

1.2. Women and girls

Gender equality^{[112](#)} and women's empowerment were described as some of the most significant challenges Somalia faces.^{[113](#)} The country ranked third last in 2024 on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index,^{[114](#)} with women and IDPs being among the most vulnerable categories in Somalia.^{[115](#)} Somalia is one of the few countries that has not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as of March 2025,^{[116](#)} or the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa.^{[117](#)} Women and girls in Somalia experience humanitarian 'crises' in different ways due to existing gender inequalities and norms, systemic disparities and power dynamics.^{[118](#)}

As of 2023, Somalia's population was 18 358 615, out of which 9 160 786 were women.^{[119](#)} According to the 2020 Somali Health and Demographic Survey (SHDS), 46.5 % of women had no education, 4.7 % completed primary school, 6.1 % secondary and 5 % had higher education.^{[120](#)} Between 2021 and 2023, the gross enrolment rate of girls at primary education was 83 %, 29 % at secondary level and 2.3 % at the tertiary level.^{[121](#)} As of February 2024, 19.6 % of seats in the parliament were held by women in Somalia.^{[122](#)}

- [1.2.1. Gender based violence \(GBV\), types, prevalence and situation of women in the Somali society, including forced and child marriage](#)
 - (a) The legal framework
 - (b) Gender based violence (GBV)
 - (c) Early and forced marriage
 - (d) GBV and situation of women under Al-Shabaab, including forced and child marriage
 - (e) Situation of women who left Al-Shabaab and repercussions for leaving Al-Shabaab
- [1.2.2. FGM/C and repeated FGM/C](#)
 - (a) FGM, forms, practices, performers and (extended) family's role
 - Prevalence
 - Forms
 - Societal attitudes and practices
 - Performers and family's role
 - (b) Repeated FGM, forms and practices
 - (c) Repercussions for refusing to undergo the practice
- [1.2.3. The situation of single and minority women, notably in IDP camps, or women and girls with lack of network support](#)

UNDP, Somalia, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, n.d., [url](#); EEAS, 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 29 May 2024, [url](#), p. 142

[113](#)

UNDP, Somalia, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, n.d., [url](#)

[114](#)

UNDP, Advancing Rule of Law in Somalia, updated as of January 2025 [url](#), p. 2

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Federal Republic of Somalia, Somali National Development Plan 9-2020-2024, 5 January 2020, [url](#), p. 100

[116](#)

EEAS, 2023 Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports), 29 May 2024, [url](#), p. 142; also see UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, UN Treaty Body Database, n.d., Ratification Status for Somalia, filtered by country, [url](#)

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UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan*, A/HRC/57/80, 23 August 2024, [url](#), para. 38

[118](#)

UNOCHA, Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2025, January 2025, [url](#), p. 15

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World Bank Group, Population, total – Somalia, 2023, [url](#); World Bank Group, Population, female – Somalia, 2023, [url](#)

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Somalia, NBS, The Somali Health and Demographic Survey 2020, April 2020, [url](#), p. 24

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UNHRC, East, Horn of Africa and Great Lakes (EHAGL) Region, Gender Equality, 2024 Annual Update, 19 February 2025, [url](#), p. 3

[122](#)

UN Women, Data, Somalia, n.d., [url](#)