



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Jaaliyadda

Nairobi, 31 December 2008

Salaam Aleikum

Dear Friends,

1. The pace of events continues unabated. I would even argue that it has increased since my letter of 2 December to you. While the last month has seen an almost unprecedented level of international attention being focused on Somalia since the late 1990s, in my view, one of the most significant incidents of the last few days is the peaceful resignation of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed.

2. Of interest are also the relocation of the leadership of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) and the delegates of the Joint Security Committee to Mogadishu and Beletweyne, as well as the endorsement by the Transitional Federal Parliament of the principles of implementation of political cooperation between the TFG and ARS.

3. In my previous correspondence, I had already mentioned the intention to hold a Ministerial level conference on piracy. That was done on 10-11 December. Drawing attention to the fact that piracy is only the off-shore manifestation of the deeper crisis affecting Somalia was achieved. The final communiqué highlights the international community's determination to seek a comprehensive solution to piracy anchored in international, regional and Somali-based initiatives, including the livelihoods and recovery of local fishing communities. However, the real solution lies in the promotion of stability and reconciliation. Unless you can address the problems of your country on land, problematic manifestations like piracy will continue to surface, giving a bad name to Somalia.

4. On 16 December, the International Contact Group met under my chairmanship in New York to discuss a broad range of political, security and assistance issues. The meeting was attended by a number of very senior government officials including the US Secretary of State and the Foreign Minister of Norway. Describing the present crisis within the TFG as a "distraction" from the political dialogue process, the final communiqué called on all parties to put aside disagreements and to work together in the interest of lasting peace and stability to implement the Djibouti Agreement and resume the constitutional process outlined by the Transitional Federal Charter.

5. A few days later, the 31st Extraordinary Meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers was convened to discuss the problem within the TFG and the situation following the announced departure of Ethiopian troops. The Ministers were extremely clear in their determination to take action and impose sanctions against individuals who would try to scuttle the Djibouti peace process. Throughout Africa we are already witnessing the impact of sanctions on individuals

and I share the idea that the Somalis should not oblige the region and the international community to take such decisions.

6. The announced departure of Ethiopian troops has precipitated the need to find alternative security arrangements in Somalia. On 22 December, the AU held at Ministerial level its 163rd meeting of the Peace and Security Council to discuss the reinforcement of AMISOM to be phased with the orderly withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. Similarly, in a letter to the Security Council dated 19 December, the UN Secretary-General proposed to support the strengthening of AMISOM and the creation of the joint Somali security force as two critical urgent actions, while maintaining open the option of a deployment of a UN Peacekeeping Operation.

7. The renewed attention on Somalia, either from regional governments or the wider international community, has brought with it an emerging consensus that ultimately your country's problems stem from the absence of accountable and committed national leadership (government, opposition, business, religious, political and security leaders). It has been repeated time again, whether in the course of the IGAD deliberations, the International Contact Group, or even the Security Council, that the fundamental problem of Somalia is not security but political leadership. I am confident that progress is being made towards a situation where responsible leadership will have friendly relations with its neighbors, and smooth integration into the international community.

8. I wish to recall that the Djibouti process has opened a new era in the history of your country. It has also given the opportunity to all Somalis to witness the activity of a vital generation that is committed to peace and stability. In this respect, I wish to commend the decision of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed to resign from his position. You have also seen after two decades of power struggle – whether for political, economic or religious reasons – that no single winner has lasted. Rather, women and the younger generations are losing any positive hope for the future. Time has come for all those leaders whose political, economic or religious ambitions have not been accepted by time and facts to now also demonstrate their commitment to peace and the well-being of their country. They may be recognized by History and remembered as “Dignitaries. Accountable and committed leadership is needed if Somalis are collectively to help establish a level of stability that will allow a return to normality to begin.

9. We have an ambitious agenda ahead for 2009. Within the first few weeks, we should prepare for the election of a new president, the formation of a government of national unity and the enlarged parliament. Before the end of January, I hope to convene a meeting with the business community to discuss stability and the reconstruction of the country. I plan also to convene a meeting of former senior military and police officers, who have not been involved in the civil conflict, to exchange views on ways to increase security and to rebuild the national army. I plan to engage more vigorously the Arab League to support these efforts.

10. Despite this progress, some reports and studies continue to be sceptical of your future. You should wish them well as change is difficult to understand. Somalia is entering a new era. The international community continues to focus on ways and means to ensure minimum stability in your country. I call on all of you to catch the train of history and mobilize all efforts to maintain solidarity among all brothers in order to recover the integrity, sovereignty, and dignity of Somalia. Pray for the end of the expression “failed state” which is currently all too often associated with the name of your great country. I wish you a happy new year.

Yours Faithfully

Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah