

## Sheffield City Council Calls for the International Recognition of Somaliland

[www.somalilandlaw.com](http://www.somalilandlaw.com) 06/04/2014

As Somaliland is about to celebrate next month the 23<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the reassertion of its independence as a sovereign state, the Sheffield City Council passed, on Wednesday 2 April 2014, a motion calling ***'upon the UK Government to recognise Somaliland as an independent state and to encourage other Governments around the world to do the same'***.

The elected local authority of this large northern England town has addressed this issue because, under its City Council Constitution, the Council can consider motions on any matter *'for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the City, or its inhabitants'*. As is reflected in the wording of the motion (set out below), this is a matter of concern to the Somalilander British Community in the City and is also one which other inhabitants including the councillors and the members of parliament noted in the motion believe is deserving of their consideration and support.

The motion read as follows:

*'That this Council:*

*(a) notes that thousands of people from Somaliland live in Sheffield and recognise and appreciate the important contribution they make to the City and the close ties Sheffield has with Somaliland;*

*(b) supports the Somaliland community in Sheffield and their campaign to have Somaliland recognised as a sovereign state and gain a seat in the UN, with reasons for recognition including:*

*(i) the Somaliland government believes that recognition would entrench democracy in the Horn of Africa;*

*(ii) recognising Somaliland will aim to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism, extremism, piracy, illegal fishing, toxic dumping, and other serious crimes; and*

*(iii) the marketing of Somaliland as a safe tourist destination, primarily cultural and eco-tourism could also emerge as an important segment of the Somaliland economy;*

*(c) notes that since 1991 Somaliland have had a democratically elected Government and President, in this time there have been 4 elections and changes of president, it looks after international waters with no piracy, it has opposition parties and is not a recipient of international aid;*

*(d) believes that recognition will help to bring about stability in Somaliland, creating a situation where people can live in peace and harmony with the support of the International Community, and that recognition would bring international banks, jobs and finance;*

*(e) welcomes the support for this campaign by local MP's Paul Blomfield and Clive Betts and the work they are doing with the Cross Party Somaliland Group and would encourage other local MP's to also support this Group; and*

*(f) calls upon the Government to recognise Somaliland as an independent state and to encourage other Governments around the world to do the same.'*

Following up this motion, Paul Blomfield MP raised the following question in the House of commons on 3 April 2014:

**Hansard** (Citation: HC Deb, 3 April 2014, c1008)

**Question: Paul Blomfield** (Sheffield Central, Labour)

Yesterday, following a resolution passed by its city council, Sheffield became the first city in the United Kingdom to support calls for the international recognition of Somaliland. Since 1991, the people of Somaliland have made great progress in establishing a stable country with a freely elected Parliament and an independent judiciary. May we have a debate on how the British Government can do more to use their influence in the international community in order to secure recognition of Somaliland?

**Answer: Andrew Lansley** (The Leader of the House of Commons ; South Cambridgeshire, Conservative)

I am, of course, aware of the issue that the hon. Gentleman has raised. He may have an opportunity to raise it with Ministers during Foreign and Commonwealth Office questions next Tuesday, and also with other Members who may be interested in Somaliland and Somalia, and, in particular, may welcome the progress that Somaliland has made in recent years.