



## United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

### **Letter to the members of the Somali Diaspora (No. 24)**

Nairobi, 19 April 2010

As-Salaamu Alaikum,

My warmest greetings to you all,

1. The arrival of Spring, currently taking place in many of your countries of residence, generally brings a renewed sense of optimism for the future. I hope this regular update to the Jaaliyadda finds that feeling rekindled in all of you when you think of your homeland and where it is headed because there are quite a few positive developments.
2. The implementation of the Government's agreement on 15 March with Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a continues. Meetings with all parties have been underway in Mogadishu with discussions centering on ways to move forward on the security front including plans for the integration of the ASWJ military elements, numbering 2,000, into the TFG where appropriate and for collaboration in the area of governance.
3. As I said last month, this is a good step forward especially for those in the central regions and the Somali people should call for the agreement to be implemented quickly. This agreement is a departure from past practices of viewing the situation as a confrontation where there is a winner and a loser. This is not the case here. The move by Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a to join the TFG has been a show of patriotism and dignity that demonstrates, more than any words could, the will to offer some hope to ordinary Somalis. Things are changing and it is more evident than ever that those who continue the violence no longer have an alibi and cannot hide behind the veil of war.
4. Again, I hope that the agreement serves as a perfect example that all Somalis should join the peace process. This would help to address fundamental issues just as their brothers in Puntland and Somaliland are doing. The progress there is noticeable and has been made by themselves alone. The TFG and the Puntland Administration signed an agreement on 12 April to harmonize an accord which, in its first phase, was signed by both sides on August 23 in Galkayo. In essence, the agreement obligates both sides to take steps towards combating piracy and strengthening law and order on land and at sea which would have critical social, economical and environmental outcomes including better security and job creation.

5. In Somaliland, the Code of Conduct has been signed by the Chairmen of the political parties and all parties have reaffirmed their commitment to abide by it. The issuance of new voter registration cards will begin the second week in May 2010. Somaliland continues to give priority to discussion and dialogue over violence.

6. On the security front, training by the European Union Training Mission in Uganda is scheduled to start in May of an initial 1,000 recruits. This training will also be an opportunity to integrate some of the ASWJ troops into the TFG, as well as offer some places for troops from other regions to train along side their TFG counterparts. Training of national security forces has already taken place in neighboring IGAD member countries. The Somali National Security Force now has around 10,000 trained personnel and the Somali Police Force will be around 7,000 by 1 July. These are necessary operations and the Government should be seriously and immediately supported by the International Community to help equip these troops and pay their stipends during this transitional period.

7. The Constitutional process has also advanced since I last updated you. An Induction Workshop for the Independent Federal Constitution Commission (IFCC) which took place in Djibouti from 4 to 23 March 2010 has mapped out concrete ways to drive forward the Constitutional process. The Commission extended its participants from 15 to 30 and reached an agreement on the outline of the structure of the IFCC. Members of the Parliamentary Constitution Committee (PCC) and IFCC also set up a joint committee to pursue matters of coordination between the two bodies and adopted a unified work-plan which includes a media and public consultation strategy. The first consultative draft document should be issued by the 1 July 2010 which, by no coincidence, happens to be the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Somali Independence! In fact, 2010 has been declared the “Year of Peace” in Africa by the African Union. It is also the “Year of Africa” as the continent celebrates fifty years of independence for 20 African nations, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Sudan, to name just a few. Many of these countries are still struggling, but they are developing and functioning. Somalia can get to there too. This is why I implore the international community not to give up on Somalia, though that opinion is always lingering.

8. In fact, the International Community will be represented by some 40 countries showing their support for Somalia at the next International Contact Group meeting on 21 to 22 April. Hosted by the League of Arab States, it will be held in Cairo and will provide another opportunity to look at the progress made and agree on ways forward in the peace process. I will, of course, provide you with more details following the Conference.

9. I would also like to take the opportunity to mention the much-talked about “offensive.” The Government has been preparing for quite a while an offensive to address, in particular, security in the capital. This offensive covers three aspects: political, security and the economy or job creation. In this respect, the offensive has already started with action taken in the all three areas simultaneously. The agreement with ASWJ broadens the basis of the Government; integration and training of the Somali Forces with a strong role played by the European Union, the United States and the African Union is in motion. Finally, related to job creation, rehabilitation and

reconstruction of infrastructure and private enterprises provide activities that are part of the offensive long announced by the Government.

10. So far, I have provided a brief summary of positive developments, but the recent move by extremists to force 14 radio stations in Mogadishu to stop airing music or face dire consequences cannot be ignored. Intimidating and threatening the public, the media and aid workers is not in keeping with Somali heritage or culture and an infringement of basic human rights. Somalis are known and admired for their reverential views of poetry, artistic performances and music. Furthermore, besides entertainment, the media provides an essential service to Somalis by informing them of the latest news and events. Keeping Somalis from knowing what is happening around them is another form of oppression.

11. I must add a final comment on the unnecessary disputes within Parliament. They are a distraction from the essential activities and responsibilities of the Government, Parliament and the leadership and precious time should not be devoted this counterproductive activity. I hope that the positive developments that are taking place will diminish the role of those elements that continue to make the Somali people suffer. We all know there is a long way to go, but let us take heart from what has been done and continue to push forward.

Yours Faithfully,  
Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah