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Situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 15 of Security Council resolution [2657 \(2022\)](#) and to resolution [2670 \(2022\)](#), provides updates on the implementation of those resolutions, including on the mandates of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), covering progress achieved against the benchmarks identified by the strategic review, and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers significant developments from 23 August 2022 to 7 February 2023.

II. Political, security and economic overview

A. Political developments

2. During the reporting period, progress was achieved towards the implementation of the priorities of the Federal Government of Somalia identified in its work programme for the period 2022–2026. Through regular meetings of the National Consultative Council, chaired by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the Federal Government and federal member states continued to foster cooperation, with meetings held in September, October and December to discuss state-building priorities.

3. During the meeting held on 12 and 13 September, the National Consultative Council commended the ongoing military operations against Al-Shabaab. It also agreed to intensify drought response efforts, accelerate talks with “Somaliland”, strengthen cooperation between government institutions at both the federal and regional levels and work towards ensuring political stability based on trust, unity underpinned by the constitution, and the rule of law. In the October meeting, the National Consultative Council concurred on the acceleration of the transition plan and the implementation of the national security architecture. It also noted, inter alia, the importance of speeding up the drought response, prioritizing the constitutional review process and implementing free and transparent elections.

4. The most recent meeting of the National Consultative Council, held from 25 to 28 December, resulted in the signing of agreements on the allocation of powers between the federal and state levels and a federal model of the judiciary, with the



exception of Puntland, which committed to sharing its views on those issues at a later stage following further internal consultations. The National Consultative Council also agreed to form technical committees to review the national security architecture adopted in April 2017 and to prepare recommendations on universal suffrage elections.

5. Subsequently, on 9 January 2023, Puntland issued a statement asserting its constitutional right to act as an independent government until the Federal Constitution was finalized, while reiterating its role in building the federal system of Somalia. Puntland further outlined its readiness to negotiate separately with the Federal Government towards reaching agreements on the completion of the constitution, security matters and power-sharing, among other matters. On 14 January, Puntland appointed a 22-member technical committee to engage with the Federal Government in this regard.

6. In South-West State, the State Assembly's decision to extend the mandate of the State President, Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed "Laftagareen", to a five-year term caused tensions, with the opposition contesting the extension of the President's term, alleging it was unconstitutional and demanding that elections be held without delay.

7. In the light of this, on 19 November, the federal Speaker of the House of the People, Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nuur "Madobe", announced an initiative to achieve political reconciliation in South-West State. However, tensions between the South-West State administration and the political opposition were further aggravated by an event held on 20 December to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the election of President "Laftagareen". On 23 December, mounting tensions led to an armed confrontation between South-West State security forces and opposition supporters in Baidoa, reportedly resulting in five fatalities, including two children. In the wake of those clashes, a reconciliation conference was held in Baidoa from 17 January to 5 February, under the auspices of President Mohamud and the Speaker of the House of the People. The conference concluded with an agreement on the South-West State Assembly and on subsequent presidential elections to be held between November 2023 and January 2024, with the federal Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation overseeing the implementation of those provisions. The conference also resulted in an agreement on compensation for damages sustained in the 23 December clashes, the release of political detainees and respect for the freedom of movement of opposition members.

8. In Laascaanood, the regional capital of Sool, protests took place following the killing on 26 December of a local businessman who was also a member of the "Somaliland" Waddani opposition party. "Somaliland" security forces quelled the protests, resulting in at least 12 deaths and 59 people injured. On 4 January, "Somaliland" security forces reportedly shot dead a member of the Dhulbahante Jama Siyad sub-clan, prompting clan militia to attack security forces, which later withdrew from the town. A delegation of "Somaliland" representatives travelled to Laascaanood on 7 January, seeking to restore stability through dialogue, but no resolution could be reached. A Dhulbahante clan conference which took place in Laascaanood from 28 January to 5 February concluded with a declaration that the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag were part of the Federal Republic of Somalia, and that "Somaliland" forces should withdraw from the area. Subsequently, violent clashes between "Somaliland" forces and clan militia took place on 6 and 7 February, with reports received of at least 37 civilians killed and 131 injured. In a statement, President Mohamud called for an end to the fighting and a resolution through dialogue.

9. During the reporting period, there were also notable electoral developments, at both the federal and state levels. On 21 November, President Mohamud issued a decree to annul three presidential decrees issued by his predecessor, President

Mohamed Abdullahi Mohammed “Farmajo”. The cancelled decrees dealt with the appointment of and term extension modalities for the members of the National Independent Electoral Commission, the Independent Boundaries and Federalism Commission and the Anti-Corruption Commission. The President further instructed that new members should be appointed to each of those commissions.

10. In Puntland, preparations for the local district council elections continued, despite delays in the launch of the voter registration exercise. The phased voter registration, initially scheduled for December, was launched on 5 January to allow the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission to address the concerns of political associations regarding the process. Although the first phase of the voter registration proceeded relatively smoothly, the start of voter registration in the Nugaal region was denounced by local clan elders and a senior Puntland Security Forces commander, who alleged that the electoral process was not based on consensus. Subsequent talks between the state government and opposition representatives aimed at resolving the dispute ended in deadlock, following which armed forces aligned with the opposition moved into Garoowe and exchanged fire with troops loyal to the Puntland government for several hours on 6 February. The clashes ended when elders convinced the pro-opposition armed forces to retreat from Garoowe.

11. In Galmudug State, the electoral management body was established on 8 December and its chair appointed. The South-West State Cabinet approved the draft law establishing the South-West Electoral Commission on 9 November and on 4 December the Hirshabelle State Assembly adopted a law establishing its Independent Electoral Committee.

B. Security developments

12. During the reporting period, 1,524 security incidents were recorded, including 501 incidents of terrorism.

13. In line with the Federal Government’s priority of addressing the threat posed by Al-Shabaab, government-led forces conducted a series of offensive operations against the group in Galmudug and Hirshabelle States, together with “community defence forces” comprised of local clan militias. The joint offensives dislodged Al-Shabaab from several areas in Galmudug and Hirshabelle, including around Xarardheere, Adan Yabaal, Ruun Nirgood and Buulobarde towns in Mudug, Shabelle Dhexe and Hiraan Regions, respectively.

14. In the light of the ongoing campaign by the Somali Security Forces aimed at degrading the capability of all terrorist groups, and to facilitate the drawdown of African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) troops, leading to the gradual handover of security responsibilities to the Somali security forces, a summit of Heads of State, attended by the Presidents of Djibouti and Kenya and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and chaired by President Mohamud, took place in Mogadishu on 1 February. At that summit, the leaders commended the efforts undertaken by the Federal Government in the fight against Al-Shabaab so far and agreed, among other points, on making a final push to liberate the whole of Somalia from the militant group. They stressed the urgent need to jointly plan a decisive operational strategy against Al-Shabaab and acknowledged the importance of mobilizing regional support for timely, decisive operations and establishing a joint operations mechanism that coordinated the operations’ holistic capabilities and multipliers. They emphasized the importance of establishing a joint border security mechanism and requested that international partners support the stabilization efforts of Somalia in the newly liberated areas. The summit followed a meeting of the defence ministers of the respective countries in Mogadishu to discuss the fight against Al-Shabaab.

15. Throughout the reporting period, Al-Shabaab continued to carry out high-impact attacks against government, security forces and civilian targets in urban centres across the country. The most affected regions were Banaadir and Lower Shabelle. On 3 October, two large vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices exploded in Beledweyne, Hiraan region, near the Hiraan Regional Administration complex. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, which resulted in 70 civilian casualties, with 17 killed and 53 injured.

16. On 23 October and 27 November, respectively, Al-Shabaab mounted complex attacks against hotels in Kismaayo and Mogadishu. In both cases, the attacks were initiated with an improvised explosive device at the outer security perimeter of the hotel. This allowed the armed insurgents to infiltrate the premises, killing indiscriminately and holding out for several hours before being neutralized by security forces. In the attack in Kismayo, 13 people were killed, including 8 civilians and 5 members of Al-Shabaab. During the Mogadishu hotel attack, 17 people were killed, including three members of the Somali security forces and six Al-Shabaab elements.

17. On 29 October, two large vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices exploded at the Zoobe junction in the centre of Mogadishu near the Ministry of Education, resulting in over 111 fatalities, including a United Nations national staff member. At least 318 people were injured.

18. On 4 January, Al-Shabaab launched an attack on the Office of the District Commissioner and the local police station in Maxaas, Hiraan Region, utilizing two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. Maxaas had been recovered by the Federal Government in July at the beginning of the military offensives in Hirshabelle. In the attack, at least 50 people were killed and 70 injured.

19. On 22 January, Al-Shabaab carried out a complex attack against the Banaadir Regional Administration building in Mogadishu. The attack was initiated with two person-borne improvised explosive devices before Al-Shabaab gunmen entered the building. Somali security forces intervened and regained control of the building after five hours. At least 11 people, including six attackers, were killed and four others injured.

20. On 1 February, two mortar rounds were launched towards the Aden Adde International Airport, with one mortar round hitting the United Nations compound, injuring six United Nations Guard Unit personnel.

21. On 6 February, in the Daynille district of Mogadishu, a United Nations Children's Fund convoy hit a remote-controlled improvised explosive device, with the explosion striking the security services escort vehicle. No fatalities were reported, but four members of the security escort team were injured.

22. Pro-Da'esh elements in Somalia also conducted two attacks, including the assassination of a senior Mogadishu district official using an under-vehicle improvised explosive device on 29 August. An armed clash occurred between Da'esh in Somalia and Darwish soldiers on 14 January in Boosaaso district, Puntland.

C. Economic developments

23. Somalia continued to make progress under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, with the Initiative completion point projected to be reached by 2024. Following the successful completion of an additional review of the Extended Credit Facility, the International Monetary Fund released an additional \$9 million to Somalia on 5 December.

24. The economic recovery in Somalia remained fragile, however, with reduced growth projections and increasing inflation, especially for food and other commodities, compounding the impact of the severe drought. In the light of this, the zero net real growth rate per capita observed since 2014 was projected to continue until at least the end of 2023. Limited fiscal monetary tools reduced the country's ability to provide relief to people and the economy.

25. Domestic revenue mobilization similarly remained low, but the resumption of external grants following the completion of elections eased the fiscal pressures experienced in 2022. Since September, the World Bank Board of Executive Directors has approved \$180 million in additional resources to address critical needs for water provision, public resource management and urban internally displaced persons.

III. Update on the activities of the Mission and the United Nations country team

A. Support to the political processes

26. The United Nations continued to support Somalia in the areas of State-building, peacebuilding and reconciliation. Funding provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Peacebuilding Fund, as well as assistance provided by UNSOM, supported the convening of the three meetings of the National Consultative Council held during the reporting period.

27. In the area of national reconciliation, the United Nations supported the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation in preparing and launching a review of the National Reconciliation Framework on 12 December. In order to review and update the Framework and the National Reconciliation Plan, the Government held consultations with youth, women, elders, minorities and groups from across Somali society, as well as representatives of the federal member states, to build consensus on the formulation of a comprehensive national reconciliation and social cohesion strategy.

28. The United Nations also supported the South-West State reconciliation conference, including preliminary consultations held by the Speaker of the House of the People, Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nuur "Madobe".

29. With regard to local elections, the United Nations continued to support the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission by providing technical and operational assistance for the ongoing voter registration process ahead of planned district council direct elections.

B. Support to the security sector, rule of law and stabilization (comprehensive approach to security)

1. Security sector development

30. The core security partner group, convened by the Federal Government of Somalia and comprising ATMIS, the European Union, Türkiye, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and the United Nations, convened seven times during the reporting period to facilitate discussions between the Federal Government and international partners on security-related issues.

31. Following the National Consultative Council meeting in December, and at the request of the Office of National Security, UNSOM supported the organization of a series of thematic discussions on the revision of the national security architecture

during the initial meeting of the national security architecture technical committee, involving federal and state representatives, which was held from 16 to 18 January.

32. On 6 October, the Federal Government of Somalia shared its new draft counter-terrorism strategy with key partners, proposing an all-of-government approach to countering terrorism, complemented by community support. The strategy was subsequently approved by the National Security Adviser, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs and other national stakeholders on 7 December, and is aimed at countering the main elements underpinning Al-Shabaab activities, such as territorial control, taxation and recruitment.

33. The Federal Government of Somalia continued to strengthen its weapons and ammunition management capacity, supported by the United Nations. Priority is currently being given to operationalizing the six-month action plan presented by the Office of National Security in September in support of the implementation of the national strategy. In this connection, with the support of the United Nations, progress has been made towards the construction of an ammunition storage facility in Jazeera, Mogadishu.

34. The Mine Action Service conducted a preliminary consultation with the Office of National Security to discuss establishing a national strategy to counter improvised explosive devices.

2. Rule of law

35. In preparation for the December meeting of the National Consultative Council, UNSOM supported consultative meetings between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states' ministries of justice and other relevant stakeholders from 19 to 24 December.

36. During the reporting period, UNSOM held a series of workshops with stakeholders in Mogadishu, Puntland and "Somaliland" to promote ways to enhance justice for conflict-related sexual violence, and judicial independence, which will result in reports and recommendations for action by March 2023.

37. At a project steering committee meeting on 6 December, the Joint Justice Programme was formally closed. The draft framework for a new programme has been developed, and discussions are ongoing with the Ministry of Justice thereon.

38. The Hirshabelle Parliament enacted the State Police Act on 20 December, with financial and technical support from the Joint Police Programme. This new legislation contributes to the federalization of security in Somalia by providing the governance framework for the Hirshabelle State Police, reinforcing the national security architecture. Similar police acts exist for Galmudug and "Somaliland", with work continuing to finalize them in South-West State and Jubbaland, as well as for the Federal Police.

3. Stabilization

39. On 1 December, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, together with the Office of the Prime Minister, presented the priorities of the updated national stabilization strategy to international partners. The focus areas of the strategy continue to be (a) local governance; (b) community recovery; (c) social cohesion and reconciliation; and (d) the rule of law. Additional emphasis was given to the role of stabilization in support of the current military operations, as part of the Federal Government's overall approach and coordination effort. The Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation underscored the need for increased resources to address stabilization priorities linked to the current operations to help consolidate the

gains made across Hirshabelle and Galmudug States, as well as to expand efforts to other States as operations progressed.

40. Throughout the reporting period, the federal Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and its state counterparts in Hirshabelle and Galmudug continued to lead and coordinate a range of stabilization activities in areas recovered from Al-Shabaab, funded and supported by the United Nations and partners. These efforts included the appointment by Hirshabelle State of an interim administration for Aadan Yabaal and repairs of community infrastructure damaged or destroyed by Al-Shabaab in Maxaas and Buulobarde districts. The implementation of social cohesion and district council formation activities under the national stabilization strategy continued across Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and South-West States, including the conclusion of district council elections in Balanbal, Caabudwaaq and Dhuusamarreeb, as well as social cohesion activities in Wanlaweyn, Balcad, Daynuunay and Buulo Gaduud.

4. Preventing and countering violent extremism

41. The federal Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs formalized an agreement with the United Nations on 7 December on the next joint United Nations programme on the prevention and countering of violent extremism for the period 2023-2026. Implementation of the programme will be led by the federal and state-level ministries of endowments and religious affairs, with overarching strategic guidance from the Presidency's Office of National Security.

42. From 20 to 24 October, the federal Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), held a three-day interministerial meeting with the federal and state-level Ministries of Religious Affairs, followed by a three-day consultation forum between the ministries, Somali scholars and faith and community leaders. The conferences were aimed at mobilizing the support of religious leaders for anti-extremism messaging.

43. In parallel, national and international stakeholders continued efforts to establish a revised rehabilitation programme for low-risk defectors formerly associated with Al-Shabaab, including a strengthened community-based element. Throughout this transition phase, the five rehabilitation centres in Mogadishu, Baidoa and Kismaayo remained operational, providing support to 454 female and 539 male beneficiaries as at 7 February.

C. Humanitarian assistance

44. The humanitarian situation remained extremely dire. Five consecutive below-average rainy seasons have compounded the impact of decades of conflict, mass displacement and severe economic hardship, driving increased and more severe humanitarian needs and pushing parts of the Somali population to the brink of famine.

45. In early September, a multi-partner Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis projected that famine could occur between October and December among rural residents of Baidoa and Buurhakaba districts in South-West State, as well as internally displaced people in Baidoa city, if humanitarian assistance were not urgently scaled up and sustained. It also found that several areas of central and southern Somalia faced an increased risk of famine if the 2022 *deyr* rainy season failed and if food assistance did not reach the most vulnerable people.

46. An updated Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis released in December found that the efforts of local communities and the scale-up of humanitarian assistance had prevented famine thresholds from being surpassed. The

analysis noted, however, that the underlying crisis had not improved and that even graver outcomes had been averted only temporarily. Famine continues to be a strong possibility from April to June 2023 and beyond if humanitarian assistance is not sustained and if the 2023 April to June rains underperform as current forecasts indicate.

47. Even without a famine declaration, nearly 50 per cent of the population is estimated to be affected by the longest and most severe drought in the recent history of Somalia. Over 1.3 million people have been internally displaced due to drought and almost 100,000 people have sought safety and assistance in Ethiopia and Kenya. More than 3.5 million livestock have died since mid-2021, devastating livelihoods and reducing children's access to milk. Almost 6.4 million Somalis are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity between January and March 2023, including 322,000 in Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 5, and about 1.8 million children under 5 will likely face acute malnutrition through June, including over 513,000 children who are expected to be severely malnourished.

48. Prolonged and extreme conditions have resulted in higher-than-normal deaths, and excess mortality will continue to accumulate unless assistance is further scaled up and sustained in crucial sectors. Given rising death rates in many areas, the large size of the affected population and the likely duration of the crisis, the cumulative levels of excess mortality could be as high as in 2011, when close to 260,000 people lost their lives, at least half of them children.

49. The drought has had a devastating impact on women and children, who make up more than 80 per cent of the displaced population of Somalia. The limited or lack of access to livelihoods and adequate health, water, sanitation and other services has exacerbated protection risks and pre-existing inequities. Of the more than 3.1 million drought-affected school-age children, 400,000 children displaced since January 2021 have lost access to education, with another 900,000 children at risk of dropping out. These children are at heightened risk of exploitative and dangerous working conditions, child recruitment, child marriage and family separation, as well as violence and neglect. At least 90 per cent of the children who lost access to education during the 2017 drought never returned to school.

50. Limited access to health, water, sanitation, hygiene and nutrition services has increased the risk of disease outbreaks, in particular in the already overcrowded sites for internally displaced persons. About 8 million people lack access to safe water and appropriate sanitation and hygiene services, and reported cases of measles and cholera continue to surge in comparison with recent years. The high rates of acute malnutrition increase the risk of diseases and deaths from preventable causes, while sick people become malnourished more easily. Less than a third of people living in drought-affected areas are estimated to have access to essential health care.

51. Ongoing conflict and insecurity continue to be major impediments to humanitarian operations, including their expansion outside major population centres and into hard-to-reach areas across Somalia. More than 600,000 people were displaced by conflict and insecurity in 2022. Partners are working with local authorities and communities to reach people in need and to allow access to humanitarian assistance.

52. Despite the security, operational and financial challenges, some 7.3 million people were provided with humanitarian assistance in 2022, delivered by 335 humanitarian actors, including 259 national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which continued to be present in 74 districts across all regions and States.

53. On 8 February, the United Nations and partners, together with the Federal and state governments, launched the Somalia humanitarian response plan for 2023, which

seeks \$2.6 billion to assist 7.6 million people in need. An estimated 8.25 million people, or nearly half of the population, need immediate lifesaving humanitarian and protection assistance in 2023.

54. The Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs visited Somalia from 31 August to 7 September to raise awareness of the critical humanitarian situation there, identify additional measures to avert the worst outcomes and show solidarity with the Government and people of Somalia.

D. Support to coordination of development assistance

55. The Federal Government of Somalia convened a high-level drought response meeting on 26 September and an international investment conference on 28 and 29 November with the support and participation of the United Nations.

56. To ensure that priority is given to the most pressing needs in Somalia, the Somalia multi-partner trust fund was rebranded to become the Somalia Joint Fund, with a new governance structure, seven financing windows and a participatory programme planning process with national ownership forming the core of the Fund's reforms.

57. On 30 November, the United Nations held an event on climate security with national and international practitioners, donors and international financial institutions working in Somalia. Furthermore, as part of the Somalia Joint Fund, a new climate and resilience funding window has been designed to advance joint programming around climate change adaptation.

58. On 6 December, the League of Arab States and the United Nations co-hosted a high-level conference in Cairo on drought and climate resilience for Somalia, with high-level participation by the Federal Government of Somalia. The conference brought together States members of the League, Arab NGOs, financial institutions and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes to discuss the dire humanitarian conditions in and climate projections for Somalia. The conference focused on both emergency lifesaving needs and medium- and longer-term sustainability to help break the cycle of recurrent crises.

59. On 18 December, Somalia commemorated International Anti-Corruption Day, organized by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, with support from the United Nations. The event enabled an exchange of views on the nexus between integrity, good governance and the combating of corruption. It also highlighted the role of youth in the fight against corruption.

E. Women, peace and security

60. On 5 September, Prime Minister Hamse Abdi Barre launched the Somali national action plan to implement the Somali Women's Charter and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). At the launch, the Minister of Women and Human Rights Development reaffirmed the important role that Somali women play in conflict prevention and resolution and emphasized the need to address marginalization, the lack of representation of women and protection of women and girls.

61. On 23 October, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia hosted the annual Global Open Day on Women, Peace and Security, which was attended by more than 50 women leaders from government, business and civil society organizations. At the event, which was held to commemorate the twenty-second

anniversary of the adoption of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), participants discussed the crucial role that women play in ending conflict.

62. On 26 November, at the launch of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign, the First Deputy Speaker of the House of the People, Sadia Yasin Haji Samatar, highlighted the need to end sexual violence. Her remarks were interpreted by some observers to be a call for the adoption of the sexual offences bill of 2018, which had been unanimously endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers on 30 May 2018 but had not been presented to the Federal Parliament because of opposition from conservative factions. The First Deputy Speaker's comments on the bill were met with harsh criticism, including hate speech and incitement to violence.

63. On 30 November, the focal person for international relations, governance and policy in the Office of the First Deputy Speaker of the House of the People and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia hosted 72 young women to discuss prevention of violence against women and girls as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign. The participants recommended prioritizing the education of young girls and women, creating mentorship programmes and giving women space to voice their ideas. In addition, they called for comprehensive approaches to prevent and respond to sexual harassment against women and girls.

64. On 20 and 21 December, the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development of the Federal Government of Somalia convened an interministerial retreat in South-West State that was attended by representatives of women's ministries from Jubbaland, Hirshabelle, Galmudug and South-West States. The participants agreed to support legislation that protects the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities, and to promote the national action plan to implement Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). At the retreat, the representatives of the women's ministries declared their support for the ongoing military offensive against Al-Shabaab and highlighted the need to mitigate the impact of military operations on women and children.

F. Youth, peace and security

65. On 4 November, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and local partners conducted a youth-led peacebuilding campaign at eight sites for internally displaced persons across Kismaayo and Jubbaland. Young people at each site presented a variety of issues related to peacebuilding in moderated, open dialogues, and they committed themselves to serving as peacemakers and change-makers by spearheading efforts to address a culture of violence in their communities. The events, which brought together young people, community leaders and government officials, reached some 4,000 people across the targeted locations.

66. From 27 to 29 November, UNFPA and its partners hosted a forum on youth, elections and democratization in Mogadishu that brought together 60 young women and 60 young men to learn about electoral processes, identify challenges and opportunities for youth electoral participation and engage in intergenerational dialogue with elders, politicians and United Nations representatives.

67. On 3 December, UNFPA and local civil society organizations conducted a peacebuilding forum for 27 young women and 23 young men in Beled Xaawo, Gedo Region. The objective of the forum was to increase the peacebuilding and conflict resolution capacities of young people, provide a platform for knowledge exchange and promote the participation of young people in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

68. On 17 December, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Ministry of Youth and Sports organized a capacity-building workshop for 100 young people in Baidoa in order to strengthen their knowledge, networking skills and ability to participate in local peacebuilding and governance.

69. During the reporting period, the United Nations carried out a peer learning programme for ministries responsible for reconciliation at the federal and state levels. The programme was focused on building capacity to strengthen youth-, gender- and climate-sensitive conflict analysis and enhance planning for reconciliation, with a view to enabling the participation of youth and women.

G. Human rights and protection

1. Human rights

70. During the reporting period, UNSOM recorded 1,059 civilian casualties (382 killed and 677 injured), a 153 per cent increase compared with the 419 civilian casualties recorded during the previous period. Al-Shabaab remained the main perpetrator, responsible for 841 civilian casualties, followed by 100 attributed to State security forces, 81 to unidentified actors, 34 to clan militia and 3 to other actors. The number of casualties rose because Al-Shabaab committed more mass-casualty attacks using improvised explosive devices. In the final quarter of 2022, civilians comprised 65 per cent of the victims of improvised explosive device incidents. Of the total casualties recorded during the reporting period, 429 (111 civilians killed and 318 injured), or 41 per cent, resulted from the group's attack on the Zoobe junction in Mogadishu on 29 October. One journalist was killed and two others were injured in that attack. Two other journalists were killed by Al-Shabaab in two improvised explosive device attacks in Hirshabelle, one of which occurred in September 2022 and the other in January 2023. The increase in casualties makes 2022 the deadliest year for civilians in Somalia since 2017.

71. During the reporting period, authorities arrested and detained 17 journalists. On 11 October, the Secretary-General of the Somali Journalists Syndicate was arrested in Mogadishu in connection with a joint press release issued by five media associations in which they expressed their concerns about an order issued by the Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism on 8 October prohibiting "dissemination of extremism ideology both from traditional media broadcasts and social media". The media associations expressed concern that the order may restrict freedom of expression and access to information, including by limiting the ability of journalists to freely report on the ongoing operations against Al-Shabaab and by restricting public access to information concerning the ongoing security operations. On 22 October, the Banaadir Regional Court released the Secretary-General of the Somali Journalists Syndicate on bail. On 10 November, he was formally charged under the Somali Penal Code with three offences. Judicial proceedings are ongoing.

72. On 9 November, a delegation from Somalia participated in a dialogue with the Committee against Torture on the initial report of Somalia submitted under article 19 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT/C/SOM/1), which the Government had submitted in 2019. On 2 December 2022, the Committee published its concluding observations on that report (CAT/C/SOM/CO/1). The delegation, in its statement to Committee, indicated that Somalia planned to complete, in 2023, the revision of the Somali Penal Code of 1964, and that it intended to include therein a definition of torture that is in accordance with article 1 of the Convention.

2. Compliance with the human rights and due diligence policy

73. On 25 August and 8 September, as part of the support provided by the Mine Action Service to the Somali Police Force, UNSOM and UNSOS delivered tailored training on international human rights law for 26 police officers (20 men and 6 women) in Mogadishu. In addition, from 11 to 15 December, UNSOM, UNSOS and IOM delivered the first training of trainers course for 10 officers (five women and five men) from the National Intelligence and Security Agency in Mogadishu. The focus of the course was on training and facilitation skills, discrimination against women in law enforcement, female defectors and conflict-related sexual violence.

74. On 1 December, during a human rights due diligence policy task force meeting, representatives of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, the Mine Action Service and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) delivered an update on the provision of support to the Somali security forces, including with respect to the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy in the context of recent security developments in Hirshabelle State, as well as force generation initiatives by the Federal Government. In addition, on 4 December, the human rights due diligence policy task force finalized its review of the draft risk assessment and mitigation measures related to UNOPS support to the Somali National Army.

75. From 4 to 8 December, representatives of UNSOM, UNSOS, the African Union and African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) troop- and police-contributing countries attended a validation workshop on the African Union-United Nations predeployment training manual for ATMIS troop- and police-contributing countries. The participants provided feedback on the draft training manual, and the representatives of troop- and police-contributing countries shared their experiences in that regard, in line with the relevant human rights due diligence policy mitigation measures related to the capacity-building of the Mission.

3. Children in armed conflict

76. From 23 August 2022 to 31 January 2023, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations committed against children verified 1,127 grave violations against 909 children (724 boys and 185 girls), 13 attacks against schools and 2 against hospitals, and 20 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. A total of 434 children were recruited and used (412 boys and 22 girls), 288 children were abducted (247 boys and 41 girls), 277 children were killed (72 boys and 22 girls) and 178 others were maimed (137 boys and 41 girls), 96 children were subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence (1 boy and 95 girls) and 186 children were victims of multiple violations. Al-Shabaab perpetrated 703 violations, followed by clan militias (110), government security forces (53), regional forces and authorities (45), “community defence forces” (21) and the Ethiopian Liyu Police (2). A total of 193 violations, including 49 resulting from crossfire, could not be attributed to a perpetrator. More than half of the violations that were verified occurred in Juba Dhexe (194), Shabelle Dhexe (153), Shabelle Hoose (147), Hiraan (96) and Bay (89) Regions.

77. Between 23 August and 31 December, the Somali National Army and the Ministry of Internal Security handed over 44 boys formerly associated with Al-Shabaab to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) for reintegration support. From 9 to 13 October, UNICEF, UNSOM and the Ministry of Women’s Development and Family Affairs in Puntland screened and separated 56 children from regional forces and clan militias.

78. On 11 January, UNICEF and UNSOM co-chaired the first quarterly meeting of the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations committed

against children. The ongoing drought and military offensives against Al-Shabaab were identified as key factors contributing to violations. The attendees agreed that promoting child protection legislation was a key priority for 2023.

4. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

79. During the reporting period, the working group on monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements verified eight incidents of conflict-related sexual violence (four rapes, three gang rapes and one attempted rape), affecting six women and two girls, one of whom was 7 years of age and the other 14. Three of the adult survivors were internally displaced because of the current drought. Three of those incidents were recorded in Puntland, two in Mogadishu and one each in South-West, Hirshabelle and Jubbaland States. Unidentified armed men carried out six incidents. A police officer in Puntland allegedly perpetrated one incident, while a clan militia member in Mogadishu allegedly carried out another incident. Both were arrested. However, authorities subsequently released the clan militia member for unknown reasons.

80. As part of the implementation of the joint programme on Women, Peace and Protection, which is co-led by UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UNSOM provided technical support to develop a training of trainers manual on conflict-related sexual violence for community leaders and grass-roots representatives. That manual is the first of its kind in Somalia. Separately, UNSOM held workshops at both the federal and state levels with justice actors, civil society activists and such vulnerable groups as internally displaced persons on overcoming social and legal barriers to accountability for conflict-related sexual violence.

81. On 14 December, UNSOM launched a book entitled *A Story of Courage* at an event in Mogadishu to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign. The aim of the book, which is presented in an accessible graphic format, is to raise awareness of the steps that victims of sexual violence should take in the event of a sexual assault.

H. Logistical support provided by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia and Somali security forces in joint and coordinated operations

1. Support to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia

82. During the reporting period, UNSOS continued to provide mandated support to ATMIS in line with the ATMIS concept of operations and the Somalia Transition Plan, as outlined in Security Council resolution [2628 \(2022\)](#).

83. In order to better support the reconfiguration of ATMIS and the ongoing security transition in Somalia, UNSOS established a core group in November comprising in-house experts to support the handover to and takeover by ATMIS and the Somali security forces of forward operating bases. A standard operating procedure was developed to guide the handover/takeover process and identify which United Nations-owned equipment could, in accordance with rules and regulations, be left in its original location and granted to the Federal Government of Somalia, in order to ensure that forward operating bases remain defensible and operational. On 21 January, ATMIS, with the support of UNSOS, successfully handed over Maslah forward operating base to the Somali security forces in sector five of ATMIS operations.

84. In support of the transition, and as agreed upon at the ATMIS logistics conference in July, UNSOS began to decentralize the provision of support to ATMIS

and Somali security forces in September, with pilot exercises conducted in Baidoa and Jawhar. The decentralization concept includes the forward stocking of larger tactical reserves and increased delegation of authority to the sectors, with associated accountability measures for staff members in the sectors to ensure flexible and agile support in the field. The decentralization concept will be expanded to three other sectors following the conclusion of the ongoing review of the pilot phase.

85. To support implementation of phase I of the ATMIS concept of operations, UNSOS conducted an advisory assessment inspection of additional air assets that had been pledged by some troop-contributing countries in support of ATMIS operations. The assessments, which were conducted between 14 and 24 November, were aimed at initiating the negotiation process among the African Union, troop-contributing countries and the United Nations regarding the letters of assist that are needed to secure aviation assets.

86. The Mine Action Service continued to deliver improvised explosive device threat mitigation measures that have proven critical to the mobility and safety of personnel from ATMIS troop-contributing countries. These measures include delivering specialized in-country and predeployment training for more than 6,300 ATMIS military and police personnel and pre- and post-convoy briefings for more than 400 ATMIS convoys, conducting searches on main supply routes that led to the destruction of 29 explosive devices and providing 36 threat analysis and awareness reports.

87. In support of the security transition, the Mine Action Service and ATMIS hosted a conference in Mogadishu from 8 to 10 November on countering improvised explosive devices. The conference was aimed specifically at drawing lessons learned from the operations in Hiraan region and paving the way for planning and executing future operations to counter improvised explosive devices.

2. Support to Somali Security Forces

88. During the reporting period, UNSOS continued to provide non-lethal logistics support to 13,900 troops and police officers in joint or coordinated operations with ATMIS in 23 locations. Field defence stores were provided to support the construction of new forward operating bases in newly liberated areas. In December, UNSOS provided training and capacity-building in proficiency in joint mission air operation support to five Somali National Army personnel. Eight other personnel benefited from training in information and communications technology and attended computer science courses.

89. As at 9 February 2023, the United Nations trust fund in support of the Somali security forces had a balance of \$2.64 million, following receipt of a \$2.7 million donation. The balance was sufficient to cover operational expenses from January to March 2023. In order to secure additional contributions, UNSOS and the Federal Government continued their outreach to potential donors, highlighting that the provision of mandated logistics support to Somali security forces is a key enabler of current and future operations.

90. The Mine Action Service helped Somali security forces improve their ability to counter improvised explosive devices by delivering an 11-week training course to five Somali National Army personnel. In addition, it conducted a refresher training course on searching routes for explosives and disposing of conventional munitions for two Somali National Army improvised explosive device disposal teams in Baidoa and Kismaayo. The Service also conducted a training course on explosive hazard awareness for 85 Somali National Army soldiers across all ATMIS operational sectors. During the reporting period, Somali National Army disposal teams neutralized 58 improvised explosive devices. The Service continued to enhance the

capacity of 150 Somali Police Force officers by delivering explosive hazard awareness training for personnel deployed in Kismaayo, Jubbaland State.

I. United Nations presence in Somalia

91. United Nations entities remained present in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Berbera, Boosaaso, Dhooble, Dhuusamarreeb, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu. As at 7 February, 783 international staff and 1,556 national staff were deployed throughout Somalia.

J. Observations

92. I welcome the close cooperation between the Federal Government and federal member states, which have held regular meetings of the National Consultative Council to discuss issues of national importance. Their enhanced dialogue and coordination have contributed greatly to the progress made towards the identified national priorities, including the State-building agenda, the fight against Al-Shabaab and the humanitarian response. Sustained dialogue between the Federal Government and federal member states remains critical to implementing the programme of work of the Government and further advancing the mutually agreed upon national priorities.

93. The recent agreement on the delineation of powers between the Federal Government and federal member states, albeit at this time without the support of Puntland, is encouraging progress. I urge leaders to continue inclusive discussions towards reaching a political agreement on power-sharing and other outstanding issues of federalism, within the context of the constitutional review process. It is vital that National Consultative Council discussions and the constitutional review process be informed by broad public consultations, in order to reflect the views of all stakeholders, including women, young people and marginalized groups. I am concerned by the recent announcement made by Puntland that it would limit cooperation with the Federal Government, and I call on the leaders of Somalia to resolve disputes through dialogue and compromise.

94. I welcome the agreement reached at the South-West State reconciliation conference, which was held under the auspices of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and I encourage all parties to work together to implement that agreement. The recent violence in Laascaanood, Sool Region, is alarming. I call for the immediate de-escalation of violence, protection of civilians, unimpeded humanitarian access and for tensions to be resolved peacefully through dialogue.

95. I am deeply concerned by the vicious campaign against the First Deputy Speaker of the House of the People, Sadiya Yasin Haji Samatar, the first woman to hold this post. It is imperative that elected officials be able to perform their duties without harassment or threat and that their safety be ensured. Safeguarding and increasing the political participation of women remains a critical priority in Somalia and all stakeholders should redouble their efforts towards achieving this objective.

96. The dire humanitarian situation remains alarming. After five consecutive below-average rainy seasons, the ongoing drought has already become the longest and most severe in the recent history of Somalia. Regrettably, rainfall from April to June 2023 is forecast to be less than average. While famine thresholds have not yet been surpassed, some 8.3 million people will need humanitarian assistance in 2023. Therefore, scaled-up assistance must be sustained and improved in order to continue to prevent famine. I thank donors for their generosity in 2022 and urge them to provide

additional funds, which are urgently required in order to keep pace with the increasing scale, scope and severity of needs. Sustaining and improving scaled-up humanitarian assistance and frontloading funding for 2023 will be vital, as needs remain extremely high and critical gaps persist. Responses to avert famine must be accompanied by long-term investments in livelihoods, resilience, infrastructure development, climate adaptation, durable solutions and protection in order to ensure that those affected can quickly recover and become more resilient to future shocks.

97. In addition to the drought, conflict is driving increased needs and exacerbating access challenges. Somalia recorded a significant increase in civilian casualties in 2022, the first time that such casualties had increased since 2017. I reiterate my previous calls regarding the importance of fulfilling obligations to protect civilians and civilian objects, end and prevent grave violations against children, including the arbitrary detention of children, and facilitate humanitarian access, including removing any impediments to assistance, in accordance with international humanitarian law.

98. I welcome the progress made in the fight against Al-Shabaab and the commitment of the Federal Government to stabilization and reconciliation activities in order to consolidate the gains achieved in the territories recovered from Al-Shabaab. I am further encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the Government to review and advance the implementation of the national security architecture in the context of those activities.

99. The continued attacks by Al-Shabaab, which have resulted in human rights violations, conflict-related sexual violence and a sharp increase in civilian casualties, are alarming. I reiterate my strong condemnation of all acts of terrorism and violent extremism and express my support to survivors and heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. As the Somali authorities take steps to protect civilians from such attacks, it is imperative that they ensure that counter-terrorism measures do not infringe on freedom of expression or create impediments for journalists and media workers as they strive to perform their vital work. I am deeply concerned about the arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists and media workers, and I urge the authorities to ensure an environment that promotes and protects the rights to freedom of expression and access to information.

100. I welcome the engagement of Somalia with the Committee against Torture in November 2022 and urge the Federal Government to implement the observations of the Committee and engage with other human rights treaty bodies, giving priority to submitting the initial reports of Somalia pursuant to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. I also welcome the launch of the national action plan to implement Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), in which specific and emerging protection needs for Somali women and girls are identified, including protection against conflict-related sexual violence. I urge the authorities to allocate budgetary resources, in consultation with survivors, to implement the provisions of this plan. I call on the authorities to take measures to strengthen the legislative framework to enhance the protection of women and girls against sexual violence, including by adopting the sexual offences bill of 2018.

101. I call on the Federal Government of Somalia and all partners to sustain the reform momentum, in order to enable the country to reach the remaining enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative completion triggers and finalize debt relief agreements with all creditors this year. The finalization of the debt relief process will provide Somalia with much-needed access to additional international development finance. Such finance is a crucial element of the State-building effort and will enable the Government to focus public spending on social services and other priorities that

will improve the lives of Somalis. In view of the ongoing humanitarian and security needs, I reiterate the importance of addressing the underlying drivers of conflict and fragility. Inclusive, sustainable development is humanity's ultimate prevention tool. It is a key tool that is capable of breaking repeated cycles of crisis.

102. I express my deep appreciation to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the European Union, Member States and other partners for their sustained support and engagement in peacebuilding in Somalia. I pay tribute to AMISOM, ATMIS and the Somali security forces for the sacrifices that they continue to make in order to achieve long-term peace and stability in Somalia. In that connection, the funding shortfall facing ATMIS and the Somali security forces remains a grave concern. I therefore urge partners to ensure predictable, sustainable, multi-year funding for ATMIS and adequate resources for Somali security forces, including through the United Nations trust fund in support of the Somali security forces that is managed by UNSOS. The lack of sufficient resources is a key obstacle to the successful implementation of the security transition.

103. I express my gratitude to my former Special Representative, James Swan, and thank him for his dedicated service and leadership during his tenure. I also express my appreciation to my Deputy Special Representative, as Officer-in-Charge of UNSOM, and all United Nations staff in Somalia for their work towards advancing State-building and peacebuilding in Somalia.



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