



Children's Legal Defense Center 2025 Annual Report

THE CHILDREN'S LEGAL
DEFENSE CENTER USES
CRIMINAL DEFENSE TO
**PUT HUMAN RIGHTS INTO
ACTION**
TO GET IMPRISONED
CHILDREN HOME IN
SOMALILAND.

2025 humbled us. In a single blow, the funding we depended on vanished. The US Government's decision to shut down USAID cut off the funds that institutions such as UNICEF could contribute to our work. After years of carefully cultivating institutional donors with long-term potential, that source of support was no longer viable.

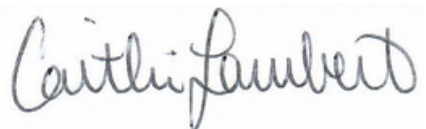
But people like you ensured that this was not the end of the Children's Legal Defense Center's story.

While many small organizations like ours closed their doors in 2025, ours stayed open thanks to a small grant from the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) and donations from individuals. These donations, large and small, fueled our work and helped us continue assisting imprisoned children in Somaliland.

And your donations made a remarkable impact in 2025.

With your support, we provided legal aid to 609 new clients, secured the release from prison and police detention for 353 children, and achieved shorter prison sentences for another 129.

We could not have done this without you. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caitlin Lambert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Caitlin Lambert
Executive Director

THE
IMPACT
OF
YOUR
SUPPORT
IN
2025

**OUR DOORS REMAINED
OPEN FOR 609
CHILDREN**

Your support made it possible for 609 children to access legal aid in 2025. In a system where representation is rare, you ensured that children in detention had a pathway to justice—someone to guide them, advise them, and begin building their defense from the moment it mattered most.

**353 CHILDREN RELEASED
FROM DETENTION**

Your donations helped secure the release of 353 children from detention in 2025 and reduce sentences for another 129. These outcomes reflect what your support makes possible: children leaving custody, returning to their families, and moving forward with a second chance.



Photo: CLDC's office sign in Hargeisa, Somaliland.



Photo: Staff Lawyer, Nimco, with four clients released in 2025.

THE
IMPACT
OF
YOUR
SUPPORT
IN
2025

CHILDREN FACING DEATH AND TORTURE DEFENDED

Eight children sentenced to death and 63 subjected to torture were not left alone—they had a defense. This work was made possible with the vital support of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT), whose partnership ensures that even the most vulnerable children are not denied justice.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTIONS ENFORCED

Individual donations also helped strengthen the enforcement of human rights in Somaliland's courts. In numerous cases, judges cited protections such as the best interests of the child and the principle that imprisonment should be a last resort and for the shortest possible time—demonstrating how your support shaped fairer outcomes for children in 2025.



Photo: Managing Lawyer, Idiris, meeting with a client who faced the death penalty.

Jamhuuriyada Somaliland

Magaca Umadda Somaliland

Xukunka Maxakamadda Gobolka M/Jeex

Xukunkii Maxakamadda

Maxkamadda Gobolka Maroodi Jeex- Ee Hargeisa :-

Maxkamadu Waxay Danbi Ku Heshay Si Waafaqsan 123 Xha

Danbiilayaasha Magacyadoodu Kala Yihiin :-

- [REDACTED] D/17 jir ah.
- [REDACTED] D/15 jir ah.
- [REDACTED] D/18 jir ah
- [REDACTED].....Maqane
- [REDACTED]

Maxkamaddu Waxay ku xukuntay Dambiilayaasha kala ah

- [REDACTED] D/17 jir ah.
- [REDACTED] D/15 jir ah.
- [REDACTED] D/18 jir ah
- [REDACTED].....Maqane

Midkiiba 1 (Hal) sano iyo 6 (Lix) Bilood oo xadhig ciqaabeed ah oo

xukuntay qod: 484.40xca IYO QOd:10aad X.N.G.C

NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2025

PUBLICATION OF A LEGAL COMMENTARY

In 2025, CLDC published a “Commentary on Somaliland’s Juvenile Justice Law,” translating our courtroom experience into practical recommendations to strengthen protections for children in conflict with the law. This work reflects our commitment not only to defend individual children but to improve the system as a whole. The commentary is available on our website.

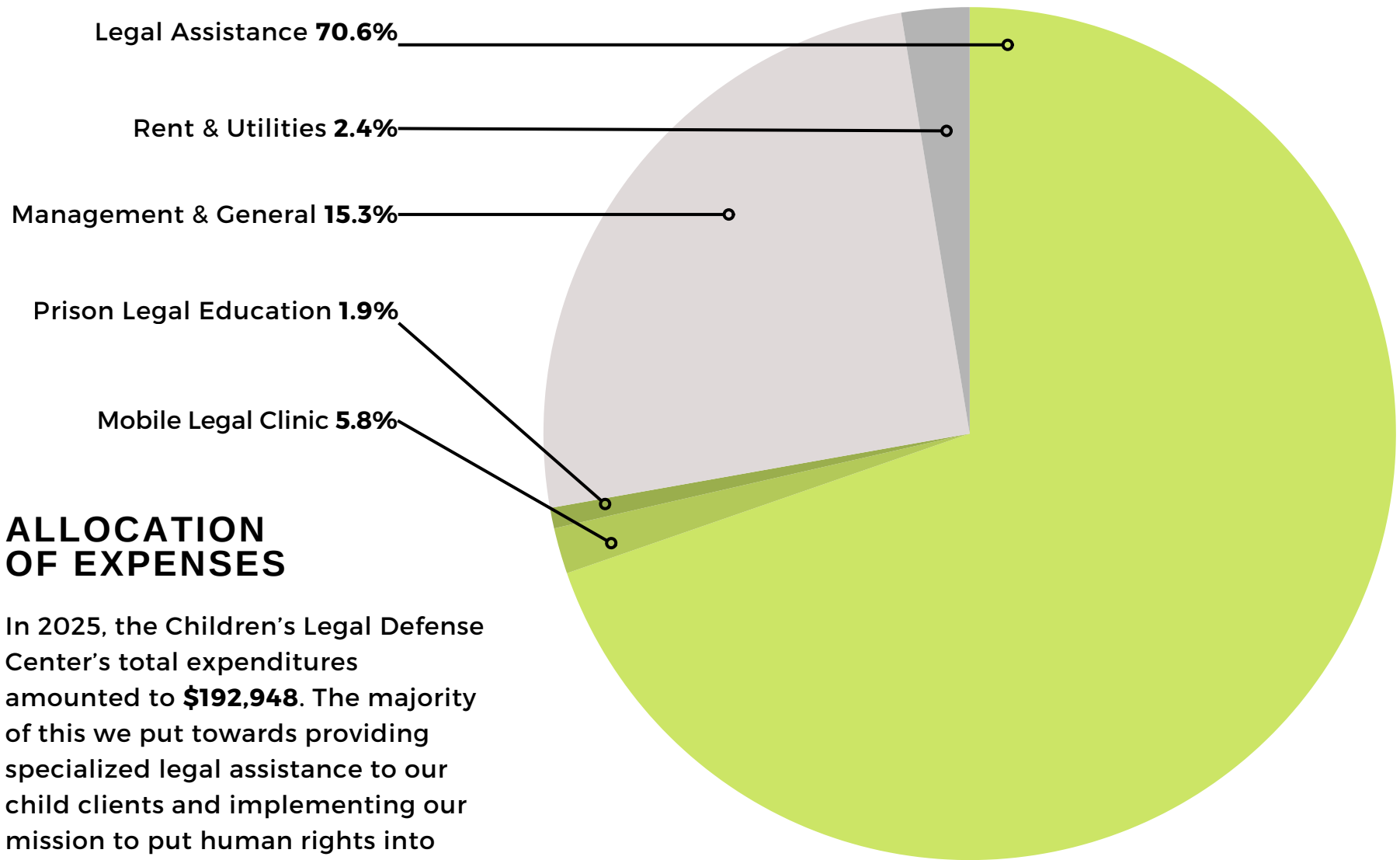
AWARDED THE FRENCH REPUBLIC’S HUMAN RIGHTS PRIZE

In 2025, CLDC was awarded the French Republic’s Human Rights Prize by the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH), a distinction that recognizes outstanding efforts to protect and promote human rights globally. This honor reflects what your support makes possible—ensuring that children in Somaliland have access to justice, protection, and a fair chance at their future.



Photo: Staff Lawyer, Hamdi, giving a copy of the Commentary to a judge.

Photo: Executive Director, Caitlin, at the awards ceremony in France with the Minister of Gender (left) and the President of CNCDH (center).



ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

In 2025, the Children's Legal Defense Center's total expenditures amounted to **\$192,948**. The majority of this we put towards providing specialized legal assistance to our child clients and implementing our mission to put human rights into action.

WITH GRATITUDE

In 2025, we secured the release of 353 children from police stations and prisons in Somaliland.

Behind each of these releases is a community that chose to act. Individual donors from around the world made it possible for us to stand with children who would have otherwise faced detention alone. We are especially grateful to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT), whose support ensured we could defend children sentenced to death and forced to confess under torture. Together, you made it possible to turn human rights into real outcomes—bringing children home.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who made this possible.



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

The Children's Legal Defense Center is a US 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization (Federal Tax ID 86-3884113) and a registered local nonprofit in Somaliland (Registration Number L.43.13.1403.2026M/J).

cldcsl.org
info@cldcsl.org



CHILDREN'S LEGAL DEFENSE CENTER
XARUNTA DIFAACIDA SHARCI EE CARRUURTA