

Somalia: UN Security Council urges sustained momentum towards democratic governance

10 February 2017 – Welcoming political and security progress in Somalia since 2012, including the recently concluded elections in the country, the United Nations Security Council today highlighted the need to maintain the momentum towards democratic governance in the African nation.

In a Presidential Statement adopted today, the 15-member Council also hailed the increased representation of women in the Upper House and the House of the People and underscored the important contribution of women to Somalia's peacebuilding and State-building processes.

The UN body responsible for matters concerning international peace and security also congratulated President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed 'Farmajo' and paid tribute to former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud for his service and commended the swift and gracious transfer of power in Somalia.

The new President, known as 'Farmajo,' was declared the winner on Wednesday after two rounds of voting by the Somali Parliament in the capital, Mogadishu. The runner-up, incumbent President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, chose to withdraw from a third and final round.

It also underscored the importance of timely and transparent appointment of ministers and the cabinet, in consultation with the Somali Parliament, and called on the Parliament and all federal and provincial leaders to cooperate fully with the Federal Government in driving forward reform and addressing immediate priorities without delay.

The Security Council further emphasized the need to accelerate agreement between the federal and regional authorities on a federal security sector architecture as well as the importance of good faith cooperation between the authorities to speed up the country's peacebuilding and State-building process.

It also called on the international community and Somalia's partners to step up their support to efforts to build and strengthen the country's national institutions, governance structures and socio-economic infrastructure.

The Council further urged the Federal Government to promote a comprehensive reconciliation process that brings about local, regional, and national cohesion and integration in a climate of respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to establish an effective federal political system.

Also in the statement, the Council recognized that the coming months would be an important

period for Somalia, and said that it would follow progress closely, and reaffirmed its support for peace, stability and development in Somalia.

In Turkey, UN chief Guterres spotlights collective responsibility for refugee protection

10 February 2017 – Underscoring the enormity of the plight of refugees, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres today appealed for effective burden-sharing in supporting those who have been forced to flee their homes, as well as to those providing them refuge.

“This is a moment to launch an appeal when we see so many borders being closed and when we see so many escaping their responsibilities [...] for effective burden-sharing and to make sure that the integrity of the international refugee protection regime is maintained,” Mr. Guterres said at a press encounter in Istanbul alongside Binali Yildirim, the Turkish Prime Minister.

“One area is [supporting] the countries of first asylum, support to the host communities, support to projects that can help [...] both refugee populations and the host communities,” he explained.

“The second area of burden-sharing is the resettlement of refugees [...] because the protection of refugees is not only the responsibility of neighbouring States of a crisis; it is a collective responsibility of the international community,” added Mr. Guterres.

The UN chief, on his first official visit to the region, also thanked the Turkish Government and people for their large humanitarian support to Syrian people as well as to those from other parts of the world.

In particular, he expressed his appreciation for the role of Turkey in convening and orienting the Astana conference on Syria and that it would lead to the Geneva talks in which the political solution dimension will be at the centre of the discussions.

“The role that Turkey has played has been, in our opinion, extremely positive and we are very grateful and very appreciative for that fact,” he said.

Mr. Guterres also thanked Turkey for its role in convening of the Astana Conference and said: “It is now very important to have in Geneva discussions that go to the substance of the issues and allow for a political solution to start [being] built.”

Recalling the country's contributions to the international multilateral system, he noted that Turkey is one of the guarantor powers in the UN-supported Conference for Cyprus for the unity of Cyprus, and expressed hope that the efforts of the two communities that go on meeting at the highest level and the efforts of the guarantor powers will allow for a breakthrough in the near future.

A breakthrough able to fully respect the concerns of the Turkish Cypriot community about its security but, at the same time, compatible with the concerns of the Greek Cypriot community, added the Secretary-General, pledging the support of the UN to the two communities and the guarantor powers to support the search for a solution that is acceptable for all.

The UN chief also noted the importance of political solutions in which people feel duly represented at the political level for successfully fighting terrorism.

Secretary-General Guterres also said there is no plan but for the two-state solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and underscored: It is absolutely essential to avoid unilateral actions that undermine the possibility of that two-state solution.

He also noted that his discussions in Istanbul included the situation in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan as well as the on importance of rule of law and protection of human rights.

[Central African Republic: Senior UN official condemns armed, forceful entry into hospital](#)

9 February 2017 – Denouncing forceful entry by armed individuals into a hospital in the Central African Republic's restive PK5 neighbourhood with the intention to kill some of the patients, a senior United Nations humanitarian official has emphasized that such incidents are in violation of the international humanitarian law.

This is the second such incident at the health facility, situated in the capital, Bangui, in the last five days.

It is unacceptable that armed elements come to a hospital, with arms to kill patients, stressed Michel Yao, the Acting Humanitarian Coordinator and the head of the World Health Organization (WHO) office in the Central African Republic (CAR), in a news release.

The UN official also underlined that that respect for health facilities and their civilian character must be ensured, and that free and unhindered access to patients and medical staff must be safeguarded.

International humanitarian law expressly forbids attacks on or targeting of medical facilities and personnel.

I call on all parties including national authorities to enhance the protection of civilians and peaceful cohabitation of communities," the Acting Humanitarian Coordinator added.

At least three killed in the restive neighbourhood

According to the news release, at least 26 individuals – both civilians and combatants – were injured and at least three killed in the violence in Bangui's PK5 neighbourhood that has witnessed violent flare-ups in the past.

Several houses, a school and a church were also destroyed.

Protection of civilians continues to be a major concern in CAR where, according to estimates, 400,000 people remain displaced due to conflict and 2.2 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance.

In January, the UN together with the Government and relief organizations launched a \$400 million appeal for humanitarian response until 2019. Funding, however, remains a major challenge.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013. Despite significant progress and successful elections, CAR has remained in the grip of instability and sporadic unrest.

UN calls for 50 per cent increase in funding for mine action in 2017

9 February 2017 – The United Nations has launched a \$511 million international appeal for humanitarian mine action in conflict and post-conflict settings for 2017, a 50 per cent increase from last year's \$347 million consolidated appeal.

Across the world, the conflicts tearing countries, communities and lives apart cause a tragic increase in the number of casualties due to landmines and other explosive hazards," said the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Agnès Marcaillou, in a press release

issued earlier this week.

There is an absolute necessity for a humanitarian mine action response. The knowledge and willingness to help are there – it is adequate funding that is missing,” added Ms. Marcaillou, who also chairs the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.

According to the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2017, an online resource for information on such projects, there is a sharp increase in the need for humanitarian mine action, including landmine clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

The Portfolio covers over 200 projects and presents a consolidated picture of the needs and strategies of 22 countries and territories contaminated with landmines and other explosive hazards such as unexploded cluster munitions, rockets and improvised explosive devices across Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and South America.

Needs are the greatest in active conflict zones, with Afghanistan requiring \$124 million; Iraq \$75 million; Syria \$52 million; and Yemen \$17 million. In addition, countries which have extensive residual contamination also need substantial support, with Cambodia requiring \$23 million and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic \$26 million, according to UNMAS.

[UN and international partners express support for working with new Somali president](#)

9 February 2017 – The United Nations and its international partners in Somalia today said that they were eager to partner with President Mohamed Abdullahi ‘Farmajo’, his new Government and the people of Somalia to avert another famine in the country and to assist with improving security for all Somalis.

The comments were made in a congratulatory statement on behalf of the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ethiopia, Italy, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

“The international partners urge all political forces in Somalia to work together in support of President Farmajo and the incoming government,” the statement read.

Distributed by the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), the statement also noted the need for reconciliation and the peaceful resolution of a

number of local conflicts, as well as the resumption of the constitutional review process.

The Somali Parliament selected the new president yesterday in two rounds of vote. A one-person, one-vote election is expected in 2020.

The international community welcomed the election results and commended outgoing Federal President Hassan Sheikh Mohamed and his Government for their many achievements over the past four years.

They also thanked him for a gracious concession speech that facilitated a peaceful and orderly transfer of power in decades.

Yesterday's orderly and peaceful transfer of power is a major achievement for Somalia and should boost confidence in the country's future both at home and abroad, said Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Somalia and head of UNSOM.

He added Hambalyo Somalia in Somali, which translates to Congratulations Somalia.