



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

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**UN Special Representative says Somalis must redouble efforts
for peace following Ethiopia's withdrawal**

Nairobi, 13 January 2009 - The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has said that, given the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Mogadishu, it is now up to the Somalis to ensure peace and stability in their country.

“The Ethiopians wrote to the Secretary General in November last year to say they would be withdrawing,” said Mr. Ould-Abdallah. “Today the Ethiopians have respected their commitment. The ball is now in the court of the Somalis, particularly those who said they were only fighting against the Ethiopian forces, to stop the senseless killings and violence.”

Mr. Ould-Abdallah also emphasized the importance of electing a new President within the timeframe set out in country's Transitional Federal Charter.

The current Parliament has already endorsed the principle of enlarging the Parliament and creating a Government of National Unity. Subsequently the Working Group of the High Level Committee, comprising representatives from the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia, agreed on proposals for expanding the Parliament, based on the Charter, and for an expanded Parliament to elect the President in Djibouti by the end of the month. These proposals will be put to the High Level Committee meeting in Djibouti this week, 15 – 16 January.

“The proposals will be presented to the High Level Committee for its endorsement,” said Mr. Ould-Abdallah. “I hope that the Parliament will act responsibly and maturely to ensure that we have a President on time and that the acting Head of State, Speaker Sheikh Madobe, will attend the discussions on his return from his official trip abroad.”

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- 2 -

Mr. Ould-Abdallah said many Somalis had urged him to ensure that a new President would be chosen within 30 days as specified in the Transitional Federal Charter, preferably by an expanded Parliament.

“Today Somalia needs and deserves an effective and representative Government with wide-ranging participation, particularly from the new generation of young men and women, who are not tainted by past violence, corruption or excessive clan loyalties ,” said Mr. Ould-Abdallah. “We urge Somalis, backed by the international community, to continue supporting the Djibouti Peace Process and put their efforts into electing a capable and inspiring President able to work closely with the Speaker and others to form a Government of National Unity in the next few weeks.

“This Unity Government must be able to address the security situation after the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops, in close cooperation with the Somali Joint Security Forces and AMISOM troops and, we hope, will represent a future, peaceful Somalia.”

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