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STATEMENT BY HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR FOR SOMALIA ADAM ABDELMOULA ON THE DROUGHT

Deputy Special Representative, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Adam Abdelmoula, addressed the Spokesperson's noon briefing at UN Headquarters in New York on 7 June. Below is the transcript of his remarks:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am speaking to you today because Somalia is on the brink of a devastating and widespread hunger and mass starvation that could claim hundreds of thousands of lives. Since the beginning of the year, the drought emergency in Somalia has worsened dramatically and today, we are looking at a looming disaster.

The situation is grim. Four consecutive rainy seasons have failed, creating the worst drought

in Somalia in at least four decades. At the same time, food prices have soared, and humanitarian assistance remains out of reach for millions of Somalis, as resources to meet their needs remain limited. In our analysis, the drought has so far affected seven million people, displacing over 805,000 from their homes.

Recently, some areas received moderate, scattered rains but these were not enough to alleviate the severe drought conditions. There is now a concrete risk that the next rainy season could also be below average, which would mark an unprecedented fifth consecutive failed rainy season.

Should these forecasts materialize, the situation will worsen further until mid-2023, at the earliest. Already, eight areas in Somalia are at increased risk of famine, particularly in the south of the country; in regions where insecurity and conflict make humanitarian access extremely challenging.

As we speak today, 7.1 million Somalis - close to 50 percent of the population - are facing crisis-level food insecurity or worse through at least September; of these 213,000 people will face catastrophic hunger and starvation,

representing a 160 percent increase since April.

Women, children and the elderly have been particularly hard hit, constituting 82 percent of all people displaced by drought since January. An estimated 1.5 million children under the age of 5 years face acute malnutrition, including 386,400 who are likely to be severely malnourished - an increase of 55,000 compared to previous estimates.

The malnutrition crisis is likely to worsen as the nutrition situation deteriorates further in the affected areas and access to people in need remains difficult for humanitarian agencies.

The drought has not spared livestock, a major source of livelihood for Somali families. Since mid-2021, around 3 million heads of livestock have died due to drought. And as expected, the decline in meat and milk production has aggravated the malnutrition situation, particularly among young children in pastoral areas.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Somalia is certainly heading toward a famine, if action is not taken now.

Somali families are increasingly unable to cope with the high food prices as local food

has become scarce. Moreover, imported food prices have also reached record levels – in part because of supply chain impacts due to the crisis in Ukraine. In some parts of the country, food prices have risen by 140 to 160 percent, leaving poor families hungry and destitute.

At the same time, the drought has caused a health emergency, as disease outbreaks continue spiking. Since January, over 4,880 suspected cases of acute watery diarrhoea/ cholera have been reported - half of these

“It is not too late to avert the looming famine; lives and livelihoods can still be saved. But we need to act immediately.”

among children under the age of 2. At least 8,700 suspected measles cases (82 per cent children under age 5) have been also reported.

We know that severely malnourished children are nine times more likely to die of diseases, such as acute watery diarrhoea/ cholera and measles. The latest data shows that mortality rates are reaching high levels in some areas, especially in southern and central Somalia – and that indicates that loss of life is already occurring. We are hearing on the ground that people are losing loved ones, especially children and the elderly.

It is painful that the drought is devastating the lives and livelihoods of people whose coping capacities, livelihoods and assets were already

eroded by decades of conflict and insecurity, rising food prices and shortages, climatic shocks, disease outbreaks, desert locust infestations and the COVID-19 pandemic.

That is why, as the humanitarian focus on saving lives and averting famine, the international community must also invest in sustainable livelihoods, resilience, infrastructure development, climate adaptation and durable solutions to ensure those affected by crises can survive in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is not too late to avert the looming famine; lives and livelihoods can still be saved. But we need to act immediately.

Utilizing available resources, humanitarian agencies reached 2.8 million people between January and April 2022 with lifesaving and livelihood assistance through drought assistance and famine prevention programmes. I thank the donors and partners for their contributions so far.

The humanitarian community and national and local authorities have scaled up their activities, reorienting responses towards famine prevention and targeting the most vulnerable people in areas of highest need. These interventions by humanitarian partners have so far prevented the worst outcomes but cannot cope with the rising levels of needs. The available resources are woefully low. Our Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022 is just 18 per cent funded.

The reality is simply that the scale of assistance currently being delivered and funding from the international community is not sufficient to sustain those most at risk. Partners have shifted to famine prevention activities but are directing limited resources only to the people and areas where the needs

are greatest, focusing on saving the lives most at risk.

Ladies and Gentlemen, join me in beating the drum so that the world can understand the gravity of the crisis in Somalia. I am calling on the international community to act fast while we still have some hope of preventing widespread famine and deaths. With additional resources, we can reach many more people. Without additional resources, more people will die.

“I am calling on the international community to act fast while we still have some hope of preventing widespread famine and deaths.”

We cannot wait for a formal declaration of famine to act at scale – by then, it will be too late. We have been there before; in 2011, severe drought resulted in a famine that killed a quarter of a million people, partly because we were slow to act. We must not allow that to happen again.

Today, hundreds of thousands of lives are at risk, again. I particularly urge donors and partners to urgently frontload pledges and rapidly scale up assistance to the people of Somalia. We must act right now to avert a humanitarian catastrophe.

Thank you.





UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE BRIEFS SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON SOMALIA

The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, briefed the Security Council at its meeting on Somalia on 23 May. Below is the transcript of his remarks:

(As delivered, New York/Mogadishu)

Madam President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief on the situation in Somalia. I am pleased to do so once again along with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira.

Madam President,

The conclusion of Somalia's electoral process last week is a major milestone for the country. The Presidential contest followed an unduly protracted and contentious process to choose members of the legislature. Once the Senators and Members of Parliament were sworn in on 14 April 2022, however, they moved

quickly to elect the Speaker and two Deputy Speakers in each chamber of parliament and then prepare for the Presidential vote. On 15 May 2022, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, was elected Somalia's tenth president by a decisive margin in a joint session of parliament that was peaceful, orderly, and respectful of the rules of procedure. Outgoing President Mohamed Abdillahi Mohamed Farmajo graciously conceded, and congratulated and extended support to his successor. The new President was immediately sworn in and the outcome has been fully accepted.

As this Council has noted repeatedly, Madame President, it is past time for Somali leaders to move beyond the prolonged political contest to focus on urgent national priorities. I had the honour on 18 May, to hear directly from President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud about his immediate goals. He emphasized national reconciliation, improving relations between the central government and federal member states, addressing the security threat from Al-Shabaab, finishing the constitutional review and judicial reforms, completing election-related laws, ensuring compliance with International Financial Institutions' requirements for debt relief, and giving urgent attention to the dire drought conditions. We believe this is an appropriate list of initial priorities and look forward to learning more details as the new leadership takes charge

and as a new Prime Minister and cabinet are named in the coming weeks. The entire UN system in Somalia is ready to work with the new Government in support of these shared goals.

Madam President,

While we welcome the end of the elections and look forward to progress on other issues, we must be clear-eyed about the shortcomings of the earlier stages of the process. Contrary to Somalia's Provisional Constitution, the Somali people did not have the opportunity to vote for the House of the People in a 'one-person, one-vote' election. Women were elected to just 21 per cent of parliamentary seats – well short of the 30 per cent goal set by Somalis themselves. Many irregularities in the selection of MPs were noted throughout the process. And it was repeatedly marred by tragic incidents of violence with numerous civilian casualties recorded. We call on Somalia's leaders to do better for their people in the next electoral cycle. The UN stands ready to support such efforts.

Madam President,

Somalia's security situation remains highly volatile. Emboldened by domestic political tensions, Al-Shabaab in recent months maintained its modus operandi and focused attacks in Mogadishu, South West State and Hirshabelle. The spate of deadly incidents in

March and April suggested an effort to disrupt the final phases of the electoral process.

I commend the courage and tenacity of Somali security forces and African Union Transition Mission in Somalia forces who safeguarded the electoral process and bore the brunt of Al-Shabaab's deadly attacks then and after. I want to extend special condolences for the losses suffered as a result of the 3 May 2022 complex attack by Al-Shabaab on the ATMIS Forward Operating Base in Ceel Baraf, Middle Shabelle.

Since the formal transition from AMISOM to ATMIS on 1 April, as per Council resolution 2628, both Somali and AU security officials have been heavily focused on electoral security. The UN has taken steps at the technical level to engage both the Federal Government of Somalia and ATMIS on the way forward on implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan and the ATMIS mandate. Now that the election is over, it will be important to reinvigorate structures previously agreed by the Security and Justice Committee to support coordination, prioritize force generation and integration, mobilize resources, and build capacity of the Somali security forces. I call on the new administration to demonstrate its full political commitment and leadership in delivering the agreed security transition.

The UN Support Office for Somalia (UNSOS) continues to provide support under its mandate to ATMIS forces, and has established and staffed a transition cell to ensure it is well postured to meet the needs of the new AU mission. UNSOS also continues to support Somali forces under the terms of its mandate, albeit at reduced levels due to the depletion of the Somali Security Forces Trust Fund. While thanking those who have generously offered support, we call on partners to make further contributions to the Trust Fund. We would also welcome more clarity on plans to fund future ATMIS requirements that are not currently covered.

Madam President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia is worsening following the failure of a fourth consecutive rainy season. The number of people affected by the drought has risen to 6.1 million. The country faces a heightened risk of localized famine in six communities if food prices continue to rise and humanitarian assistance is not sustained.

Humanitarians have scaled up their activities, prioritizing the most vulnerable populations and focussing on famine prevention. Yet, almost half-way through the year, the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan is just 15 per cent funded against its total appeal for \$1.45 billion. We call for additional urgent contributions.

On 26 April, a high-level donor roundtable in Geneva focused attention on humanitarian needs across the Horn of Africa, including Somalia. We are grateful to donors for the pledges and commitments. However, without immediate receipt of funding to expand humanitarian operations, we face the prospect of significant loss of life in the period ahead. Even as we focus now on saving lives and averting famine, there is also a need to increase resilience, development, and climate responses so that those affected by recurring crises can adapt and thrive in the future.

Madam President,

In all of the UN system's activities in Somalia, we are guided by the principles of respect for human rights, and of full inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups. We continue to rigorously apply the Human Rights Due

We call on Somali leaders to work together in a spirit of collaboration and national purpose.

Diligence Policy and ensure both advocacy and technical support for protection of human rights. The UN and the Government have begun implementation of the flagship Women, Peace and Protection programme, funded by the Peacebuilding Fund. This programme promotes women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes and protection of women and girls from sexual violence in conflict. On the youth front, the UN continues to integrate youth dimensions in electoral participation, mediation, and civilian oversight of the security sector.

Madam President,

In closing, let me stress that the conclusion of the electoral process on 15 May offers a long-awaited opportunity for Somalia to make progress on other urgent national priorities. We call on Somali leaders to work together in a spirit of collaboration and national purpose. We call on Somalia's international friends and partners, including those on this Council, to offer constructive support and encouragement. Let us work together to capitalize on this moment of opportunity for Somalia.

Thank you.

[Read the Report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on the Situation in Somalia here.](#)

ON WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY, UN EMPHASIZES VITAL ROLE OF SOMALI MEDIA



On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, the United Nations in Somalia emphasizes the vital role that the country's media play in Somali society and the need to ensure their ability to carry out their work safely and freely.

"Somalia's media are a key component for the growth of democracy, and they need to be able to go about their work free from threats, intimidation and harm so they can carry out their important work," said the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan.

Journalists in Somalia remain under physical threat in many areas. Since May last year, one journalist has been killed and two others injured. Moreover, 64 journalists and media workers have been arrested while carrying out their work.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed World Press Freedom Day in 1993, with 3 May designated for the observance to mark the anniversary of the Windhoek Declaration, a landmark statement on the link between the freedom to seek, impart and receive information and the public good. The Day acts as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom, as well as celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, assess the state of press freedom throughout the world, defend the media from attacks on their independence, and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.



UN CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT HASSAN SHEIKH MOHAMUD ON INAUGURATION

The United Nations in Somalia congratulated President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his inauguration, and said it looks forward to working with his administration in support of achieving national priorities.

The inauguration ceremony for Somalia's tenth president was held in the venue known as 'the hangar' in the Aden Adde International Airport area of the capital, Mogadishu.

The event was attended by various regional leaders and representatives of the country's international partners. Some of the visiting dignitaries spoke at the event – they included Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta, Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed; South Sudan's Vice President

Taban Deng Gai, and Egypt's Prime Minister Mostafa Kamal Madbouly, among others.

Countries represented at the inauguration included the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uganda, Burundi and Turkey. Representing the world body was Adam Abdelmoula, Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia.

In his remarks at the event, President Mohamud covered various topics, including peace and reconciliation efforts in Somalia, with the latter involving efforts to ensure respect for people's rights, good relations with Somalia's Federal Member States, a democratic system of governance and a just and fair judicial system. Protecting the environment and strengthening the country's economy were also featured.

On the regional and global front, President Mohamud spoke about the need for cooperation to improve security in the

Horn of Africa region, and enhanced trade and economic collaboration.

The worsening drought in Somalia was also highlighted. President Mohamud appealed to all Somalis and the international community to work together to help the millions of affected Somalis.

Earlier this week, UN humanitarian agencies warned that a historic fourth consecutive failed rainy season in Somalia, along with skyrocketing prices and an underfunded humanitarian response have resulted in a 160 per cent increase in the number of people facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity, starvation and disease around the country.

They went on to say that with no end in sight for the devastating drought affecting the country, the risk of famine looms larger than ever, and an urgent increase in support from the international community is essential to avert famine. Some 7.1 million Somalis – close to 50 per cent of the population – currently face crisis-level food insecurity or worse through at least September 2022.





AWEYS HAJI NUR

HELPING SOMALI BOYS TODAY

BECOME TOMORROW'S SOMALI FOOTBALL STARS

Like so many other boys around the world, when Aweys Haji Nur was young, he dreamed of becoming a professional footballer.



However, the time was not right – he was born in 1984, which meant that his adolescence coincided with the civil war which broke out in 1991 and devastated so much of Somalia over the next 30 years.

So Mr. Nur shelved his dreams of fame and glory on the football pitch, and pursued a livelihood in another field.

Born and raised in Mogadishu, Mr. Nur attended Tadamun Primary and Second-



ary School, and continued his secondary education at Usama Bin Zeyd High School. He went on to tertiary studies, completing a bachelor's degree in Political Science and Information at Mogadishu University in 2013.

He followed this up with a Master's in International Business Administration at Amity University, in India, through distance education, from 2014 to 2017. He then went on to a successful career as a senior journalist and news director for well-known Somali media houses such as Horn-Afrik and Mustaqbal Media, among others. He is currently the director of Goobjoog TV.

Football dreams

But, despite his achievements in the media sector, his football dream never quite left him.

In his spare time, he avidly followed football as a pastime and, occasionally, volunteered to coach local boys in Mogadishu who aspired to be football players.

"Whenever I saw boys playing in front of

my house, I saw myself as a child and it made me sad. We still don't have enough opportunities for children to enable them to pursue their dreams – I saw how they could have achieved their dreams if they had had someone to help them," says Mr. Nur, a father of seven.

"I think Somali children are less fortunate than children in other parts of the world because they don't have a secure, serene environment to develop their football skills," he adds.

Looking into options, he noted that there was no formal system for football talent development for youngsters in Somalia – and no one seemed to be interested in introducing one, especially given the country's focus on rebuilding after decades of conflict.

Tired of waiting and unable to completely shed his passion for the 'beautiful game,' Mr. Nur took matters in his own hands.

In 2018, he opened the ITAAL Football Academy, a training centre for youngsters with aspirations like Mr. Nur once had.

"I founded ITAAL Academy to fulfil children's dreams," he says, proudly.

The academy's first two trainees were two of Mr. Nur's sons. Currently, there are 30 boys enrolled in the academy. Located in Mogadishu's Wadajir district and consisting of a playground and a small office, it caters to children under eleven years of age, with enrolment determined not only



by the physical fitness and aptitude of a candidate but also by their enthusiasm for the game.

The academy charges no fees. Mr. Nur uses his own money to fund the academy's day-to-day operations, and he occasionally receives assistance from friends who share his passion for football and desire to help Somali youth.

Mr. Nur is not just focussed on the administration side of the academy; he also takes to the field as one of its trainers. To this end, he earned his certification as a youth football coach from the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) in 2021.

Since its inception five years ago, ITAAL Football Academy teams have attended four competitions recognised by the Somali Football Federation (SFF) – three of which they won. The academy players also participated in the FIFA Grassroots Tournament in Mogadishu in October 2021.

Football links

In order to have options for talented young players who can go on to develop their potential, Mr. Nur established links with Somali football authorities and some clubs in Somalia and abroad.

"We have good relations with the Somali Football Federation, and we also have good relations with football clubs inside and outside the country, such as Sweden's Som United, and Somalia's Premier League clubs Wahol, Elman, and Mogadishu City," he says.

The Somali Football Federation has nothing but praise for Mr. Nur's efforts, describing them as a key step in developing the country's football scene.

"The Somali Football Federation sees Aweys' effort as a young man preparing young players who we believe will benefit the country and form the backbone of football development... I believe his efforts will improve Somali football," says the SFF's Technical Director, Awil Ismail Mohamed.

"We encourage him to continue this brilliant work," Mr. Mohamed continues. "There is an existing partnership between us and Aweys, and the Federation unconditionally supports people like Aweys in his volunteering to support Somali children in desperate need of reliable sports training."

Parents of trainees at the ITAAL Football Academy agree.

"I see this opportunity as both fun and education because there are few such





places where children develop their skills during school vacations... this has helped my kids avoid playing on the streets where they used to be more in danger or going to distant places where it is difficult to keep an eye on them, and I believe this is an opportunity we have had and I recommend that it be expanded," says Sultana Mohamed, a mother of two boys enrolled at the academy.

Growing reputation

Mr. Nur says the reputation that the ITAAL Football Academy enjoys has grown since its inception.

"Parents are constantly contacting me and requesting that their child be enrolled at the academy, which makes me happy," he notes.

But despite the growing acclaim and recognition, ensuring the academy's viability is no easy feat and, despite support from some quarters, it remains a testament to Mr. Nur's commitment and passion.

"At the moment, I have no one to support me. I spend part of my salary on football, and there are individuals or clubs that

sometimes donate balls or sporting gear," Mr. Nur says.

"We have limited options for training spaces. We do not have access to independent stadiums to train for hours, and so we have to rent them," he continues. "We do not have much money; we rent only for a few hours, and that is not enough. Also, since they are children, when getting to and from the stadiums, we have to transport them by bus, and we have to pay for that too."

Mr. Nur is hopeful about obtaining further support for the academy. In the meantime, he says he remains a footballer at heart, and is committed to helping develop today's young Somalis into tomorrow's footballing heroes.

Parents are constantly contacting me and requesting that their child be enrolled at the academy, which makes me happy.

"I expect that the football profession in Somalia will change immensely," he says. "The ITAAL Football Academy will produce excellent players who can compete, and it will ensure that every Somali child has a suitable place to train to be the next football star."

Sport has the power to align our passion, energy and enthusiasm around a collective cause. And that is precisely when hope can be nurtured and trust can be regained.

UN and sports

The United Nations has long recognised the power of sport to play a positive role in the world, with it being a fundamental right and a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and promote sustainable development and peace, as well as solidarity and respect for all.

In light of its impact, in 2013, the UN General Assembly declared 6 April as the annual International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP) to recognise the positive impact which sport and physical activity play in communities and in people's lives across the globe.

"Sport has the power to align our passion, energy and enthusiasm around a collective cause. And that is precisely when hope can be nurtured and trust can be regained. It is in our collective interest to harness the tremendous power of sport to help build a better and more sustainable future for all," the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed, said on this year's observance of IDSDP.





PROGRESS, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS HIGHLIGHTED BY UN INDEPENDENT HUMAN RIGHTS EXPERT

The human rights situation in Somalia came under the spotlight during the first visit of the United Nations Independent Expert.

Isha Dyfan highlighted progress and challenges as well as called for more international support for human rights in Somalia when she visited the country in April.

"I urge the international community not to relent in its support, at this last stage, when stability is increasingly becoming a reality in Somalia," [the Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in Somalia](#), Isha Dyfan, said at a press conference in the capital, Mogadishu, during which she shared some preliminary observations and recommendations on some key issues.

"I call upon the international community to continue its assistance to Somalia towards strengthening the Federal and Federal Member State institutions, in particular the security and justice institutions as well as the health system," she added, "and addressing the adverse impact of climate change on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights, by ensuring access to basic social services including drinking water, sanitation facilities, housing, health care education for all children, in particular the girl child."

The Independent Expert was speaking at the end of a week-long visit to Somalia. It was her first since being appointed in May 2020 by the UN Human Rights Council to the post, which involves assessing, monitoring and reporting on the situation of human rights in the Horn of Africa country, with a view to making recommendations on technical assistance and capacity-building.

The travel restrictions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic had prevented her visiting earlier.

"In light of this and the ongoing electoral process, I chose to focus my first visit on economic, social and cultural rights, as they relate to the benchmarks and indicators of my second report to the UN Human Rights Council," Ms. Dyfan said.

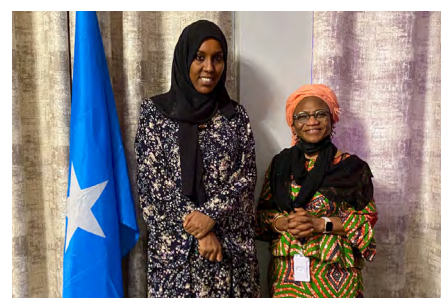
While in Mogadishu, the Independent Expert met with the federal Minister of Women and Human Rights Development, Hanifa Mohamed Ibrahim, and the federal Minister of Justice, Hassan Hussein Haji, as well as representatives of humanitarian organizations and civil society, and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and UN agencies, funds and programmes.

She also visited the city of Baidoa, in the Federal Member State of South West State, where she met with its President Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed 'Laftagareen' and other senior officials, and civil society representatives.

Humanitarian needs

In her remarks to the media, the Independent Expert noted how the issues of insecurity, conflict and recurring drought due to climate change continue to increase the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in Somalia, as well as severe food and water shortages.

"To this end, the Federal Government and humanitarian partners are implementing the Emergency Response and Preparedness Plan of 2021 and pre-positioning food items, water and non-food items to support the IDP populations in Baidoa and other areas in the country," Ms. Dyfan noted.





Health needs

The Independent Expert flagged how access to healthcare remains dangerously low in the country. She cited the example of Mogadishu having only one government hospital and people often having to seek healthcare services at private health facilities and pay high amounts out of their own pockets for medical treatment.

“As a result, only a few people can afford these services, thereby leading to high child and maternal mortality. I therefore urge the Government to expand the delivery of public health services, in light of the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, and increase funding for its health system,” the Independent Expert said.

She also called on the authorities to advance efforts to eliminate child, early and forced marriage and to protect the rights of girls in vulnerable positions, as such marriages contribute to an extraordinarily high population growth and result in negative health consequences.

Justice needs

Ms. Dyfan flagged how the treatment and conditions in Somalia’s prisons fall below international standards and capital punishment remains a legal penalty. She urged the Federal Government to put a halt on all executions and to introduce a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its abolition.

“Despite the enormity of these challenges,” she added, “the Government has strengthened its normative and institutional frameworks to address the promotion and protection of human rights, including in the area of rule of law and administration of justice.”

In this respect, the Independent Expert also highlighted the country’s alternative dispute resolution centres. These have been established to handle small civil

cases – including family issues, land and property rights – with a view to addressing the gaps in the justice sector and improving citizens’ access to justice.

“The alternative dispute resolution model, funded by international partners, complements the judicial process and is credited with resolving large number of cases, by applying Islamic and customary laws,” Ms. Dyfan said.

Electoral needs

Somalia’s ongoing parliamentary elections were also flagged in the Independent Expert’s remarks. She emphasized that women’s political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality and genuine democracy.

“However, from the discussions, I was informed that the 30 per cent minimum quota for women’s representation during the ongoing electoral process is not being met, suggesting that more work needs to be done now towards the next election,” Ms. Dyfan said, in addition to calling on the Federal Government to ensure that the quota for women’s participation is achieved in the remaining seats.

“I also urge the Government to ensure diversity and inclusion, which focuses on equal treatment and equal opportunity for marginalized and minority groups,” she added.

Media needs

Somalia’s media sector also featured at the press conference, with the Independent Expert noting that the right to freedom of expression and opinion is essential to any functioning democracy. In this vein, she noted concerns about arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists by security personnel across the country.

“I wish to reiterate the importance of respecting the right to freedom of

expression and opinion. I recommend that laws and policies, whose ambiguity have been used to criminalize journalists for their legitimate work, are revised with a view to bringing their content and execution in compliance with the principle of legality and other international human rights standards,” Ms. Dyfan said.

She added that she was encouraged by the launch of a legal aid unit by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to provide legal protection for journalists. The programme focuses on ensuring lawyers are equipped with the tools needed to promote fundamental rights related to media freedom, based on international and regional legal standards.

Independent Experts

Ms. Dyfan said she will elaborate on her preliminary observations and recommendations in a comprehensive report to the UN Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly later this year.

Independent Experts like Ms. Dyfan are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the UN Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council’s independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. Special Procedures’ experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. They are independent from any government or organization and serve in their individual capacity.



[Read her press statement here.](#)



UNSOM POLICE SURPASSES THE GENDER PARITY TARGETS FOR 2028

Achieving gender parity in the United Nations staff remains an organisational imperative.

In response to the United Nations Secretary-General's call for accelerated action to advance gender parity, the Police Division has reinforced its efforts in this regard as well as implemented several new initiatives. For instance, since the passage of Security Council resolution 2242, which called for doubling the number of women serving in police contingents, United Nations Police (UNPOL) has seen a more than twofold increase in women members of Formed Police Units (FPUs), from 6% in 2015 to 14.4% in 2022, surpassing the target of 12% set out in the [United Nations Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy 2018-2028](#).

The UNPOL component in the [UN Assistance Mission in Somalia \(UNSOM\)](#) has taken meaningful steps to give effect to the initiatives of the Police Division to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation.

Working with Mission administration and leadership, the UNSOM Police Section has achieved its gender parity goals by creating a truly enabling environment, including:

- implementing actions to prevent sexual and other harassment within the Police Section;
- creating a network to empower women police officers, including uniformed personnel serving with AMISOM (African Union Mission in Somalia) and EUCAP (European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia);
- co-locating at least two women uniformed officers in Mission team sites where possible;

- improving camp accommodation conditions to better meet the needs of women;
- carrying out mandatory staff engagement surveys with concrete and timely follow-up on the findings.

The progress began in 2018-2019 when the percentage of women in the UNSOM Police Section was consistently around 30%. It has since increased to 36% in 2020, 46% in 2021 and now stands at 64% in 2022. Real action, real results!

[More about UNPOL Gender Toolkit here.](#)



Contact: UNSOM Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Group (SCPAG) | unsom-pio@un.org