

# Somaliland's First Female Prosecutors

10 December 2011 - Aswan Mohamoud Jibril leads by example for women in Somaliland. At 26, she is one of the region's first female prosecutors.

Born and raised in Borama, which lies on the Ethiopian border, she has become a pioneer for women's equality in a region where just 36 percent of women are literate (UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006). Aswan's determination to fulfill her dream of becoming a lawyer led her first to apply for a scholarship to study law supported by UNDP.



“I was alerted of the UNDP-sponsored scholarship programme for women. I applied, and was lucky enough to be accepted. I graduated and secured an .LL.B in 2009. Two days only after my graduation, I enrolled in a 10-month internship programme, together with other female law graduates, through the Somaliland Women Lawyers Association, thanks to UNDP support,” she said.

UNDP's [Access to Justice Project](#) is behind an internship programme that helps place the law school's top graduates in key judicial institutions. Through her participation in this programme, in 2010 Aswan was appointed as a prosecutor with the Somaliland Prosecutor's Office, and spends her days in court prosecuting those convicted of a range of crimes, but mainly of crimes against women and children. However, the job is not without its challenges and even dangers. She says she faces real risks to her personal safety by those who she has prosecuted.

“Sometimes I get threats after the court,” she says. “The accused threaten me that they will kill me after they come out of prison. When I am in court I look around myself and when I am in the marketplace I put on a veil and cover my face so that those criminals don't see me when they are out of prison.”

But despite the challenges, Aswan remains positive.

“I see this to be a step forward for women, because women were looked down upon and people used to think we could not hold these positions” she said. “I have a dream of becoming a senior prosecutor.”

*Aswan Mohamoud Jibril was appointed one of Somaliland's first female prosecutors.*