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Situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution [2705 \(2023\)](#) and to resolution [2710 \(2023\)](#), provides updates on the implementation of those resolutions, including on the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), covering progress achieved against the benchmarks identified by the strategic review, and on the mandate of the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers significant developments from 6 October 2023 to 24 January 2024.

II. Political, security and economic overview

A. Political developments

2. Following the conclusion of the National Consultative Council meeting on 27 May 2023, discussions on the outcomes of the meeting continued during the reporting period among the political leaders of Somalia. On 3 November, the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission and the Joint Parliamentary Constitutional Oversight Committee held a joint meeting to undertake a technical analysis of the National Consultative Council agreement and discuss the proposed amendments contained in the first four chapters of the Provisional Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia. On 19 October, opposition leaders including the former President of Somalia, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, expressed their concern regarding the National Consultative Council proposals to change the form of government to a presidential system and adopt a two-party system. Similar concerns were also voiced by other opposition leaders. The President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, held two meetings with key opposition leaders, on 21 and 25 December, to discuss their views on the constitutional review process and the electoral model.

3. The Federal Parliament reconvened for its fourth session on 25 November. During the session, President Mohamud highlighted the Government's commitment to ensure the lifting of the remaining arms control measures and the completion of the debt relief programme before the end of December 2023. He also provided an update on the admission of Somalia to the East African Community on 24 November and the progress made in the offensives against Al-Shabaab. President Mohamud re-affirmed his commitment to improving relations with the federal member states and stressed the need to finalize the constitutional review process.



4. The Federal Government of Somalia and “Somaliland” concluded two days of meetings in Djibouti on 29 December. They announced the resumption of dialogue between the two sides and that a technical committee would be formed to oversee the discussions. On 1 January, Ethiopia and “Somaliland” announced their intention to negotiate a memorandum of understanding for partnership and cooperation. The Federal Government of Somalia has denounced the agreement as a violation of its sovereignty. On 2 January, the Federal Parliament passed a law nullifying the memorandum of understanding signed by Ethiopia and “Somaliland.” President Mohamud signed the law on 5 January. A meeting of the National Consultative Council was held on 3 January and attended by the leaders of all federal member states, except for Puntland. The National Consultative Council similarly declared the memorandum of understanding “null and void.”

5. In Puntland, following internal disagreements over the model and the timing of the upcoming State Assembly and presidential elections, the President of Puntland, Said Abdullahi Deni, issued a decree on 7 December stating that the State Assembly elections would be held on 8 January 2024 using a clan-based model, with 66 newly elected Members of the State Assembly electing the President and Vice-President. On 12 December, President Deni appointed the members of the selection/vetting committee, who published a list of the 66 new members of the State Assembly of Puntland on 1 January 2024. The parliamentarians were sworn in on the same day. As in the previous assembly, only one woman was selected.

6. The 66 members of the Puntland parliament re-elected Deni as the sixth President of Puntland and Ilyaas Osman Lugatoor as Vice-President on 8 January. The security situation in Garowe remained calm, and President Deni reached out to presidential candidates and traditional leaders in the days after his re-election to foster political conciliation. President Mohamud, state presidents, with the exception of the President of Jubbaland, Ahmed Mohamed Islam “Madobe”, key government officials and other dignitaries attended President Deni’s inauguration on 25 January.

7. The federal Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation issued a statement on 19 October in which it noted that “the Federal Government reiterates its support for the resolutions reached by the traditional leaders during their meeting in Laascaanood on 6 February 2023”. The Ministry added that the Federal Government “also welcomes and commits to working with the interim administration established by the local populace”. In Sool region, sporadic violence continued from 8 to 23 November in Buq-Dharkayn between Habar Jecllo (Isaaq) and Dhulbahante clan militias. On 28 November, leaders of the Habar Jecllo Isaaq subclan issued a communiqué reiterating their support for the independence of “Somaliland” and their commitment to defending their territory, stressing, however, that they had no intention of invading Dhulbahante territory. On 2 December, the Dhulbahante traditional leaders issued a statement acknowledging the Habar Jecllo’s communiqué and emphasizing their desire for peaceful coexistence.

8. The South-West State opposition leaders met with President Mohamud to present a petition for the implementation of the Baidoa Agreement on 6 October. The Agreement was reached in February 2023 between the South-West State administration and opposition groups with the support of the Federal Government to allow for regional assembly elections to be held in late 2023 and regional presidential elections in January 2024. On 14 October, the South-West State opposition issued a statement calling for elections in the State to be held in January 2024, in line with the provisions of the agreement.

9. During the reporting period, the relationship between the Jubbaland administration and the Gedo region improved, with the administration controlling all the district centres in the Gedo region, except Garbahaarrey, where community

grievances persist. Garbahaarrey authorities have continued to voice their opposition to the Jubbaland administration's proposals to hold an inclusive reconciliation conference in Garbahaarrey. On 17 November, traditional elders and women's groups in Garbahaarrey endorsed the former Garbahaarrey District Commissioner, Hassan Elmi, as the commissioner of Garbahaarrey district, rejecting officials appointed by the Jubbaland administration in Gedo region.

B. Security developments

10. During the reporting period, 755 security incidents were recorded, including 216 terrorist incidents. Since the beginning of December, an increase in Al-Shabaab activity has been recorded, notably in the Shabelle Hoose and Bay regions in South-West State. Heavier than usual seasonal rains exacerbated by El Niño caused widespread flooding which severely constrained both the Government's counter-terrorism offensive as well as operations by Al-Shabaab. However, in areas less affected by the rains, Al-Shabaab activity continued almost unabated, most notably in the Shabelle Hoose and Bay regions in South-West State. On 10 January, there was an aviation incident involving a United Nations-contracted helicopter in Galmudug, while it was conducting an air medical evacuation. The United Nations is working with the Federal Government of Somalia and others on the response to the incident.

11. Improvised explosive devices continue to be widely used by Al-Shabaab. A total of 145 improvised explosive device attacks were recorded, resulting in 270 casualties. Two vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices were used, constituting a significant reduction from the 21 devices used in the previous reporting period. On 21 October, Al-Shabaab detonated a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device near Afgooye, Shabelle Hoose, targeting the district commissioner and the National Intelligence and Security Agency headquarters. As a result, nine individuals were killed and 11 injured. Six person-borne improvised explosive devices were used in Mogadishu, resulting in at least 40 casualties. On 3 November, a person-borne improvised explosive device detonated between the Aden Adde International Airport area and the TURKSOM military training camp, targeting a group of soldiers walking towards the camp. The incident resulted in 4 soldiers killed and 12 injured. Al-Shabaab continues to use indirect fire weapons, including against the ATMIS protected area around Aden Adde International Airport. On 27 December, Al-Shabaab fired four 107 mm rockets from the outskirts of Mogadishu in the direction of Villa Somalia. The rockets landed in residential areas, killing at least one civilian. This is the seventh rocket attack in Mogadishu since 2022. On 11 January, four mortar rounds impacted the United Nations compound, resulting in one fatality, a member of United Nations Guard Unit personnel.

12. On 19 October, President Mohamud announced the launch of the counter-Al-Shabaab operations in the Bakool region of South-West State. Despite the impact of heavy rains, the Somali authorities reported continued activity to counter Al-Shabaab in central and southern Somalia. This included operations in the Bakool, Hiran, Shabelle Dhexe, Galguduud and south Mudug regions.

C. Economic developments

13. On 13 December, Somalia reached the completion point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and received full and irrevocable debt relief. Alongside full debt relief, the International Monetary Fund approved a new Extended Credit Facility programme to continue economic and financial reforms and increase domestic revenues. In December, the International Development Association extended grant

terms to Somalia for another year, extending favourable financing conditions for the country's development.

14. On 9 December, the Parliament endorsed the 2024 budget, which for the first time exceeded \$1 billion to account for growing economic development and security expenditures in the context of the upcoming security transition. Somalia continues to face a challenging fiscal situation perpetuating the reliance on official development assistance, which accounts for two thirds of the federal budget. However, an 18 per cent increase in domestic revenues for 2024 is envisaged in the budget.

15. The Somali economy is expected to record modest recovery with real gross domestic product growth projected at 2.8 per cent in 2024. The favourable *gu* harvest season eased local staple food prices and inflation. However, during the reporting period, Somalia experienced heavy rainfall leading to extreme flooding, which is expected to impact food production, food prices and economic growth in 2024. These repeated shocks have eroded households' asset base and purchasing power, increasing the risk of sustaining high levels of poverty.

III. Update on activities of the Mission and the United Nations country team

A. Support for political processes

16. From 7 to 9 November, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, supported by the joint programme on State-building and reconciliation, which was co-led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNSOM, organized a three-day workshop to support the finalization of the National Reconciliation Framework review, a process that started in June 2022. The revised framework provides a framework for conflict resolution and prevention which encompasses areas of transitional justice, climate change and environmental degradation, with an added focus on areas newly recovered from Al-Shabaab.

17. On 19 and 20 November, the United Nations supported Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation engagements with clan elders, civil society leaders, women and youth representatives as well as international partners. The consultations were focused on the constitutional review process and the proposal of the National Consultative Council of May 2023 on one-person, one-vote elections, in support of broad public consultations on these proposals.

B. Support for the security sector, rule of law and stabilization

1. Security sector development

18. On 12 December, the Federal Government of Somalia convened a security conference at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Federal Government presented the Somalia security sector development plan, outlining its priorities and vision for the security sector in the next six years, as well as requirements for international support.

19. The United Nations continued to support the Federal Government in developing its national counter-improvised explosive device framework. In November, a baseline assessment was concluded which will inform the development of a national counter-improvised explosive device strategy.

20. UNSOM provided advice to the Federal Government on priority security legislation, including the defence bill, the police bill and draft prisons law, and

expanded its engagement with federal parliamentary committees and women parliamentarians on security sector governance. This included workshops with parliamentarians on 10 December.

2. Rule of law

21. Through the Joint Justice and Corrections Programme, UNSOM and UNDP, in consultation with civil society and federal and state-level authorities, supported the development of a Ministry of Justice road map by providing technical assistance to ensure an inclusive justice and corrections model and its finalization through the constitutional review process. In November and December, UNSOM and UNDP conducted workshops with 50 women leaders and civil society actors to enhance their advocacy capacity on gender-sensitive lawmaking with the Federal Government and Parliament.

22. UNSOM and UNDP also supported the strengthening of the delivery of justice services through four generative dialogue sessions to explore community justice and security solutions for 241 participants (139 men and 102 women) from Galmudug, Jubbaland, and South-West States. The Chief Justice of South-West State noted that this had led to improved perceptions of justice providers among the population. UNSOM also supported justice assessments in four districts in Hirshabelle and Galmudug States newly recovered from Al-Shabaab and trained 66 participants (about 30 per cent women) on trauma-informed restorative justice.

23. In September and October, UNSOM and UNDP supported the drafting of police acts in South-West and Hirshabelle States, which provide a legal basis for the governance of the police services in those states. UNDP finalized the concept note for the development of phase 2 of the Joint Police Programme with United Nations police, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the European Union. UNSOM and UNDP developed a proposal for funding policing in newly recovered areas, as part of phase 2 of the Joint Police Programme to support the Federal Government in implementing an affordable and sustainable policing model that reflects the federal structure.

24. UNSOM supported the State Ministries of Internal Security in crafting and implementing strategic police plans in Hirshabelle, Jubbaland, Puntland and South-West States to develop effective and sustainable police institutions in each federal member state. UNSOM supported the strengthening of Somali Police Force capacity by organizing workshops for the police on enhancing their inspection capabilities in Mogadishu and “Somaliland”, from 17 to 18 December, and on a crime prevention strategy from 17 to 19 December.

25. From 7 to 9 November, federal and state ministries of internal security and finance held a conference on the distribution of 40,000 police as outlined in the revised national security architecture as follows: 20,000 federal police and 4,000 state police for each of the five member states. Authorities also agreed on a comprehensive plan of action to address the recruitment, training, equipping and deployment of police over a three-year period from 2024 to 2026.

3. Stabilization

26. On 30 November, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation held its early recovery working group meeting on local governance and reconciliation with international partners to review progress towards the implementation of the Federal Government’s stabilization plan. The Ministry presented the findings of the 2023 Fragility Index and Maturity Model overview report on stabilization progress. The report featured the progress made in the offensive against Al-Shabaab in

Hirshabelle and Galmudug States and the formation of elected district councils. It also noted challenges around district authorities' capacity in public financial management.

27. The Federal and South-West State Ministries of Interior hosted a stabilization learning event with their state counterparts from Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Jubbaland States from 8 to 11 October in Baidoa. The key lessons identified included the need to share experience of recent coordination efforts on the offensive against Al-Shabaab with South-West State and Jubbaland State of Somalia, improvement of the agility of the stabilization response and improvement of the linkages between stabilization and military planning.

4. Preventing and countering violent extremism

28. As part of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts, UNSOM provided technical and coordination support to national and international partners to implement the revised Federal Government-led defector rehabilitation programme for 2023. The roll-out of the programme for newly graduated, low-risk defectors commenced in Baidoa and Kismaayo on 2 October and 23 October, respectively. The programme was focused on creating an environment of social cohesion among communities and defectors during the reintegration phase and reducing the tenure of defectors at rehabilitation centres from 9–12 months to 3–6 months. Five rehabilitation centres in Mogadishu, Kismaayo and Baidoa and one multifunctional reception centre in Galmudug are operational, providing support to 215 female and 502 male beneficiaries as at 24 January 2024.

29. On 18 October, the Federal Government launched the Tubsan National Centre for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. The Centre supports and coordinates national efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism, including through information-gathering and provision of policy and research support.

30. UNDP and UNSOM worked with the religious scholars network of Puntland to support the Gaalkacyo religious scholars conference held from 3 to 5 December 2023. The conference highlighted the evolving dialogue on the role of religion in shaping the region's peace and governance strategies.

C. Humanitarian assistance

31. During the reporting period, heavy *deyr* rains (October to December) and floods were recorded across Somalia, affecting close to 2.5 million people, including more than 1.2 million people displaced and 118 deaths reported in 31 districts, mostly in Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and South-West States. The rains, exacerbated by El Niño and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole climate phenomenon, swamped at least 1.5 million hectares of farmland, disrupting agricultural productivity, but on a lesser scale than anticipated. A rapid scale-up of response activities saved lives in affected areas. In anticipation of the upcoming *gu* rains in 2024, humanitarian agencies are proactively preparing for challenges such as airstrips becoming inaccessible to fixed-wing aircraft and the closure of vital overland supply routes.

32. Owing to the floods, tens of thousands of people were cut off from markets and supplies or trapped by water in isolated villages. Roads and airstrips have been extensively damaged, limiting access to people in need, while hospitals, schools and other vital facilities closed. Critical bridges in Baardheere, Buurdhuubo, Bu'aale and Luuq in Jubbaland State and Buulobarde in Hirshabelle State have been washed away, damaged or submerged. There has been an increase in acute watery diarrhoea and cholera and other waterborne diseases. Humanitarian agencies are responding and monitoring the situation closely.

33. The Somali authorities, communities and humanitarian actors stepped up assistance to people affected by the heavy rains and floods. While 1.34 million flood-affected people had been reached with life-saving assistance as at the end of December, needs remain high despite reductions in rainfall received across the country. At least 40 boats have been deployed to either deliver supplies or evacuate people trapped by floodwater. While the El Niño-induced heavy rains improved water availability, the floods led to widespread and unprecedented devastation of farmland, livestock deaths, damage to essential infrastructure and severely disrupted livelihoods.

34. The United Nations has released \$36 million to support the *deyr* flood response efforts, including \$10 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund and \$26 million from the Somalia Humanitarian Fund. These funds have supported efforts to prevent loss of life, stem disease outbreaks and address food insecurity. The Somalia Humanitarian Fund is championing localization, with 69 per cent of 2023 funding channelled to national non-governmental organizations as at the end of December, most of which are implementing projects in underserved and hard-to-reach areas.

35. Humanitarian assistance reached about 8.4 million people over the course of 2023, but millions of Somalis continue to suffer from hunger. According to the 2023 post-*gu* Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis of 18 September, acute food insecurity and malnutrition remain high. About 4.3 million people faced high levels of acute food insecurity from October to December, compared with 4.7 million people at the same time in 2022.

36. Despite some improvement, acute malnutrition also remains high in Somalia, with global acute malnutrition rates above 15 per cent in many areas, including near-critical levels among the internally displaced people in Mogadishu. An estimated 1.5 million children under the age of 5 will face acute malnutrition from August 2023 to July 2024, including 330,630 who are likely to be severely malnourished.

37. The humanitarian country team, together with the Federal Government, is strengthening measures to deter interferences in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including establishing joint task forces to develop a collective strategy to mitigate aid diversion and improve the impact and efficacy of assistance. The humanitarian country team is also working closely with the authorities, donors, partners, clan elders and people receiving aid to implement strong collective action to prevent aid diversion and ensure that all aid reaches the intended recipients.

38. As at the end of 2023, the 2023 humanitarian response plan was only 43 per cent funded (\$1.126 billion of \$2.6 billion required). The funding shortfalls across all sectors have forced humanitarian partners to scale down their responses, prioritizing the most vulnerable in areas with the greatest severity of needs. Increased support is needed to reach more people and save lives and livelihoods. The 2024 humanitarian response plan now targets 5.24 million people out of 6.9 million that need assistance, with total requirements in the amount of \$1.6 billion.

D. Support for the coordination of development assistance

39. On 27 November, the Federal Government launched the development process for the Centennial Vision 2060 plan. It is expected to set out a multisectoral vision to create a prosperous, secure, democratic, inclusive and competitive country with a high quality of life. It contains eight priority components: (a) a capable, efficient and developmental State; (b) a skilled workforce and human capital; (c) private sector growth and transformation; (d) a climate-resilient and market-oriented productive sector; (e) modern infrastructure and technology; (f) a blue economy as an engine of growth; (g) international and regional trade and integration; and (h) foreign direct investment attraction and industrialization. The Vision will also be built on four cross-

cutting areas: (i) women empowerment; (ii) youth empowerment; (iii) fostering a growth mindset; and (iv) environmental sustainability.

40. UNSOM and UNDP supported the Somalia Strategic Direction workshop attended by President Mohamud, the Prime Minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, members of the Cabinet and members of government departments, from 15 to 18 October. The workshop led to the establishment of a National Transformation Unit, chaired by the Prime Minister. The Unit's main role will be to provide strategic guidance and advisory services for Somalia towards attaining Centennial Vision 2060.

41. Somalia continued to advance its efforts to address climate and environmental challenges. On 16 November, the Minister for Energy and Water Resources of Somalia attended a meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Ministers responsible for water affairs. The meeting led to an agreement on the process of strengthening cooperation and collaboration for water resources management and development. This includes the sharing of data and information across transboundary water issues. Somalia and partners agreed to work on transboundary surface and groundwater issues in the region.

42. On 25 November, the United Nations task force on water and environment completed the formulation of joint programmes on climate, peace and security and on water infrastructure in Jawhar. On 5 December, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change presented its new strategy and newly agreed nationally determined contributions, a key document for managing and monitoring carbon emissions. On 6 December, Somalia joined the global task force on access to climate finance, leading to increased commitments from the climate change vertical funds and other bilateral donors on increasing the country's access to funding for climate adaptation and mitigation.

43. On 17 December, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Somali National Bureau of Statistics and UNDP launched the study on multi-dimensional poverty in Somalia. The study will assist with gaining a nuanced understanding of the drivers of poverty and vulnerability in Somalia.

E. Women and peace and security

44. The Office of the Prime Minister, UNSOM and UNDP, as part of the political transition joint programme, appointed a committee in October tasked with advocating for women's issues to be included in the agenda of the next meeting of the National Consultative Council. On 1 November, the programme supported a delegation led by the federal Minister for Women and Human Rights Development that travelled to Jawhar. The delegation met the President of Hirshabelle, Ali Abdullahi Hussein "Gudlawe", to lobby for his support for the newly established women's advisory committee to the National Consultative Council. The delegation also raised the need to enforce the 30 per cent quota for women's political participation during the constitutional review process. The Minister for Women and Human Rights Development emphasized the need to include women in positions of leadership and to enhance the protection of women and girls.

45. On 7 November, the Minister for Women and Human Rights Development and the United Nations hosted the annual Global Open Day on Women, Peace and Security. Participants included government officials, civil society representatives and the United Nations. In his keynote address, the Deputy Prime Minister, Salah Jama, reiterated the commitment of Somalia to promoting and respecting women's rights and to their participation in decision-making processes. The United Nations encouraged the continuing efforts of Somalia to advance the women and peace and security agenda in Somalia, stressing the commitment of the United Nations to strengthening

collaborations to this end. Participants discussed the challenges in promoting women's full participation in decision-making processes and women's protection and called on the Government to expedite legislation for the 30 per cent quota for women.

46. On 5 December, the United Nations convened the Somalia women Members of Parliament/United Nations leadership forum. Participants agreed to conduct advocacy visits to federal member states for the National Consultative Council so that it can include issues of women's empowerment on its agenda and convene a conference to discuss options for attaining the 30 per cent quota for women. Participants also expressed their commitment to pursuing the enactment of legislation that would address inclusivity in elected bodies and government positions. Participants agreed that the constitutional review process and capacity-building for female members of parliament would remain key priorities. Subsequently, the United Nations organized a national conference of women parliamentarians on 12 and 13 December, bringing together women parliamentarians from the Federal Government and federal member states, civil society organization representatives and senior government officials. From 12 to 18 November, the United Nations sponsored a study tour to Nigeria, which helped members of the forum increase their capacities and skills related to gender-responsive legislation and legislative affairs.

F. Youth and peace and security

47. On 17 October, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the South-West State Ministry of Youth and Sports conducted a youth-led peacebuilding campaign with local partners in Hudur district. The campaign included a public forum with approximately 250 people (122 female and 128 male) focusing on the role of youth in peacebuilding and stabilization.

48. On 26 October, UNFPA, in partnership with youth-led organizations, conducted a five-day capacity-building workshop for young entrepreneurs in Boosaaso, Puntland State. A total of 75 young people (36 female and 39 male) participated and benefited from start-up grants for their businesses. The training was aimed at peacebuilding and mitigating radicalization among young men and women.

49. From 14 to 17 November, UNFPA and its national partner hosted a youth dialogue at Abdiyaziz Youth Centre in Mogadishu with the attendance of 86 young people (48 female and 38 male) to identify challenges and opportunities in the political and State-building process.

50. On 12 December, UNDP supported MAAN-DHIS, a non-governmental youth organization, in convening a youth, peace and security forum in which 150 university students discussed peace and security challenges facing Somalia. Aligned with Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#), the forum addressed unique challenges faced by young people and promoted their role in sustainable peace and development.

51. On 30 December, the United Nations completed the recruitment of the 2024–2025 Youth Advisory Board, which facilitates active engagement and exchanges among young people in Somalia.

G. Human rights and protection

1. Human rights

52. During the reporting period, UNSOM recorded 167 civilian casualties (84 killed and 83 injured), a 53 per cent decrease compared with the 399 civilian casualties recorded in the previous reporting period. Al-Shabaab was responsible for 51 civilian

casualties (31 per cent), followed by 44 (26 per cent) attributed to clan militias, 43 (26 per cent) to unknown actors and 29 (17 per cent) to State security forces. The decrease in civilian casualties is attributed to the impact of the flooding on Al-Shabaab's activities. On 6 October, a television journalist was killed by an improvised explosive device detonated by a suicide bomber in a restaurant in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that it had targeted "Somali security officials". On 10 October, in Jilib, in Juba Dhexe region, nine civilians, including six children (four boys and two girls), were injured in an air strike carried out by an unidentified aircraft. On 1 January, a male humanitarian aid worker was abducted by Al-Shabaab in Gedo region. He was released on the same day following clan negotiations.

53. In the period from 6 to 14 January in "Somaliland", two journalists, two studio employees and one social media activist were reportedly arbitrarily detained by the "Somaliland" Intelligence Agency for allegedly commenting on the memorandum of understanding between Ethiopia and "Somaliland." Three were released without charges, while the other two remained in detention without charges.

54. In November and December, several activities took place to commemorate the 75 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including an art exhibition at the National Museum and the first human rights film festival at the National Theatre, with the winners of both competitions attending the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights high-level regional event in Nairobi.

55. During the reporting period, Somali authorities carried out 14 executions (nine former members of the security forces and five civilians) and sentenced three others to death (two former soldiers and a civilian). On 16 October, the Kismaayo District Court convicted and sentenced a civilian, who reportedly had a mental disability, to death for killing his mother. On 10 November, authorities executed a soldier on the same day that he was convicted and sentenced to death by the First Instance of the Military Court in Baidoa, denying him the opportunity to appeal the guilty verdict and sentence.

2. Compliance with the United Nations human rights and due diligence policy

56. During the reporting period, members of the human rights due diligence policy task force met twice in Mogadishu, reviewing two risk assessments of the United Nations support for the Somali National Army and one for the Darwish Police. The task force also endorsed a methodology note on human rights background checks aimed at strengthening a common understanding and consistent implementation of this mitigation measure across the United Nations in Somalia.

57. On 13 November, the UNSOS risk management and compliance unit provided training for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) and Somali security forces air officers in Baidoa, South-West State, to sensitize them on the importance of strict compliance with the human rights due diligence policy.

58. On 3 December, the ATMIS-UNSOS-UNSOM Joint Working Group met in Mogadishu to discuss joint advocacy on the protection of civilians in the context of the handover of security responsibilities from ATMIS to the Somali security forces. Promoting strengthened communication with local communities on changing security arrangements in the areas affected by the handover of security responsibilities was identified as an opportunity for joint advocacy based on respective mandates.

3. Children in armed conflict

59. From October to December, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children verified 567 grave violations against 454 children (341 boys and 113 girls), 2 incidents of attacks on schools and 1 incident of denial of

humanitarian access. The highest number of violations occurred in Hiraan (101), Bay (99) and Shabelle Hoose (71). The reporting period marked an increase in child casualties in Banaadir and Shabelle Hoose due to mortar shells, explosive remnants of war and unexploded ordnance. Al-Shabaab remained the main perpetrator, responsible for 58 per cent of grave violations. The group continued to abduct children for the purpose of recruitment and use mostly in Hiraan, Bay, Shabelle Hoose, Bakool and Juba Dhexe. An increase in violations in Hiraan region was attributed to the ongoing military operations.

60. On 12 November, UNSOM and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in coordination with the Ministry of Defence, chaired the interministerial committee working group to address the situation of children in armed conflict. The Directors-General and child protection focal points of six key-line federal ministries participated in the meeting. They discussed the trends of grave violations against children from January to September 2023 and agreed to share advocacy letters with the Government to ensure accountability in line with the 2019 road map on children and armed conflict.

4. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

61. UNSOM verified four incidents of conflict-related sexual violence affecting six women (four in Banaadir, one in Bay and one in the Juba Hoose region). Three of the five survivors were internally displaced from the Bay region (and two displaced from Banaadir). In the incident in Juba Hoose, the perpetrator was identified as a member of a clan militia and briefly arrested but released following clan negotiations. In the other incidents, the perpetrators were unknown armed men.

62. On 27 November, UNSOM, in collaboration with the Faqih Foundation, a civil society organization based in Mogadishu, held an event to launch and commemorate the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign. The event was attended by 80 participants (45 female and 35 male), comprising internally displaced persons, camp administrators, representatives of civil society and public officials from the Banaadir administration. The event highlighted the impact of gender-based violence and the need to increase awareness, coordinate advocacy, promote reporting and share knowledge on ending violence against women and girls.

63. The Federal Government of Somalia continued to review the legislation to strengthen the protection of women and girls from sexual violence. Following revision by the Solicitor General, a new bill called the offences of rape and indecency bill was approved by the Cabinet on 28 December. Some of the provisions of the bill remain to be addressed to be consistent with international human rights standards.

H. Logistical support from the United Nations Support Office in Somalia to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia and Somali security forces in joint and coordinated operations

1. Support for the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia

64. During the reporting period, UNSOS continued to provide support to ATMIS in line with the ATMIS concept of operations and the Somalia Transition Plan. The tripartite technical committee of the Federal Government of Somalia, ATMIS and UNSOS continued to coordinate drawdown activities. Forward operating bases were handed over from ATMIS to the Somali security forces in Raga Ceel, Shabelle Dhexe region, in October, and in Mogadishu (forward operating bases at the State House and Parliament) and Qorilow, Hirshabelle State, in December. In January, two forward operating bases, in Sariiraha and at the old Kismaayo Airport, both in Juba Hoose

region, were closed. Another two forward operating bases at the Old Kismayo Airport and Bura Hache, Gedo region, were handed over to Somali security forces.

65. Following the conclusion of the letter of assist between the Government of Burundi and the Department of Operational Support for the deployment of four additional aviation assets in support of ATMIS operations, three helicopters were successfully deployed to Somalia in November 2023 and are already supporting operations. In addition, following the conclusion of the letter of assist with the Government of Uganda, two more helicopters were deployed in support of ATMIS in December 2023.

66. On 12 December, the Federal Government of Somalia, the African Union and the United Nations signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding to enhance support to the mandated Somali security forces.

67. UNSOS supported the flood response coordinated by the Federal Government, ATMIS and the United Nations country team with a focus on continuing logistics support to ATMIS and the Somali security forces in challenging circumstances, including flooded runways, and providing additional support, where needed and possible. The latter included the delivery of sandbags, tentage, Hesco bastions and water pumps to support ATMIS and Somali security forces forward operating bases.

68. The Mine Action Service continued to deliver improvised explosive device threat mitigation measures that support the mobility and safety of personnel from ATMIS troop-contributing countries. These measures included delivering specialized in-country and pre-deployment training, including training-of-trainer courses, for more than 2,900 ATMIS military and police personnel and pre- and post-convoy briefings for more than 120 ATMIS convoys conducting searches on main supply routes that led to the destruction of three improvised explosive devices.

69. During the reporting period, the Mine Action Service supported the ATMIS drawdown by deploying technical advisers and combat engineer advisers to the forward operating bases identified for reconfiguration activities.

2. Support for Somali security forces and capacity-building efforts

70. In line with Security Council resolutions [2687 \(2023\)](#) and [2710 \(2023\)](#), the number of Somali security forces eligible for non-lethal logistical support by UNSOS increased from 13,900 to 15,900 and then to 18,900. During the reporting period, UNSOS provided non-lethal logistical support in 18 locations to 15,900 Somali troops and police in joint or coordinated operations with ATMIS, with preparations for an increase to support 18,900 troops ongoing. UNSOS also continued capacity-building efforts, including through interoperability trainings for Somali security forces and ATMIS which included elements on logistics planning and communication.

71. As at 27 January, the UNSOS-administered trust fund in support of the Somali security forces stood at \$6.3 million, which is sufficient only to sustain support for four months. Efforts to raise awareness of the status of the trust fund and mobilize additional funding continued.

72. The development of capabilities and deployment of Somali security forces' explosive device disposal teams have made progress. During the reporting period, the Somali National Army and Somali Police Force cleared 21 improvised explosive devices, successfully contributing to mitigating explosive threats.

73. In parallel, the Mine Action Service provided training and the development and provision of equipment for additional explosive ordnance disposal teams. The Mine Action Service trained an additional 38 Somali police force and 40 Somali National Army personnel during the reporting period.

I. United Nations presence in Somalia

74. United Nations entities remained present in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Berbera, Boosaaso, Dhooble, Dhuusamarreeb, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu. As at 24 December, 974 international staff and 1,604 national staff were deployed throughout Somalia.

J. Observations

75. I welcome the recent progress achieved in Somalia on the political, economic and security fronts. The admission of Somalia to the East African Community can provide opportunities for stronger regional partnerships and trade, which are necessary building blocks for future development. I congratulate the Government of Somalia on the attainment of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries completion point. It will be critical in the period ahead to seize the momentum and further advance key national priorities through continued political dialogue and consensus. I note the continued political impasse over the May 2023 proposals of the National Consultative Council and encourage that any constitutional amendments be based on consultation and inclusivity. I encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to continue to engage with all stakeholders on the proposals to reach a broad-based consensus, including through public consultations to hear and reflect the views of the Somali people.

76. It is of concern that women remain marginalized from political decision-making, including from the deliberations of the National Consultative Council. Women's voices must be heard and reflected in the country's State-building discussions and decision-making. I encourage the Somali authorities to actively promote and safeguard women's political participation and representation, including through quotas for electoral outcomes at both the federal and federal member state levels. In addition, the full and meaningful participation of minorities and other marginalized groups, including youth and persons with disabilities, in national processes should be ensured. Restrictions affecting civic space in Somalia continue to be observed. As safe and inclusive civic space is a cornerstone of the country's democratic progress. I call upon the Somali authorities to establish mechanisms that safeguard freedom of expression and association and operationalize the National Independent Human Rights Commission.

77. I welcome the conclusion of the Puntland presidential election on 8 January 2024. It is commendable that all stakeholders in Puntland sought to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue and compromise. It is vitally important that Puntland be included in national State-building discussions. I encourage continued engagement between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Puntland administration to this end.

78. I welcome the commitment expressed by the Federal Government of Somalia during the Somalia security conference, held in New York on 12 December 2023, to advance its national security transition, including the vision presented for the future development of the Somali security forces. 2024 will prove critical for the Somali security transition, with key milestones to be attained. Planning for the future of the country's security will be even more critical, and it is important that all of its partners continue to align their efforts in support of these objectives. The continued significant funding shortfall for ATMIS is alarming, and I urge partners to provide additional resources to enable the mission to deliver on its mandate. I also appeal to the international community to contribute to the trust fund in support of the Somali security forces.

79. Ongoing human rights violations and abuses against civilians in Somalia, including grave violations against children, are of concern. As Somali security institutions progressively take over security responsibilities from ATMIS, it is important that they ensure the protection of civilians in the planning and conduct of military operations. I urge the Federal Government of Somalia to promote strict adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law by all security forces and pro-government militia engaged in military operations or holding recovered areas, to investigate violations should these occur and hold perpetrators accountable.

80. The progress made to date in implementing stabilization initiatives in newly recovered and fragile areas is encouraging, but more could be done. The promotion of local governance, reconciliation and the delivery of basic services to communities remain crucial to consolidate gains made and provide opportunities to enhance governance, bolster the provision of security and strengthen livelihoods. In this regard, I encourage further support to the Federal Government's stabilization plan.

81. Recurrent climate shocks, in particular the devastating cycle of drought and flooding, exacerbate humanitarian crises and inhibit development in Somalia. While emergency assistance is critical for saving lives, and timely funding is required to make this possible, it is imperative that crises be anticipated and investments be made in long-term development solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change, address the drivers of needs and reduce reliance on humanitarian assistance. Continued efforts on climate adaptation and increased funding will help address the climate adaptation and mitigation needs for Somalia in the context of environmental degradation.

82. I wish to convey my appreciation to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the European Union, Member States, non-governmental organizations and other development partners for their sustained support and engagement in the peacebuilding and State-building processes in Somalia. I would like to pay tribute to ATMIS and the Somali security forces for their tremendous sacrifices to protect the Somali people and in the pursuit of peace and stability for the country and the wider region.

83. I thank my Special Representative, my leadership team and the staff of UNSOM, UNSOS and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Somalia. Their hard work and commitment under challenging and often dangerous conditions reflect their unshakable dedication to the Somali people. I look forward to the continued close cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the Federal Government during this complex year of transition.

