



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

For Immediate Release

PRESS RELEASE 032/2009

SRSR on International Human Rights Day calls for stepping up efforts to restore peace

Nairobi, 10 December 2009 – The UN Special Representative for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, has called for a redoubling of efforts to restore peace and to put an end to the violence which has devastated the lives of so many ordinary Somalis and to the pervasive impunity which is perpetuating the conflict.

Speaking on International Human Rights Day, which marks the anniversary of the adoption, on 10 December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Mr Ould-Abdallah said Somali elites and the world have all too often turned a blind eye to the horrendous plight of the Somali people, and especially to the multitude of violations and abuses of human rights committed over the years.

“Today marks one week since the horrendous attack on the graduation ceremony in Mogadishu which killed doctors and medical students, their friends and relatives, ministers, teachers, journalists and wounded many others,” said Mr Ould-Abdallah. “The tragic events of 3 December are the worst reflection of how Somalis are treated by their Somali brothers.”

The Special Representative pointed out that for the majority of Somalis, each day is a battle for survival, to find food, shelter, healthcare, education and protection from abuses, rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“A whole generation is growing up having never known what it means to live in a peaceful, stable environment where rights are respected,” said Mr Ould-Abdallah. “I believe those responsible for perpetuating the conflict are a small minority who have done untold damage and will be held to account. Impunity cannot last forever.”

Mr Ould-Abdallah praised the courage of those who continue to risk their lives to protect and defend the human rights of their fellow countrymen, the elderly, women and children.

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“Respecting the life and dignity of others is an obligation for those in positions of authority, but also the responsibility of everyone. I urge all Somalis, whether inside the country or in the Diaspora, to condemn and reject all acts of violence and redouble their efforts to restore stability,” he said.