

'Stand-off' between Somalia's federal, state authorities could 'paralyze' progress – UN envoy

Ongoing tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the country's state authorities were centre stage, as the United Nations top envoy for the country visited the country's South West State on Wednesday.

Nicholas Haysom, UN Special Representative for Somalia and head of the Assistance Mission [UNSOM](#), called for better collaboration: "What we're facing is a quite serious political issue – the stand-off between the Federal Member States and the Federal Government may well [paralyze our efforts](#) to help Somalia get back on its feet."

"We're exploring ways of bringing them together in the hope that Somalis can face down their problems together rather than going separately," said Mr. Haysom at a joint press conference, alongside Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, President of South West State, and Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission.

Mr. Haysom also flagged the need for "credible and acceptable" presidential elections next month and renewed his call for collaboration to solve the ongoing tensions.

"We're asking all of the relevant role-players to get together to find a solution and to make the necessary compromises so that they can work collaboratively rather than against each other," he said.

What we're facing is a quite serious political issue – Nicholas Haysom, UN envoy for Somalia

Mr. Haysom told reporters they also discussed development, security and political matters, assuring Somalis that "the international community does not have a candidate" and is not backing any specific candidate in the race.

"But we do want to see," he continued, "that the elections will be conducted in a way which all parties will be able to accept" adding that the President of South West State "has reassured me that this indeed will be the case," he stressed.

The UN and AU officials also met with Abdulkadir Shariif Shekhuna, Speaker of South West State's Parliament, who briefed them on preparations for the 17 November presidential poll.

"You'll appreciate the elections in the South West State will be the first of the many elections to follow and in that sense will be setting the standard,"

the UN envoy said, in a subsequent joint press encounter with the Speaker and Mr. Madeira.

The elections will be “hotly contested,” he predicted, explaining that this was why it was so important for participants to accept the outcome. “So we were reassured to hear from the Speaker in regard to the detailed arrangements which will govern the election and we wish South West [State] all the best in holding those elections,” he added.

The UN and AU envoys echoed these comments in their later meeting with seven presidential candidates.

[FROM THE FIELD: Guinean peacekeepers walk a fine line in Mali](#)

A team of Guinean peacekeepers deployed to the UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, (MINUSMA) is playing a key role in removing explosives from areas in which the mission is operating.



MINUSMA/Harandane Dicko

Mali, in West Africa, is currently the most dangerous place in the world to serve as a peacekeeper. Some 850 Guinean blue helmets are based in the volatile town of Kidal, in the north of the conflict-affected country.

Roadside bombs are a constant hazard there and it's the role of the Search and Detect team from Guinea to make sure those explosive devices do not kill or maim peacekeepers nor civilians.

Read more [here](#) about the work of the peacekeepers:

And see more powerful images from MINUSMA, [here](#):

Political incitement to violence against journalists is 'toxic': UN experts

A group of independent, UN-appointed human rights experts have called on world leaders to stop inciting hatred and violence against the media, citing the hundreds of journalists killed or forcibly detained because of their work, and ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

On Wednesday, the experts, including David Kaye, [Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression](#), Agnes Callamard, Special Rapporteur on [extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions](#); and Bernard Duhaime, Chair of the Working Group on [Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances](#), released a statement ahead of the [International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists](#), on 2 November.

The statement said that “these last weeks have demonstrated once again the toxic nature and outsized reach of political incitement against journalists, and we demand that it stop,” and strongly urged States to take firm steps to ensure accountability for violence and attacks against journalists, reversing and resisting the appalling trend of impunity.”

They particularly highlighted the killing earlier this month of Saudi dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi, and condemned the response of States, the international community and the United Nations itself, for the failure to address his enforced disappearance and apparent murder.

“The only way forward is to establish an independent, transparent and credible investigation into his murder, one authorised by and reporting to the United Nations. Anything short of a complete investigation, recognised as such by the international community, will make a mockery of government claims of commitment to the safety of journalists.”

One journalist killed every four days

The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) says that, between 2006 and 2017, over 1,000 journalists were killed for reporting the news and bringing information to the public; an average of one death every four days.

In nine out of ten cases the killers go unpunished, and this impunity, say the UN experts, triggers further violence and attacks: perpetrators must be brought to justice, and victims and families should have access to remedies.

High-level international commitments already exist, such as a [resolution](#) on

the safety of journalists, adopted by the Human Rights Council in September. The UN experts called on world leaders to implement such resolutions and end their role in inciting hatred and violence against the media.

On this year's International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, UNESCO is launching a new campaign, Truth Never Dies, to raise awareness of this situation, and is calling for media partners to support the initiative by publishing stories by, and about, journalists killed as a result of their work. A [toolkit](#) is available for media that wish to take part.



UNESCO, DDB

UNESCO #TruthNeverDies campaign to end impunity for journalists killings.

[Security Council extends mandate of UN peace mission in Western Sahara by six months](#)

The United Nations Security Council, on Wednesday, extended the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), until 30 April next year.

Adopting resolution 2240 (2018), by a recorded vote of 12 in favour and 3 abstentions, the Security Council underscored the need for a “realistic, practicable and enduring political solution” to the question of Western Sahara.

In that context, the 15-member Council expressed “full support” for the Secretary-General’s plan to initiate renewed negotiations before the end of 2018 and urged all parties to resume dialogue, in good faith, towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, “which will provide for the self determination of the people of Western Sahara.”

Originally [established](#) in 1991, in accordance with settlement proposals accepted in 1988 by Morocco and the Frente Polisario movement, [MINURSO](#) was tasked with the monitoring of the ceasefire; overseeing the exchange of prisoners of war; repatriation of refugees; and the eventual organization of a free and fair referendum in which the people of Western Sahara would choose between independence and integration with Morocco.

While the organization of the referendum has not been possible to date, other requirements of the mandate have been pursued successfully and the peacekeeping mission continues to monitor the ceasefire, conduct mine clearance operations, and supports confidence building measures.

MINURSO has also been providing assistance to irregular migrants as well as humanitarian assistance in case of natural disasters.

[UN chief appoints Norwegian diplomat as his new envoy for Syria](#)

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has appointed veteran Norwegian diplomat Geir O. Pedersen as his next Special Envoy for Syria.

Mr. Pedersen succeeds Staffan de Misutra, who announced earlier this month that he will be stepping down in November after serving as the UN chief’s top envoy for the war-battered nation for over four years.

According to a [note](#) issued by the [Secretary-General](#)’s office, Mr. Pedersen “brings to the position decades of political and diplomatic experience”, having served both in Government and UN capacities, including as Norway’s Ambassador to China since last year and as Permanent Representative to the UN for five years, from 2012.

At the UN, Mr. Pedersen served as the Special Coordinator for Lebanon between 2007 and 2008, and before that, was Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Southern Lebanon. He was also Director of Asia-Pacific Division at the Department of Political Affairs.

Born in Oslo on 28 September 1955, he is married and has five children. The UN chief also expressed his “deepest gratitude” to Mr. de Mistura, an Italian national, for his “concerted efforts and contributions to the search for

peace in Syria.”

Appointed the Special Envoy in July 2014, Mr. de Mistura continued to work with all parties involved in the Syrian conflict to push for lasting peace, in line with Security Council resolution 2254, which endorsed a Syrian-led, Syrian-owned roadmap towards peace.

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Though his tenure coincided with the bloodiest period of the crisis, with warring sides employing “medieval sieges”, barrel bombs, human shields and snipers in densely populated civilian areas, an undeterred de Mistura continued to push all sides in the conflict to adhere to the peace roadmap as well as urging that world leaders seize any “window of opportunity” to end the war.

The crisis in Syria, which started with largely peaceful protests against President Assad in March 2011, has so far claimed over 400,000 lives and driven some 11.7 million people from their homes, including over 5.5 million to seek refuge into neighbouring countries.