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Situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution [2540 \(2020\)](#) and paragraph 41 of resolution [2568 \(2021\)](#). It provides updates on the implementation of those resolutions, including on the mandates of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers significant developments in Somalia from 10 February to 7 May 2021.

II. Political, security and economic overview

A. Political developments

2. The political stalemate in the electoral process continued to affect the stability of Somalia. International partners intensified their efforts to assist the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states in overcoming the impasse regarding implementation of the electoral agreement of 17 September 2020. A technical committee comprising representatives of the Federal Government and the federal member states met in Baidoa, Bay Region, on 16 February and developed proposals to overcome the three contentious issues, namely the composition of the electoral management bodies, the selection of the “Somaliland” representatives and the management of elections in the Gedo Region of Jubbaland.

3. A summit between the Federal Government and the federal member states for the final validation of the proposals was initially scheduled for 18 February but was not held owing to disagreement over the agenda, participation and the venue. Following extensive efforts by international partners, the Presidents of all the federal member states arrived in Mogadishu in anticipation of a summit with the federal leadership between 9 and 18 March. While Jubbaland and Puntland desired to widen the summit agenda, the Federal Government rejected preconditions. Subsequently, the President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Farmajo”, the leaders of South-West State, Hirshabelle and Galmudug and the Governor of Banaadir met on 22 and 23 March without the participation of Jubbaland and Puntland.

4. On 27 March, facilitated by international partners, Mr. Farmajo met the leaders of all five federal member states on 3, 4 and 7 April for closed-door consultations on



the agenda of the summit. However, the meeting ended without agreement. On 7 April, the federal Minister for Information announced that the talks had broken down, accusing the Presidents of Puntland and Jubbaland of blocking them. In response, both Presidents publicly reiterated their willingness to re-engage in the talks. On 10 April, international partners urged the leaders to resume dialogue, reiterating that a parallel process, partial elections or new initiatives leading to mandate extensions would be detrimental to the stability of Somalia.

5. After the talks between the Federal Government and the federal member states broke down, the House of the People convened on 12 April and passed the Special Electoral Bill for Federal Elections, which replaced the agreement of 17 September with a one-person, one-vote electoral process, to be conducted within two years, and extended the terms of the Parliament and the President of Somalia by the same duration. The vote was held after the Police Commander of Banaadir, Sadik Omar Hassan “Sadik John”, declared the parliamentary session illegitimate and attempted to block access to the Parliament building; he was subsequently dismissed by the Federal Police Commander.

6. Mr. Farmajo signed the Special Electoral Bill into law on 13 April. On 19 April, he visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo to meet the Chair of the African Union, Félix Tshisekedi, and requested the African Union to take a leading role in facilitating a Somali-owned, Somali-led engagement process leading to elections. On 8 May, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission appointed the former President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, as his High Representative for Somalia.

7. On 20 March, a group of opposition figures, including members of the Council of Presidential Candidates, the Presidents of Puntland and Jubbaland and the Speaker of the Upper House, established the National Salvation Forum with the objective of ensuring consensus-based elections and national unity and protecting the stability and security of the country. The Forum has strongly rejected the law of 13 April and continued to call for dialogue.

8. Amid mounting political tension, fighting broke out in Mogadishu on 25 April between security forces loyal to the Federal Government and military personnel with ties to the opposition. On 26 April, the Prime Minister, Mohamed Hussein Roble, called for a ceasefire in Mogadishu and appealed for dialogue so that security could return to the city. On 27 April, Mr. Roble and the Presidents of Galmudug, Hirshabelle and South-West State made separate statements, opposing the extension of the federal mandates and calling for a return to dialogue on the basis of the agreement of 17 September.

9. On 27 April, Mr. Farmajo addressed the nation, stating that he would engage the House of the People on 1 May to “gain its endorsement” for elections based “purely” on the agreement of 17 September and the recommendations made by the technical committee at Baidoa on 16 February. On 28 April, Mr. Roble met the Presidents of Galmudug and Hirshabelle, as well as representatives of the Council of Presidential Candidates, to discuss ways to deescalate tension in Mogadishu. On 1 May, during an extraordinary session, the House of the People rescinded the Special Electoral Bill, in effect returning to the agreement of 17 September as the basis for the electoral process. In his address to the House, Mr. Farmajo entrusted responsibility for organizing the process to the Prime Minister.

10. On 2 May, the Council of Presidential Candidates welcomed Mr. Roble’s lead in implementing the electoral agreement and managing electoral security. It urged him to maintain neutrality and work to implement the electoral process as soon as possible, in a credible and transparent manner. On the same day, Mr. Roble extended invitations to the signatories of the agreement of 17 September for a consultative meeting on 20 May, after Ramadan, to overcome the electoral impasse. On 3 May, the

First Vice-President of Jubbaland, Mohamud Sayid Aden, confirmed that Jubbaland would participate in the meeting to be held on 20 May.

11. On 5 May, following consultations to resolve the security challenges related to the current political crisis, Mr. Roble and the opposition Council of Presidential Candidates reached a 10-point agreement on the disengagement of opposing armed forces and their return to their respective bases.

12. In a separate development, on 24 March, the Minister of Security of Jubbaland, Abdirashid Hassan Abdinoor “Janan”, surrendered to senior Federal Government officials in Beled Xaawo in the Gedo Region. The President of Jubbaland immediately dismissed the Minister from his state functions. It was later reported that, on 23 March, acting on the recommendation of the Attorney General, the Banaadir regional court had dropped past charges against the Minister for human rights violations, including torture, arbitrary arrest and corruption.

13. On 6 May, the Federal Government announced the resumption of diplomatic relations with Kenya, following facilitation by Qatar. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya took note of the announcement, expressing hope for “further normalization of relations with regard to trade, communication, transportation, people-to-people relations and cultural exchanges”.

B. Security developments

14. The security situation remained volatile, with a monthly average of 275 incidents recorded. Most of the incidents continue to be perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, primarily as hit-and-run attacks targeting Somali security forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and involving improvised explosive devices. The regions most affected were Banaadir, Shabelle Hoose and Shabelle Dhexe.

15. Al-Shabaab maintained the capability to infiltrate Mogadishu and carry out high-profile attacks. On 13 February, a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near Parliament in the Waberi district after the vehicle forced its way through a security checkpoint, killing three people. On 5 March, another such device targeted a restaurant popular among government officials and security forces in the Hamarjajab district. A nearby building collapsed as a result of the explosion, killing at least 10 people and injuring 30 others. On 28 April, another suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated outside the Custodial Corps headquarters in the Dharkenley district, killing 5 people and injuring 15 others. At least three vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices were intercepted by security forces in Shabelle Hoose in February, March and April, reportedly bound for Mogadishu. On 23 February, a suspected Al-Shabaab member threw what was reported to be a suicide vest near a police station in the Xamar Weyne district of Mogadishu when intercepted by security forces, injuring three people, including a police station commander. On 3 April, a person-borne improvised explosive device detonated inside a restaurant in the Shangani district, killing five civilians and injuring four others.

16. On 4 March, Al-Shabaab attacked and overran the central prison of Boosaaso, Puntland, freeing all 337 prisoners (including 10 women), of whom 140 were in jail for extremism-linked crimes. Two Custodial Corps personnel and seven Puntland Security Force soldiers were killed, while two were injured, including the prison commander.

17. Aden Adde International Airport, which hosts the United Nations, AMISOM and diplomatic missions, was targeted on 9 March and 26 March, with six mortar rounds in each attack. The mortars impacted the AMISOM force headquarters camp, injuring

two soldiers. Villa Somalia in Mogadishu was also targeted with indirect fire on 21 April, but the government building was not impacted. The main targets of attacks remained AMISOM and local security forces in Juba Hoose, Shabelle Dhexe, Hiraan, Bakool, Gedo and Mudug Regions.

18. In Shabelle Hoose, on 3 April, Al-Shabaab carried out coordinated complex attacks on Somali National Army bases in Bariirre and Awdheegle, in Afgooye district. The attacks were initiated with vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and resulted in about 20 soldiers of the Somali National Army killed and 45 injured. The attacks demonstrated the continued ability of Al-Shabaab to generate, equip and move forces undetected, despite ongoing security operations. In Bakool, an attack using a person-borne improvised explosive device near a police station in the town of Waajid on 5 March reportedly injured four people. On 10 April, an attack using another such device in a restaurant in Baidoa targeted the Governor of the Bay Region, who survived the attack. There were 5 people reportedly killed, and 11 others injured.

19. Activity by pro-Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) elements was reported in Bari Region, where Puntland forces were targeted with an improvised explosive device attack in Qandala district on 3 April. Two soldiers were reportedly killed. Security operations in the area led to clashes with pro-ISIL elements on 4 and 5 April, with unconfirmed casualties on both sides.

20. On 19 February, armed clashes between the security forces loyal to opposition presidential candidates and government forces in the Bondhere district, as well as during protests held in Wadajir district near Aden Adde International Airport, led to at least three civilian casualties. A projectile landing inside the airport, and the subsequent explosion, resulted in a fire and damage to shops near the airport commercial terminal, with no casualties reported.

21. On 25 April, further armed clashes between government and opposition-aligned security forces occurred in various districts in Mogadishu, leading to population displacement. The clashes started after opposition-aligned forces moved to the capital from Shabelle Dhexe and took positions in various areas. On 5 May, the Federal Government and the opposition reached a disengagement agreement.

C. Economic developments

22. On the basis of trends during the reporting period, it is projected that the economy will recover modestly from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, with estimated growth in terms of gross domestic product of 2.9 per cent for 2021. However, a spike in COVID-19 infections, the political situation or another wave of the locust infestation could impede the recovery. Following the economic downturn in 2020 and the projected modest recovery in 2021, the percentage of people in Somalia living below the poverty line is expected to increase to 71 per cent of the total population in 2021.

23. Declining domestic revenue and reduced budget support from international partners owing to the political crisis has led to a monthly deficit of \$6 million to \$7 million in the 2021 federal budget since February, posing serious challenges to the implementation of the budget.

24. The financial sector has shown stability in bank deposits and recorded increases in official remittances, although it is estimated that informal inflows have declined. Efforts to leverage mobile money to deepen financial sector intermediation continued. On 27 February, the Central Bank of Somalia announced that the country's first mobile money licence would be awarded to Hormuud Telecom, which could

contribute to formalizing the digital payments system in Somalia with a view to integration into the global financial system.

25. A second joint survey, in January, by the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, in cooperation with the federal Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, assessed that the impact of the pandemic had eased compared with July 2020, although market activities were still below 2020 levels. Some 68 per cent of small and medium-sized enterprises considered access to credit to be constrained. The survey was conducted across five cities (Baidoa, Beledweyne, Boosaaso, Kismaayo and Mogadishu), among over 500 small and medium-sized enterprises with five or more employees.

III. Support for peacebuilding and State-building efforts

A. Support for strengthening federalism

Preparations for elections

26. The United Nations continued to assess the plans and operational requirements of the Federal Elections Implementation Team and the Electoral Dispute Resolution Committee. This assessment was aimed at ensuring coherence between current electoral planning and the electoral budget developed in January 2021.

27. The National Electoral Security Task Force secretariat has established a regular, technical-level coordination mechanism to ensure momentum on preparations for electoral security. The Integrated Electoral Support Group, UNSOS and UNSOM police, together with AMISOM and the Folke Bernadotte Academy of Sweden, continue to plan for the establishment of 12 joint operations centres in all federal member states and Banaadir, with full-scale resumption of support expected following a political agreement on electoral implementation.

Deepening federalism

28. Building on the inter-ministerial working sessions on functional assignments convened in December 2020 by the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, Puntland, Jubbaland and Galmudug shared with the Federal Government their perspectives with regard to the allocation of power and the distribution of resources among the Federal Government, the federal member states and district administrations. The exercise was aimed at informing the ongoing constitutional review process and developing policy options for equitable functional assignments between the Federal Government and the federal member states. Hirshabelle and South-West State are expected to conduct the same exercise in the second quarter of 2021.

29. The Peacebuilding Fund continued to assist the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, in particular by funding the Supporting Reconciliation and State-building Processes project, which supported efforts directed at maintaining constructive dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states, including the summit meetings held in Dhuusamarreeb in February and in Mogadishu in April 2021.

Constitutional review

30. Owing to the political impasse and the presidential decree of December 2020 to defer the constitutional review process to the next session of Parliament, there was no tangible progress on the matter. However, in March, the Ministry of Constitutional

Affairs, the Oversight Committee and the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission prepared comprehensive handover reports for the new executive and Parliament. The reports provide a full account of all the consultations held to date, list necessary technical amendments and outline the constitutional articles that require further political consideration.

Prevention and resolution of conflicts

31. On 13 February, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation facilitated a preliminary ceasefire agreement between the Ayr and Saleeban sub-clans in Hananbure, Galgaduud Region. On 10 March, talks between the two sub-clans were held in Dhuusamarreeb to address the root causes of the conflict. On 12 April, the Ministry, with the support of the United Nations, held an initial coordination meeting on reconciliation and stabilization to improve information-sharing among stakeholders and harmonize responses in order to prevent conflicts and build lasting peace. Effective coordination with federal counterparts, international partners and Galmudug ministries was identified as an important step for regional reconciliation.

32. The dispute between Hawadle clan members and the newly elected Hirshabelle administration remained unresolved. In meetings with Hawadle clan representatives and other stakeholders held in Beledweyne from 24 to 26 February, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation called for the formation of a committee to resolve inter- and intra-clan differences in the Hiraan Region, but the proposal did not receive widespread support. Separately, efforts by the Hirshabelle administration to address the land dispute between the Hawadle and Reer Aw Xassan clans was opposed by Hawadle elders, who challenged the authority of the administration to resolve the dispute with the Somali region of Ethiopia. On 5 May, in the Baladu Nur, Dabaan and Harcadeey areas, on the outskirts of Beledweyne, there were clashes between the Jejele and Makane clans over agricultural farmland, after which the areas were taken over by the 27th Division of the Somali National Army.

B. Cross-cutting issues

Gender equality and the empowerment of women

33. During the reporting period, UNSOM, along with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), continued to advocate meeting the minimum quota of 30 per cent for the participation of women in the forthcoming elections, engaging with civil society organizations and women leaders.

34. On 16 February, my Special Representative met with 15 women representatives of Leadnow, a women's movement advocating the political representation and participation of women in peace and political processes. Women leaders urged the United Nations and international partners to maintain pressure on federal and state leaders to resolve the electoral impasse peacefully and increase the role and representation of women in political processes.

35. On 19 February, following violent clashes in Mogadishu, over 70 women leaders of Leadnow expressed their concerns and condemned the violence. On 24 and 26 March, in press conferences, women leaders from across the country called on federal and state leaders to peacefully resolve their differences for the sake of the country.

36. On 8 March, International Women's Day was celebrated across Somalia with the theme "Women in leadership: achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world".

The United Nations provided support to government and civil society partners through pooled resources operationalized by the United Nations Theme Group on Gender. Activities included awareness-raising on gender equality, the 30 per cent quota for the political participation of women, the role of women in leadership, peace and security and the COVID-19 pandemic. Personal protective equipment was distributed to internally displaced persons, including women and girls.

Youth empowerment

37. To promote the participation of young people in the electoral process, the United Nations, with support from partners, trained 34 young political aspirants from different political parties to strengthen the capacity of young candidates and overcome barriers to the participation of young people in electoral processes.

38. Through the Dalbile Youth Initiative, led by the United Nations Population Fund, 225 young people participated in entrepreneurship boot camps in Kismaayo and Mogadishu, with start-up funds granted for 24 business concepts. The initiative provides support to young entrepreneurs who would otherwise not qualify for loans from credit facilities. In addition, dialogues on the participation of young people in decision-making were held in Mogadishu, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Dhuusamarreeb.

39. From 14 to 18 February, the United Nations Children's Fund UPSHIFT innovative livelihoods programme organized training for 50 young people, including 5 from minority clans. A total of 10 business enterprise groups were formed and are developing business plans. The UPSHIFT initiative supports children in conflict with the law, returnees, young people at risk of migration, survivors of gender-based violence and children associated with armed actors.

40. Through the MOST (Management of Social Transformation) initiative, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization organized reflection sessions on Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on youth and peace and security, targeting young researchers and policymakers from States members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). A policy paper on youth and peace and security in the Horn of Africa is being developed as an outcome.

C. Development coordination

41. To promote implementation of the cross-cutting priorities of the national development plan of Somalia related to the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus, a high-level Triple-Nexus Steering Committee was launched during the reporting period to provide a platform for joined-up approaches. The committee will engage Somali and international decision makers to advance issues that require additional support, in order to ensure that short-term nexus task forces have a clearly defined and achievable purpose.

42. The task force on the environment, comprising United Nations agencies, continued to meet monthly to coordinate contributions to the Environmental Management Act and the national environment action plan and to enhance international coordination on the environment. Work commenced on piloting innovative mediation approaches to the relevant conflicts in Hirshabelle. The United Nations set up a working group on the environment and climate change on 6 May, in the Somalia aid architecture, and also established local task forces on flooding and water management, leveraging the peace-development nexus approach. The United Nations Environmental Adviser to Somalia has also contributed to the new site planning for displaced populations, leading to a more environmentally sustainable site in Luglow, near Kismaayo.

43. On 18 March, the United Nations anti-corruption task force approved the concept note of a programme aligned with the five priorities of the national anti-corruption strategy of the Federal Government: (a) harnessing political will and engagement; (b) strengthening the integrity, independence and capacity of key institutions; (c) following the money and protecting the public purse; (d) building a merit-based professional and inclusive civil service; and (e) creating a society that rejects corruption.

44. On 28 March, with technical and financial support from the United Nations, the national durable solutions strategy was endorsed by the Federal Government to ensure government leadership, operational guidance and clear objectives towards durable solutions for the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and donor partners. The working group on durable solutions agreed on its priorities for 2021, which include advocating an extended moratorium on forced evictions and linking durable solutions programming to inclusive local development processes.

IV. Human rights and protection

Human rights

45. UNSOM recorded 260 civilian casualties (116 killed and 144 injured) during the reporting period, compared with 200 killed and 163 injured during the previous reporting period. Al-Shabaab remained the single largest perpetrator of civilian casualties in Somalia, responsible for 177 casualties (68 per cent), followed by unknown actors (33 casualties, or 13 per cent), state security forces (27 casualties, or 10 per cent), clan militias (17 casualties, or 7 per cent) and AMISOM (6 casualties, or 2 per cent).

46. Al-Shabaab executed 12 male civilians for alleged espionage during the reporting period. On 20 February, the group attacked and set fire to civilian houses and vehicles in villages in Shabelle Hoose, apparently in retaliation for the burning by the Galjel clan of commercial trucks heading to Baidoa, in early January.

47. Somali authorities arbitrarily arrested and detained 49 individuals: 18 suspected Al-Shabaab members, nine clan elders, nine politicians, six businesspersons, five journalists and two religious leaders. In addition, at the intervention of clan elders and senior state officials, 52 individuals, including 25 alleged clan militia members held in detention since 17 November 2020 on suspicion of involvement in the killing of a female civilian and her two children and injuring another woman and a five-year-old child in Warshikh district, Shabelle Dhexe, were released without charges. A total of 15 death sentences were issued by courts in Puntland (13 Al-Shabaab members) and South-West State (one civilian and one police officer) during the reporting period. On 14 April, security forces publicly executed a National Intelligence and Security Agency officer after he was found guilty by the military court of first instance of killing a male civilian from the Hawadle clan on 8 April in Beledweyne.

48. UNSOM documented the killing of a prominent journalist in the town of Gaalkacyo, Puntland, on 1 March, by two unidentified men. In Mogadishu, on 4 March, soldiers of the Somali National Army allegedly assaulted a radio journalist in Hodan district and confiscated his equipment. UNSOM also recorded the arbitrary arrest and detention of five journalists, including three arrested in Puntland following their reporting on a speech made by the President of Puntland on 21 February regarding the federal election. The other two journalists were arrested in Mogadishu on 25 April for their coverage of the armed confrontations between security forces. All were subsequently released without charges. In addition, a journalist detained since 27 December in Puntland was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for

public incitement on social media and, on 17 March, the military appeal court increased the sentence to three years. The President of Puntland pardoned the journalist on 22 March.

Compliance with the human rights due diligence policy

49. Pursuant to Security Council resolutions [2520 \(2020\)](#) and [2568 \(2021\)](#) mandating UNSOS to provide support for an additional 3,000 members of the Somali security forces, and within the framework of the human rights due diligence policy, UNSOM concluded a risk assessment for an additional 1,000 officers of the Somali Police Force. In February, it also conducted a risk assessment for an additional 2,000 members of the Somali National Army. Both risk assessments provided an update to the general and preliminary risk assessments for the Army and the Police Force conducted in 2016 and 2017. My Special Representative communicated relevant mitigation measures to the Federal Government on 2 and 11 March, and UNSOM and UNSOS are working closely with the Federal Government on their implementation.

Children in armed conflict

50. As at 7 May, the country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children had verified 460 grave violations against 449 children (339 boys and 110 girls), including four attacks against schools, one against a hospital and six cases of denial of humanitarian access. A total of 192 children were abducted, 216 recruited and used and 104 killed or maimed, and 61 girls were subjected to rape or other forms of sexual violence. A total of 281 violations were attributed to Al-Shabaab (61 per cent), 72 to federal and state armed forces (16 per cent), 77 to unknown armed elements (17 per cent) and 30 to clan militias (7 per cent). During the same period, 14 incidents of detention affecting 26 boys and one girl were documented and verified. Cases were also attributed to the Somali Police Force (12), the Somali National Army (5), the Galmudug police (4), Jubbaland forces (3) and the Jubbaland police and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (1 each).

51. As part of the implementation of the children and armed conflict mandate, UNSOM, jointly with the Ministry of Defence child protection unit, conducted a series of awareness-raising activities on child rights and child protection through radio and television in Banaadir, from 7 to 12 February, to commemorate International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers and deter the recruitment and use of children by Somali security forces and armed groups.

V. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

52. UNSOM has recorded cases of conflict-related sexual violence committed by security forces. It has also documented a case of obstruction of investigations into sexual and gender-based violence cases by authorities in Puntland. On 31 March, a Puntland Police Force officer allegedly raped a woman in Boosaaso. The Puntland police opened an investigation against the perpetrator, but no arrest has been made.

53. In a case illustrative of the challenges faced by women working on women's protection issues and the prevention of sexual violence, on 23 March, the Head of the Sexual and Gender-based Violence and Child Protection Unit in Garoowe was physically assaulted and beaten by four police officers, including the commander of Garoowe central police station. The female officer was reviewing the sexual violence cases registered at the police station, and the commander reportedly accused her of interference. A male police officer was also assaulted for trying to assist her. The alleged perpetrators were arrested and released the same day, and the investigation into the incident has been suspended. The Police Commissioner of the Nugaal Region

has also reportedly prevented the female officer from further investigating rape cases and prohibited her from visiting police stations in Garoowe.

54. In a related case, on 24 March, a female journalist was detained at Garoowe central police station on the orders of the Police Commissioner of the Nugaal Region after she followed up on the assault described in paragraph 53 and wrote a post on social media criticizing the Puntland police force for its handling of rape cases in Garoowe. She was released without charges on the same day following an intervention by the Office of the Puntland Human Rights Defender and the Puntland media.

55. On 21 March, the Somali National Army executed one of its soldiers by firing squad in Beledxaawo, Gedo Region, after the military court found him guilty of raping and killing a 17-year-old girl on 15 November 2020.

Humanitarian situation

56. Erratic weather conditions, political instability and food insecurity contributed to the worsening of the humanitarian situation during the reporting period. In February, water shortages and pockets of drought-like conditions were reported in “Somaliland”, Puntland, Galmudug, Hirshabelle and Jubbaland. On 25 April, the Federal Government, in consultation with the United Nations, declared a drought. More than 80 per cent of the country is currently experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions. While *gu* rains have started in parts of the country, projections indicate below-normal precipitation. Over 116,000 people have been displaced by severe water shortages and drought conditions since October 2020.

57. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia mobilized \$13.3 million from the Somalia Humanitarian Fund and up to \$27 million from two Central Emergency Response Fund allocations to facilitate rapid response efforts and activate the anticipatory action framework for populations hardest hit by the water shortage crisis in all key areas. Humanitarian access remained challenging, in particular in key locations such as Ceel Waaq in Jubbaland, where the population is hardest hit by water shortages.

58. The vulnerability of populations already at risk increased as a result of both climatic conditions and political instability. Assessments conducted in the areas affected by water shortages indicated the increased exposure of women and children to female genital mutilation, sexual violence, harassment and abuse, given the difficulty in terms of access to water points and poor protection. Political instability has further exacerbated protection concerns. Recent conflict and violence have displaced 250,000 people in Banaadir, Bardaale and Badweyn, including 200,000 displaced around Mogadishu since 15 April. This is in addition to the almost 61,000 people who were newly displaced in February and March owing to conflict and insecurity.

59. Poor weather patterns are expected to continue owing to La Niña conditions and a second consecutive season of below-average rainfall, with a below-average *gu* rainfall season forecast from April to June. There was an increasingly widespread food security crisis (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification phase 3), which was expected to last until September 2021. The impact of the drought on livelihoods will be exacerbated by the ongoing desert locust infestation, which is forecast to continue spreading following reports of newly formed immature swarms breeding in northern parts of the country. Control operations by aerial and ground teams continued in the first quarter of the year, bringing the total area treated in Somalia since 2020 to 209,419 ha.

60. Without sustained humanitarian assistance, an estimated 2.7 million people are projected to be at risk of crisis or emergency levels of food insecurity by mid-June, including approximately 839,000 children under five who are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition.

61. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases spiked in the first quarter of 2021. From 16 March 2020 to 7 May 2021, more than 11,504 cases have been confirmed in Somalia, including 537 associated deaths. On 15 March 2021, the country received its first batch of 300,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine under the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access programme, and the vaccination campaign is being rolled out across the country with a view to vaccinating 20 per cent of the population (3.5 million people). As at 29 April, 121,700 people had been vaccinated. Additional resources are urgently needed to cover the rest of the population.

62. The 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia was launched on 15 February, calling for \$1.09 billion to meet the needs of 5.9 million people. Despite increasing needs, funding levels are alarmingly low: as at 6 May, they were at \$207.6 million (19 per cent of the total needed). Timely and proportionate funding is urgently required to address the shocks confronting Somalia.

VI. Comprehensive approach to security

A. Implementation of the transition plan

63. Following publication of the Somali transition plan in February 2021, the Somali National Army and AMISOM, supported by the United Nations and international partners, started to develop a plan to meet the operational objectives of the plan.

64. In February, the Ministry of Defence requested a review of the priorities for closures of forward operating bases. In line with the transition plan and the reconfiguration of AMISOM, in March the AMISOM Force Commander and the Chief of the Defence Force of the Somali National Army jointly visited the sectors to harmonize the handover of pre-identified AMISOM forward operating bases. Of seven bases, one has been closed and another handed over to the Somali security forces: the Mashaalay base was closed on 24 January and the Afgooye base was successfully handed over to the Army on 24 March. A joint agreement between the Chief of the Defence Force and AMISOM with regard to the future reconfiguration of forces was also reached at a joint meeting held on 14 and 15 April.

65. Further to Security Council resolution [2568 \(2021\)](#), the Federal Government of Somalia informed the President of the Security Council, by letter dated 30 April, that it had indeed endorsed the transition plan at a meeting of the Security and Justice Committee chaired by the Prime Minister on 1 December.

B. Operations

66. Preliminary planning for operations to secure the main supply routes as part of Operation Badbaado has commenced and is expected to be a key part of future discussions on the transition plan. Military operations in Shabelle Hoose continued to consolidate gains and set the foundations for future operations. However, the limited progress in force and resource generation could delay meeting the targets in 2021.

67. The planned deployment of 525 trained federal Darwish police to support Operation Badbaado faced technical delays. This had an impact on the donation of

equipment and vehicles by the European Union. In response, the Joint Police Programme suspended support until the trained Darwish are deployed.

68. The Mine Action Service supported AMISOM and Somali security forces in improvised explosive device threat mitigation by providing seven threat analysis reports, two studies on vulnerable points along supply routes and one report on improvised explosive device awareness.

69. To curb the spread of COVID-19 in the justice sector, on 4 March the Chief Justice of the Federal Government suspended until further notice all court proceedings in civil matters, as well as prison visits.

C. Institutional capacity-building

70. On 10 February, the “Somaliland” Custodial Corps concluded a four-week training programme on prison management for 15 officers (13 men and two women). On 12 February, the Joint Justice Programme steering committee, comprising the Federal Government, the United Nations, the European Union and the Netherlands, endorsed the workplan for January to April 2021, which is focused on service delivery, including support for mobile courts, legal aid and alternative dispute resolution centres.

71. On 23 March, a technical-level meeting of the working group on strand 2C on the rule of law of the comprehensive approach to security was held, led by the Director General of the federal Ministry of Justice, with the European Union and the Netherlands as co-chairs. Discussions were focused on the development of the justice sector strategic plan. The Ministry of Justice is consulting the federal Supreme Court, the federal Office of the Attorney General and federal member states to finalize the strategic plan by May 2021. Technical sub-working groups, including on alternative dispute resolution and corrections and rehabilitation, were established.

72. UNSOM supported the Office of the Special Envoy of the President for the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden to reactivate the National Maritime Coordination Committee to advance maritime governance and blue economy objectives, and delivered training on international maritime conventions together with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in the Office of Legal Affairs, between 19 and 28 April.

73. On 31 March, the executive board of the Joint Police Programme approved a 20 per cent reduction in Programme-funded stipends for equipped and deployed federal member state police officers, and a 50 per cent reduction in stipends for federal member state police officers who were recruited and trained but have yet to be equipped and deployed. The reductions will take effect on 1 July. The revised request by Galmudug to train 700 state police officers was also approved to help to re-establish the Galmudug state police.

74. The Police Professional Development Board under strand 2B of the comprehensive approach to security, involving representatives of the Somali Police Force, the federal member state police services and international partners, supported the drafting of a Somali police training policy, which will identify further police training in Mogadishu and the federal member states.

75. UNSOM met with the Office of the Prime Minister to discuss the participation of women in the security sector to advance the women and peace and security agenda in Somalia. The Federal Government acknowledged the importance of this priority and agreed to launch a cross-ministerial initiative in this regard.

76. The joint security sector governance programme will be concluded on 30 June. The United Nations is currently developing the foundations for a new programme to support dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states on security and civilian oversight of the federated security model.

D. Supporting activities

77. The Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, together with federal member state counterparts, continued to implement the national stabilization strategy in connection with Operation Badbaado in Shabelle Hoose. Furthermore, community recovery and reconciliation initiatives in the area supported by international partners installed solar street lights in Jannaale, rehabilitated the Jannaale-Bufoow road, made pre-*gu* season repairs to flood defences, provided sports activities for local young people and completed a new police station and clinic in Awdheegle.

78. A coordination meeting on strand 4 of the comprehensive approach to security was held on 22 March. The CAS Strand 4 terms of reference were amended to reflect the new aid architecture adopted during the Somali Partnership Forum in December 2020. The coordination unit on preventing and countering violent extremism within the Office of the Prime Minister presented a six-step plan for revising the national dialogue and tolerance strategy to be achieved in 2021. The Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund announced that the first grant of \$2 million for community resilience in Gedo had been assigned.

79. UNSOM worked with international partners to keep rehabilitation centres for low-risk former Al-Shabaab fighters COVID-19-free and open to prospective beneficiaries. As at 6 May, there were 361 male and 203 female beneficiaries in the centres. Since 1 January, 42 men and 69 women have been rehabilitated and reintegrated within host communities.

80. The Mine Action Service delivered 2,204 in-person explosive ordnance risk education sessions to 2,042 women, 1,735 men, 2,592 girls and 2,068 boys most at risk from explosive ordnance across Somalia (except in Juba Dhexe). Sessions were also delivered remotely in hard-to-reach areas, using 1,215 solar-powered devices with pre-recorded audio risk messages.

VII. United Nations Support Office in Somalia assistance for the African Union Mission in Somalia and Somali security forces

A. Support for African Union Mission in Somalia operations

81. In February, the letter of assist for the deployment of three Kenyan military helicopters was extended for a further year, until 14 December 2021. Unfortunately, a helicopter from the Ugandan military aviation unit was severely damaged in an accident on 5 February in which several crew members were injured. Investigations into the accident are ongoing, and Uganda is in the process of replacing the helicopter.

82. AMISOM requested the repatriation of the eight items of oversized contingent-owned equipment of the Ghanaian formed police unit that could not be transported from Mogadishu to Baidoa. This is expected to be completed by the end of June. UNSOS provided appropriate alternatives from its fleet to enable the unit to operate effectively.

83. The forward operating base wellness programme continues in most sectors but was delayed owing to damaged roads and COVID-19 restrictions. UNSOS delivered 6 armoured personnel carriers each to sectors 1, 5 and 6 from the consignment of 30 carriers that have arrived for the mission enabling units. It also supported the 100 Djiboutian troops deployed to Dhuusamarreeb with the construction of a forward operating base.

84. UNSOS supported the rotation of 1,941 Kenyan troops from 16 February to 4 March, 2,428 Ugandan troops from 24 March to 17 April and 160 Nigerian formed police unit personnel on 17 April.

85. UNSOS has made progress in its environmental initiatives and has, among other things, installed 511 air conditioner timers, 364 movement sensors and 4,691 light-emitting diode lights, synchronized 14 power houses and established treated wastewater recycling systems in all the sector hubs to irrigate plants and lawns and clean vehicles. In March, UNSOS established a tree seedling nursery programme at Aden Adde International Airport, which will be rolled out to all the sector hubs for planting by United Nations personnel, AMISOM and local communities. A reforestation project in Baidoa, which began in February, is in progress, using a drone to drop seed balls. As at 30 April, the balance in the United Nations trust fund in support of AMISOM was \$2.9 million, which is enough to support the engagement of AMISOM consultants and medical welfare officers for 12 months.

86. The Mine Action Service, with assistance from UNSOS, continued to support AMISOM security operations and stabilization efforts by providing improvised explosive device threat mitigation advice, analysis, training and mentoring on the use of specialized equipment, explosive detection dogs, community liaison and explosive ordnance clearance teams. During the reporting period, the Service trained 1,207 AMISOM and African Union Police uniformed personnel to enhance their capability to locate and destroy improvised explosive devices and operate safely within the threat environment, specifically along the main supply routes. The Service contributed to the safety and security of strategic infrastructure by deploying 26 explosive detection dog teams working with 52 detection dogs to conduct searches of 23,374 pieces of luggage, 67,428 vehicles, 130 buildings, 34,300 m² of building areas and 7,378,020 m² of open areas throughout the sectors.

B. Support for Somali security force operations

87. In March, UNSOS began to deliver logistical support to the additional 3,000 Somali security forces authorized by Security Council resolution [2520 \(2020\)](#). The Head of UNSOS met with the Commissioner of the Somali Police Force, the Commander of the Somali National Army, the Director General at the Ministry of Defence, the Senior Security Adviser at the Office of the Prime Minister and the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to Somalia to discuss the support arrangements and associated accountability measures, including implementing mitigation measures of the human rights due diligence policy, for the 3,000 additional Somali security forces personnel supported. The memorandum of understanding between the United Nations and the Federal Government for the delivery of logistics support to the Somali security forces is still pending agreement by the Government.

88. As at 30 April, the balance in the United Nations trust fund in support of the Somali security forces was \$2.7 million, enough to sustain UNSOS logistics support until June 2021. To replenish the trust fund, my Special Representative, the Head of UNSOS and the Senior Security Adviser at the Office of the Prime Minister co-chaired a briefing for the international community on 2 March. This effort was

followed by another appeal to Members States in New York on 23 March by the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support.

89. The Mine Action Service, with support from UNSOS, completed improvised explosive device threat mitigation training for 5 Somali National Army teams (45 members) deployed in Shabelle Hoose and started similar training for an additional 11 Army teams (99 members), thereby strengthening the Somali security forces' capacity to assume responsibilities for security, in line with the transition plan.

VIII. United Nations presence in Somalia

90. United Nations entities continued to be present in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Berbera, Boosasso, Dhooble, Dhuusamarreeb, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu. As at 5 May, 388 international staff and 1,299 national staff were deployed throughout Somalia.

91. The United Nations in Somalia continues to implement its COVID-19 response strategy, including support for United Nations and AMISOM personnel and operations through the local vaccine deployment plan. The vaccination of persons at high risk has begun. Adequate medical capacity has been established to support a population at risk in excess of 25,000, which includes the United Nations, its third-party contractors in Somalia and AMISOM.

IX. Observations

92. The recent turn of events in Somalia is a source of grave concern. Despite several rounds of consultations among a broad range of actors, Somali leaders have failed to agree on the modalities for the implementation of the electoral agreement of 17 September. As a result, the security situation in Mogadishu has rapidly deteriorated and fractures have appeared within the Somali security forces.

93. The action taken in the House of the People on 12 April created a new rift and threatened to exacerbate the political divide and create instability in the country. It is regretful that this action was taken contrary to clear positions of the United Nations, the African Union, IGAD, the European Union and many bilateral partners of Somalia, who have consistently cautioned against unilateral action and emphasized the need for dialogue to reach a consensus-based agreement. However, it is encouraging that, at the request of Mr. Farmajo, on 1 May the House of the People reversed its earlier decision and restored the agreement of 17 September.

94. The agreement of 17 September remains the basis on which stakeholder consensus can be built and the most viable path towards holding credible elections in a timely manner. It is therefore essential that the leaders of Somalia demonstrate leadership by placing the country's interests above their own and urgently re-engage in dialogue to achieve the consensus necessary for holding credible, inclusive and consensus-based elections without further delay and on the basis of the electoral agreement of 17 September and the recommendations made by the technical committee at Baidoa on 16 February. I also reiterate that the threat or use of violence is unacceptable and urge all actors to exercise maximum restraint. All efforts should be made to secure the minimum quota of 30 per cent for the representation of women in the electoral process.

95. The ongoing political crisis is diverting attention and resources away from the development, humanitarian, rule of law and security priorities of Somalia and seriously threatens to reverse the gains achieved over the course of the past decade. Cooperation between the Federal Government and federal member states, as well as

the holding of agreed-upon elections as soon as possible, is critical to allow further pursuit of the many pressing tasks towards building sustainable peace in Somalia. Dialogue and broad consensus remain imperative and the only viable way forward to overcome the challenges that the country faces.

96. Recurrent and systematic attacks by Al-Shabaab on civilians, government officials, security forces, AMISOM and the international community remain of utmost concern. Al-Shabaab has demonstrated its continued capability and intent to exploit any political impasse to intensify its attacks. I strongly condemn these attacks and extend my deep condolences to the victims' families. I am gravely concerned about the civilian casualties and appeal to the Federal Government to intensify its efforts to safeguard civilians and hold the perpetrators accountable.

97. The high number of cases of conflict-related sexual violence, which disproportionately affects girls, remains alarming. It is important that the Federal Government takes steps to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence by enacting the original Sexual Offences Bill of 2018 and holding perpetrators of sexual violence accountable. It is also important that "Somaliland" authorities support the Rape and Sexual Offences Act of 2018 and reject the regressive Rape, Fornication and Other Sexual Offences Bill of 2020, which contravenes established regional and international human rights standards.

98. Regarding the ending of impunity, efforts to reform the judiciary, strengthen the rule of law and fight against corruption are welcome. The allocation of sufficient financial resources to the judiciary is fundamental to advancing these processes. It is crucial that the Federal Government as well as the federal member states promote and safeguard the independence of the judiciary in order to increase public confidence in governmental institutions.

99. I commend the ongoing response of the Somali authorities and health-care workers to the COVID-19 pandemic at both the federal and state levels. In future, Somalia will require the continued strong support of the international community to overcome the pandemic, including for the vaccination of its citizens. I would like to thank all partners involved in the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access initiative for their support for the vaccine roll-out in Somalia and appeal to international partners to work towards further vaccine donations to ensure sufficient provisions for the country's vaccination campaign.

100. With regard to the humanitarian situation, it is of grave concern that most parts of the country are facing critical water shortages, with more than 50 districts facing moderate to severe drought conditions. Forecasts indicate a second consecutive season of below-average rainfall during the April-to-June *gu* season, and the Humanitarian Response Plan for Somalia is currently only 19 per cent funded. While cognizant of current global economic conditions in the light of the pandemic-related recession, I call upon international partners to provide the funding necessary to save lives, alleviate suffering and prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Somalia.

101. The recent revision of the Somali transition plan as Somalia aims to take the lead in providing security is a welcome development. It is crucial that the Federal Government redoubles its efforts to develop predictable and sustainable modalities to generate the capabilities of the Somali security forces and civilians, which are critical for successful implementation. The acceleration of transition-related operations and the integration of existing forces into Somali National Army and state police services are key elements to maintain current gains and achieve further progress under the national security architecture towards achieving the goals outlined in the transition plan.

102. The generous support of all donors for the United Nations trust funds for AMISOM and the Somali security forces is welcome. It is, however, concerning that the trust fund in support of the Somali security forces will be depleted at the end of May. This will severely affect United Nations logistical support for the Somali forces and compromise implementation of the Somali transition plan. While recognizing that the current political impasse is a cause for significant concern to the country's donors and partners, it is essential that Member States continue their support for the trust fund to ensure the effective implementation of the transition plan.

103. The recent announcements by Somalia and Kenya of efforts to restore diplomatic relations, following facilitation by Qatar, are an encouraging development. I hope that the announcements will lead to a full restoration of friendly relations between Kenya and Somalia, which are crucial to the stability of and cooperation in the region.

104. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the African Union, IGAD, the European Union, Member States, non-governmental organizations and other partners for their steadfast and coordinated support and engagement in Somalia. It is also important to pay tribute to the brave personnel of AMISOM, the Somali National Army and the Somali police. Their sacrifices to protect the Somali people and support the country on its path towards peace, stability and prosperity will not be forgotten.

105. I would like to conclude by expressing my deep appreciation to my Special Representative, James Swan, and the United Nations staff in Somalia for their firm dedication in implementing the mandate of the Organization in Somalia under very challenging circumstances.



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