



United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UN SOM)

Statement by Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General James Swan to the Security Council on the situation in Somalia

(As delivered, New York, 24 June 2024)

Mr. President, distinguished members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you on the situation in Somalia.

I am pleased to do so together with the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Souef Mohamed El-Amine. I commend the bravery, determination, and sacrifices of the Somali and African Union forces in contributing to peace and security in the country.

I congratulate Somalia on its election as a member of the Security Council for 2025-2026. This achievement demonstrates the progress Somalia has made over the past three decades in its journey from conflict to recovery.

Mr. President,

The Federal Government of Somalia continues to pursue its key national priorities, including the constitutional review process, the electoral framework, and the fight against Al-Shabaab. Between February and May, Somalia's Federal Parliament adopted constitutional amendments to the first four chapters of the 2012 Provisional Constitution, which cover, among other issues, the governance system and electoral framework, reaffirming the Government's commitment to a one-person, one-vote electoral model.

During the last National Consultative Council meeting, convened by His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud from 14 to 17 May, and which was attended by the Federal Member States leaders with the exception of Puntland, the leaders welcomed the amendments to the Provisional Constitution and encouraged the rapid adoption of related laws and regulations to facilitate the holding of one-person-one-vote elections. Some opposition figures and Puntland officials criticized the process and outcome, with Puntland's President announcing the State's withdrawal from the federal system pending negotiation of a comprehensive constitutional framework.

Parliament is scheduled to consider the important enabling legislation for universal suffrage elections as well as the next chapters of the Provisional Constitution during its summer session. The next phase of the constitutional review will address complex issues, such as power- and resource-sharing under Somalia's federal model. Continued engagement of all stakeholders in an inclusive process will be critical to ensure broad-based consensus on these important state-building questions. I call on all Somali stakeholders to work together to resolve their differences and seek consensus.

At the regional level, I remain concerned about the Ethiopia and "Somaliland" Memorandum of Understanding announced on January 1, which has created tensions in the Horn of Africa at a time when the region faces other crises. I recall that the Security Council has repeatedly affirmed respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of Somalia. I encourage Somalia and Ethiopia to resolve this matter peacefully in accordance with these principles as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and international law.

Mr. President

Security is a top priority for the Government of Somalia, which continues to undertake multi-faceted efforts to defeat Al-Shabaab. For its part, Al-Shabaab remains determined to continue terrorist attacks with little regard for the loss of civilian life. Protection of civilians must remain a key priority. I condemn these terrorist attacks and extend my condolences to the families of those killed.

While continuing efforts against Al-Shabaab, the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) has also drawn down in accordance with the planned transition of responsibilities to Somali security forces. Since June 2023, five thousand ATMIS troops have left Somalia and further reductions are planned in the coming weeks. The United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSO) continues to provide logistical support to deployed ATMIS forces and to facilitate an orderly drawdown of departing forces.

On post-2024 security planning, the Federal Government of Somalia and the African Union continue their discussions on the follow-on security arrangements for 2025. SRCC Souef will provide further details in his briefing. Financing remains a critical challenge, and I appeal to all partners to ensure predictable and sustainable financing for the follow-on arrangements as well as the necessary resources for ATMIS, which continues to face critical funding shortfalls.

Mr. President,

On Women, Peace, and Security, I note the commitments made in its revisions of the Provisional Constitution that enabling legislation should include quotas to guarantee women's political participation and meaningful representation in decision-making. The United Nations will continue to provide technical assistance aimed at enabling a credible and transparent electoral process and to engage federal and member state governments on the importance of increasing and codifying women's political participation.

I welcome the finalization by Parliament of the Bill of Rights, which has received Presidential endorsement as part of the ongoing constitutional review process. Important guarantees on child rights and protection against female genital mutilation are included. I further welcome Galmudug State's enactment of the first law prohibiting all forms of female genital mutilation as a vital step towards the elimination of violence against women.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains dire. While the number of people in need of assistance has reduced from 8.3 million in 2023 to 6.9 million in 2024, climatic events, insecurity and disease outbreaks have continued to exacerbate humanitarian needs. More than 3.8 million people are displaced. The 2024 Somalia Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan requires USD 1.6 billion, but as of June 23, it is only 24 per cent funded. I urge international partners to provide the necessary funding to ensure assistance for those most in need.

Somalia's humanitarian and development challenges are intensified by climate shocks. To address these challenges, investments to strengthen the longer-term resilience of communities, infrastructure, and economic recovery are essential. At the current rate, the impact of climate change is outpacing our ability to support adaptation and humanitarian response. Climate change also intensifies social tensions and conflicts, particularly in rural areas where livelihoods are highly dependent on natural resources.

Mr. President,

Regarding the Federal Government of Somalia's early May letters to the Security Council requesting the transition from UNSOM to the Country Team, the United Nations is in discussions with Somali

authorities, to determine the modalities and timeline for the transition. Since, I assumed my duties on 23 May, I have met the senior Somali leadership, including President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister, among others, on this matter to hear how the United Nations can best support Somalia's priorities going forward. All have indicated that they seek a collaborative process to ensure an orderly transition. As requested by Somali authorities, a Joint Federal Government of Somalia and United Nations Technical Committee led by senior officials on both sides has been established to take forward the planning process. An initial meeting of the Joint Technical Committee was held on 22 June. While still in their early stages, discussions to date have been cordial and constructive. We are working to fulfil the Security Council's request that the Secretary-General engages with the Somali authorities to determine the modalities and timeline for the transition and provide an update by the end of August.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude by reiterating the commitment of the United Nations to continue supporting Somalia in achieving its national priorities.

Thank you.