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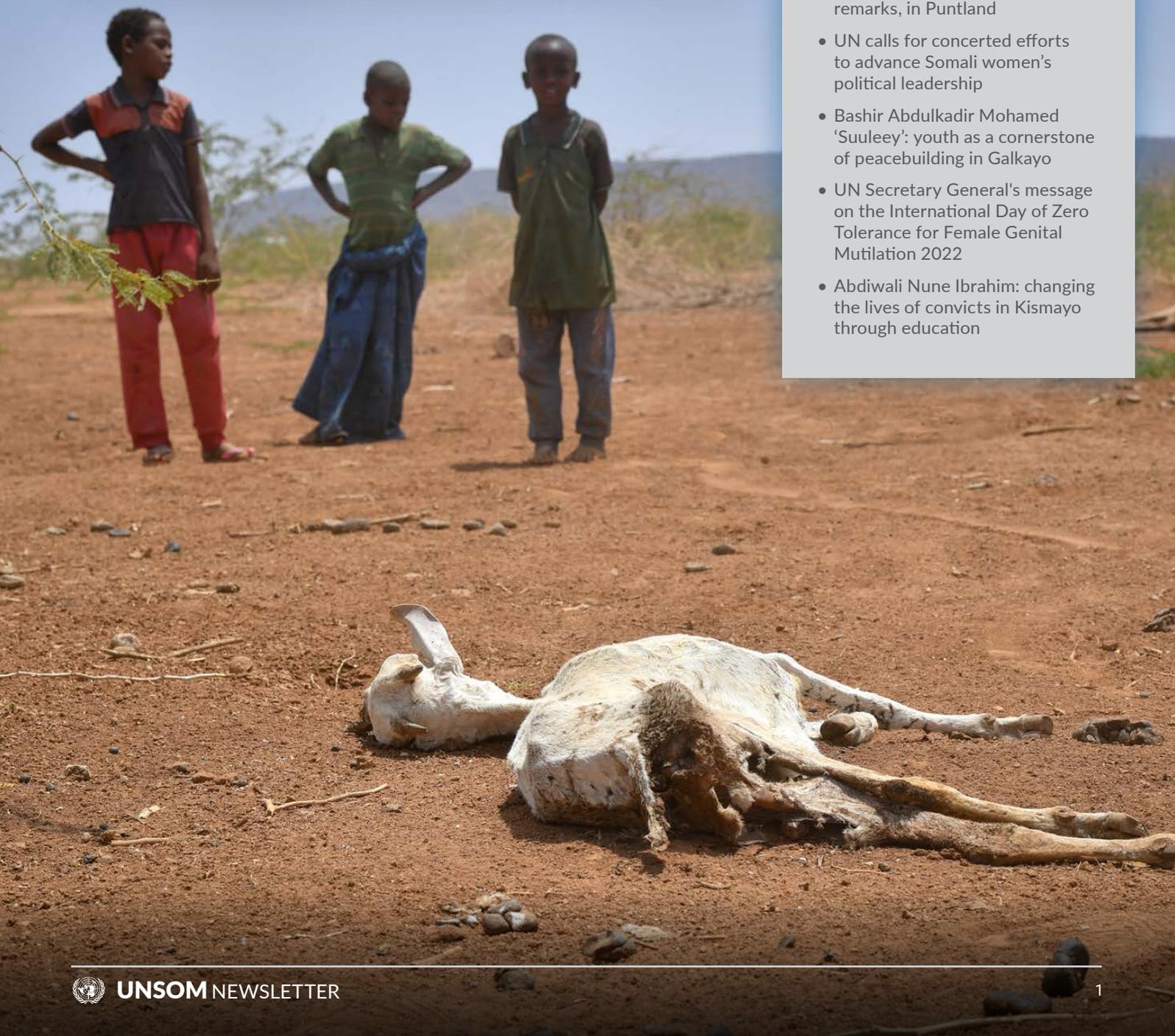
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UN: AS IMPACT OF DROUGHT WORSENS, GROWING RISK OF FAMINE IN SOMALIA

HIGHLIGHTS

- UN: As impact of drought worsens, growing risk of famine in Somalia
- UN Special Representative briefs Security Council meeting on Somalia
- International partners call for completion of parliamentary process and impartial elections
- UN Deputy Special Representative's media remarks, in Puntland
- UN calls for concerted efforts to advance Somali women's political leadership
- Bashir Abdulkadir Mohamed 'Suuleey': youth as a cornerstone of peacebuilding in Galkayo
- UN Secretary General's message on the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation 2022
- Abdiwali Nune Ibrahim: changing the lives of convicts in Kismayo through education



UN: AS IMPACT OF DROUGHT WORSENS, GROWING RISK OF FAMINE IN SOMALIA



Standing in front of his makeshift home in a camp for internally displaced people (IDP) in southern Somalia's Luuq district, Ahmad Hassan Yarrow looks out towards what remains of the Juba River and shakes his head forlornly.

“Of all the droughts I have experienced in my 70 years, I have not seen anything as severe as this,” he says as he contemplates the scenery before him.

Mr. Yarrow is one of hundreds of thousands of Somalis displaced by the country's most recent and worsening drought, leaving their homes in the search for food, water and shelter.

The Luuq district, located in the Federal Member State of Jubaland's Gedo region,

is intersected by the Juba River. For more than three months now, the river's waters have steadily dwindled, leaving only brown puddles.

As the waters evaporated, so did the hopes of local communities – made up mainly of farmers and pastoralists – which rely on the river for their livelihoods. Under a searing sun, their crops wilted and their livestock died, and, like many other Somalis around the country, the communities came a step closer to starvation.

“We lost everything in the drought,” says Salado Madeer Mursaal, a 28-year-old mother of one, who has also sought help at the IDP camp. “We need food, shelter, water and other basic human needs.”

‘Risk of famine’

With decades of conflict, recurrent climate shocks and disease outbreaks, including the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the humanitarian situation in Somalia was already grave. Even before the current drought, an estimated 7.7 million Somalis were in need of humanitarian assistance and protection this year – up 30 per cent from one year.

The situation has deteriorated, with the current drought wiping out crop harvests and livestock dying due to a lack of water and pasture, depriving many pastoral communities of their only source of income.

“The country has seen three consecutive failed rainy seasons. The fourth, which is supposed to start in April and continue through June, is also projected to be below average. If that happens, then we are looking at a risk of famine,” says the Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Adam Abdelmoula.

While the United Nations and its implementing partners have been heavily engaged in providing humanitarian support. In February, they collectively reached 1.6 million people with assistance, but, with



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Somalia's federal authorities, they are calling for more funds to provide urgent humanitarian assistance.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Somalia is currently one of the most severely drought-impacted country in the Horn of Africa. Some 4.5 million Somalis are directly affected by the drought, and about 700,000 people have been displaced.

Children are in an especially vulnerable position.

"As we speak now, 1.4 million children under five years of age are severely malnourished, and if we don't step up our intervention, it is projected that 350,000 of them will perish by the summer of this year. The situation cannot be more dire than that," says Mr. Abdelmoula, who also serves as the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia and the UN Resident Coordinator.

"So I call on all those who are able to contribute, including the Somali diaspora, the business community, the traditional and non-traditional donors, everyone, to act and to act now," he adds.

In the 2022 Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan, the United Nations seeks nearly \$1.5 billion to provide humanitarian assistance to 5.5 million of the country's most vulnerable people, including 1.6 million IDPs, 3.9 million non-IDPs, and people with disabilities.

However, just about four per cent – \$56.1 million – has been received so far.

Seeking safety and shelter

In Luuq's camps, there is a palpable mix of relief and resignation among the displaced.

After walking for several days, Fatuma Madeer Mursaal and her family arrived at the Boyle IDP camp in Luuq. There, they joined the more than 4,000 people seeking aid.

"We are farmers and we also had our livestock but all animals died in the drought. We have nothing left and we have come here for water, food, shelter and help," says Ms. Mursaal, a 39-year-old mother of six.

The Boyle IDP camp is one of several camps which have sprung up around the country as desperate people move to locations where they hope they can access help.

"It's serious, and one of the biggest tragedies Somalia is facing today. The displaced communities have no shelter, water, medicine, or even food, and they depend on handouts. The drought has wiped out everything, and if the survivors don't get urgent humanitarian assistance, they are likely to also die," says the Luuq district's local administrator, Commissioner Ali Kadiye Mohamed.

UN humanitarian agencies are working closely with implementing partners on the ground to alleviate the situation.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been trucking water into camps such as the Boyle IDP camp, as well as constructing water tanks and pit latrines to help improve sanitation conditions.

At the Luuq District Hospital, funded in part by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN agency is working with an Irish charity agency, Trocaire, to treat, feed and stabilize children admitted with severe malnutrition. Local staff say they have seen a worsening of the situation

"In January, 62 malnourished children were admitted here. In February, the number rose to 100, and as of 21 March, the number stands at 114," said the hospital's chief nurse, Abdirahman Mohamed Kasim.

"As soon as these children get to the hospital," he continues, "we give them milk for primary and secondary stages of malnutrition, and, after their recovery, we transfer them to other feeding centres

where they receive high energy biscuits and treatments for any further illnesses."

Elsewhere in Luuq, the UN World Food Programme (WFP), which is implementing cash and food voucher programmes for vulnerable groups in Somalia, is providing preventative and curative nutrition support to women and children. The humanitarian food agency is scaling up its interventions, aiming to support 2.5 million people with food relief in the first half of this year, but – like so many other UN agencies – it can only do so if it receives more funding; in this instance, some \$203 million to close a funding gap.

For Mr. Yarrow, looking out from his home in the IDP camp in Luuq, the issues of funding of the country's humanitarian response are remote, academic issues, far from his concerns. His needs, and those of the many other displaced Somalis facing starvation, are more immediate.



"This drought has wiped out everything we had," he says. "We are relieved to be here at this IDP camp where we are getting assistance but there are too many of us, and we are struggling. The food, water and shelter are not enough. There are many women, the old and children who are malnourished and sick, but have no medicine. We are doing our best to survive, but we need help."





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 in February. Below is the transcript of his remarks:

Madame President, Distinguished Members of the Council,

Thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in Somalia. I am pleased to do so again together with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Francisco Madeira. This underscores the important partnership between the AU and the United Nations in Somalia, and I once again commend AMISOM and Somali forces for their contributions to improving security in Somalia.

Madame President,

National elections in Somalia are now more than one year behind the constitutionally prescribed schedule. Since I last briefed this Council three months ago, the Upper House elections have concluded and the pace of the House of the People elections has progressed considerably following the January National Consultative Council. The Federal Electoral Implementation Team has

signalled its intent to fill at least two-thirds of the House of the People seats in the coming weeks. Thus far, 130 of 275 seats have been elected, with an additional 60 seats announced for competition shortly. I call on the electoral management bodies, as well as Somalia's political leaders, to accelerate and quickly conclude the elections for the House of the People.

Twenty-eight women have so far been elected to the House of the People, or approximately 22 per cent. This falls well short of the 30 per cent women's quota Somalia's political leaders have committed to achieving for the two houses of Parliament. I urge all Somali actors to redouble their efforts to meet this target.

Thanks to the generous contributions of member states, the United Nations continues to provide technical, material and advisory support to the election management bodies, the Office of the Prime Minister, the National Consultative Council (NCC) and the women's Goodwill Ambassadors. As we continue to receive reports of alleged irregularities in the electoral process, I urge key actors to course-correct to improve the process whenever necessary. This is vital to ensure that the elections receive broad acceptance among the Somali public.

In addition to the support we provide to electoral institutions, the United Nations continues to coordinate with international partners, ensuring joint messaging. Together with our partners, we have consistently called for a timely and credible electoral process that will enable the next government to focus on advancing Somalia's broader national

priorities, including security challenges, as well as the state-building and development agenda.

Madame President,

While political tensions among some Somali leaders continue to flare up sporadically, they have so far been contained and so have not derailed the electoral process. The risk remains, however, that a miscalculation could cause these tensions to spill over into conflict.

The United Nations has consistently sought to help Somalis reduce this risk, by directly engaging all parties and calling on them to address their political differences through dialogue. Together with our partners, we continue to advocate for restraint, compromise, and pragmatic consensus-based solutions so that Somali leaders remain focused on completing the elections.

Madame President,

Al-Shabaab continues to pose the major security threat in Somalia. Political divisions and prolonged delays in the elections have allowed insurgent forces to make some recent gains. The group's *modus operandi* remains unchanged, with Banadir region and South West State the centre of its attacks. In recent months, operations have also intensified in Hirshabelle and Galmudug states as Al-Shabaab has sought to exploit local political and security tensions. We continue to see extensive use of improvised explosive devices, including a series of Person-Born IEDs and Vehicle-Born IEDs in Mogadishu in recent weeks.

With the future configuration of the African

Union Mission in Somalia currently under review, the United Nations is actively engaged in discussions among the Federal Government of Somalia, the African Union and key donors. Progress was made during technical discussions held in Mogadishu from 27 January to 9 February. This included developing the joint African Union-Federal Government of Somalia concept of operations for a reconfigured mission, the joint African Union-United Nations proposal on a reconfigured mission, and the United Nations logistical options in support of a reconfigured mission and the Somalia Security Forces going forward, as requested under Resolution 2568.

Progress in the implementation of the Somali Transition Plan is key both for the reconfiguration of AMISOM and to determine the pace of the transfer of responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security forces. We encourage the Federal Government of Somalia to convene the next Somalia Transition Plan Steering Committee meeting soon to advance this priority in collaboration with security partners.

Madame President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains extremely dire, with 7.7 million Somalis requiring humanitarian assistance in 2022. Somalia is the most severely drought affected country in the Horn of Africa, with 4.3 million people impacted and more than 270,000 people newly displaced due to drought. With the next rains in April likely to be the fourth below-average cycle, Somalia is facing a potential humanitarian catastrophe.

While the Somalia humanitarian operation

has the know-how to deliver life-saving aid to people in need, it requires adequate resources. Unfortunately, the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2022 is currently only two per cent funded. While I wish to express profound appreciation to the donor community for its continued commitment to Somalia, I once more call on donors to increase their support for urgent assistance to the most vulnerable Somali people.

While critical, any humanitarian response is not a long-term solution. The United Nations family is therefore taking action to

Somalia is the most severely drought affected country in the Horn of Africa, with 4.3 million people impacted and more than 270,000 people newly displaced due to drought.

strengthen the humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding nexus. To this end, Somali-based Agencies, Funds and Programmes continue to pursue a joint approach to address challenges such as water management, durable solutions, fraud and corruption.

Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as inclusion of

youth remains central to our work. With support from the Peacebuilding Fund, the UN and the Government of Somalia jointly launched a new Women, Peace and Protection programme in November. This project aims to promote women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding processes, particularly within decision-making and leadership roles. This is an investment enabling us to implement the Women, Peace and Security agenda at the federal and sub-national levels as well as to improve critical areas such as protection of women and girls from sexual violence in conflict. On the youth front, the UN continues to support the Somali government to integrate youth dimensions to different areas, from electoral participation to local reconciliation and more.

Madame President,

While political, security and humanitarian conditions in Somalia are still fragile, I remain guardedly hopeful that the country will make further progress in these areas in the coming months and beyond.

This requires Somali leaders to put their differences aside for the good of the Somali people and to conclude credible elections as soon as possible. This overdue step will then allow leaders to refocus their efforts on the full range of urgent national priorities. To this end, the international community continues to accompany the Somali people on this journey by providing the necessary support.

Thank you.

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



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS CALL FOR COMPLETION OF PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS AND IMPARTIAL ELECTION OF SPEAKERS AND PRESIDENT

In a joint statement issued in March, international partners* noted that more than 80 per cent of the House of the People seats were completed as of the deadline of 15 March set by the National Consultative Council.

"We strongly urge all Somali stakeholders to resolve any obstacles to completion of the process in the remaining voting sites through dialogue and on a consensus basis, so as to rapidly and credibly conclude the elections. We, therefore, call upon all political leaders to avoid approaches, including a parallel process, that are not based on an agreement among the key actors," they said.

"We reiterate that efforts must be

redoubled to achieve the 30 per cent quota for women's representation in parliament," they added.

In the statement, the partners also urged Somali leaders to announce preparations for the elections venue and pledge their commitment to respect Somalia's constitutional provisions regarding a fair and impartial process to elect the Speakers of the two Houses of parliament and the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

*African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, European Union (EU), Finland, France, Germany, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sudan, Sweden, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States and United Nations.



MEDIA REMARKS OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR SOMALIA IN PUNTLAND

The UN Deputy Special Representative in Somalia, Anita Kiki Gbeho, and international partners, traveled to Garowe, the capital of the Federal Member State of Puntland, in northern Somalia, in March for meetings with the leadership and other stakeholders to discuss the drought, elections and 30 per cent women quota. Below is the transcript of her remarks to the media:

"Good afternoon, Mr. President, representatives of the Puntland State and the media.

Thank you, President Said Abdullahi Deni and your team, for the warm welcome that you have extended to us today as the AU/IGAD/EU and UN. It is a pleasure to be back in Garowe, on one of our regular visits to

Federal Member States; and as part of our collective effort to support Somalia on its path to greater stability.

I am accompanied by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Ambassador Francisco Madeira; the Deputy Representative, Ms. Fiona Lortan; the European Union Ambassador to Somalia, Ambassador Tiina Intelmann; and by a representative of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Special Mission to Somalia, Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Abdi.

In our meeting today with President Deni and his cabinet we discussed issues of local and national concern, with a particular focus on the current elections.

We spoke about the effects of the drought on the people of Somalia and about strengthening our coordinated response.

We spoke about the urgency of moving to the next stage of elections and the actions required to do so. We welcomed the progress made in Puntland towards the completion of the House of the People elections by the deadline of 15 March. So far Puntland has elected 31 out of 37 seats of which 5 are women.

Again, we underlined the fundamental importance of inclusivity of the process. We

applauded the vibrant advocacy efforts in Puntland towards achieving the minimum quota of 30 per cent women's representation in these elections. However, we noted with concern that achievement of this objective is in doubt. We, therefore, urge that ongoing efforts be redoubled to ensure more women's representation in the Federal Parliament.

As we approach the 15 March deadline, it is important to conclude elections for all House of the People seats at the earliest. I therefore urge stakeholders to work together constructively and expeditiously, while ensuring political space for all, so that the electoral process can be completed by the agreed deadline.

I thank President Deni, his Government, and the people of Puntland for their warm welcome during our visit. Thank you."





ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, UN CALLS FOR CONCERTED EFFORTS TO ADVANCE SOMALI WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

On the occasion of International Women's Day, on 8 March, the United Nations in Somalia congratulated Somali women for their tireless efforts and immense contributions to promoting peace, political stability and development in the country.

"Somali women have shown bravery, resilience and unwavering resolve to ensure gender equality and full participation of women in all spheres of life," said the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative

for Somalia, James Swan, said in a statement.

"I commend Somali women's active role and advocacy in the ongoing federal electoral process to achieve the minimum 30 per cent quota for women. Women's representation can change the political landscape in Somalia, making it more inclusive and pluralist," he added.

The theme of this year's International Women's Day was 'Gender Equality Today For a Sustainable Tomorrow.' As Somalia prepares for a new government, there is an opportunity to advance gender equality and women's political empowerment and leadership for sustainable peace and development.

"It is vital that Somali women are given their

fair share in politics, as well as in economic and social development," Mr Swan said. "It is important that their contributions are recognised together with their rightful place in leadership and decision-making in peace and political processes."

The United Nations in Somalia acknowledges the tremendous efforts and contribution of Somali women over the years and urges all Somali stakeholders, particularly the country's leaders, to ensure greater inclusion, voice and participation of women in all national and state-level bodies to realise and sustain peace and development in Somalia.

International Women's Day has been observed around the world since 1975, to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day marks a call to action for accelerating gender equality.





BASHIR ABDULKADIR MOHAMED 'SUULEEY':

YOUTH AS A CORNERSTONE OF PEACEBUILDING IN GALKAYO

Until recently, Galkayo had been known for its history of conflict and displacement.

For decades, the city was divided in half due to long-running hostilities between clan militias from the neighbouring Federal Member States of Puntland and Galmudug. Some five years ago, that began to change.

Traditional elders, local business people and residents, the Federal Government of Somalia and the authorities in Puntland and Galmudug, with support from the United Nations, came together to find a way to end the violence in Galkayo. This effort culminated in a peace agreement between both Puntland and Galmudug administrations, and reached under the auspices of the international community, in 2016.

A key stakeholder in the peacebuilding efforts was the city's youth, who played a



fundamental role in Galkayo's transformation, success and recovery, through formal avenues, such as the Joint Galkayo Youth Committee engaging with the elder-led peace talks, and informal initiatives such as campaigns, projects and safe spaces for dialogue and trust-building.

Among the youth representatives driving this change was activist Bashir Abdulkadir Mohamed, also known by his nickname 'Suuleey.'

Transformation

Just as the city had transformed after the peace agreement was reached in 2016, Mr. Mohamed's experiences before 2016 transformed him too into an activist.

"I was in Galkayo during its fiercest and bloodiest confrontations. At the time, the city was divided by the 'green line' with roadblocks that barred movement in the city. I witnessed many people get killed, injured or displaced," the 31-year-old says.

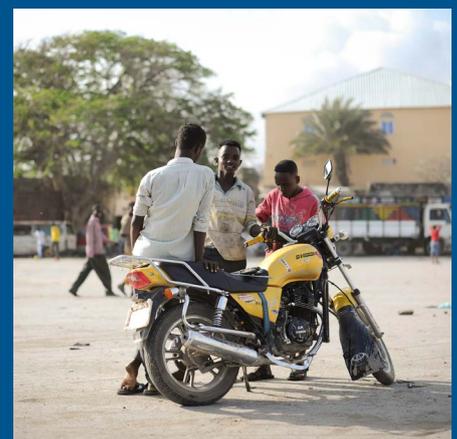
"There were times when elders would come together and agree on a ceasefire today, but it would be a fragile one and fighting would start again the week after – the situation remained like this for a long time. It affected me, my education and my career choices," he adds.

As hard as daily life was, those hardships also inspired Mr. Mohamed to try to change the situation in Galkayo so that its residents could move about freely without

militia-controlled roadblocks nor gunfights putting them at risk, and so that schools could be re-opened for local children to resume their education and normal life.

"The biggest number of casualties in every clash in Galkayo was being experienced by its youth, so I asked myself, 'Why don't youth in Galkayo, regardless of where they live or what their clan is, try to play a role as agents of peace?'" Mr. Mohamed says. "So, with the help of some friends, I came up with an initiative to advocate for peace and raise awareness among youth to change them into agents of peace."

"What I saw and experienced during the fighting instilled in me a long-held dream to establish a youth organization that could help Galkayo's youth to come together and discuss issues affecting them," he adds.





Agents of Peace

In 2015, along with ten friends, Mr. Mohamed began setting up a civil society organization – the Haldoor Forum – with a focus on bringing local youth into local peace efforts. The Haldoor Forum came into being in 2016.

It was not an easy task.

“We faced many challenges. I remember how I was warned not to cross into the other side of the city; family members said that I would be in danger. Another one of the challenges was finding a place where our organization’s members could safely meet; there were transportation challenges because there was no transport to allow us to move between Galkayo’s neighbourhoods,” he recalls.

But, with his colleagues, the young activist was determined to overcome the challenges that the nascent civil society organization faced.

“It helped us, Galkayo’s youth, recognize our role in ensuring peaceful coexistence in the city. We managed to bring youth together from the north and south of Galkayo,” Mr. Mohamed continues. “We started get-together meetings, lunches and dinners in each side of the city to create confidence and harmony among Galkayo’s youth.”

“Galkayo is safe now,” he notes. “People are moving around, business is going on as normal. It is a united city where people can go wherever they want – taxis can take you from south to north and vice versa, without hesitation. There is a tranquillity in the city that did not exist a few years ago.”

With peace having come to Galkayo, the Haldoor Forum’s focus has expanded since 2016.

“It’s a social activism platform,” he notes, “that now focuses on progressive social issues – such as peace and security and socio-economic development – through discussion, debates and research. Our goal was to help change the mindset of society, and our work has been able to successfully bring about integration among Galkayo youth.”

Adopted home

Mr. Mohamed was not born in Galkayo. He hails from Laanmodow, a small village in the Mudug region. However, he spent his schooling years in Galkayo, attending secondary school there from 2008 to 2012. For his tertiary education, he moved to Basaso, where he graduated from Mogadishu University’s Bosaso campus in 2016 with a bachelor’s degree in education.

After graduation, he returned to Galkayo in 2017. While there, he studied online for a master’s degree in business administration from Amity University in India, while working full-time, and which he completed in 2020.

In 2019, he joined the Dhulmaal Stone Company, a local construction company specializing in cutting, reshaping and designing stones, as its Chief Executive Officer.

He balances his work with activism, with social media providing a useful platform to reach youth in Galkayo and beyond with articles on reinforcing the goals of Galkayo’s peace agreement and encouraging civic spirit among its inhabitants, especially its youth.

“Social media can help spread peace and encourage dialogue among people,” he says, adding that he has 17,000 followers on his Twitter account. “I like to write about social issues, and publish articles and short messages through online and social media platforms.”

“I encouraged people to go everywhere in the city without fear. I and my friends have started to roam around the city, do daily shopping from any corner of the city.”

In 2017, he started a social media campaign, pegged on the Twitter hashtag of #IsbaaraduWaaqalbiga – which means ‘Invisible Roadblocks’ – in reference to barriers that may have arisen in people’s minds after years of becoming accustomed to physical barriers.

“It aimed to discourage the segregation that was caused by the ‘green line’ within Galkayo,” Mr. Mohamed says, referring to the line that was used as the dividing point between the two administrations of Punt-



land and Galmudug that now run the city.

“I encouraged people to go everywhere in the city without fear. I and my friends have started to roam around the city, do daily shopping from any corner of the city. This has really worked,” he adds.

Away from Haldoor Forum, Mr. Mohamed has organized other campaigns that have benefited his adopted home city. In 2018, he began a door-to-door and online fundraising drive to help 400 children orphaned by the conflict that Galkayo had experienced in its recent past.

“There were many children who lost their providers, their fathers and mothers. I collected donations from Galkayo residents, which benefitted dozens of orphans by providing them with food and clothing,” Mr. Mohamed says.

Galkayo Peace Book Fair

Mr. Mohamed’s activism is not limited to the digital world. He was one of the main organizers of the first Galkayo Peace Book Fair, which brought together local communities, along with hundreds of people from across Somalia, to highlight the benefits of peace and community in the city.

The inaugural event was held in October last year, and is scheduled to take place annually. Participants included officials from the Federal Republic of Somalia and the governments of Puntland, Galmudug, Jubaland, Hirshabelle and South West State, as well as traditional elders, religious leaders, peace-building experts and committees, scholars, politicians, graduates, women and youth representatives, and officials from the United Nations.



The event was organized by Galkayo youth activists, the Puntland Development Research Center and Interpeace, with support from the Galkayo district administrations of Puntland and Galmudug, and its theme was 'Sustainable Peace.' It centred on strengthening community peace efforts, enhancing cooperation between the two administrations, reinforcing social integration, developing economic opportunities, and improving local literacy rates.

The purpose of the book fair was to encourage peace and coexistence in Galkayo and again to recognize those who played a positive role in the Galkayo peace process: among others, the Puntland and Galmudug administrations, joint peace committees, joint police force commanders, youth and women.

"Galkayo is now peaceful, and our major aim in organizing the event was to bring peace to life and show the people the dark histories of the city to avoid going back to the same footsteps," he says. "It has become a working platform that brings together many people. Awareness meetings were held on both sides of the city to create an atmosphere of brotherhood and enjoyment."

UN and youth

Somalia is one of the youngest countries in the world, with more than 4.6 million people between the ages of 15 and 35.

However, opportunities for youth to obtain an education and gainful employment are limited. Avenues to engage politically, economically and socially remain weak or non-existent, due to stereotypes and stigmatization, social and cultural norms and institutional exclusion.

According to the United Nations, improving young people's lives and enabling their active role in society is crucial to ensure sustainable peace in Somalia and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone everywhere, and were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda, which sets out a 15-year plan to achieve the SDGs.

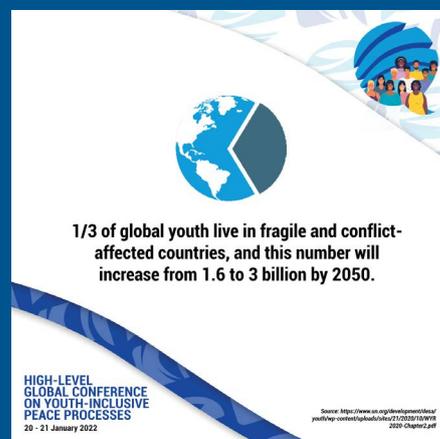
"Galkayo youth remarkably demonstrate how young people's transformative leadership paves the way for sustainable peace and reconciliation in Somalia – if and when they are meaningfully included, supported and protected by duty-bearers, elders and international actors," says the UN's Youth, Peace and Security Advisor for Somalia, Julius Kramer.

Also adopted in 2015, the Youth, Peace and Security agenda celebrated its sixth anniversary in December last year. Established through [Security Council Resolution 2250](#), the agenda aims to support young people's transformative leadership and meaningful participation in politics and peacebuilding, and the protection of young peacebuilders and activists in conflict.

Since 2015, two additional resolutions have been adopted by the UN Security Council – resolutions 2419 and 2535

– mandating the UN and governments to ensure youth participation in peace processes, the protection of youth civic spaces, and build partnerships with and for young people for peace and security. Guided by these resolutions, the UN in Somalia endeavours to advance young people's rights and agency through all efforts for peace and security, with and for young Somali women and men.

This week, world leaders have convened a High-Level Global Conference on Youth-Inclusive Peace Processes to discuss how all peace processes can be shaped by and supportive of young people. Co-hosted by Qatar, Finland and Colombia, and co-organized with civil society and UN partners, the event includes young Somali peacebuilders both as speakers and participants.



UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ZERO TOLERANCE FOR FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

"Female genital mutilation is an abhorrent human rights violation that causes profound and permanent harm to women and girls around the world.

Every year, over 4 million girls are at risk of this extreme form of violence. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on health services and put even more girls in jeopardy.

This flagrant manifestation of gender inequality must be stopped. With urgent investments and timely action, we can meet the Sustainable Development Goals target of eliminating female genital mutilation

by 2030 and build a world that respects women's integrity and autonomy.

The United Nations and partners are supporting initiatives to shift the social norms that perpetuate this practice. Young people and civil society are making their voices heard. And lawmakers are advancing positive change in many countries.

On the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, join us in calling to accelerate investment to end female genital mutilation and uphold the human rights of all women and girls."



ABDIWALI NUNE IBRAHIM: CHANGING THE LIVES OF CONVICTS IN KISMAYO THROUGH EDUCATION

The work of a committed teacher is to inspire and help students develop through education, with the ultimate goal of becoming productive members of society.

It could be argued that people convicted of crimes and sentenced to jail warrant special attention in this regard.

According to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, further education should be provided to all prisoners, with the schooling of illiterates and young prisoners compulsory.

As Somalia rebuilds after decades of conflict and instability, education for prisoners has not been a priority due to other priorities for the country's development.

However, in Somalia's southernmost Federal Member State of Jubaland, one man – Abdiwali Nune Ibrahim – is trying to change that for inmates at the Kismayo Central Prison, which is located in the city's centre and currently has close to 100 inmates in its confines.

In a volunteer capacity, he teaches many of the usual subjects which students are taught around the country – for example, literacy, mathematics, and social studies – even though he could be doing the same in an actual classroom in the Jubaland's regular education system.

Before starting his teaching initiative, Mr. Ibrahim was employed as a clerk for the prison administration, and through his work he interacted with its inmates.

“I was working with the Kismayo custodial corps, charged with overseeing its administrative operations, so I often visited the prison and it was then that I took an interest in talking with the inmates – as I got to know them and how they ended up there I also became aware of their level of literacy,” Mr. Ibrahim says.

“I could not really comprehend that most of them lacked a basic education, and it was then that the urge to start teaching programmes for the inmates came to my mind,” he adds.

Over the past three years, in addition to his regular clerical work five days a week at the prison, Mr. Ibrahim has also given classes to an average of 70 inmates per week. Prior to his efforts, most of the inmates were not provided with any such educational activities, nor any vocational and rehabilitation programmes.

The 27-year-old fervently believes that his efforts will have long-term benefits for the inmates themselves but also for their local communities, and for Somalia as a whole, when their sentences are over.

“It is through these trainings that certain mindsets and perspectives can be moulded. For instance, if a person who has committed a crime is not rehabilitated nor trained to know and understand that what they did was wrong, then at the person's release there is every possibility that that individual will relapse into the same criminal behaviour,” Mr. Ibrahim says.





was there that he attended primary and secondary school.

In 2016, Mr. Ibrahim moved to Jubaland's interim capital, Kismayo, and went on to gain a Diploma in Education in 2018 from the Jubaland Teachers Training College, located in the city.

After graduation in early 2018, he briefly taught at the Hawa Tako Primary School in Kismayo before joining the city's central prison as a clerk. He left teaching for a career in the Federal Member State's custodial corps, believing that he could also have a positive impact there, particularly in relation to supporting efforts to strengthen the rule of law.

Mr. Ibrahim does what he does without much formal backing. The local authorities are unable to provide support as there is no government budget for rehabilitation programmes, and he has yet to get any support from local non-governmental organisations.

Instead, he has so far relied on friends and well-wishers who donate writing and reading tools, in addition to using his own funds to purchase additional material.

Initially, Mr. Ibrahim's family and friends were worried about his endeavours, often

asking why he could not simply continue teaching at local schools. They worried that time spent with convicted criminals would put him at risk, but this attitude eventually changed, as they better understood his commitment and saw the results of his hard work.

"I have overcome scepticism from friends and relatives who dismissed my idea of contributing back to my community – nowadays, when I am in town, people call me 'teacher' wherever I go, even when I'm on public transport," Mr. Ibrahim says.

New opportunities

One of the many inmates whom Mr. Ibrahim has taught is Afrah Ali Abdi, a 35-year-old man, who, during his 18 months in prison, learnt how to read and write.

"Abdi was a good student at the prison, he was eager to learn. To him, in a way, the prison was a blessing in disguise as he came out better than the way he was before his arrest despite the challenges at the prison," Mr. Ibrahim says.

Now back in his local community in Kismayo, Mr. Abdi works as a storekeeper at a local company with his newly-acquired skills.

"I don't think I would have had this

opportunity without my learning in prison, the classes I took at the prison enable me to unlock my potential and today I keep records at the store," Mr. Abdi says, adding, "Mr. Ibrahim devoted his time and energy to change our course and become productive citizens."

Mr. Ibrahim says there are many now-released inmates who are doing meaningful jobs in their respective communities like his former student, Mr. Abdi, and it is stories of development and progress like his which motivate him.

"Some of our former students have not only gone on to get stable jobs and reconcile with their families, they have even started their own businesses," he notes.

Whether in regular schools or in the country's prisons, he believes that providing his fellow Somalis with an education – regardless of their backgrounds – is a direct way to make an impact at the local community and national levels.

"In Somalia today, there are so many students who are eager to learn and teach their fellow Somalis, although they have never seen a functioning government in their entire lives, which in itself indicates that there is an upcoming Somali generation that has the potential to change Somalia through education," Mr. Ibrahim says.

Appreciation

The Kismayo Central Prison's staff appreciate Mr. Ibrahim's efforts, and have nothing but praise for him. They say the benefits of the teaching have extended beyond the individual inmates.

"His teaching has helped start teamwork among the inmates; they now interact and talk to each other which was not the case before Mr. Ibrahim's intervention. Even our interaction with the inmates has tangibly changed, with the inmates now busy and focused on learning thanks to his efforts," says the Regional Commander of the Kismayo Custodial Corps, Mohamed Aqib Hirsi.



“Although he struggles to deliver lessons without basic equipment, even a projector, let alone other training materials for prisoners, he tries to do all he can to help us at the prison – we would be grateful if we could receive training and learning materials for the programme,” Mr. Hirsi adds.

Mr. Ibrahim was among 20 prison staff members who took part in two consecutive capacity-building courses in Jubaland in 2021. The courses were organized by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) on leadership and management, including of crises, with subjects including security management and international human rights standards.

“Before, it was just armed men guarding prisoners so as to prevent them from escaping from the prison; there was no knowledge of how to handle the prisoners, on what were their rights and responsibilities. Now they are aware of how to handle and manage an inmate, and we need more of such trainings,” Mr. Hirsi says.

Mr. Ibrahim’s efforts were further recognized in 2021 with his selection to attend UN-backed training on national laws and international standards for ensuring the safety and security of the prisoners, as well as their humane treatment while in custody.

“Since Mr. Ibrahim joined the prison, the prison conditions have improved, and even the prison coordination with the United Nations in Kismayo, and we will build on the renewed cooperation with the prison officers in the Kismayo Central Prison,” says Agnes Rebecca Gabu, an UNSOM Corrections Officer based in Kismayo who has provided trainings for the volunteer teacher and other prison staff.

“There is a remarkable improvement on the functional literacy level of inmates,” she adds.

UNSOM supports the country’s National Development Plan goal to establish independent, accountable and efficient justice institutions capable of addressing the justice needs of the people of Somalia. It does this through the professionalisation of its Custodial Corps, the establishment of correctional facilities operating in accordance with national laws and international standards, and developing a unified legal framework.

Adopted in 1955, the [UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners](#) is the first legal instrument created in the body of standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice.

According to a UN manual published in 1995, ‘Basic Education in Prisons,’ there

are millions of people in prisons and other correctional institutions throughout the world, and most of them have no higher vocational or other advanced education, and a large minority – commonly between 25 and 40 per cent – face difficulties in reading, writing, numeracy and social interaction.

The manual notes that the right to basic education in prisons has been shown to be a prerequisite for achieving the internationally agreed goal of ensuring a basic level of education for all.



**The United Nations
Standard Minimum Rules for
the Treatment of Prisoners**

(the Nelson Mandela Rules)

