



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Jaaliyadda (No. 17)

Nairobi, 25 August 2009

As-Salaamu Alaikum,

Dear friends,

1. The Holy Month of Ramadan is the month during which the Holy Koran was revealed. Ramadan is time for peace and forgiveness. It is the time to renew our spirits, faith and relationship with our Creator, and also with one another as Moslem brothers and sisters. This time of spiritual reflection is also a time for considering those less fortunate than ourselves. I would like all of us to pray to God that Somalia will, *Insha Allah* achieve peace and stability, regain its dignity and see the return of displaced and refugees before the next Ramadan.

2. Which brings me to the plight of the Somali refugees currently in camps. We are all aware of the overcrowding, harsh conditions that these refugees must endure in exchange for a security away from home. The efforts and generosity of host countries helping the Somalis in need is commendable, but certainly the burden of responsibility should lie with the Somali elites communities, who are in a position to help by bringing peace home.

3. I particularly appeal to the Somali elite, inside and outside the country, who are fortunate enough to live with their families in comfortable, secure homes and with access to good schools to remember that only stability will end the long suffering of refugees and internally displaced persons. It will also help you to have, once again, a place to call proudly *homeland*. To that end, dialogue is better than the killing of Somalis by Somalis. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) promoted the spirit of compromise at Al Hudaibiya and that Pact is seen as a noble example of strength rather than a weakness. Why shouldn't Muslim Somalis emulate this heroic action of the Prophet and talk to each other?

4. In my previous letter, I mentioned that my office was in the midst of planning several important developments on the way forward and some of those have since then taken place:

5. The Government is making progress towards reforming and improving security. On 25 July, the Joint Security Committee (JSC), now comprised of key Government figures, AU/AMISOM, the UN, EU/EC, LAS, Italy met in Mogadishu for the first time. That meeting laid the ground work for coordinating the cooperation between the Government and the international community. On 12 August, a second

meeting of the JSC took place also in Mogadishu and established three technical working groups to be devoted to strengthening the security sector. Soon the High Level Committee will start its meetings.

6. From the 1 to 5 August, former Minister of Defence Professor Ghandi and I co-chaired a very productive meeting in Washington, DC with the former Somali senior military officers. One of the reasons for convening these former military officers is because of their institutional memory which, combined, offers a good option for analyzing past successes and failures and establishing improved policies and procedures to work with in restructuring Somalia's security forces. At the same time, it should be reiterated that the Government has never strayed from its initial pronouncement that it is committed to dialogue and is open to all segments of Somali society and ready to accommodate members of all oppositions. This includes former military officers or any Somali who wishes to contribute to the restoration of stability and national reconciliation.

7. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's meeting on the 6 August with President Sheik Sharif was an encouraging sign for Somalis and a strong show of support and belief in the Somalia's people and Government. On behalf of the US, the Secretary of State made a firm commitment to support Government efforts in improving humanitarian assistance, health, water, education and in building a secure environment for the Somali people. Now, it's up to the Government to leverage this and all the logistical and technical support of their international partners with swift and efficient actions.

8. During my visit to UN Headquarters at the end of July, I held several bilateral meetings and addressed the UN Security Council. I underscored the support needed from the Council to help restore stability in Somalia and outlined concrete steps that the international community could take including political and financial assistance to the Somali Government and AMISOM and support for IGAD and the African Union. I also told the Council, that the UN should show it is serious about moving to Somalia, to be closer to the people.

9. After the Security Council, I travelled to Ottawa where I met the Foreign Minister, Lawrence Cannon, to discuss the latest situation in Somalia. Following meetings with other Ministry officials, I spoke to some 30 Diaspora community leaders whose large majority expressed interest in becoming more actively involved in the peace process.

10. Impunity is a priority issue for Somali and should be addressed. A culture of impunity is toxic and leaves no soul unscathed. A society cannot have peace, let alone prosper and develop without justice. Back in November 2008, a first workshop on Justice and Reconciliation was held in Djibouti and participants committed themselves to begin to address impunity under a Unity Government. A second conference: "Addressing Impunity: Towards Justice and Reconciliation" which included members of the Government, parliamentarians and civil society representatives from inside Somalia has just concluded its work. A number of well-known international experts as well as members of the Nairobi based UN Monitoring Group made important and lively contributions. There was a significant number of

women and youth participating at the conference. Ways of moving forward were outlined and various mechanisms for addressing impunity were presented.

11. Armed violence continues. It continues even though there are no longer any Ethiopian troops in Mogadishu the previous justification. What reason is there now to continue fighting unless it is to capitalize on the insecurity for personal gain? Everywhere I go foreigners ask me in particular this question. This is a question I put forth to those who lately have threatened to redouble their attacks during the Holy Month of Ramadan, particularly as the President has precisely invited for dialogue. What is the sanctity in killing innocent Moslem civilians? What moral justification is there for instilling fear and terror in the population?

12. I am saddened every time I read a media report that mentions the Somali conflict as spawning a terror threat that is spreading throughout the world. This affects all Somalis and those of you living in the Diaspora more so. Even though you may have national passports from Western countries you may still be seen as suspicious. To be presumed suspicious or a threat by the rest of World because of one's origin strips one of freedom and dignity. It is time to end this long conflict at home, that of Somalis fighting Somalis.

13. The Government has made cooperative acts at the political level with Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah and we support that productive effort. I hope more will be done in Mogadishu with all willing Somali brothers not yet at peace with the Government and with Somalia itself. All doors are open to peace.

14. Some may be satisfied with the present Government. Some not. But it is time, after 20 years, to remember that a new government is better than no government. With patience, by the Grace of God, you will have the Government that you all call for. To get there, your unity in strengthening the Government is essential. This Government will succeed and patriots shouldn't miss this moment. I pray that you remember this important fact in this holy month of Ramadan.

Ramadan Kareem!

Yours Faithfully
Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah