



United Nations and

SOMALIA



UN Political Office for Somalia

After the withdrawal of the [United Nations Operation in Somalia II \(UNOSOM II\)](#) in March 1995, the United Nations has been closely monitoring the developments in and around Somalia through the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), established in Nairobi and headed by [Mr. David Stephen](#) (United Kingdom). At the same time, the United Nations has been encouraging peacemaking efforts by others, mainly by regional governments and organizations.

Since October 1997, the United Nations Secretariat has been organizing a periodic “Meeting of External Actors” in Somalia. With the members of the Security Council, relevant regional organizations and those countries that have taken peacemaking initiatives participating, the Meeting has proved to be a useful vehicle to ensure better coordination of peacemaking efforts in Somalia.

In August 1999, the United Nations Secretary-General, in his [report](#) on Somalia to the General Assembly, stated that the re-establishment of a functioning state in Somalia would require, not only an enormous effort and political will on the part of the Somali people and their leaders but also “a massive rebuilding operation” as an “accompaniment of any peace process”. He further stated that the stage had been reached at which “it may be appropriate for the UN to play an enhanced role in Somalia” working with its partners “to help bring about national unity and the restoration of a national government.” This included a review of the role of the United Nations in Somalia, recommending a possible relocation of some UN programmes to Somalia, the establishment of a trust fund to support the peace process and concomitant development, and ways to protect the rights of Somalis in the absence of state sovereignty.

National Peace Conference

On 22 September 1999, President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti put forward his plan for peace in Somalia in a speech to the General Assembly. Consultations followed with a wide range of Somali leaders. On 21 March 2000, he convened a meeting of 50

Somali intellectuals, who were invited in their personal capacity to advise on the peace process. Following those discussions, the Somali National Peace Conference had been formally opened in Djibouti on 2 May.

The delegates to the Conference consisted of elders, traditional leaders and politically-active Somalis. From 2 May to 13 June, the meeting of the elders focused on reconciliation among the clans and working out an agenda and a list of delegates for phase II of the Conference. The final list of delegates included a large number of political leaders, former officials, Somalis from the diaspora and prominent members of civil society.

The second phase of the Conference, attended by more than 900 delegates, started on 15 June. The agenda included security, arms control and disarmament, the future of Mogadishu as capital, economic and social development, and the transitional arrangements. A number of various political and faction leaders, however, chose not to participate in the meeting.

On 29 June 2000, the United Nations Security Council [fully supported](#) the initiative of the President of Djibouti, and strongly urged representatives of all social and political forces of Somali society to participate actively and in a constructive spirit in the work of the Somali National Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Djibouti.

New Parliament Created

The Conference has resulted in the creation of Somalia's first Parliament for a decade marking important progress in ending the violent anarchy that has existed there since the 1991 fall of President Mohamed Siad Barre. The National Assembly was inaugurated on 13 August 2000. Under a document agreed on by the participants in the National Peace Conference, the Assembly would elect a president of Somalia who in turn would form a government that was due to sit initially in the south-central Somali town of Baidoa.

On 16 August, Security Council members welcomed formation of new Somali parliament and strongly urged all Somali political forces to support the ongoing peace process. In a statement to the press following closed-door consultations, the Council President reminded the warlords and faction leaders that "obstructing and undermining the efforts to achieve an overall settlement in Somalia would not be acceptable," and urged them to support the National Assembly. Reaffirming that preservation of the territorial integrity of the country was "the precondition for overall normalization in Somalia," Council members voiced support for efforts of regional organizations towards that end. They also urged all States to observe the arms embargo against Somalia, which the Council [imposed](#) in 1992. On relief efforts, the Council urged all parties to live up to their obligations to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian personnel operating in Somalia.

President of Somalia Elected

On 25 August 2000, the Transitional National Assembly elected Mr. Abdiqassin Salad Hassan as President of Somalia. In the [message](#) on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony, the Secretary-General described that event as an important milestone in the efforts of the Somali people to re-establish Somalia as a member of the community of nations, through an inclusive, consultative process. Having said that the search for peace and prosperity in Somalia would not be smooth, nor would it be achieved quickly, the Secretary-General said that the United Nations would continue to assist the people of Somalia in their efforts to meet the challenges ahead.

Humanitarian Aspects

The humanitarian situation in the country continues to be extremely fragile. Thousands of people suffer from the cumulative effects of nearly a decade of armed conflict, a fractured economic infrastructure, low food production and the virtual absence of health and educational services. Approximately 1.2 million Somalis are estimated to be at risk of facing severe food shortages. The United Nations system has been doing its utmost to provide humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance throughout Somalia under trying conditions. For the year 2000, the UN Agencies have set out in the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal a series of key interventions designed to assist vulnerable households and communities most affected by emergency crises. A total of US\$ 50.6 million is required to provide resources for the “core humanitarian strategy” to respond to such emergencies. Personal safety and security remained part of the risk of humanitarian assistance delivery in Somalia and continued to affect all aspects of those activities.

- [For news and recent developments](#)
- [For more information on humanitarian aspects](#)
- [For UN documentation](#)