



## **United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)**

### **Statement by Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Kiki Gbeho to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia**

**New York, 22 February 2023**

Madam President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief on the situation in Somalia at this session held under the important theme of “Somalia: a women, peace, and security perspective”.

I am pleased to do so alongside the recently appointed Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ambassador Souef Mohammed El-Amine, with whom I collaborate closely and the Executive Director of UNWOMEN, Ms. Sima Bahous.

Madam President,

Since the last Security Council session on Somalia on 7 September last year, the Federal Government of Somalia has – despite many challenges – made significant progress in advancing its key national priorities. Close cooperation with Federal Member States has been sustained, momentum in the fight against Al Shabaab regained, and Somalia remains on track to complete the debt relief process in 2024.

Through regular meetings of the National Consultative Council (NCC), His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has undertaken efforts to prioritize Federal Government and federal member states relations, and to advance state building priorities.

In the December meeting of the NCC, Federal Government and Federal Member State leaders, with the exception of Puntland, agreed a federated model regarding the allocation of powers and on justice; both of which are key elements for the completion of the Constitutional review. Puntland requested additional time to consider its position on these matters and has asked for further consultations with the Federal Government of Somalia. I encourage the Federal Government and the Federal Member states to continue dialogue within the NCC framework toward consensus on Somalia’s state building agenda.

Madam President,

I welcome the Federal Government's continued commitment to implementing women, peace, and security agenda, as demonstrated by the launch of the National Action Plan on Security Council Resolution 1325. The launch of the National Action Plan is timely as it provides a framework to address the challenges that persist for women in Somalia. More has to be done to enable equal representation in all facets of public life.

To this end, enhancing women's political participation also remains critical. This includes that the commitment Somalia's political leaders made on the 30 per cent women's quota is not only codified in relevant legal and electoral frameworks but also safeguarded by all entities.

In this regard, the United Nations continues to support newly elected women representatives. For example, through the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme, the United Nations supported the establishment of the Federal Parliament's, Upper House, women's caucus. Moving forward, we must remain focused on advancing women's participation and equality. I call on all stakeholders to redouble their efforts towards achieving this objective.

Madam President,

As the government seeks to advance its post-election priorities, including conducting operations against Al-Shabaab and managing the devastating impact of the drought, recurrent political conflicts continue to command the government's attention. In South-West State, for instance, clashes took place on 23 December related to the timing of the state presidential election. A South-West State reconciliation conference held under the auspices of His Excellencies, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and the Speaker of the House of the People, Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur, was able to avert an escalation and address political grievances.

In Laascaanood town, Sool region, the fighting that broke out on 6 February continues, and has led to increased humanitarian needs. An interagency assessment reports more than 185,000 people displaced, (89 per cent of whom are women and children). At least 63 civilians were killed and over 363 injured. Efforts to stop the fighting are ongoing, but the situation, including the targeting of civilian infrastructure, remains alarming. I would like to reiterate the previous statements by the United Nations and international partners condemning the violence, calling for the resolution of political tensions through dialogue, and calling for unhindered humanitarian access to urgently address the needs of those displaced and impacted.

Madam President,

Al-Shabaab continues to pose a serious threat to peace and security in Somalia. The year 2022 was the deadliest for civilians since 2017, with 60 per cent increase in civilian casualties as compared to 2021. Over the past few months, the Federal Government has made progress in countering this threat by targeting Al-Shabaab's military and financial operations and ideological narrative. The Somalia Security Forces, reinforced by the use of local militias, have conducted successful

operations against Al-Shabaab in Hirshabelle and Galmudug States. Operations are expected to gradually move into other areas of Somalia.

Consolidating gains in the newly recovered areas will require strong linkages between military operations and stabilization initiatives, comprised of reconciliation and justice components and aimed at bolstering good governance and service delivery. In this regard, and in line with Somalia's National Stabilization Strategy, efforts have focused on supporting communities and newly established district authorities in several recovered areas.

In parallel, the Government continues efforts towards generating forces, to gradually assume security responsibilities in line with the Somali transition plan. The handover of the ATMIS Maslah camp to the Somali National Army in mid-January was an important step in this process, having paved the way for the handover of such camps in future. However, funding remains a critical challenge. I reiterate previous calls by the Secretary-General to ensure predictable and sustainable funding to ATMIS and adequate resourcing for Somali security forces. This remains vital to the security transition.

Madam President,

With five consecutive poor rainy seasons, the current drought is unprecedented in its severity. Humanitarian needs continue to steadily rise, with about 8.3 million people – nearly half of Somalia's estimated population – requiring assistance and protection in 2023. Needs are also more pronounced with minorities and marginalized groups.

Thanks to the generous donor support, Government efforts, and local community initiatives, humanitarian organizations scaled up response and reached 7.3 million people in 2022. While famine has been prevented for now, famine remains a threat if the April to June rains underperform as forecast and humanitarian assistance is not sustained. The 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan, launched on 8 February, seeks \$2.6 billion to meet the priority needs of 7.6 million people. I urge donors to stand with Somalia at this difficult time by providing the required resources early.

Madam President,

Despite great adversity, the people of Somalia continue to demonstrate strength, resilience, and resolve.

The progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia to advance peace, security, and development, has generated a positive momentum to enable further advances in the state building agenda. At the core of this agenda lies the completion of an inclusive and consensus based constitutional review process. This remains a priority in the period ahead.

As the United Nations, we stand ready to support with these efforts and as always, to support Somalia in implementing its vision of a secure, stable, and peaceful nation.

I thank you