

Briefing to the UN Security Council

by

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*Mr. President,
Permanent Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I welcome this opportunity to brief the Security Council following my appointment as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. I wish to begin with a brief on some of the critical developments regarding Somalia which took place since assuming Office.

For the past two months, I have held consultations with various Somali stakeholders including the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the *Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a* group, regional and international organizations, as well as civil society organisations. I have just completed consultations with countries in the region as well as the African Union and IGAD. I consult regularly with envoys and partners on the Somali crisis on how to advance the peace process.

Regional leaders have raised concern that the lack of cohesion within the TFG encourages insurgents to intensify their military and propaganda campaign against the government and AMISOM. I have visited Mogadishu three times in the past ten days to consult with the President on the political impasse. I have undertaken similar initiatives with the Prime Minister and the Speaker of Parliament and urged them to resolve their differences and continue working together. Under Secretary General Lynn Pascoe conveyed a similar message when he visited the region earlier this month and met with President Sheikh Sharif in Mogadishu.

Earlier today, the Parliament has voted a resolution to request the Prime Minister to come before Parliament and seek a vote of confidence. In this context, the Security Council may wish to underscore the need for unity and cohesion in the TFG in addressing insurgency and advancing the peace process.

Mr. President,

The Transitional Federal Charter and the Djibouti Agreement provide for the establishment of a new more inclusive and democratic dispensation following the end of the

transitional period in August 2011. There are several tasks to be accomplished before the end of the transition. These include continuing the initiatives on reconciliation, building civilian and security institutions and the completion of the constitution-making process, which could also serve as a vehicle for the government and Parliament to reach out to the population through wide consultations within Somalia and with the Diaspora. Furthermore, the TFI leaders need to urgently discuss and agree on post-transition arrangements.

I have urged the TFG to reach out to more opposition groups, expand the political process and focus on delivering basic services to the people. In this context, the TFG must develop a road map of achievable objectives and clear timelines to be developed for the remaining transitional period. In this context, I have urged the TFG to convene without delay the High Level Committee to define a political strategy and tasks to be accomplished prior to the end of the transition.

These key elements will define the future institutions of a united, democratic and stable Somalia.

I commend AMISOM for ably defending the Transitional Federal Institutions, the vital installations in Mogadishu and for holding off the recurrent attacks by the terrorist insurgents led by foreign fighters from undermining the peace process. While the crisis in Somalia persists, positive opportunities still exist in both the political and security sectors, to move the peace process forward. A scaled up assistance from the international community is needed to make a difference.

Mr. President,

I am concerned by the security situation in the country and its potential impact on the entire region. The suicide attacks carried out in Kampala on 11 July evidently bear the political and operational hallmarks of international terrorism which threatens the sub-region. Kismayo has become the entry point for foreign fighters, war materiel for the insurgents and has become a scene of criminal activities and illicit trade. There is a need for increased maritime and aviation security to deter these materiel from being used against AMISOM and the TFG. I hope that the Security Council will send a message to those State and non-state actors supporting these illicit activities from doing so. Importing radical terrorism has not only negative effects for Somalia but for the entire sub-region.

The brutal attack on Muna Hotel in Mogadishu during the Holy month of Ramadan, left more than 70 people, including six parliamentarians, dead. On my second visit to Mogadishu, I witnessed continuous attacks on AMISOM positions by the insurgents with light and heavy weapons. During my third visit on 9 September, accompanied by the envoys of the AU and IGAD, there were suicide attacks by the extremists at an AMISOM check-point in the approaches to Mogadishu Airport. The operation was foiled, but left fourteen people, including two AMISOM peacekeepers dead, and several others injured. The insurgent's operation points to the need to strengthen AMISOM's defensive capabilities.

Mr. President,

With only eleven months prior to the end of the transition period, the TFG and the international community should heighten their political resolve to preserve and expand the fragile peace ushered in by the Djibouti Agreement and protected by AMISOM. The military capability of the TFG should be supported and developed to expand the territorial space and to widen the political space for the TFG to operate and reach out to the Somali people.

Concerted regional and international support and assistance are required at this very critical stage of the peace process if the TFG is to play the role envisaged by the Djibouti Agreement. In this connection, the decision by the IGAD and the AU to deploy in Mogadishu 2,000 additional troops to enable AMISOM reach its authorized strength of 8,000 must be speedily implemented. The initiative by the US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Mr. Johnnie Carson to help generate more troops, needed equipment and financial support to AMISOM, has been well received by IGAD and the AU.

The threat level in Mogadishu and in the southern central Somalia has actually increased, therefore IGAD and the African Union foresee a new AMISOM troop level of up to 20,000 in the coming months. The AU Peace and Security Council will soon submit to the UN Security Council a request for authorization for increased troop levels for Mogadishu and other strategic locations in Somalia. However, this military strategy needs to be developed within the construct of an overall political strategy.

Mr. President,

The United Nations Support Operation for AMISOM has discharged, with distinction, its mandate to deliver a support package to AMISOM. The AU and the Force Commander have on several occasions expressed their appreciation of these valuable services that I have had the opportunity to see for myself in Mogadishu. I should also take this opportunity to thank all partners for their collective and bilateral contributions to the UN Trust Funds and direct assistance to the TFG. In the immediate future, support to the security sector and building the TFG institutional capacities stand out as top priorities.

I should also bring to the attention of the Council the outstanding work performed by the United Nations Mine Action Group (UNMAS). This effort by UNMAS staff has dramatically reduced casualties amongst the civilians and AMISOM peacekeepers. Through their efforts, we have reduced the number of AMISOM troop casualties from last year significantly.

Mr. President,

It is not the number of initiatives for Somalia that is in deficit, but concrete and practical actions on the ground. As we all realize the dangerous conditions in which the TFG and AMISOM troops operate under, I appeal to all Member states to move from the usual political commitments, to more practical actions. While one appreciates the value of support so far extended to AMISOM, gaps still exist in financial and material support for the Mission, such as lack of helicopter support for troop lift and casualty evacuation. I therefore would like to stress

the importance of predictable and timely provision of these resources to AMISOM and TFG security forces during this crucial time. Furthermore, AMISOM troop allowances should match those paid under UN peacekeeping operations.

Of equal importance is the proper equipping of AMISOM troops with appropriate means to identify, track, deter or respond to insurgents' attacks in an urban, populated setting. AMISOM is currently critically short of means to prevent civilian casualties and lacks adequate surveillance and operational intelligence systems. Pre-deployment training in humanitarian law on the protection of civilians remains an important requirement. The protection of UN civilian staff to be deployed under the light foot print in Mogadishu and elsewhere is also critical.

Mr. President,

We are encouraging cooperation between the TFG, "Somaliland" and "Puntland" authorities, on matters of security including anti-piracy issues, including the movement of people such as the internally displaced persons. "Somaliland" and "Puntland" indeed serve as a role model to the rest of Somalia illustrating that peace and stability can be achieved.

Additionally, we will continue to advocate and mobilize more support to the TFG, "Puntland" and "Somaliland" in different fora such as the forthcoming International Contact Group meeting in Madrid later this month and the Mini-Summit on Somalia that the Secretary-General will be convening on 23rd September here in New York. The Istanbul Conference earlier this year was also a useful forum in profiling Somalia's present and future needs and encouraged private sector involvement. A follow-up implementation meeting of the Istanbul Conference is envisaged.

Mr. President

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. The sustained attacks on TFG and AMISOM positions by the insurgents have compounded the suffering of the innocent civilians, particularly in Mogadishu. A growing number of civilians, including those who had recently returned to their homes, have had to flee the capital as the fighting intensified. Refugees continue to arrive in neighbouring countries and are a major concern to those countries. The international community ought to make more assistance available to address the persisting humanitarian crisis.

Mr. President,

There is a need for greater cooperation and coordination among the three UN entities namely UNPOS, UNSOA and the Country Team cannot be over emphasized. Recommendations on approaches to integration have been laid out, but implementation has been stalling. I have initiated Senior Policy Group meetings comprising the Heads of the three UN entities and a joint planning mechanism is being put in place. However, there is a need for more impetus to move forward the integration process that is consistent with practices elsewhere and the prevailing trend for greater cohesion in the United Nations system. UNPOS has also initiated its regional deployment of international staff in "Somaliland" and "Puntland".

Mr President,

I request and encourage the Council to remain engaged and seized with the situation in Somalia which unlike many African conflicts has multiple threats to international peace and security – a protracted civil war, international terrorism, international piracy and international trafficking. Experience in Somalia has shown that the more delayed or inadequate the response is, the more complex the crisis becomes. We have to act in a comprehensive manner to address these complex challenges.

Thank you.