



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

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SRSRG welcomes the Somalia's new Unity Government announcement

Nairobi, 20 February 2009 - The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has welcomed the announcement of the new Somali cabinet made by the Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke.

“I am very pleased that the Prime Minister has chosen a Government of National Unity as outlined in the Djibouti Agreement of 18 August 2008. It is encouraging to see members of the original Transitional Federal Government alongside some fresh faces from what was the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia. This cabinet is a healthy combination of experience and youth and I welcome it.”

Mr. Ould-Abdallah said he was happy that the new Government would return to Mogadishu this weekend to start work on alleviating the plight of their compatriots.

“The security on the ground in Mogadishu has improved and I would like to praise the work of Somalis to bring this about,” he said. “I am also heartened to hear that the two Italian nuns abducted in November 2008 have been released. This is excellent news, although long overdue, and it is good to hear that they are safe and out of harm’s way.

“However, I would like to repeat my call for all remaining hostages, Somali and foreign, to be released immediately and allowed to return to their homes and families. Those responsible for holding these innocent captives should take advantage of this time of renewed hope in Somalia to show a gesture of humanity and patriotism.

“Despite some progress, Somalia remains an extremely dangerous place for many Somalis, particularly humanitarian workers and journalists.

“I call on elders and religious leaders in the communities to use their influence to stop the violence. Everyone needs to work together to create a stable environment – one where children have an education and the young people employment. Security and development are closely linked and we need the help of both Somalis and the international community to ensure there is major progress in this area.”

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