



United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)

Statement by Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General James Swan to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia

(As delivered, New York, 3 October 2024)

Madam President, distinguished members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on the situation in Somalia.

I am pleased to do so alongside the Somali Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, also the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Mohamed El-Amine Souef and civil society representative Ilwad Elman, Director at the Elman Peace organization.

I would like, from the outset, to honour the dedication and commitment of the Somali and African Union forces who have made tremendous sacrifices to advance peace and security in the country.

Madame President,

The Federal Government of Somalia remains focused on its national priorities. Following the amendment in March of the first four chapters of the Provisional Constitution by Parliament, the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission is now working on chapters 5-9 of the Constitution. Consultations have already begun with federal member states, civil society and other key stakeholders on proposed amendments covered in these chapters, such as power-sharing and resource-sharing between the central Government and federal member states.

Progress has also been made in defining the process for one-person-one-vote elections, with the Federal Cabinet endorsing three foundational bills for universal suffrage elections, namely the Independent National Electoral and Boundaries Commission Bill, the Elections Bill and the Political Parties and Organizations Bill. The National Consultative Council, which convened yesterday with the leaders of the Federal Government and four federal member states, is expected to discuss these bills before they are submitted to Parliament for consideration.

The transition from the previous indirect electoral system to the planned new system of universal suffrage will require broad and inclusive consultations, and a willingness of all stakeholders to engage in dialogue in order to build political consensus. In this regard, I welcome the meeting of the National Consultative Council.

The adoption of implementable electoral laws and the establishment of an independent elections commission will be important indicators of progress toward delivering universal suffrage elections. The United Nations is committed to supporting Somalia as it addresses technical, logistical and other challenges and mobilizes financial support from donors to deliver timely and credible elections.

Madame President,

The fight against Al-Shabaab continues to be the key security priority for the Government of Somalia. While making commendable efforts to sustain military operations against Al-Shabaab, Somalia is at the same time tackling the challenges of force generation; taking over security responsibilities from the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS); planning the transition to the proposed African Union

Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM); and implementing crucial stabilisation programmes in recovered areas. The United Nations continues to support the Federal Government on these activities, working closely with the African Union and other partners. The United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) continues to enable the ATMIS drawdown while fulfilling its ongoing support responsibilities. The lifting of the arms embargo on the national government has facilitated its access to additional weapons and supplies, and I remind other entities operating in Somalia of the requirement to respect the remaining terms of the arms embargo established by resolution 2713.

Al-Shabaab continues to demonstrate its disregard for civilian life, through its use of indirect fire on population centres, the use of improvised explosive devices, and suicide attacks against civilians, including the heinous 2 August attack at Lido Beach in Mogadishu. I underscore the condemnation issued by the Secretary-General of such attacks and reiterate the United Nations' support to the Government and people of Somalia as they stand against terrorism and violent extremism. In this regard, I also note with concern the increased presence and activities of the affiliate in Somalia of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh).

Madame President,

I remain concerned about the continuing regional tensions following the Memorandum of Understanding announced on 1 January between Ethiopia and "Somaliland". Recalling the Security Council's affirmation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of Somalia, I urge Ethiopia and Somalia to find a diplomatic solution that resolves this issue within the framework of international law. I commend partners' mediation efforts, including talks hosted by Türkiye in Ankara on 1 July and 12 August. I urge

Ethiopia and Somalia to engage in good faith in these diplomatic efforts and to avoid actions that could lead to escalation. This is essential given the possible negative ramifications for stability in the region, including the potential impact on the post-ATMIS transition.

In a recent visit to Hargeisa, I also urged a de-escalation of the tensions in Sool and Sanaag as well as continued access for humanitarian actors in accordance with the Security Council's press statement of 7 June last year, which called on all parties to facilitate humanitarian assistance in this area.

Humanitarian needs remain significant throughout Somalia. Intensifying climate shocks, conflict, disease outbreaks and widespread poverty continue to affect millions. While the number of people estimated to require assistance country-wide has diminished from 8.3 million last year to 6.9 million in 2024, Somalia remains in dire humanitarian need. I call for further support to the \$1.6 billion 2024 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, which is only 37 per cent funded.

Somalia's humanitarian and development challenges are intensified by climate shocks. Scarcity of resources and displacement of communities are in turn conflict drivers. Building greater resilience to the effects of climate change is essential for Somalia's stability. United Nations entities and other accredited partners have supported Somalia's access to the Green Climate Fund to build local-level resilience and engage in climate-smart interventions across Somalia.

Madame President,

The United Nations continues to mainstream human rights, gender, youth and disability inclusion in all United Nations activities in Somalia. One of many examples is our support to the National Disability Agency, including by providing legislative and policy advice on a rights-based approach to disability. In this context, I welcome passage of the Disability Protection Bill by the House of the People during the current session of parliament.

Madame President,

The Federal Government of Somalia's proposal concerning the transition from UNSOM to the United Nations country team was transmitted to this Council by the Secretary-General on 30 August. This Somali proposal followed constructive and cordial discussions within a joint United Nations – Federal Government of Somalia technical team and additional consultations with Somalia's leadership, including the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. We look forward to closely working with the Federal Government to implement the transition, and to continuing the United Nations' support for Somalia's national priorities once a mandate is received from this Council.

Thank you, Madame President.