



# Security Council

Distr.: General  
15 June 2023

Original: English

---

## 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 mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and progress achieved against the benchmarks identified by the strategic review, and on the mandate of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers significant developments from 8 February to 7 June 2023.

#### II. Political, security and economic overview

##### A. Political developments

2. During the reporting period, the Federal Government of Somalia continued efforts to advance the implementation of its key national priorities on the basis of political dialogue. The National Consultative Council, which brings together the leaders of the Federal Government and the federal member states, held two meetings. From 15 to 17 March 2023, the President of the Federal Government, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, convened the National Consultative Council in Baidoa, South-West State. Leaders of the Federal Government and federal member states, with the exception of Puntland, which did not attend the meeting, reached agreement on a model for fiscal federalism and amendments to the national security architecture. The adopted model for fiscal federalism specifies the creation of two independent agencies: a national revenue authority and a planning and allocation agency.

3. Also at its meeting in March, the National Consultative Council agreed that the leaders of three federal member states, namely the President of Hirshabelle State, Ali Gudlawe, the President of South-West State, Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed “Laftagareen”, and the President of Galmudug State, Ahmed Abdi Kariye “Qoor”, would travel to Puntland to engage its President, Said Abdullahi Deni, on key concerns related to the National Consultative Council and Puntland’s participation in the State-building process. This matter remains unresolved, and Puntland did not participate in the National Consultative Council meetings held during the reporting period.



4. Another meeting of the National Consultative Council was held in Mogadishu from 24 to 27 May. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Mohamud and was attended by the Presidents of Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and South-West State. Discussions during the meeting centred on enhancing national security, preparations for the anticipated second phase of the counter-al-Shabaab operations, completing debt relief procedures and progress in implementing the outcomes of previous meetings. Following the meeting, the leaders issued an agreement outlining the decision to adopt a one-person, one-vote electoral model for Somalia. They also agreed on a harmonized election schedule in which local council elections would be held on 30 June 2024, and elections for assemblies and presidents at the federal member state level on 30 November 2024. The National Consultative Council further agreed that the President and a Vice-President, at the federal level, would be elected by the people on a single ballot paper, which generated debate and drew criticism. Mr. Mohamud stated that this was a preliminary political agreement that would be subject to public consultation and parliamentary deliberation.

5. On 27 March, following a member's petition that attracted approximately 100 signatures, the Federal Parliament formed a joint committee to prepare recommendations on a possible term extension from four years to five for all federal institutions. The proposed extension was criticized by some opposition parties and influential political figures. On 3 June, the motion was presented to Parliament for consideration.

6. With regard to the constitutional review process, the Federal Cabinet approved the appointment of five members of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission, including one woman, on 2 March. The commissioners assumed office on 29 March. Mr. Mohamud continued to call upon government institutions tasked with the constitutional review to expedite and conclude the process as soon as possible.

7. A significant milestone was reached in the country's State-building goals with the holding of universal elections in Puntland. On 25 May, one-person, one-vote district council elections took place in 30 out of 33 planned districts in Puntland. Of the voters who collected their voter registration cards, 72 per cent participated in the elections. According to the legal framework, the three political associations that won the most seats, namely Kaah, Mideeye and Sincad, would be registered as political parties. Despite efforts to achieve 30 per cent representation for women candidates, women made up only 17 per cent of those elected. Technical challenges and disputes were managed through constructive engagement by stakeholders. Three notable security incidents took place during the voter registration process and the distribution of voting materials in Garoowe, Nugaal. Negotiations are ongoing to allow for the polls to take place in the three remaining districts.

8. Efforts to advance dialogue between Somalia and "Somaliland" were also made. On 1 April, Mr. Mohamud appointed the former President of Galmudug State, Abdikarim Hussein Guled, as his special envoy for the Somalia and "Somaliland" dialogue. On 19 April, "Somaliland" appointed Edna Adan as the envoy for the Somalia and "Somaliland" talks.

9. In Laascaanood, the capital of Sool Region, long disputed between "Somaliland" and Puntland, violent clashes between "Somaliland" forces and local Dhulbahante clan militia continued at varying levels of intensity, causing significant casualties, destruction of infrastructure and displacement of civilians. On 23 February, the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia issued a statement expressing alarm at the high number of civilian casualties and calling upon all parties involved in the clashes to fully respect their obligations under international law, in particular with regard to the protection of civilians. During the reporting period,

UNSOM recorded 36 civilian deaths and 270 injured in the conflict in Laascaanood town and surrounding areas.

10. Several coordinated initiatives by governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as by multilateral and bilateral partners, sought to secure a ceasefire and facilitate dialogue between the parties to the conflict. In one such initiative, a delegation of clan elders supported by the Federal Government of Somalia travelled to Garoowe, Laascaanood and Hargeysa to obtain a ceasefire. On 28 May, the delegation of the Dhulbahante traditional leaders met Mr. Mohamud and senior members of the Federal Government to discuss the conflict.

11. In South-West State, the agreement reached at the reconciliation conference concluded on 5 February 2023 continued to be implemented. The commitment in the agreement to provide compensation for damages sustained during the clashes in Baidoa on 23 December has been implemented. The implementation of the other provisions of the agreement, including opening democratic space, freedom of expression and freedom of movement for opposition members, remained limited.

## **B. Security developments**

12. During the reporting period, 935 security incidents were recorded, including 355 incidents of terrorism.

13. The number of terrorism-related incidents in the first quarter of 2023 surpassed all previous quarterly averages on record since 2016. Improvised explosive devices continued to be used to disrupt and dissuade the efforts of Somali security forces to degrade Al-Shabaab. A total of 61 improvised explosive device attacks were recorded, resulting in 291 casualties. Vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices were used in four incidents, including to facilitate overruns of those forces' positions, resulting in the looting of weapons and equipment. Government and local clan militias known as "community defence forces" are often targeted in reaction to the ongoing offensive. The first quarter of 2023 saw the highest number of improvised explosive device incidents compared with any other quarter since 2017. Regions that recorded the highest number of improvised explosive devices included Banaadir, Shabelle Hoose, Hiraan and Juba Hoose.

14. On 21 February, Al-Shabaab launched a complex attack against the private residence of a Somali National Army commander in the Cabdicasiis district of Mogadishu, which served as an improvised hospital for Hawadle clan militia members ("community defence forces") injured in Hiraan Region during offensive operations. The attack was initiated by a person-borne improvised explosive device, followed by the intrusion of five armed attackers. In the assault, 5 Al-Shabaab fighters and 10 civilians were killed, while 7 persons were injured, including security personnel responding to the attack.

15. Al-Shabaab increased the frequency of indirect fire attacks in Somalia, with 29 attacks reported, 3 of them in Mogadishu. Villa Somalia and the Aden Adde International Airport area, where the majority of all United Nations entities operating in Mogadishu are located, remained frequent targets of mortar attacks.

16. During the reporting period, pro-Islamic State elements in Somalia conducted one attack in Puntland. On 14 February, an explosion from an improvised explosive device targeted a convoy transporting electoral delegates in Boosaaso district, Bari Region. The blast missed the target, and no one was injured. Islamic State in Somalia claimed responsibility.

17. In February, the Federal Government announced plans for a comprehensive military operation against Al-Shabaab through the establishment of a Frontline States

initiative comprising military forces from Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. The initiative, which is intended to build on recent operational gains in Galmudug and Hirshabelle, is expected to take place in parallel to the ongoing phases of the drawdown of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS). Operational plans and support requirements were discussed among the Frontline States partners during high-level meetings in Mogadishu on 1 February and from 4 to 6 April, as well as during a summit of ATMIS troop-contributing countries held in Kampala from 25 to 27 April. Preparations for the operations are to be accompanied by enhanced efforts to ensure joint planning with ATMIS and close coordination with stabilization initiatives in newly recovered areas.

18. Somali security forces, together with local clan militias, conducted a series of offensive operations against Al-Shabaab, mainly in Galmudug State. The joint offensives dislodged Al-Shabaab from several villages in Ceel Dheere and Xarardheere districts, Galguduud Region. In response to the military offensives, Al-Shabaab conducted several high-impact attacks, including two complex attacks on 19 and 22 April in Bud Bud and Masagway towns, Galguduud.

19. On 26 May, a large group of Al-Shabaab fighters launched a complex attack on the Uganda People's Defence Force at the ATMIS forward operating base in Mareer, Shabelle Hoose.

### **C. Economic developments**

20. Somalia continued to make progress under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, with its completion appearing to be achievable in late 2023. As at 7 June, the Somali Parliament had passed key legislation, including the Data Protection Law, the Investment and Investor Protection Law and the Electricity Act, to meet the completion point triggers of the Initiative, but the enactment of other relevant legislation remained pending. Additional progress is required in the areas of macroeconomic stability, domestic revenue mobilization and the finalization of the national unified social registry to complete the Initiative.

21. Drought and flooding continued to have an impact on economic activity, slowing growth and heightening inflationary pressures. Food and commodity prices decreased slightly in the first quarter of 2023 but remained above five-year averages and are subject to rainfall and local food production levels.

22. Domestic revenue mobilization remained low, requiring the introduction of a supplementary budget for 2023 in Parliament to reduce discretionary spending and prioritize security sector compensation and the hiring of teachers. The Federal Government remains committed to increasing revenue mobilization but continues to rely heavily on external grants.

23. Somalia made some progress on fiscal federalism. During its meeting from 13 to 17 March, the National Consultative Council endorsed a preliminary agreement on the appropriation and sharing of resources across the Federal Government and federal member states, with the exception of Puntland. This is an important step in reviewing possible functional assignments and institutional arrangements for the sharing and transfer of resources across the Federal Government and federal member states.

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

#### **A. Support to the political process**

24. During the reporting period, the United Nations provided operational support to the newly established elections technical committee of the National Consultative Council and supported the holding of its meetings in Mogadishu in February and in Baidoa in March to develop options for the electoral system.

25. UNSOM and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued to provide technical and operational support to the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission in the context of the May elections. The United Nations also supplemented financial support to the electoral process in Puntland through the Somalia Joint Fund.

26. The Galmudug Independent Electoral Commission, established in December 2022, is setting up its structure and plans to be fully operational by the end of 2023. The United Nations provided technical and operational support, as well as capacity-building, to the Commission. The United Nations also assisted in drafting the legal framework for Galmudug's state elections. On 22 March, UNSOM and UNDP met with the Speaker and the Secretary-General of Galmudug's Parliament to discuss United Nations support for the one-person, one-vote elections in the state.

27. UNDP supported the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation as well as line ministries at the federal member state level in developing a conflict navigation tool for Somalia, to inform early warning, conflict prevention and reconciliation efforts.

28. On 3 June, a groundbreaking ceremony initiating the construction of an UNSOM office in Dhuusamarreeb, Galmudug, took place.

29. On 3 and 4 May, UNSOM facilitated training on good governance and human rights for 10 Members of Federal Parliament (including 6 women) and 10 parliamentary staff.

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

##### **1. Security sector development**

30. The core security partners 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, met on three occasions at the principal level (16 February, 22 March and 1 June). The meetings remain an important platform for the Federal Government and international partners to coordinate on issues such as the revision and implementation of the national security architecture, force generation, integration, and financing of security. In parallel, preparatory work by the national security architecture technical committee, comprising representatives of the Federal Government and federal member states, resulted in agreement by those present on the revised architecture presented during the National Consultative Council meeting in March.

31. During the reporting period, UNSOM worked closely with the Federal Government of Somalia, ATMIS, the European Union and key donors to arrive at a joint assessment of progress achieved against the benchmarks and indicators for the

security transition in Somalia pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2628 \(2022\)](#) and [2670 \(2022\)](#).

32. UNSOM also continued to support the Federal Government of Somalia in strengthening its weapons and ammunition management capacity. The construction of an ammunition storage area in Jazeera, Mogadishu, was completed on 8 February.

## **2. Rule of law**

33. The United Nations continued to support discussions on a new justice and corrections model in Somalia. Proposals on this topic and a restructured Custodial Corps were presented and endorsed by those participating at the National Consultative Council meeting in March with the exception of Puntland, which was absent.

34. Further to the agreement between federal and state ministries of justice and donors, the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme phase II was signed on 17 May. The Programme was designed to promote justice sector reform, including through strengthening of the capacity of formal and informal rule of law actors.

35. In line with the Federal Government's priority of undertaking stabilization initiatives in areas recently recovered from Al-Shabaab, the United Nations advocated for the extension of accessible justice and policing service delivery and governance activities. Through established initiatives, such as the Joint Police Programme, community policing was enhanced in federal member states. Strategic and technical support was provided to the Federal Government to advance policies on conflict-sensitive justice approaches.

36. Through the provision of technical and financial assistance to the Council of Ministers of Internal Security, the United Nations facilitated discussions in the technical working group, which resulted in agreement on the updated national security architecture by the participants at the National Consultative Council meeting in March. The agreement includes an increase in the number of police from 32,000 to 40,000 and outlines a plan for the clear delineation of responsibilities between federal and state-level police.

## **3. Stabilization**

37. Throughout the reporting period, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, together with its state counterparts in Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and South-West State, focused on coordination and planning of efforts on the basis of the national stabilization strategy and in anticipation of the planned Frontline States operations. On 1 April, Mr. Mohamud announced the appointment of Mohamed Abdi Ware as Special Envoy for Civilian Protection and Stabilization. On 13 April, the Prime Minister convened an interministerial planning session on the Frontline States operations to ensure effective coordination on a number of issues, including stabilization-related initiatives.

38. In key locations, including Aadan Yabaal in Shabelle Dhexe Region and Maxaas in Hiraan Region, progress on stabilization activities, such as community engagement, installation of solar lights and construction of administration buildings, continued as efforts started shifting from early recovery interventions to midterm initiatives. Initial early recovery activities, such as pre- and post-liberation dialogues, distribution of shelter and non-food item kits, and water trucking, were also ongoing in newly recovered areas, including Xarardheere and Ceel Dheere, Galguduud Region. The United Nations continued to support the Federal Government and federal member states in their stabilization efforts.

#### 4. Preventing and countering violent extremism

39. From 3 to 6 March, UNSOM and UNDP, in collaboration with partners, held a meeting to discuss the new joint programme on the prevention and countering of violent extremism. Members of the ulama and government representatives from the ministries of religious affairs, as well as the Office of National Security, jointly defined the overarching vision of the new conflict transformation approach.

40. On 21 February, an agreement was reached between the Ministry of Internal Security and international donors on a five-year plan for the gradual handover of the defector rehabilitation programme, with the Federal Government incrementally assuming responsibilities for the financing and management of the programme by 2027. UNSOM and the International Organization for Migration assisted the Government in coordinating international support for the programme, including through strategic and technical advice and policy development. Efforts are being refocused on community-level activities to align the revised programme with the draft national stabilization strategy in order to enhance social cohesion and complement other initiatives to prevent and counter violent extremism.

### C. Humanitarian assistance

41. According to the analysis of the multi-partner Integrated Food Security Phase Classification on Somalia released on 28 February, famine has been averted in the country for the time being. While the *deyr* rainy season (October–December) in 2022 failed to deliver the needed levels of rainfall, it was better than forecast. In addition, the scaled-up humanitarian response has mitigated the suffering of millions of people affected by conflict and climatic shocks.

42. The current moderate to heavy *gu* (April–June) rains have also improved access to water and pasture, bringing some relief to the people affected by severe drought from January 2022 to March 2023. Water prices have reportedly decreased by about 40 per cent in parts of South-West State. However, recovery from the extended impact of severe drought will take time. More uninterrupted rainfall and sustained humanitarian assistance are needed to alleviate the extended impact of drought.

43. Follow-up surveys on integrated food security, nutrition and mortality were conducted among internally displaced people in three areas in March. The areas included Mogadishu, Baidoa and agropastoral communities in Buurhakaba, Bay Region, which previously faced the risk of famine. Partners reported significant humanitarian food and cash assistance coverage from January to March, which resulted in improvements in the food security indicators. Food prices and the cost of the minimum expenditure basket have reportedly declined compared with six months ago (by 11–16 per cent for rice and 6–10 per cent for the cost of the minimum expenditure basket) but remain higher than the five-year average by 32–39 per cent. The three areas now face moderate to large food consumption gaps until the end of June at the latest. For the period from March to June, internally displaced persons in Mogadishu and Baidoa were categorized as Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 4 (emergency), and agropastoral populations in Baidoa and Buurhakaba districts as phase 3 (crisis).

44. The global acute malnutrition prevalence in the three areas has reportedly improved compared with the situation in October 2022, with a statistically significant reduction among internally displaced persons in Baidoa from 21.2 per cent in October 2022 to 15.3 per cent in March 2023. The global acute malnutrition prevalence, however, remains at critical levels, at 20.2 per cent of internally displaced persons in Mogadishu and 15.3 per cent of agropastoral populations in Baidoa and Buurhakaba.

45. The humanitarian situation remains alarming, as morbidity is still high (greater than 20 per cent) in the areas that faced the risk of famine in 2022, despite some reported reductions. Across the country, 5 million people were acutely food insecure until March, classified in crisis or worse, including over 1.3 million people in emergency and 5,000 in catastrophic food insecurity. A total of 6.6 million people will have faced crisis-level food insecurity or worse by June. Furthermore, an estimated 1.8 million children under the age of 5 are facing acute malnutrition until December, including about 477,700 who are likely to be severely malnourished. Partners estimate that 43,000 excess deaths – half of them children under the age of 5 – may have occurred in Somalia as a result of the drought in 2022. Another 18,100–34,200 drought-related deaths are forecast for the first six months of 2023.

46. The drought has devastated the lives of Somalis and driven hundreds of thousands from their homes, resulting in 306,000 displacements from January to April 2023. Over 1.4 million people have been displaced by the drought since January 2022. Over 3.8 million livestock have also reportedly died since mid-2021. Recovery from a crisis of this magnitude may take years with sustained climate-sensitive development support complementing humanitarian assistance.

47. At the same time, high precipitation was recorded from mid-March to April in the Ethiopian highlands, causing floods downstream in the Shabelle and Juba Rivers, including in Baardheere, Jubbaland, and in Baidoa. As at 7 June, at least 468,000 people had been affected by floods, including nearly 247,000 people displaced, and at least 27 related deaths were reported in Baardheere district in Jubbaland State and Beledweyne district in Hirshabelle State. Humanitarian partners are implementing a national flood preparedness and response plan, based on the Humanitarian Response Plan. If rains intensify, floods could affect up to 1.6 million people, with over 600,000 displaced.

48. The rains come at a time when partners report a surge in cholera and acute watery diarrhoea cases, mainly in Jubbaland and South-West States, with the flooding likely to exacerbate the transmissions. At least 8,987 cholera cases were reported from January to April, including 27 deaths. Partners have reported challenges in ensuring adequate medical supplies, in addition to logistical and security access constraints in some affected areas.

49. Furthermore, conflict and insecurity have complicated an already challenging operating environment. While the current operations against Al-Shabaab have created opportunities for access to people in need, careful collaboration is required among all partners to mitigate risks, including the risk of internal displacements. About 433,000 people were displaced by conflict and insecurity across Somalia from January to March, of whom between 154,000 and 203,000 were displaced by fighting in Laascaanood from December 2022 to March 2023. About 580,000 people reportedly live in territory controlled by non-State armed actors, largely out of reach of humanitarian actors.

50. Drought and conflict continue to have a devastating impact on women and children, who make up more than 80 per cent of the country's displaced population. Education cluster partners report that over 1.7 million school-age children are displaced, with only 20 per cent of them having access to primary education.

51. Humanitarian partners are targeting about 7.6 million people out of the 8.3 million in need of assistance in 2023. On 9 March, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee system-wide scale-up for Somalia was extended by six months, until September, covering all drought-affected areas where responses are still not at scale.

52. Although generous donor support enabled humanitarian organizations to reach 7.3 million people in 2022, resource mobilization still remains a challenge. The

Humanitarian Response Plan for 2023, which seeks more than \$2.6 billion to meet the priority needs of 7.6 million people, is currently only 28 per cent funded.

53. The Executive Director of the World Food Programme visited Somalia on 1 and 2 May to advocate for immediate international action for Somalia and the Horn of Africa. She appealed for increased funding to sustain famine prevention; emphasized the need for a longer-term resilience programme as well as immediate humanitarian aid; and reinforced the importance of partnerships and collaboration with the Government and between humanitarian actors.

#### **D. Support to coordination of development assistance**

54. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued its efforts with regard to durable solutions, water management and climate adaptation, while discussion on the new aid architecture was initiated. From 12 to 15 February, the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on Solutions to Internal Displacement visited Somalia to advocate for a systematic approach to resolving displacement. Following his visit, the United Nations country team in Somalia established a solutions steering group to lead on the implementation of the Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement.

55. On 27 February, the Federal Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development, with the support of the United Nations, convened a high-level national durable solutions conference. Participants agreed to prioritize increasing access to housing, land and property and improving coordination among the Federal Government of Somalia, the federal member states and the United Nations.

56. From 5 to 8 March, the United Nations held a joint workshop in Somalia with various stakeholders in the water sector. Participants identified barriers to effective water management in Somalia and potential solutions. A core group was established to implement the workshop's outcome strategic engagement plan to improve coordination, joint programming, and integration of climate water resilience in support of the national water plan.

57. From 6 to 10 March, the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Organization for Migration and UNSOM conducted training for 35 women in Dhuusamarreeb, Galmudug State, on gender-focused climate change and security awareness and environmental community action planning. The participants were trained in practical climate-adaptive practices, such as water harvesting and soil restoration methods, and developed their environmental community action plans.

58. On 1 May, the United Nations Environment Programme launched an institutional capacity assessment of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change and related government bodies. The assessment, due to be completed by June 2023, is expected to identify capacity gaps and provide recommendations.

59. On 9 May, the Federal Government, the United Nations and donors met to discuss the new aid architecture proposed by the Government. They agreed to launch the Development Coordination Forum for development partners. Meanwhile, consultations continued towards agreement on the launch of the overarching bodies and the security and humanitarian coordination architectures. On 5 May, a high-level humanitarian forum meeting was held in Kismaayo, Jubbaland. Discussions focused on the adoption of a humanitarian coordination forum within the new aid architecture.

60. The Federal Government and the United Nations launched the Somalia Joint Fund, a multi-donor trust fund, in Mogadishu on 10 May. The Fund's purpose is to strengthen the partnership between Somalia, international partners and the United Nations in support of key national priorities and implementation of the United Nations

Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. The Fund seeks to mobilize \$60 million in flexible funding annually over the next seven years.

## **E. Women and peace and security**

61. In a continuing pattern of social media attacks against female elected officials, on 19 February, the South-West State Minister of Women, Family Affairs and Human Rights Development, Fahima Osman Omar, at a press conference, refuted attacks against her made on social media by a former Member of Federal Parliament a day earlier. The former Member of Parliament had accused the Minister of supporting a project on gender and LGBTQ rights. The Minister described the accusations as misleading and asked South-West State authorities to ensure her safety, given the threats against her. A media analysis conducted by the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme in February noted patterns of gendered disinformation and hate speech in both social and mainstream media, targeting women in public and political life, including activists, leaders and journalists.

62. From 22 to 26 February, representatives of the Women, Peace and Protection Joint Programme from UNDP and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) undertook a monitoring visit to Kismaayo. The Programme is aimed at ensuring the full political participation of Somali women in all spheres of society and their protection as a precondition for participation. The representatives engaged with beneficiaries, including traditional elders, religious leaders and members of women's groups. In discussing the training workshops offered by the Programme, the participants noted a significant improvement in their capacities to advocate for women's rights and participation in their communities. Other participants highlighted how the training on conflict-related sexual violence inspired them to strengthen prevention mechanisms in their areas.

63. On 9 May, the Federal Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, civil society organizations and women leaders, with support from UN-Women, launched the interim Steering Committee of the Somalia chapter of the African Women Leaders Network in Mogadishu. The Network promotes women's participation in leadership and advocacy for conflict prevention and resolution. The Network is aligned with the country's efforts to implement the national action plan for women and peace and security and to develop and launch federal member state action plans in line with both the national action plan and Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).

64. On 23 May, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General led a senior-level meeting between the United Nations and Somali women leaders in Parliament. Participants agreed to create a Somalia women Members of Parliament/United Nations leadership forum and to jointly explore four strategic areas of action: (a) gender-related priority legislation; (b) strategic engagements with the National Consultative Council; (c) early action to implement the 30 per cent quota for women; and (d) capacity-building for female Members of Parliament.

## **F. Youth, peace and security**

65. From 18 to 21 March, the United Nations Population Fund, in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Jubbaland, conducted peacebuilding training for 50 young people in Kismaayo. The workshop provided the participants with key sustainable peacebuilding skills, including how to address a culture of violence in their communities, and mediation and conflict resolution skills, aimed at enhancing their contribution to the welfare of their communities.

66. On 30 March, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in collaboration with international partners, completed the implementation of a pilot project entitled “Saving children’s dreams in Somalia through sport”. The project, initially focused on Garoowe, was aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation across Somalia by using sport as a tool for development, inclusion, reconciliation and peace. The implementation began with a “train the trainers” component that was delivered by the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The project also included the formation of a multidisciplinary team of local youth experts empowered to take the lead in sport for development and peace efforts. A total of 1,000 children and youth directly benefited from the project.

67. During the reporting period, the United Nations Population Fund supported youth centres in providing sexual and reproductive health services to 80 young people (43 male and 37 female) across Somalia. Through peer education, the youth centres also provided students with comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health for youth, including HIV prevention. The youth centres provided mentorship services and life skills education to ensure that young people have access to information.

68. On 11 May, the Somali Federal Cabinet approved the national youth policy for 2023–2030. The policy consists of 10 priority pillars intended to enable young people to realize their full potential and actively contribute to the country’s development.

## **G. Human rights and protection**

### **1. Human rights**

69. During the reporting period, UNSOM recorded 546 civilian casualties (159 killed and 387 injured), a 48 per cent decrease compared with the 1,059 civilian casualties recorded in the previous report, which covered a period of five and a half months. The decline in casualties despite the increase in security incidents (see para. 13 above) is attributed to fewer high-impact incidents during the reporting period. The conflict between “Somaliland” security forces and the local Dhulbahante clan militia in Laascaanood town of the disputed Sool Region, which reached its height in February 2023, was the main driver of the civilian casualties, with 306 casualties (36 killed and 270 injured). Al-Shabaab was the second largest perpetrator, responsible for 104 civilian casualties (57 killed and 47 injured), followed by 59 attributed to unidentified actors (26 killed and 33 injured), 47 to clan militia (25 killed and 22 injured), 25 to State security forces (15 killed and 10 injured) and 3 to other actors (3 injured). While Al-Shabaab did not carry out its mass casualty attacks in urban areas using improvised explosive devices, civilians accounted for over 11 per cent of all improvised explosive device-related casualties recorded across Somalia. The group carried out attacks against 24 civilians in Mogadishu (13 killed and 11 injured). Victims included two male clan elders connected to the offensive in Hirshabelle and two male electoral delegates from Shabelle Dhexe Region.

70. On 26 March, the Secretary-General of the Somali Journalists Syndicate, Abdalle Ahmed Mumin, was released from the Mogadishu Central Prison, where he had been held since 23 February. He had been convicted for disobeying the orders of the authorities pursuant to article 505 of the Somali Penal Code after reading a public statement on behalf of five media associations that had criticized a directive issued by the Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism on 8 October 2022 prohibiting the dissemination of extremist ideology. The media associations raised concerns that the directive might silence criticism of the Government and its security forces. On 27 March, the Banaadir Regional Court lifted the travel ban against him.

71. On 16 April, four journalists were arrested and detained in Mogadishu for attempting to report on an explosion in Mogadishu. On 18 March, five male journalists in “Somaliland” were also arrested and detained for interviewing members of the public on the alleged corruption of a government official. In both cases, the police released all the journalists on the same day without charges. On 16 April, police in Puntland arbitrarily arrested and detained a local politician for joining an opposition political association in Garoowe. He was released on the same day without charges. On 6 June, members of Al-Shabaab reportedly abducted five civilians (three male and two female) in Farlibaax village, Beledweyne town, Hiraan Region. Four of the abductees are humanitarian staff working for a local health organization.

## 2. Compliance with the human rights due diligence policy

72. On 14 March, the Federal Ministry of Defence and the United Nations Office for Project Services signed a memorandum of understanding on European Union-funded projects supporting the Somali National Army. It outlines that support is subject to the human rights due diligence policy, including measures such as screening of troops for children and information-sharing on alleged violations.

73. On 20 March, the human rights due diligence policy task force endorsed a methodology note on training as a mitigation measure, strengthening coherence among the support providers and identifying minimum criteria for international human rights and humanitarian law training when used as a mitigation measure.

## 3. Children and armed conflict

74. From 8 February to 31 May, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children verified 482 grave violations against 376 children (294 boys, 82 girls), including 12 attacks on schools, 10 attacks on hospitals and 4 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. A total of 139 children (125 boys, 14 girls) were recruited and used, 145 children (124 boys, 21 girls) were abducted, 43 children (37 boys, 6 girls) were killed, and 79 children (53 boys, 26 girls) were maimed, while 50 girls were subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence. Of these, 80 children were affected by multiple violations.

75. Al-Shabaab perpetrated 298 violations, followed by clan militias (36), government security forces (15), regional forces and authorities (11), “community defence forces” (7) and Da’esh (4). A total of 111 violations, including 70 resulting from crossfire, could not be attributed to a perpetrator. Violations were verified in Juba Dhexe (91), Shabelle Hoose (61), Hiraan (58), Shabelle Dhexe (45), Gedo (44), Bakool (36), Bay (35), Banaadir and Juba Hoose (27 each), Sool (25), Galguduud (15), Bari (12), Mudug (4) and Nugaal (2) Regions.

## 4. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

76. UNSOM verified six incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involving nine women, including a disabled pregnant woman, and four girls, compared with the previous reporting period, during which eight incidents involving six women and two girls were verified. The low numbers are likely attributable to the stigma attached to sexual violence and the difficulty in accessing areas and verifying incidents. Five of the survivors were internally displaced as a result of the drought. In one of the cases involving a minor, three suspects were arrested, while in the other incidents, the alleged perpetrators are reportedly on the run, and a clan militia member reportedly resorted to traditional mechanisms (*xeer*) to settle one case through the intervention of clan elders.

77. On 15 March, the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements technical working group met and identified key priorities for women protection actors. At the

meeting, the working group agreed to continue to monitor the situation in Laascaanood, given the risk of sexual violence that the continued hostility presented to women and girls. The working group also recognized the need to advocate for women to be involved in the planning and implementation of stabilization programmes in areas recovered from Al-Shabaab and the need to follow up on the developments around the ongoing revision of the 2018 Sexual Offences Law to strengthen the protection of women and girls from sexual violence.

## **H. Logistical support from 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**

78. 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 resolutions [2628 \(2022\)](#) and [2670 \(2022\)](#). The support provided included emergency assistance to ATMIS following the attack on the forward operating base in Mareer on 26 May.

79. Following the successful handover of the Maslah forward operating base to Somali security forces on 21 January 2023, UNSOS conducted an after-action review to establish a framework for future handovers and takeovers during the drawdown. The review concluded that collaboration could be further strengthened, and a joint tripartite (Federal Government of Somalia-ATMIS-UNSOS) core group was established to coordinate the handover and takeover process.

80. As part of UNSOS support to the security transition, the decentralization pilot programme in Baidoa and Jawhar, initiated in September 2022, concluded at the end of March 2023. The pilot programme confirmed the need for increased delegation of authority to the sectors ensuring direct and timely support to ATMIS sector commanders, without recourse to mission headquarters.

81. During the previous reporting period, UNSOS conducted an advisory assessment inspection of additional air assets that had been pledged by troop-contributing countries in support of ATMIS operations, which have yet to be deployed. Following the inspection, the African Union authorized the Government of Burundi in March 2023 to deploy four additional aviation assets in support of ATMIS operations. In preparation for their deployment, UNSOS constructed accommodation for the crew.

82. In an introductory meeting as Co-Chairs of the Joint Host Country Relations Committee, the new Head of UNSOS met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia on 10 April and agreed to deepen the relations between UNSOS and the Federal Government to ensure the Office's effective logistical support to ATMIS and the Somali security forces. The Head of UNSOS, at her meeting with the Minister of Finance on 7 May, discussed challenges in the implementation of some aspects of the status-of-mission agreement, including the tax-free importation of commodities, and agreed to engage regularly to resolve any pending issues. She also met with the Chief of Defence Force of the Somali Armed Forces on 7 May and the Ambassador of Kenya to Somalia on 10 May to discuss UNSOS support to the Somali National Army and the Kenya Defence Forces serving in ATMIS, respectively.

83. The Mine Action Service continued to deliver improvised explosive device threat mitigation measures that have proved 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 4,860 ATMIS military and police personnel and pre- and post-convoy briefings for more than 250 ATMIS convoys and conducting searches on main supply routes that led to the destruction of 250 explosive devices.

84. The Mine Action Service reoriented its support to ATMIS contingents, allowing for increased ownership and autonomy to respond to the threat posed by improvised explosive devices and for improved implementation of protection measures. Efforts focused on building sustainability through the delivery of “train the trainers” capacity-building on basic improvised explosive devices threat awareness and mitigation. This has allowed the creation of a pool of 52 trainers competent to autonomously deliver basic training.

## **2. Support to Somali security forces**

85. During the reporting period, UNSOS continued to provide non-lethal logistical support to 13,900 troops and police officers in joint or coordinated operations with ATMIS in 22 locations. Field defence stores were provided to support the construction of new forward operating bases in Hiil Weyne and Aadan Yabaal, Shabelle Dhexe Region. UNSOS also airlifted supplies for the joint ATMIS-Somali National Army operations in Aadan Yabaal and Beledweyne. UNSOS continued to conduct frequent air medical evacuations in support of the joint offensive operations against Al-Shabaab in Hiraan, Galguduud and Shabelle Dhexe Regions, with over 30 special flights.

86. As at 31 May, the United Nations trust fund for the Somali security forces had a negative balance of \$182,381.46. In order to secure additional contributions, UNSOS and the Federal Government continued their outreach to potential donors, highlighting that the provision of mandated logistical support to Somali security forces was a key enabler of current and future operations.

87. The Mine Action Service continues to focus on national ownership as a key enabler for the transition of explosive threat mitigation responsibilities. Support to the Somali security forces is enhanced as trained explosive device disposal teams progressively deploy and gradually obtain the capacity to mitigate explosive threats. These efforts proved successful during the reporting period, when the Somali National Army found and neutralized 18 improvised explosive devices, successfully mitigating explosive threats and thus saving lives. In parallel, the Service contributed to sustaining the improvised explosive devices disposal capacity of the Somali Police Force through the delivery of refresher training in Mogadishu for 30 police officers.

## **I. United Nations presence in Somalia**

88. United Nations entities remained present in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Berbera, Boosaaso, Dhooble, Dhuusamarreeb, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu. As at 7 June, 957 international staff and 1,405 national staff had been deployed throughout Somalia.

## **IV. Observations**

89. I am grateful for the opportunity to visit Somalia in early April, during the holy month of Ramadan, and to witness the progress achieved in the country on the peace, security and economic reform agenda. I sincerely thank Mr. Mohamud and the people of Somalia for the hospitality accorded to me. I was alarmed by the dire humanitarian

situation and deeply touched by the plight of the many internally displaced, some of whom I was able to meet during my visit to the Bulo Ciir camp in Baidoa.

90. Since Mr. Mohamud assumed office a year ago, momentum has been sustained towards the advancement of key national priorities, including deepening federalism, advancing a justice and corrections model and sustaining the fight against Al-Shabaab. I welcome the efforts made by the Federal Government to strengthen collaboration and enhance dialogue with federal member states to advance these priorities. It is through sustained dialogue and on the basis of consensus that further progress in the State-building agenda can be made in the period ahead. I remain concerned by the limited cooperation between Puntland and the Federal Government. I encourage the country's political leaders to continue to advance the constitutional review process in a consensus-based, transparent and inclusive manner, while also ensuring that the views of women, youth and marginalized communities are heard and meaningfully reflected.

91. I am gravely concerned by the continued conflict in Laascaanood, which has resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including medical facilities and schools. The fighting has displaced civilians and exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Sool and the neighbouring regions. I call upon the parties involved in the conflict to agree on an immediate ceasefire, to engage in dialogue and to create conditions that allow for those displaced to return. I also urge the relevant authorities to ensure an independent and impartial investigation and hold accountable those responsible for civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

92. I commend the people of Puntland for holding historic one-person, one-vote local district council elections. These elections constitute a milestone for Somalia and showcase the progress made in the State-building process through the political participation of Somali citizens, which allows their voices and their aspirations to be heard and represented.

93. While sustained assistance, slightly better rains and improved crop harvests have mitigated the risk of famine, the humanitarian situation remains alarming with approximately half of the population in need of humanitarian aid. The current *gu* rains have improved access to water and pasture; however, more uninterrupted rainfall is needed to alleviate the impact of drought. Approximately 1.4 million Somalis have been displaced, 80 per cent of them women and children. The negative impact of climate change on the environment, drought and floods exacerbate the dire situation in which Somalis find themselves. To avoid a further worsening of the humanitarian situation, emergency humanitarian response must be sustained, alongside long-term investments in inclusive sustainable development solutions. I am deeply concerned by the funding shortfall for the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan and urge international partners to increase funding for humanitarian needs, as well as the development initiatives required to build community resilience.

94. I welcome the progress made in the fight against Al-Shabaab and note the recent agreement between Somalia and its neighbouring countries, known as the Frontline States Initiative, to jointly advance operations against Al-Shabaab as the security transition in Somalia progresses. Regional cooperation remains essential to addressing regional security concerns. I urge those States participating in this initiative to ensure that their operations are conducted in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The United Nations remains committed to supporting national and regional efforts to uphold international humanitarian law, protect human rights and combat terrorism and violent extremism.

95. As military operations against Al-Shabaab continue to unfold, providing governance, promoting community reconciliation and providing essential services are key to consolidating security gains. Additional resources will be required to assist Somalia with its ongoing stabilization efforts and to guarantee the sustainability of early-recovery activities and pave the way towards long-term solutions. I encourage the country's international partners to continue to work closely in support of the Federal Government, the federal member states and local authorities in their stabilization efforts.

96. I note with increasing concern the developments affecting the country's civic space, including a 76 per cent increase in arbitrary arrests and detention of journalists, as well as continued misinformation and disinformation campaigns targeting public officials. I call upon the Somali authorities to create an enabling environment for the protection and expansion of civic space for civil society actors, human rights defenders, political opposition groups and other independent voices in the country. I also urge the Somali authorities to protect journalists and media workers who report and cover issues of legitimate public interest.

97. I remain concerned by the continued attacks against female elected officials. I urge the Government to protect and support women who hold public office to enable their full contribution to and participation in governance.

98. I also remain concerned about the levels of grave violations committed against children. I call upon all parties to immediately cease and prevent violations and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law. I further encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to strengthen the legal framework on child protection and to continue to implement the 2012 action plans on ending and preventing the recruitment, use, killing and maiming of children and the 2019 road map, including at the federal member state level.

99. I express my appreciation to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the European Union, Member States and other partners for their sustained assistance and engagement in support of the advancement by Somalia of its State-building and security goals. The progress achieved notwithstanding, I remain deeply concerned by the continued funding shortfalls for ATMIS and the lack of adequate resourcing for the security transition. I reiterate my previous appeals to the international community to make available adequate, sustainable and predictable financing for ATMIS until the end of the security transition so as to ensure that the Mission is able to fully implement its mandate.

100. I welcome my new Special Representative, Catriona Laing, who assumed office on 21 May, and express my gratitude to my Deputy Special Representative Anita Kiki Gbeho, who served as Officer-in-Charge of UNSOM, for her leadership. I also thank Lisa Filipetto, the former Head of UNSOS, for her service and dedication and welcome Aisa Kirabo Kacyira as the new Head of UNSOS. Lastly, I express my appreciation to all United Nations staff for their work towards advancing State-building and peacebuilding in Somalia.



Map No. 3690 Rev. 10.2 UNITED NATIONS  
May 2014

Department of Field Support  
Cartographic Section