



## **United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)**

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

**New York/Mogadishu, 7 September 2022**

Mister President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the situation in Somalia.

With the conclusion of the contentious electoral process in May, the political climate in Somalia is now more conducive to addressing key national priorities. To capitalise on this opportunity, federal and state authorities must collaborate closely to achieve progress on the new government's goals, including improving governance and justice, effectively countering Al-Shabaab, and responding urgently to the worsening humanitarian crisis. The United Nations is committed to supporting Somalis in achieving their national priorities.

I last briefed this Council just after the 15 May election of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the new President of Somalia. Since then, Parliament in June unanimously endorsed his nominee for Prime Minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, and in August confirmed his cabinet.

The new Government moved swiftly to present a four-year work programme, laying out goals and activities across six pillars. These include: security, justice, reconciliation, economic development, social development and foreign relations. In parallel, Parliament completed the process of forming its committees, to include the joint Oversight Committee charged with steering the constitutional review process through parliament. The United Nations and other international partners are supporting Parliament to advance key legislative priorities.

Unfortunately, women remain under-represented in cabinet positions and parliamentary committees. Just 13 per cent of cabinet members are women, and 21 per cent of parliamentary committee members. I call again for Somali leaders to take further measures to ensure women's meaningful participation across institutions of government, as well as the inclusion of youth and historically marginalised groups.

Mister President,

President Hassan Sheikh has repeatedly highlighted the importance of improving relations between the central government and federal member states to advance national priorities. Among his first, commendable actions in office was to meet with Federal Member State (FMS) leaders in the National Consultative Council (NCC) and then visit several state capitals. I urge that this outreach to the FMSes continue and that the NCC meet again very soon. The UN is working with the Government in support of this important meeting.

Since taking office, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has also made multiple foreign visits to neighbouring countries and other important bilateral partners. I welcome his initiative to ensure close ties with all — even those countries with which relations were previously strained. I urge that this continue — particularly with regional neighbours.

Mister President,

The new Somali administration has identified security as its top national priority. This comes at a time when Al-Shabaab has demonstrated increased boldness. Al-Shabaab recent activities include targeted assassinations, complex attacks such as that on the Hayat Hotel in August, and large-scale military actions along the border with Ethiopia.

I condemn these repeated terrorist attacks, extend my deep condolences to the families of those killed by Al-Shabaab, and wish a speedy recovery to the wounded. I commend the courage and tenacity of Somali Security Forces and the forces of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) who at great cost in lives continue to fight to defend the population against Al-Shabaab.

Somalia's efforts toward force generation, integration and coordination are necessary both to achieve military gains and to address citizens' protection concerns. Effective Somali forces are key to the planned transition from ATMIS. I reiterate the need for the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Federal Member States to collaborate closely to counter Al-Shabaab, guided by Somalia's regional and international human rights commitments.

The implementation of security transition tasks mandated by Council resolution 2628 is advancing, including the request for the FGS, African Union, European Union, and United Nations to identify relevant, clear and realistic benchmarks for progress. UNSOS continues to provide mandated logistical support to ATMIS and, using Trust Fund contributions, to authorised Somali Security Forces. I remain deeply concerned by the shortfall in funding available for ATMIS salary stipends and for the Somali Security Forces Trust Fund and urge additional donor contributions as a matter of urgency.

Mister President,

Somalia is facing a humanitarian catastrophe with some 7.8 million Somalis — nearly half of the country's estimated population — impacted by the worst drought in at least four decades, exacerbated by climate factors. With four consecutive failed rainy seasons, areas of the country face the risk of famine.

Thanks to generous donor support, humanitarian organisations have since January quadrupled the number of those reached with assistance to 5.3 million people. But with ever-escalating needs and a fifth failed rainy season projected, a further scale-up of humanitarian assistance is critical. I call on all parties in Somalia to facilitate humanitarian access. I call on all of Somalia's friends to increase urgently the needed funding.

The ongoing humanitarian crisis has especially contributed to the vulnerability of displaced women and children, who historically have faced discrimination and exclusion from services. I urge the Somali authorities to increase prevention measures for the risk of sexual violence particularly

against women and girls, including by strengthening security at water points and at food distribution sites.

Turning to the longer-term development agenda, Somalia has taken significant steps in the debt relief process. In June, the Board of the International Monetary Fund approved pending reviews, leading to the release of \$350 million in much-needed development funding. Similarly, other donors have resumed pending budgetary support to ease the financial pressure and to sustain the required reform efforts to complete the debt relief process.

Before concluding, Mister President, let me reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to continue supporting the Government and the Somali people in achieving their national goals. In this context, the Strategic Review of UNSOM is well advanced. The Review team visited Somalia in August and held extensive consultations with government officials and other stakeholders, ensuring that Somali views will inform its forthcoming report and recommendations to the Council.

Thank you very much.