



United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)

Briefing to the Security Council by Ambassador Nicholas Kay, Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Somalia

19 May 2015

[AS DELIVERED]

Addis Ababa - Madam President, Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council. I am glad to be doing so with my friend and colleague, Ambassador Maman Sidikou. Yesterday we briefed the AU Peace and Security Council together, which is why we are joining you from Addis. The AU-UN partnership in Somalia is unique, strong and essential for success.

Madam President,

Let me begin by thanking the Council for its continued support to UNSOM and the peace and state-building process in Somalia.

When I spoke to you in February I was both excited and worried about the year ahead. The last few months have highlighted the progress and the challenges.

I was excited because, after too long a pause, there was the prospect of political progress again. And indeed, momentum has been regained. Somalia's third Government in less than three years is hard at work and the Federal Parliament has begun its 2015 session. Somalia's federal, regional and local leaders, parliamentarians, and people from all walks of life are building a federal state, step by step, through dialogue and reconciliation. The prevailing environment of mistrust accumulated over 25 years makes the task difficult and painstaking; but it must continue, and deserves our sustained support.

Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, as well as the Prime Minister, Speaker and the leaders of Puntland, Jubba and South West Administrations have reiterated their determination to deliver Somalia's Vision 2016 plan, without any extension of the term of the Federal Parliament or President in August and September 2016 respectively.

There are several important targets the Government has set for the coming months, including: completing the formation of Interim Regional Administrations and assemblies; advancing the constitutional review; establishing the National Independent Electoral Commission and Boundaries and Federation Commission; and finalizing priority legislation on political parties, citizenship, and elections.

Once parliament has approved the nomination of Commissioners for the National Independent Electoral Commission, the NIEC faces a compressed timeline to discharge its duties. Upon its establishment, the commission will need to decide swiftly on how to implement its mandate. The United Nations will deploy an Electoral Assessment Mission to advise and determine, in close collaboration with stakeholders, the nature and extent of UN electoral support in Somalia.

The UN, together with the African Union, IGAD, and the European Union and member states continue to support the formation of the Interim Regional Administrations. Many challenges remain – in particular ensuring inclusivity. More needs to be achieved in terms of local reconciliation. Women, minorities and youth must be well represented as part of that inclusivity.

Progress on federalism has not been matched by similar progress on the constitutional review process. On 6 May of the Chairperson of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission resigned, but there should be no let-up in moving the process forward. The United Nations is supporting the Commissioners and other relevant institutions to start the constitutional review process in earnest without further delay.

I am also concerned about the timetable for elections in “Somaliland”, which were due next month. The recent decision by the House of Elders to postpone elections for 22 months until March 2017 is a disappointment. The UN has joined other international partners in urging a reconciliation of this timetable based on a political consensus among all “Somaliland” stakeholders.

Madame President,

The security of UN staff in Somalia remains a priority. Tragically a terrorist attack in Garowe on 20 April claimed the lives of four UNICEF staff and three Somali guards. Al-Shabaab targeted individuals who were working hard to improve the lives of Somali children and families. It was, as the President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said “an attack against the future of [the] country.”

We honor our fallen colleagues by continuing their work. We have to ensure a balance between our duty of care to staff and the delivery of our mandate to support the Somalis. Overall, the UN - Agencies, Funds and Programmes and mission combined - have on average 1,400 people deployed through Somalia. We must ensure adequate protection for these teams.

In this regard, I want to thank the Council for its support to the expansion of the United Nations Guard Unit, which provides vital protection to UN staff within the Mogadishu International Airport compound and the new offices we have moved into in Mogadishu city. This is the first time a Security Council mandated mission has operated from outside the airport zone since 1995.

Madam President,

I remain concerned about security in Somalia, and about the threat posed by Al-Shabaab to the wider sub-region, demonstrated by the heinous attack on Kenya's Garissa University in April. We need to monitor closely and be able to respond to any sign that Al Shabaab is benefitting from their links to extremist groups in Yemen. Counter-terrorism requires effort on many fronts: I hope that the coming weeks will see even closer cooperation among Member States to address this threat at a sub-regional level, including measures to prevent and counter violent extremism. With so much at stake between now and 2016, we can expect Al-Shabaab to do everything it can to derail the political process.

Renewing the joint Somali and African Union offensive against Al Shabaab is an urgent priority. I once again pay tribute to the courage of the Somali National Army and our AMISOM colleagues. The AU and UN recently completed a joint mission to Somalia to assess the benchmarks for a UN peacekeeping mission; the impact of the 'surge' of AMISOM troops, and to provide recommendations on the next steps in the military campaign. My colleague Ambassador Sidikou and his Excellency the Prime Minister of Somalia will brief further on this.

Development of the SNA and Somali police, is an imperative for both the defeat of Al Shabaab and AMISOM's exit strategy. The Guulwade (or "Victory") Plan referred to in the Secretary-General's report seeks to train and equip the SNA for joint operations now. It provides a sound framework; but business as usual will not be enough to support it. A robust architecture for the delivery of international support to the SNA is needed and we are consulting all partners on the options. A similar plan for the police, including regional police, is also needed.

Madam President,

I am encouraged that the mechanisms created in 2014 to support the implementation of the New Deal Somali Compact are starting to perform. The government has exercised leadership in bringing all partners together. A portfolio of 7 programmes, aligned with Federal Government priorities and donor resources, and with a value of over \$100m, has been approved for inclusion in the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund. I thank all donors who have pledged support, and further encourage them to support Somalia's recovery through these mechanisms.

However the alignment and coordination of international assistance behind Somali leadership is uneven. Of the funds generously pledged at Brussels in 2013, only ten per cent have been committed through the Compact architecture. I encourage all Somalia's partners to adhere to our collective commitments, and especially to increase their use of national systems.

Although Somalia's financial system remains high-risk, the Federal Government and its international partners are taking steps, within the New Deal framework, to ensure robust oversight of the overall governance architecture. There is still a long way to go, but I am pleased to report that a Treasury Single Account is now in place, creating a single channel for national revenues and payments.

Madam President,

There is work to do on human rights as well. This year, Somalia will need to report on progress made on their commitments in the Universal Periodic Review. I note with concern that there has been a marked increase in executions and death sentences handed out in 2015 despite Somalia's commitment to put a moratorium on executions.

I also remain concerned about threats and intimidation of journalists in Somalia.

I welcome the AU's report on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by AMISOM soldiers and commend the work of the investigations team. As the Council has already noted, there is now a need to follow up. Ambassador Sidikou will brief further on this.

Madam President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains alarming. 730,000 Somalis continue to be unable to meet their most basic daily food needs. An additional 2.3 million people are at risk of sliding into the same situation. Among them over 1.1 million Somalis remain displaced, the majority women and children. This situation requires constant attention, adequate funding as well as continuous upgrades to our analytical and forecasting capabilities and systems. One third into the year, the Humanitarian Appeal is only 12 per cent funded, having received only US\$100 million of the \$863 million needed.

The situation could be further compounded by a poor rainy season, the closure of the Somali remittance operators and an escalating conflict in Yemen. As of 14 May Somalia has received 6,949 arrivals since 27 March. The vast majority – around 92% - are Somali nationals of whom many have refugee status in Yemen. The UN is actively supporting efforts to assist those returning.

Madame President,

The planned High Level Partnership Forum on 29 July will be an opportunity for Somalia and its partners to come together to agree on priority actions between now and 2016. But continued progress between now and then will take sustained attention and commitment on all sides.

I believe that UNSOM's mandate remains relevant for the coming year. As the federalism process moves forward, we will adjust the focus of our efforts. Our work in Somalia's regions will become ever more critical, and we will seek to maximize our support to existing and new administrations, within our mandate of providing good offices and strategic policy advice.

This requires logistical and security support in difficult circumstances. I look forward to a strategic review of UNSOA also scheduled for July. It will help us to establish what is feasible, including to support emerging administrations where UNSOM does not have a presence. We will continue to update the Council on the adequacy of security arrangements. Finally, we will keep under review the preparations for an electoral process in September 2016, and provide further advice on the implications as required.

Madam President,

While it is too soon to celebrate definitive success in Somalia, I believe we would be missing a strategic opportunity if we fail to appreciate just how much Somalis and the international community are achieving. As we cast our eye over the wider region where else do we see a country, once mired in conflict, that now has progressively better functioning governance and, where political dialogue is replacing the rule of the gun and where, most importantly, violent extremism is being successfully countered. A country from where once refugees fled in their millions and which is now receiving refugees from other countries, such as Yemen, and is welcoming home its own citizens.

It is an honour for me to work in such a context and with such dedicated partners and brave UN colleagues. The world should not squander this opportunity. We need to reinforce success with increased engagement and resources in the coming months.

I am grateful for the Council's continued support.

Thank you.