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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Amnesty International visits Somaliland to run a human rights workshop and meet the government**

Amnesty International representatives from Kuwait and its UK-based International Secretariat are due to run a workshop on "Human Rights Awareness and Action" in the Somaliland capital of Hargeisa from 17 to 19 October 1998. They also plan to hold talks with President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal's government about promoting and protecting human rights.

The workshop participants will be drawn from NGOs, activists and officials in Somaliland who have expressed interest in promoting and defending human rights in various ways. The workshop has been designed to respond to local requests for human rights training. It has been prepared by Amnesty International with logistical support from the Hargeisa office of International Cooperation for Development (ICD).

This will be the organization's first visit to the Somaliland Republic since it declared independence in 1991 and sought international recognition. Formerly the north-west region of Somalia, the territory had been the scene of massive human rights violations throughout the 1980s by the Mogadishu-based government of Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre. The military employed "scorched earth" measures in counter-insurgency operations, and thousands of civilians were imprisoned, tortured or extrajudicially executed.

Former prisoners of conscience are represented in the current government and in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) now working for development and human rights in Somaliland.

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