

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

New York, 12 August 2021

Mr. President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief on the situation in Somalia. I am pleased to do so together once again with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira. This underscores the importance of the relationship between the United Nations and the African Union in advancing peace, security and stability in Somalia. I am also pleased to be briefing alongside H.E. Ambassador Abukar Osman, the Permanent Representative of Somalia to the United Nations, and Ms. Batuulo Axmed Gaballe, Chairperson of the recently appointed women's Advocacy Committee.

Mr. President,

My last briefing to the Council took place two days before the signing of the 27 May Electoral Implementation Agreement between Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble and leaders of the Federal Member States. I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made since then.

The Prime Minister has demonstrated strong leadership and initiative in moving the process forward. The National Consultative Council, which includes the Prime Minister and the Federal Member State leaders, has held regular meetings and dialogue on key issues related to the implementation of the Agreement.

Further, election management bodies at Federal and State levels have been established, and the elections for seats in the Upper House of Parliament have begun in four of the Federal Member States. The mandated ministerial committee comprised of Federal Member State representatives has held consultations in Garbaharey to prepare for the Gedo elections. The National Electoral Security Committee has been established and has begun preparations. And the Prime Minister has appointed an Advocacy Committee, whose Chairperson will brief the Council today, to attain the women's 30% quota in the 2021 federal elections of Somalia.

At the same time, more progress is needed in certain priority areas. This includes more intensive and detailed preparations for electoral security, and clarity on plans to secure the quota for women. I am particularly concerned that unless strong measures are put in place now, the women's quota might not be achieved. There is also a need for greater inclusion of youth and historically marginalized communities in the electoral process.

The United Nations has been working closely with the Office of the Prime Minister and the election management committees at the federal and state levels on the implementation of the 27 May Agreement and election preparations. This includes the provision of technical and logistical support, as well as the coordination of international financial assistance. Recently, an agreement was signed with the Office of the Prime Minister to ensure that donor funds generously contributed by Member States are available for use by the Electoral Management Bodies.

As future challenges to the implementation of the agreement and the completion of the electoral process emerge, we urge that they continue to be addressed and resolved through dialogue.

Mr. President,

Beyond the electoral process, the United Nations continues to support broader peacebuilding efforts, including strengthening federalism, conflict prevention and management, and peace consolidation. In this regard, we recall that the 27 May Agreement includes a roadmap for the completion of the state-building process in Somalia, and we look forward to supporting its implementation.

With funding from the Peacebuilding Fund, the United Nations in Somalia will also step up its support to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 and the role of women in peacebuilding through a new programme to address systemic barriers to Somali women's representation and participation in public life.

Mr. President,

Preparations for election security are key due to the continuing threat posed by Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabab continues terrorist attacks and insurgent operations, including by encircling communities; especially so in South-West State.

UNSOM has so far in 2021 recorded reports of 708 Somali civilian casualties (321 killed, 387 injured), mostly attributed to Al-Shabab. There are also alarming increases in sexual violence and violations against children being recorded and these remains a priority area of concern for the United Nations.

Mr. President,

AMISOM continues to play a critical role in Somalia. I pay tribute to all AMISOM and Somali Security Forces personnel, who work together on a daily basis to bring security to the country. Too many have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

The United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) continues to provide vital support to AMISOM and the Somali Security Forces.

UNSOS assistance to the Somali National Army and Somali Police Force is made possible by voluntary Trust Fund contributions. Additional generous contributions are urgently needed to continue this vital support to Somali security forces, mandated by the Council.

The Somalia Transition Plan continues to be implemented. However, some goals for 2021 have yet to be achieved, including consolidation in Lower Shabelle and further gains in HirShabelle State. We note, however, recent Somali National Army operations to counter al Shabaab in HirShabelle and Galmudug States.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. The combined impact of conflict and climate change, including recurrent droughts and floods, as well as COVID, are likely to further exacerbate food insecurity. I would like to note the leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia in rolling out a national vaccination campaign, with the support of the Covax initiative.

Humanitarian access and significantly more funding are required to continue to deliver life-saving support. The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan is only 38 per cent funded.

Climate change is contributing to the extreme crisis in Somalia, with potential negative effects on stability and security, as well as the humanitarian and development situation. The Council has recognised the adverse effects of climate change on Somalia, and the United

Nations continues to work at Federal Government and Federal Member State levels to better understand, mitigate and manage this.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

Following a prolonged period of uncertainty and heightened tensions, the long-awaited elections in Somalia are now moving forward, albeit somewhat behind schedule. Ensuring that this process continues to advance, and is inclusive and credible, will need constant effort by all parties involved, and continued leadership by the signatories of the 27 May Agreement.

The United Nations stands ready to continue to support Somalia in this election process and beyond, so that the country can renew its focus on core peace, security, and development goals.

Thank you.