

Communiqué: International Contact Group on Somalia

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

UNITED NATIONS - The International Contact Group met on 16 December 2008 at UN headquarters in New York under the chairmanship of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah.

The Contact Group expresses its serious concern regarding the continued dispute between the leaders of Somalia's Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), which only serve as a distraction from the political dialogue process. The Contact Group calls on all parties to put aside disagreements and to work together in the interest of lasting peace and stability to implement the Djibouti Agreement and resume the constitutional process outlined by the Transitional Federal Charter.

In this regard, the Contact Group welcomes the 26 October declaration between the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) to form a unity government and an enlarged parliament. This agreement paves the way for the creation of a unity government representing the majority of the Somali people, and is another key step in the Djibouti peace process. The Contact Group urges all Somali parties to participate constructively in this process which provides the only comprehensive framework for peace in Somalia.

The Contact Group further welcomes the 26 October ceasefire agreement between the TFG and ARS and the subsequent 24 November establishment of a verification and monitoring mechanism (VMM) to promote a full ceasefire arrangement in Somalia. The Contact Group reiterates its commitment to provide financial and political support for this agreement and the work of the Joint Security Committee (JSC). It also recognizes the need to support the UN trained police force.

The Contact Group expresses its great appreciation for the important work of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) under difficult conditions and recognizes its urgent need for more resources and material support. The ICG urges the international community to address this together with the need for an accelerated political process. The Contact Group recalls its support for the deployment of the stabilization force requested in the Djibouti Agreement. In that context various proposals were discussed including the deployment of UN Peacekeeping Operation for which significant support was expressed, while a few delegations preferred that the issues be discussed in more depth.

The Contact Group condemns the continuing violence in Somalia, particularly the taking of hostages and targeted attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers. The Contact Group calls on all parties to immediately cease all hostilities and allow free and unhindered access for much-needed humanitarian aid.

The Contact Group also condemns piracy, which was discussed in the Security Council in

parallel with the Contact Group meeting and at an UNPOS convened meeting in Nairobi from 10 -11 December. It sees this as a result of the lawlessness and lack of effective Government institutions and believes it illustrates the danger of ignoring a failed state. The Contact Group therefore stresses the need for a comprehensive approach to address the underlying causes.

The Contact Group expresses deep concern about the human rights situation in Somalia and calls for an end to the continuing culture of impunity. Preparations should be made for reconstruction and development to give hope to Somalis, particularly the large numbers of unemployed youth.

The next ICG meeting will be held at a date and location to be determined.

Present at Meeting

Burundi, Canada, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, United Kingdom, USA, Yemen

African Union, European Union, European Commission, Organization of Islamic Conference, United Nations, World Bank