



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Jaaliyadda (No. 11)

Nairobi, 4 February 2009

As-salaamu Alaikum

Dear friends,

This is my second letter to you in a week, but as events are moving so quickly I feel now more than ever it is important to keep you all updated.

Today Somalia has an enlarged Parliament and a new President, who was elected in a fair and open manner. I am sure many of you followed last week's developments closely on the media. It was very encouraging to see that once Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was elected as the new President, the other candidates all pledged their support to him and he committed himself to keep in close touch with them all as often as possible. All the candidates support reconciliation and the need to return pride and dignity to the Somali people.

"None of you will have true faith unless he wishes for his (Moslem) brother what he wishes for himself." (Hadith narrated by Anas Ibn Malik, collected by Al Bukhari and Muslim)

We are now in a new era – there can no longer be a “winner takes all” attitude. Instead the emphasis should be on cooperation between the Somali leaders. This is why the Prime Minister, Nur Hassan Hussein, and his two Deputies were included in the President's delegation which travelled to Addis Ababa for the African Union Summit. This demonstrates the need for a Government of National Unity to be formed as soon as possible to reconcile and stabilize the country.

The international community fully endorsed what took place in Djibouti particularly during the African Union Heads of State summit in Addis Ababa. President Sharif and his delegation travelled to Addis on the President of Djibouti's official plane. On arrival he received a high level welcome, similar to those given to all other Heads of State, and there was much excitement about Africa's newest President. In Djibouti and later in Addis he met the representatives of the African Union, European Union, the League of Arab States, Australia, France, Italy, UK and USA among others. In Addis he met many African Presidents and visiting Arab delegations and was given a standing ovation. He

attended a session of regional Heads of State (IGAD), which has pledged its continued support. IGAD is like many key regional organizations –SADEC for Southern Africa and ECOWAS for West Africa.

Many Somalis and their friends hope that the destructive relationship between Somalia and its neighbours will be overcome and replaced by friendship and cooperation between Governments based on mutual trust and respect. There are countless precedents of countries overcoming historical differences. For example France and Germany are now the main partners in Europe. Similarly the US and China have overcome the bitterness of Cold War era and become key trading partners. Countries can neither choose their neighbours nor do they have any power to change them. Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya have no choice but to live and work together. Time, wisdom and mutual human and economic interest will combine to drive towards the well being and prosperity of Somalia's population.

The next step in the process is the selection of Prime Minister and the formation of a new Government of National Unity. The hope is that the Somali Parliament, the new Government and all supporters will be able to return to Somalia next week. The Parliamentarians still in Djibouti are attending in-depth workshops on key issues. Everyone including the business community, intellectuals, NGOs and others should rally round to restore respect to Somalia. This should allow an image of Somalia as a normal, stable and peace loving country to emerge. The international community looks forward to welcoming Somalis back into the Family of Nations.

I call on those outside the process to take this historic opportunity to join in. There is room for them. My colleagues and I in the UN are willing to offer every assistance possible to facilitate this process.

The supporters of peace have even more reason to continue their good work. Those carrying out the violence are now killing only their own people, other Somalis. There is no reason to continue fighting for control of revenues from hostage taking, ransoms or roadblocks when peace will bring far more legitimate resources to the individuals and to the nation.

There is a dispute over a violent incident, now being investigated, that took place on Monday in Mogadishu which unfortunately cost the lives of a number of Somalis. Any loss of life is deplorable and I offer my condolences to their families and relatives. Observers believe that the incident was provoked to distract attention from the AU Summit, but it failed to do so. Many Arab and African leaders are increasingly doubtful about the accuracy of certain kinds of media reports on such incidents.

I would like all of you in the Diaspora to use your influence with your friends and associates to help free all the hostages, both Somali and foreign (from Australia, Belgium, Britain, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Italy, Kenya, and other

countries). They were taken hostage without reason often while carrying out humanitarian work.

There is a new chance to restore Somalia's image. All Somalis need to grasp it and help make it work. Somalia's future is in Somali hands. They should replace war with dialogue, exclusion with inclusion, death with life and humiliation with dignity.

Yours Faithfully,

Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah