



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

For Immediate Release

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Somali Transitional Federal Government Signed an Action Plan to end recruitment and use of children

Rome and New York, 3 July 2012 – The Minister of Defense/Deputy Prime Minister of Somalia, Mr. Hussein Arab Isse, signed an Action Plan today committing to ending the recruitment and use of children by the Somali National Armed Forces. The Action Plan was signed at the International Contact Group meeting on Somalia in Rome. The Special Representative of Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the UN Political Mission in Somalia Dr. Augustine Mahiga, signed on behalf of the United Nations. The Action Plan outlines concrete steps to be taken by the Government of Somalia to ensure a child-free national army. Full compliance with the Action Plan will result in the Government of Somalia being removed from the UN Secretary-General’s list of parties who recruit and use children.

In the Action Plan, the Government of Somalia committed to:

- 1) Ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children in Somalia’s National Armed Forces;
- 2) With the support of the United Nations, reintegrating all children released from Armed Forces;
- 3) Criminalizing the recruitment and use of children through national legislation;
- 4) Providing the UN with unimpeded access to military installations to verify the presence of children.

Since 2007, the Transitional Federal Government has been listed on the United Nations Secretary-General’s list of parties to conflict who recruit and use children. The Action Plan responds to the UN Security Council’s call in resolution 1612 (2005), for concrete and time-bound action to halt the recruitment and use of children by parties listed in the Secretary-General’s annual reports on Children and Armed Conflict.

“The children of Somalia have witnessed so many horrors in this decades-old conflict and have grown up in war. The Government firmly believes that today’s children and future generations must spend their childhood in schools not in barracks. The Government firmly commits to the implementation of the Action Plan signed today,” said the Somali Minister of Defense/Deputy Prime Minister Hussein Arab Isse.



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SRSG Mahiga stated that: “The signature of the Action Plan will be critical for the professionalisation of the security forces, and will contribute positively to the ongoing stabilisation of Somalia.”

The UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, speaking from New York, commended the Government of Somalia for signing the Action Plan, saying it demonstrated strong political support to the protection of children.

“I am encouraged to hear that the Government has committed to sign a similar agreement to end the killing and maiming of children,” she said. “Somalia must now sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols,” SRSG Coomaraswamy added.

Dr. Mahiga stated: “The United Nations is committed to supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups, including through education and livelihood support. Tangible change in the lives of these children will require sustained support for their reintegration. I strongly urge the Governments present here at the ICG to come forward and provide the necessary funding for the release and reintegration of these children”.

In addition, the Minister of Defense/Deputy Prime Minister committed to subsequently signing an Action Plan to protect children from being killed and maimed. The second Action Plan will be signed this month in Mogadishu, Somalia.