

'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.