



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Jaaliyadda (no 18)

Nairobi, 30 September 2009

Salaam Aleikum

Dear friends,

1. I would like to wish you Eid Mubarak and send my warm greetings to one and all at this time of calls for peace and forgiveness. I believe the same spirit must prevail to ensure that the next year is one of expanding stability in Somalia and that your children will grow up proud of their parents' motherland returning to progress and prosperity.

2. There have been several key events over the past month since I last wrote to you and I would like to inform you about a few of them. In August the African Union held a summit in Tripoli during which Somalia was high on the agenda. There was widespread concern about the continued violence and a strong call for African countries to support the Government and help their brothers in Somalia through all means possible. Those in the African Union, and particularly in the regional grouping IGAD, are in the best position to support Somalia given their close ties to the country.

3. During the past month, I visited Yemen. As you know the Government and the people have many close ties to you and have provided important support to your country including university scholarships. I met representatives of the many Somali refugees who have made the perilous journey and heard their concerns. They feel abandoned by their leaders.

4. Shortly after I visited Somaliland and Puntland for the second time – the first time being in March last year. I know the administrations there are determined to strengthen their practice of tolerance and continue their history of peace and stability and to work out any problems among themselves. I was warmly received in both Hargeisa and Garowe and met many Diaspora members who have returned home to help their families to build up businesses in telecommunications, hotels, natural gas, etc.

5. Last week, world leaders attended the annual General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed gave an important speech to the Assembly on Friday morning stressing the need for urgent backing for his Government and also emphasising the importance of reconciliation. He was received by the UN Secretary General for an important exchange of views on Somalia and the region. This followed the President's visit to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of King Abdallah to a meeting attended by more than 20 Heads of State. Last Wednesday there was a meeting of the International Contact Group on Somalia on the sidelines of the General Assembly which was attended by representatives of more than 40 countries and international organizations. I convened this extraordinary meeting at the request of Italy and Kenya, with a focus on the key issues of providing

immediate backing for the Government, as well as development, piracy and humanitarian issues. Those attending included the Prime Minister of Kenya, and Foreign Ministers from Denmark, Ethiopia, Kenya, Italy, and Yemen, the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, the European Union High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid and two UN Under Secretary Generals.

6. On 17 September the suicide attack against AMISOM headquarters left 22 dead and many wounded, including Somali officials and peacekeepers from Burundi and Uganda. This attack was condemned by the African Union, the European Union, IGAD, the League of Arab States, the United Nations, Norway, the US and many others as a cowardly assault aimed at those who are risking their lives to help the Somali people. However the Governments of the troop contributing countries have made it clear that they will remain in Mogadishu and are determined to protect themselves. Regrettably those leaders who made public statements supporting the attack have made their international case even more difficult to defend.

7. As you may have heard, following UN Security Council Resolution 1844 there are now moves towards imposing sanctions on individuals who are engaging in or providing support for acts that threaten the peace, security or stability, or who obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Somalia. This is in addition to sanctioning those who break the arms embargo or who have links with Al Qaeda or Taleban. While it is important to take action against such spoilers, I also believe that there is a need to remove from the sanctions lists, the names of those who have shown that they have changed their attitude and are now actively working towards peace and security.

8. Recently the Government signed an agreement with the international accountancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers. This will allow for close scrutiny and monitoring of funds received by the TFG and will give the international community confidence that its support is being well used. The international community should accelerate its help to the Government, not only through material support, but also by taking practical measures. This should include moving to Mogadishu to be closer to the victims of the violence and those in need of all forms of assistance.

9. Overall there are positive indications that some of those who were fighting against the Government, now realize that such violence only leads to the suffering of the Somali people. I hope to report more progress in my next letters about the Government and other groups reaching out to each other. There is a need for Somalis to talk to each other inside the country to solve the ongoing problems. Somalis speak the same language, share the same culture and religion, they are more than able to reconcile between themselves going beyond all personal suspicion. My office is ready to help.

10. I hope that you will continue to make progress and that after 20 years, the guns will finally fall silent. Reporting the daily violence is not an end in itself and can not be a substitute for a durable policy. The Diaspora can and has been playing an important part in putting pressure on those who want to look beyond their personal gain. Now is the time to come together and let the people's will prevail.

Yours Faithfully,
Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah