV/AIDS (going to their houses, giving health education, increasing their nutritional states)
- Upgrading T.B.A and circumcisers through trainings and income generations in order to replace the F.G.M practice into other professional.

### iv. **Income generation**

- To develop minority women skills
- To replace the FGM practice with provisional practice, To establish credits for sustainability, To establish small factories for production and also sustainability

### v. **Mass media and film production:**

- Publications of a bimonthly newsletter
- Releasing debates, discussions and programs from the radios and televisions
- Producing films telling the facts, events etc

## **10: Some of the recently and current Projects implemented by VOSOMWO**

<b>N</b>	<b>The Project Title</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Funding Agency</b>	<b>Status</b>
1.	informal education center in Hargeisa that provides literacy education to 230 boys and girls From outcast minority clans'	2005 up to 2010	Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	<b>On going</b>
2.	Sanitation awareness' raising in minority villages	2005	UNHCR	<b>Completed</b>
3.	FGM and HIV/AIDS mobilization awareness' raising and trainings	2006	UNICEF	<b>Completed</b>
4.	Court trails observation to observed minority cases and regularly attending the court proceedings	2007	International Minority Rights Group (MRG)	<b>Completed</b>
5.	Monitoring and documentation of human right violations against the outcast minorities community in Somaliland	2006 up to 2007	National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	<b>Completed</b>
6.	environmental protection and Collection and Recycling plastic bags , Improve the living standards of 200minortiy IDPs and returnee Households , Improve sanitation condition of 2500 and nutritional status	2007 up to 2010	World Food Program (WFP)	<b>On going</b>
7.	Exclusion and marginalization documentary film production	2006 up to 2007	Oxfam NOVID Netherlands	<b>Completed</b>
8.	Population Movement Tracking and Protection Monitoring this is the project which covers the migration and minority groups, IDPs, Refugees and returnees movement of the within and out of Somaliland territory, which are fleeing from different parts of Somalia because of poverty, war and other tensions, movement trends and urgent needs of the displaced as a result	2006 up to 2010	UNHCR	<b>Completed</b>

	of conflict, floods, drought et			
9.	To campaign for the political representation quotas for women and Minority in Somaliland	2007 up to 2008	Urgent Action Fund-Africa,	<b>On going</b>
10.	Advocacy for equal rights, education and Job opportunities for people with disabilities.	2008 up to 2009	ABILIS FOUNDATION Finland	<b>Completed</b>
11.	Monitoring and documentation of human right violations against the outcast minorities	Feb-09 to Jan 2010	NED	<b>Completed</b>
12.	The Promotion of Democratic Governance and Minorities' political Participation in Somaliland	Feb. 2010 – Jan 2011	NED	<b>On Going</b>

### **Contact person**

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