

# UK opens new training centre for the Somali National Army in Baidoa

The UK training facility was opened by Somalia's Minister of Defence, Hassan Ali Mohammed, Southwest State Speaker, Abdulkadir Shariif Sheekhuna, and the UK Foreign Office's Political Director, Richard Moore.

The BSTC, supported by the British government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), will support the SNA and promote long-term stability and security in Somalia. The new centre will train up to 120 Somali National Army soldiers at a time and will help the SNA improve the quality of its training.

Speaking at the opening of the facility, British Ambassador to Somalia, Ben Fender, said:

The UK is one of the major international providers of support to the Somali National Army. We're playing a central part in helping the SNA conduct current operations in Lower Shabelle including through giving practical help to the newly recovered areas – like new housing for Sabid community

In Baidoa, the Somali forces we are supporting have been building defensive positions to make the approach roads into the city more secure. This is having a direct impact on the number of attacks in the city and the security of the surrounding area.

The SNA are motivated, keen to learn and professional. We are committed to long-term co-operation in order to help Somalia improve security and regain full control over its territory.

The Somalia's Minister of Defence, Hassan Ali Mohammed said:

Security and stability is crucial for the future of Somalia. Al Shabaab is a threat to the national security and supporting the army is vital in undermining the extremist efforts.

I would like to thank the UK government for their continuous support to Somalia. To the SNA you have an important role to play in securing the country, take advantage of the trainings provided to better yourself and to secure the country.

British military personnel have been training the SNA since January 2017. They have delivered courses on areas such as medical skills, leadership, equipment care, logistics and human rights.