

Thank you, Chairperson,

I am Muna Muday, representing the Somali Bantu minority in Somalia, standing before you today on behalf of the Somali Alliance for Justice and Equality Movement (SAJEM).

Today, I draw your attention to the enduring historic discrimination and marginalization that has entrenched the ethnic Somali Bantu minority in Somalia, a distressing cycle of exclusion, affecting every facet of their lives.

One example of this discrimination is the 4.5 clan-based power sharing system,<sup>1</sup> a systemic issue that not only impacts the Somali Bantu Minority but also extends its reach to other minority groups. The 4.5 formula equalized representation of the four majority clans, whereby minorities combined were considered to make up only half of one majority clan. The implications of this discriminatory structure significantly weigh on the Somali Bantu community, compounding their already marginalized status and hindering their socio-economic and political participation.

Despite being a numerical majority, the Somali Bantu face exclusion in numerous ways, with the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing system, limiting access to education, healthcare, employment, freedom of assembly and expression, political representation, land, and property rights, perpetuating a cycle of marginalization and hindering their ability to enjoy the rights and opportunities afforded to other communities. This exclusion, despite their demographic strength, highlights the urgent need for comprehensive reforms.

Today, I present these three key recommendations for your consideration:

1. Undertake a comprehensive review and reform of the 4.5 clan-based power-sharing system to ensure equitable representation and opportunities for minority groups like the Somali Bantu.
2. The Somali government and relevant international partners should collect and analyze disaggregated data specifically focused on the Somali Bantu community. This data should cover various aspects, including education, healthcare, employment, climate change and environmental degradation, and justice, providing a clearer understanding of the challenges faced and guiding targeted interventions.
3. Develop Anti-Discrimination Legislation that explicitly protects minority rights, including the Somali Bantu. These laws should address issues such as discriminatory employment practices, property rights, and ensure equal opportunities in the labor market, preventing systemic exclusion based on ethnicity.

In addressing these challenges, we urgently need concerted efforts to dismantle discrimination, promote inclusivity, and empower Somali Bantu minority. The international community must stand in solidarity, amplify their voices, and work collaboratively to rectify injustices.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/role-45-democratization-and-governance-somalia-implications-and-considerations-way-forward-may-2023>