

**URURKA QAREENADA
SOMALILAND**



**SOMALILAND LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION**

Press Release: Somaliland Lawyers Association Celebrates World AIDS Day 2023

Hargeisa, Somaliland, December 1, 2023 - The Somaliland Lawyers Association (SOLLA) joins the global community in celebrating the 35th World AIDS Day, which is observed every year on December 1st to raise awareness and show support for people living with HIV/AIDS. The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "End Inequalities, End AIDS, and End Pandemics".

SOLLA is a local professional association that aims to enhance the reputation of the Somaliland lawyers, to improve the quality of their performance in service delivery, and protection of the lawyers rights and observance for their duties; the realization of access justice, fair and independent judiciary, respect of human rights, promotion of the legal education, realization of democratic and proper application of the laws. SOLLA has been actively involved in providing legal aid and support services to HIV-affected communities in Somaliland, in collaboration with other stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS Commission, the UNDP, and civil society organizations.

SOLLA's role for HIV-affected communities in Somaliland is very important and relevant, as legal and human rights issues are often intertwined with the HIV epidemic. People living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) face various forms of stigma, discrimination, and violence, which can affect their access to health care, education, employment, and social protection. They also face challenges in resolving disputes, obtaining justice, and enforcing their rights. SOLLA provides free legal aid and counseling to PLHIV and their families, especially women and children, who face discrimination, violence, inheritance issues, property disputes, divorce, custody, and other legal matters. SOLLA also conducts awareness campaigns and trainings on HIV/AIDS and human rights for lawyers, judges, prosecutors, police, health workers, religious leaders, community leaders, and the general public. SOLLA advocates for the enactment and implementation of laws and policies that protect the rights of PLHIV and prevent stigma and discrimination, such as the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Act, the Anti-Discrimination Act, and the Gender-Based Violence Act. SOLLA participates in the development and review of the national HIV/AIDS strategic plan, the national HIV/AIDS policy, and the national HIV/AIDS legal framework. SOLLA collaborates with other partners to monitor and document human rights violations against PLHIV and to provide legal and psychosocial support to the victims. SOLLA supports the establishment and strengthening of networks and associations of PLHIV and other key populations, such as sex workers, men who have sex with men, and injecting drug users, to empower them to claim their rights and access services.

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SOLLA's work for HIV-affected communities in Somaliland is commendable and contributes to the National Development Plan (NDPIII) and global efforts to end the AIDS epidemic by 2030, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. SOLLA calls for more support and recognition from the government, the international community, and the society for its role and achievements. SOLLA also call for all stakeholders to join hands and work together to ensure that no one is left behind in the response to HIV/AIDS. SOLLA believes that everyone has the right to live with dignity and respect, regardless of their HIV status. SOLLA is committed to continue its work for HIV-affected communities in Somaliland, with the motto of "Justice for All".

SOLLA calls for the collaboration of all stakeholders to make sure that the draft Act and Policy on HIV/AIDS meet the legal and human rights standards, and that they are adopted, executed, and upheld by all authorities and agencies, with SOLNAC's assistance, to safeguard the rights and needs of the affected communities. SOLLA also urges the enhancement and training of the enforcement agencies and the community, in partnership with SOLNAC, to ensure the proper conduct and compliance with the law and policy and to address all the essential needs for the effective response to HIV/AIDS.

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