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Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia

I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution [2461 \(2019\)](#) and paragraph 55 of resolution [2431 \(2018\)](#), provides information on the implementation of those resolutions, including on the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers major developments in Somalia during the period from 5 May to 4 August 2019.

II. Political, security and economic overview

A. Political developments

2. Relations between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states remained strained during the reporting period. In an effort to resume dialogue, President Mohammed Abdullahi Mohammed “Farmajo” and leaders of the federal member states, together with the Governor of Banaadir, met from 5 to 10 May in Garoowe. The meeting did not result in a political agreement or consensus on a mechanism for future consultation between the two levels of government. Following the Garoowe meeting, federal member states reiterated their grievances, including the lack of consultation on key political processes and federal legislation, and alleged interference in state affairs.

3. On the legislative front, the Speakers of the House of the People (lower house) and the Upper House announced the resumption of cooperation between the two houses of the Federal Parliament in a joint press conference on 12 July, effectively ending a seven-month rift between the two legislative chambers. Despite the rift, several bills advanced in the legislative agenda. On 20 May, the lower house began the first reading of the electoral bill, and also adopted the petroleum bill and submitted it to the Upper House. On 24 June, after receiving comments from the Upper House, the lower house adopted a bill on the establishment of an anti-corruption commission, a legislative priority to strengthen the country’s public financial management framework.

4. Political dynamics around federal member state elections dominated the reporting period and contributed to tensions between the Federal Government and federal member states. In a speech on 15 May, President Farmajo said that neither his government nor the leaders of the federal member states should exceed term-limits,



as term extensions have the effect of damaging the credibility of state institutions and undermining public trust. On 25 May, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation issued a press release, entitled “General principles and procedures for the elections of the regional states”, in which it asserted the Federal Ministry’s authority to oversee the electoral processes in the federal member states and to certify the results. Jubbaland, Galmudug, Puntland and HirShabelle dismissed this as unconstitutional.

5. In Galmudug, the Prime Minister, Hassan Ali Khayre, travelled to the state from 24 June to 3 August to engage the President of Galmudug, Ahmed Duale Gelle “Haaf” and key stakeholders including Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama’a (ASWJ) to resolve the disputed electoral calendar. The Prime Minister visited several population centres and engaged local the local population, including elders, the business community and young people. As a result of the Federal Government’s engagement with ASWJ, President Haaf nullified the 2017 Djibouti power-sharing agreement between Galmudug state and ASWJ. There is now agreement to organize a reconciliation conference that would lead to the holding of the state’s parliamentary and presidential elections in Dhuusamarreeb, as well as an agreement between the Federal Government and ASWJ to integrate ASWJ forces into the Somali security apparatus. The Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation established a reconciliation committee to prepare for the conference in early August. On 22 July, a high-level international delegation, led by my Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Francisco Caetano José Madeira, visited Dhuusamarreeb and held discussions with the Prime Minister and the reconciliation committee. The delegation encouraged the committee to hold an inclusive forum leading to a fair and transparent electoral process. On 15 July, in Hobyo, the Habar Gidir clan conference began, with a view to strengthening unity among sub-clans.

6. The Jubbaland Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission published the state electoral calendar on 4 July. The presidential election is scheduled for the week of 24 to 30 August. On 23 July, the Commission published the list of elders who will select the state assembly candidates, although the list continues to be contested. Criteria for registration of presidential candidates have been issued, and nine candidates have been registered so far including the incumbent, Ahmed Madobe, and two women. On 17 July, a group of presidential aspirants expressed concerns about the lack of transparency and legitimacy of the state electoral process, while threatening to pursue a parallel election if improvements were not made. They also called on the Federal Government and the international community to intervene and called for a neutral venue to conduct free and fair elections. On 31 July, the Commission stated that electoral operations were advancing, with Jubbaland elders present in Kismaayo to finalize the submission of the state assembly nominees on 6 August.

7. In South-West State, post-election clan reconciliation efforts continued between the state authorities and clan elders. On 13 June, representatives of the Digil-Mirifle clan elders formed a 15-member executive committee to pursue the reconciliation agenda with the South-West State authorities and the Federal Government, following previously unsuccessful attempts by the Leysan sub-clan to resolve issues related to the 2018 December state presidential election. The status of the former deputy leader of Al-Shabaab and state presidential candidate, Mukhtar Robow, who remains in federal custody, is still a point of contention. The authorities also pursued efforts to extend authority at the district level, with the reshuffle of the administration in Marka and Bardaale districts, and with the appointment on 23 June of a new administration in Buurhakaba district, a strategic location on the main supply route between Baidoa and Mogadishu.

8. In HirShabelle, tensions arose when the state President, Mohamed Abdi Waare, appointed a new Governor of Hiraan, but the previous incumbent refused to relinquish his office and was supported by militia forces. The ensuing demonstrations in Beledweyne led to the killing of a police officer in a dispute over the control of a revenue collection point. After several weeks of negotiations led by President Waare, on 13 July the former Governor handed over the office to the new appointee and pledged to cooperate with his successor. Also, in June, in Hiraan region, clashes between Habar Gidir and Hawadle sub-clans over grazing land and water resources resulted in several fatalities among members of both clans.

9. In Puntland, a visit by its Minister of Education to monitor examinations in Badhan district heightened tensions which resulted in a clash between “Somaliland” and Puntland security forces. Claiming underrepresentation in the “Somaliland” government, army officers and civil servants of the Warsangali clan in Sanaag region abandoned their posts and moved to areas under Puntland control in late May. On 3 June, “Somaliland” and Puntland exchanged 17 prisoners who had been captured in Tukaraq in May 2018.

10. In “Somaliland”, the President of “Somaliland” lifted a two-month state of emergency in three western districts of Sanaag region on 25 June, previously imposed as a result of recurring inter-clan conflict in those districts. Clashes returned to the districts from 7 to 8 July, when 18 civilians died in inter-clan violence. There was also little progress on the resumption of dialogue between Somalia and “Somaliland” during the reporting period. On 25 June, the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue hosted a meeting to review international facilitation efforts between the two parties. On 17 July, President Farmajo announced a national commission for reconciliation and dialogue with “Somaliland” to prepare a road map for talks and lead the Federal Government’s engagement. “Somaliland” subsequently issued a statement reiterating its commitment to dialogue while rejecting the format put forward by the Federal Government.

11. Strains between Somalia and Kenya over the maritime boundary dispute and other issues continued, despite continued efforts by regional and international partners to de-escalate tension and foster dialogue. On 26 June the International Court of Justice scheduled the hearing on the maritime border dispute between the two countries for 9 September 2019.

12. In other regional developments, on 20 June, the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia held its twenty-second plenary session in Mauritius. During the plenary, Contact Group participants endorsed Kenya as the new Chair of the Contact Group for a two-year period from 1 January 2020. On 20 July the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, led an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-United Nations visit to seek views on regional security and economic integration. Representatives of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troop-contributing countries met on 12 July to discuss the implications of the AMISOM troop drawdown on the country’s peace and state-building processes.

B. Security developments

13. The security situation remained volatile during the reporting period. Al-Shabaab continued to perpetrate violence, including carrying out attacks targeting government facilities and personnel, security forces, international partners and public places such as hotels and restaurants.

14. A total of 228 incidents occurred during Ramadan, from 5 May to 3 June; higher than in Ramadan in 2017 and 2018. Some 35 per cent of violent incidents occurred in the Banaadir region, with southern Somalia accounting for 34 per cent, indicating that

Al-Shabaab's operational focus did not change during the reporting period. Overall, security incidents declined significantly in June and July. There was, however, an increase in incidents involving improvised explosive devices in July, when there were several high-profile terrorist attacks.

15. Al-Shabaab perpetrated several attacks by vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices in Mogadishu. On 14 May, in Warta Nabada district, a suicide bomber drove such a device into the district administrative office, as a result of which 4 people were killed and 10 injured. On 22 May, in Boondheere district, a suicide bomber used a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device to target a checkpoint at a National Intelligence and Security Agency jail. At least 17 people were killed in the blast, and 20 others were injured. On 15 June, another incident involving such a device occurred at a checkpoint near the Federal Parliament, with nine people reportedly killed and 20 others injured. Targeting and killing of civilians continued, with at least 11 civilians killed in Mogadishu during the final week of May.

16. On 22 July, at the Km. 4 Junction road neighbourhood, a national staff member of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was injured in a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device explosion at the checkpoint. On 24 July, 10 people were reported killed in an improvised explosive device attack at the Banaadir Regional Administration in Mogadishu. The casualties included two district commissioners and other senior officials. The Mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of Banaadir succumbed to his injuries on 1 August in Qatar, where he had been taken for medical treatment. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility. An increasing number of large-scale attacks within and outside of Mogadishu highlight the group's resilience and strong operational capability despite the ongoing intensified security measures, including airstrikes targeting the group and joint national army-AMISOM operations in Shabelle Hoose, which are specifically designed to counter threats to Mogadishu.

17. In Shabelle Hoose, the national army continued offensive operations, supported by AMISOM troops and international partners, to capture territory. Al-Shabaab continue to use "hit-and-run" ambushes and improvised explosive devices to target public officials and partner forces in the region. Following the loss of the towns of Bariira and Sabiid, Al-Shabaab made significant efforts during the reporting period to test both the strategic force capability and the logistical ability of the national army and AMISOM to hold ground; however, the army has remained in place and continues to hold those strategic locations.

18. In Galmudug, the general security situation remained tense, amid political negotiations related to the state electoral process. Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the 31 May assassination of a United Nations staff member in south Gaalkacyo. Tensions also continued in the disputed border area between "Somaliland" and Puntland.

19. In Jubbaland, the security of clan elders and contestants participating in the state elections process is a priority concern. On 17 June, in Kismaayo, unidentified gunmen shot and killed a traditional elder of the Biyomaal clan in a suspected election-related incident. Al-Shabaab carried out a complex attack on 12 July on the Medina Hotel in Kismaayo, resulting in 33 fatalities, including a state presidential candidate and a contractor with the International Organization for Migration, as well as 56 others injured.

20. By comparison with the previous reporting period, a lower number of airstrikes was recorded, with the majority taking place in Middle and Lower Juba, by comparison with the strike rate reported in January and February. Al-Shabaab's attempts to mitigate the threat of airstrikes has reportedly led to an increase in its personnel operating in urban areas. Airstrikes also targeted pro-Islamic State of Iraq

and the Levant (ISIL) elements, which may be the reason for a notable decline in the group's activities during the reporting period.

C. Economic developments

21. In May, the Federal Government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reached a staff-level agreement on a fourth staff-monitored programme covering May 2019–July 2020. The IMF Executive Board endorsed the programme on 1 August, as meeting the conditionality standard of an upper credit tranche arrangement, putting Somalia more clearly on the path to debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. At least six months satisfactory performance under an upper credit tranche-quality staff-monitored programme is one of the preconditions for reaching a decision point under the Initiative. Other preconditions include delivery of an approved interim poverty reduction strategy paper, as well as the mobilization of adequate financing assurances from international donor partners to cover the IMF share of debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries. The Government has prepared a draft national development plan 2020–2024 to both serve as and meet the criteria for the strategy paper, on which there have been extensive consultations among national stakeholders, and for which consultations with international development partners are under way.

22. The latest available figures indicate that the country's real gross domestic product grew by an estimated 2.8 per cent in 2018, to \$4.4 billion, up from 1.3 per cent growth in 2017. Estimates have been revised downwards from previously published forecasts, reflecting newly available data on household consumption, based on a more nationally representative sample, which includes broader geographic coverage and data on nomadic populations and internally displaced people settlements. With an annual average population growth rate of 2.9 per cent over the last five years, real gross domestic product growth has not been sufficient to boost real per capita income. Real per capita gross domestic product is estimated to have declined from \$316 in 2013 to \$311 in 2018, according to preliminary data from the 2019 World Bank Somalia Economic Update. As a result, poverty incidence continues to remain relatively high and widespread.

III. Support for peacebuilding and state-building efforts

A. Establishment of a functional federal state

1. Deepening federalism

23. Technical cooperation between the Federal Government and federal member states continued, including in the strands of the comprehensive approach to security, and a joint meeting of the Office of National Security and regional security offices on 21 and 22 July. On 24 June, while addressing the first batch of graduates of the Somali National University since the State collapsed in 1991, President Farmajo said that cooperation between the centre and peripheries was vital and he supported a federalist system, but not a "confederation". He said that there was a need to build a strong central government capable of defending the country, and with reliable monetary and immigration systems and a central foreign policy.

2. Constitutional review

24. On 30 July, President Farmajo held a meeting with the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, the Constitutional Review and Oversight Commission and the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission, to discuss

progress in the review process. The Commission completed the preliminary technical review of the last five chapters of the Provisional Federal Constitution and submitted them to the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on 27 June. A technical working group, operational since May and embedded in the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, with United Nations participation, has started developing some options on a range of key political settlement issues that remain unresolved in the Provisional Federal Constitution, in order to prepare the ground for broader consultations and future decision-making between the federal and state leaders.

25. From 17 to 19 June, a workshop held in Mogadishu convened women's groups from the Banaadir region and the federal member states to explore the constitution's role in state-building and peacebuilding in Somalia, in particular from the perspective of Somali women. The workshop resulted in a set of recommendations to foster women's participation in political processes throughout Somalia in the review process.

3. Prevention and resolution of conflicts

26. The Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation began the roll-out of the National Reconciliation Framework to the federal member states. From 28 to 30 June, Ministry officials presented the framework to South-West State officials in Baidoa and discussed the development of the regional reconciliation framework, with the support of the Ministry. Dozens of civil society representatives pledged to contribute to the effort.

27. From 30 June to 3 July, in Gaalkacyo, the Galmudug Minister of Reconciliation and Federalism facilitated a local reconciliation meeting between the Sa'ad sub-clan of the Habar Gidir and the Dir clan, both residing in remote areas of Mudug region. The parties reached a ceasefire agreement and pledged to end hostilities.

28. From 9 to 10 July, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and international partners held a symposium organized with the support of the Government of Norway. Some 30 participants, including academics, reconciliation experts and the business community, discussed the role of the business community in peacebuilding, national reconciliation processes and development and humanitarian service delivery, to foster reconciliation efforts in cooperation with the Federal Government.

4. Support for universal suffrage elections

29. On 20 May, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation presented the draft electoral bill to the lower house. The bill was criticized by leaders of the federal member states, who claimed that they were not consulted on the revised draft by the Federal Government prior to its being tabled. The Federal Government called on federal member state representatives to engage on the bill in the lower house and the Upper House. The bill remains at the first reading stage. On 21 July, the Speaker of the lower house appointed the 15 members of an ad hoc parliamentary committee to review the draft electoral bill. The draft bill includes provisions that contain constitutionally, politically and operationally problematic issues that require further review, including the need for clarification on how the Upper House elections will be conducted. There is also some uncertainty as to whether the requirement of a minimum of 30 per cent of women in electable positions in the political parties' lists will remain in the bill. In addition, a mismatch of the electoral timelines needs to be adjusted. In parallel, the Federal Cabinet submitted proposed amendments to the 2016 political party law to the lower house, which awaits its first reading.

30. The National Independent Electoral Commission advanced technical preparations for elections, including the finalization of the identification and

verification of potential voter registration centres in South-West State and Banaadir region. The exercise is ongoing in other federal member states, except Puntland, where it is on hold owing to political differences with the Federal Government. The Commission approved a draft concept of operations and tentative budget for the 2020 voter registration exercise.

B. Cross-cutting issues

1. Gender equality and the empowerment of women

31. During May and June, UNSOM supported several meetings with women civil society leaders and members of Parliament to discuss the draft electoral bill with respect to achieving a minimum of a 30 per cent quota for women in the forthcoming federal elections. On 30 May, UNSOM facilitated a consultative meeting of women leaders in the Bay region of South-West State. Participants highlighted the need for robust, gender-responsive civil education and public outreach as among the most critical issues to support women's participation in the 2020 electoral processes, including as voters and candidates.

32. In Puntland, on 19 and 20 June, the state Ministry of Women Development, and Family Affairs, together with the Puntland Development and Research Centre, held a consultative forum on women's political participation, which underscored the importance of early campaigning for women candidates in Parliament in the upcoming national elections in 2020 and 2021.

2. Youth empowerment

33. On 15 May, a series of activities were held across Somalia to mark Somali Youth Day. These included a peace march with 300 youth from North and South Gaalkacyo. Speaking at the Mogadishu event, which was organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), President Farmajo called upon the 1,500 youth participants to unite for peace and prosperity in the country.

34. In preparation for the upcoming elections, UNSOM co-hosted a consultation in Mogadishu, from 28 to 29 July, with 55 young women and men from across Somalia, to gain a better understanding of what hinders youth political participation. At the meeting, programming gaps were identified and a set of recommendations made for future programmes to support the formal and informal political engagement of young people, including conducting electoral training, reviving the youth caucus in the Federal Parliament, establishing a mentorship network for young women, providing youth leadership training and strengthening the advocacy capacity of youth-led organizations.

35. The Youth Political Empowerment project, implemented by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and UNFPA, with Peacebuilding Fund support, continued to advocate for youth political participation in Jubbaland. Two intergenerational forums were held in Doolow and Kismaayo in May, gathering youth, elders and decision-makers to discuss youth engagement in the upcoming state elections. Three youth-led campaigns were initiated to amplify youth voices after the forums, and currently 17 youth, including two women, who are preparing to run for state office in August.

C. Development coordination

36. The Federal Government announced that the Somalia Partnership Forum would be held in October 2019. The Forum convenes high-level officials for political dialogue, taking stock of progress in the implementation of the national development plan and adherence to the New Partnership for Somalia. The previous Forum was held in Brussels in July 2018.

37. The Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility has continued to serve as both a coordination framework and a financing architecture for implementing the national development plan. The Federal Government initiated consultations in July on revising the aid architecture with federal member states, international partners including the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and members of Parliament. The revised architecture, aligned with the new national development plan (2020–2024), is expected to be developed in the coming months and agreed at the next Somalia Partnership Forum.

IV. Humanitarian situation

38. Somalia is experiencing the negative effects of lower than normal *gu* rains (April to June), which follows a poor 2018 *deyr* season (October to December), and unusually dry conditions during the 2019 *jilaal* season (January to March). Except for the 2018 *gu*, every rainy season since late 2015 has been below average. The 2019 *gu* is the second consecutive below-average rainy season, while the country is still recovering from the effects of the prolonged drought of 2016–17. The 2019 rains started late throughout the country and, in most areas, resulted in cumulative below-average rainfall. In some parts of the country, heavy rains over a short period also resulted in flooding and significant damage to planted crops, land, and other resources critical for agricultural and livestock production.

39. While the late rainfall in May and early June eased drought conditions and improved water availability, improving livestock conditions to some extent, it was insufficient to meet sustainable agricultural production needs. Impoverished pastoralists with small herds risk large food consumption gaps in the months to come. Owing to exhausted food stocks, reduced income from agricultural labour and poor harvest prospects, many agro-pastoral families and farmers across the country are expected to face food shortages until late 2019. The late rains have generated only enough pasture growth to temporarily improve livestock conditions. For crop-growing areas, the delayed start of *gu* rains significantly affected planting and germination. As a result, the cereal harvest is projected to be 50 per cent below average.

40. As of July, an estimated 2.2 million are people facing acute food insecurity, a nearly 30 per cent increase compared with February projections. Deteriorating food security, coupled with a lack of access to clean water, and severe acute malnutrition rates among children, especially among internally displaced people, is heightening the risk of water-borne disease outbreaks and exacerbating existing fragilities.

41. Displacement is steadily on the rise, with some 193,000 people displaced since the beginning of the year, including over 72,000 as a result of food insecurity. In addition, over 60,000 individuals have moved to Barlow, Awdheegle, and Afgooye, mainly from Bariira in Shabelle Hoose, where military operations are ongoing. Overall, more than 2.6 million Somalis are internally displaced. Since the beginning of 2019, over 115,000 internally displaced persons have been evicted. In terms of policy and regulatory framework, progress is being made, with drafts of the national policy on refugee returnees and internally displaced persons, the interim protocol on

land distribution for housing to eligible refugee-returnees and internally displaced persons, and the national eviction guidelines already submitted to the Cabinet of the Federal Government of Somalia for review.

42. Over 800,000 Somali refugees remain displaced in neighbouring countries, in particular in Ethiopia, Kenya and Yemen. A total of 90,058 (as at 13 July) Somali refugees have returned through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees voluntary repatriation programme, mainly from Kenya, as well as Yemen, Djibouti and Libya. In early July, some 1,300 Somali refugees left Eritrea and arrived in Ethiopia.

43. The deterioration in the humanitarian situation comes at a time when resources are limited, forcing aid agencies to curtail relief efforts. The collective actions of the food security cluster had reached only 1.4 million people with food assistance as at June, against a target of 2.2 million and down from an average of two million people between July and December 2018. The 2019 humanitarian response plan was only 40 per cent funded as at late July. On 20 May, aid agencies launched a drought impact response plan to provide critical life-saving aid to 4.5 million people. On 12 July, a revised drought impact response plan was issued jointly by the Federal Government and the humanitarian country team, which appeals for \$686 million to respond to drought-induced needs.

44. To facilitate a response to drought conditions across the Horn of Africa, on 5 June, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, announced a Central Emergency Response Fund allocation of \$45 million, of which \$30 million was allocated to Somalia. The Federal Government has prioritized its own scaling up of the drought response, in collaboration with aid agencies, and initiated efforts to tackle the cyclical reoccurrence of drought through the recovery and resilience framework, which targets investments inter alia towards water management infrastructure, agricultural productivity and natural resource management.

45. The operating environment remains challenging. In 2019 to date, some 49 humanitarian personnel were directly affected by security incidents. Of these, 2 humanitarian workers were killed, 1 injured, 11 abducted, 5 arrested and temporarily detained, and 2 expelled by authorities for alleged infractions. Bureaucratic constraints and limited logistics infrastructure continue to hinder humanitarian agencies' ability to reach those in need. The United Nations humanitarian country team adopted an access strategy in May to provide guidance on how to expand, reach and engage with authorities and all parties to conflict to enhance aid delivery.

V. Human rights and protection

A. Human rights

46. During the reporting period, 322 (as at 21 July) civilian casualties were recorded by UNSOM: 76 per cent (245 casualties) were attributed to Al-Shabaab, less than 1 per cent (2 casualties) to AMISOM and 7 per cent (23 casualties) to State security forces. The Ramadan period saw a 7 per cent increase in the number of civilian casualties as compared with the previous year.

47. In all, five death sentences were pronounced, and three executions were carried out following death penalty convictions. In May, the Garoowe District Court in Nugaal region found three defendants guilty of raping and killing a 12-year-old girl in Gaalkacyo, sentencing them to death. Targeted assassinations of participants in the

electoral process continued, including both delegates and clan elders, with 10 assassinations recorded and claimed by Al-Shabaab.

48. Two journalists were killed in an Al-Shabaab-coordinated attack in Kismaayo on 12 July. Four individuals were arrested in connection with issues related to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, among them three journalists, and two media stations were banned for 12 days, before the ban was reversed. “Somaliland” police arrested a reporter in Laascaanood district, Sool region, for allegedly interviewing residents demonstrating against the arrest of a Member of Parliament, while in Hargeysa, one freelance journalist was sentenced to three years’ imprisonment for defamation and circulation of false news. Additionally, 557 inmates convicted of minor crimes in “Somaliland” were pardoned as part of the celebrations of 18 May. Puntland authorities also pardoned 121 inmates on the occasion of Ramadan.

49. On 20 June, President Farmajo signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified on 31 July. On 24 June, Deqa Yasin, the Minister for Women and Human Rights Development, gave her first speech before the Human Rights Council since Somalia became a member in January 2019. The Minister reiterated the country’s commitment to foster a culture of respect for human rights as a basis for post-conflict peacebuilding, described Somalia’s progress to promote and protect human rights and urged increased coordination on those issues with the United Nations.

50. The Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia conducted a 10-day visit to Mogadishu and Hargeysa, starting on 15 July. He met with UNSOM, AMISOM and representatives of the Federal Government and civil society organizations to discuss the human rights situation in the country and advocate for action to be taken to promote and protect human rights in Somalia.

B. Children in armed conflict

51. There was an 8 per cent decrease in the number of grave violations committed against children, as compared with the previous reporting period. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict verified 426 grave violations affecting 301 children (271 boys and 30 girls), one attack on a hospital, one attack on a school and two incidents of denial of humanitarian access. A total of 187 children were victims of recruitment and use, 172 children were abducted, 51 were victims of killing and maiming and 11 were victims of sexual violence. The violations were attributed to Al-Shabaab (88 per cent), unknown armed elements and clan militia (7 per cent) and federal and state armed forces (5 per cent). Seven incidents of deprivation of liberty affecting seven boys were attributed to Somali Police and Jubbaland forces.

52. UNSOM, in conjunction with the Federal Government, conducted child protection training for 135 members of the Somali security forces (105 men, 30 women) and 75 government officials (52 men, 23 women). A new global campaign to protect children affected by conflict was launched at the national level, with the Federal Government recommitting itself to strengthening child protection measures. A total of 392 children (380 boys, 12 girls) were separated from armed forces and armed groups and handed over to UNICEF partners for rehabilitation and eventual reintegration.

C. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

53. Somalia marked the International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict, on 19 June. UNSOM supported civil society to mark the day under the national theme “Stand with rape survivors, fulfil their rights”, reflecting the global theme on the importance of the survivor-centred approach. Key recommendations adopted by the participants include strengthening access to justice and the passing of the sexual offences bill.

54. On 25 June, the UNSOM-chaired monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements working group held a meeting, convened at the technical level. The technical working group reviewed cases of conflict-related sexual violence from the first half of 2019 and noted the underreporting of incidents owing to a lack of access to conflict-affected areas, cultural and social factors that discourage reporting and limited coverage of policing and justice services throughout the country. The prevailing patterns of unidentified armed men in uniform raping women without being held to account was noted, as there are very few cases in which alleged perpetrators are arrested and convicted.

55. My Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, visited Somalia from 13 to 19 July and engaged with authorities at the federal and state level on the prevention and response to sexual violence in conflict. She also engaged with social workers supporting female defectors under a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration project with other stakeholders, including civil society, advocating for additional support for national commitments on sexual violence in conflict.

VI. Transition plan implementation

A. Transition planning

56. The comprehensive approach to security coordination at the technical level continued throughout the reporting period, leading to increased coordination between military planning (strand 2.A); police and other rule of law initiatives (strands 2.B and C); and stabilization activities (strand 3) in support of the national army-led operations in Shabelle Hoose. With support from AMISOM and other international partners, military operations and stabilization activities coordinated across various Federal Government ministries and South-West State authorities continued in the vicinity of Sabiid and Bariira, targeting strategic villages with bridges across the Shabelle River. This was followed by military operations along the coastal strip resulting in the securing of Ceel Sallini and Dhanaane villages.

B. International cooperation – comprehensive approach to security

Strand 1

Enabling operations of the African Union Mission in Somalia and enhancing Mission effectiveness

57. During the reporting period, UNSOS continued to contribute towards enhancing AMISOM effectiveness. UNSOS provided AMISOM with secure voice communications in the field, as well as a mobile application that reduces the response lead-time in cases where casualty and medical evacuations are required. In addition, UNSOS continued to enhance AMISOM signals capabilities through the establishment of field technology training facilities in Mogadishu and all sector

headquarters. Training in information and communication technology continued to be provided for AMISOM components, the national army and the Somali Police Force.

58. UNSOM delivered formal training to a total of 2,537 AMISOM troops, thereby enhancing the skills of AMISOM personnel in finding and destroying improvised explosive devices during convoys. UNSOM also provided specialized training and equipment to AMISOM route search explosive ordnance disposal teams and the improvised explosive device detection teams in various sectors. UNSOM surveyed 913 km of road to assess road conditions and identify vulnerable points and areas at risk of a potential attack.

Strand 2

Strengthening Somali security institutions

59. The Federal Government began verification of the biometric registration of all national army personnel, to be completed by 31 December. The exercise will capture human resources and medical data to ensure the prompt payment of personnel, identify training gaps and provide a baseline for personnel to be demobilized under the pensions and gratuity bill, which is currently under consideration in Parliament. The United States of America resumed support for pilot national army units following agreement on transparency and accountability measures. Integration of ASWJ forces into the national army began in Galmudug.

60. On 15 May, the federal Minister of Justice convened a meeting involving strands 2 and 4 of the comprehensive approach to security, targeted at providing justice and corrections services in transition locations in Shabelle Hoose. As a result, the Federal Government and international partners developed an intervention plan to assess and identify entry points for delivery of justice services in newly recovered areas, with further consultations ongoing.

61. The technical Committees for the implementation of Somalia's new policing model in Galmudug, South-West State and Jubbaland updated their 2020 state policing priorities. The second joint AMISOM-United Nations training course for 200 police recruits in Jawhar, funded by the joint police programme, commenced on 27 May. The programme also approved \$2.8 million in support of state police forces in Puntland.

62. On 18 June, UNSOM and international partners attended the IGAD-coordinated Maritime Security Coordination Committee, with agreement reached that the finalization of the Maritime Code of Somalia should be accorded a high priority, as it will support the governance structures for the country's maritime domain.

63. UNSOM facilitated the clearing of 12,500 square metres on five proposed Somali Police Force forward operating bases near Mogadishu, as part of the Mogadishu security plan's mitigation measures against mortar attacks.

Strand 3

Stabilization and Community Recovery and Extension of State Authority and Accountability

64. Leading the Federal Government interministerial task force, the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and South-West State authorities coordinated stabilization initiatives in Shabelle Hoose in support of the transition plan. The initiatives included the establishment of initial governance and community recovery efforts in areas recovered from Al-Shabaab, with assistance from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland early recovery initiative, the United States Agency for International Development and the European Union. The implementation of community reconciliation and district council formation activities,

under the national stabilization strategy, continued in Galmudug, HirShabelle, South-West State and Jubbaland. At the community level, UNSOM facilitated 53 discussion sessions for a total of 341 participants to promote dialogue on peace and tolerance.

Strand 4

Preventing and countering violent extremism

65. Preventing and countering violent extremism committee structures have been established at the state level, mirroring the Office of the Prime Minister coordination structure with federal ministries. South-West State and HirShabelle have already developed road maps for preventing and countering violent extremism implementation.

66. UNSOM and IOM continued to support the Federal Government's national programme for the treatment and handling of disengaged combatants. As at July, the three rehabilitation centres for low-risk Al-Shabaab defectors had recently provided support to 70 individuals in Mogadishu, 27 in Baidoa and 96 in Kismaayo. On 20 June, 126 former Al-Shabaab members graduated from the Baidoa Rehabilitation Centre after completing the required programme, which includes formal education, vocational training and psychosocial support.

C. Compliance with the human rights due diligence policy

67. The United Nations-AMISOM joint working group on the human rights due diligence policy met in May and discussed the progress on the implementation of the agreed mitigation measures to address human rights and international humanitarian law violations. While a decline in alleged human rights violations by AMISOM, from 94 allegations received in 2017 to 21 in 2018, was noted, the need to further strengthen the prevention and response measures, including the AMISOM Board of Inquiry, was underscored. A presentation on the action taken by AMISOM to monitor air asset mitigation measures was made. A further joint assessment to support implementation of those measures, in view of the expected new air assets, was carried out on 8 July. Recommendations made to AMISOM included further human rights training and recommendations on standard operating procedures and on incident reporting. UNSOM also supported other entities through training and briefing sessions to strengthen implementation of the measures within the framework of their support to Somali security forces.

VII. Logistical support for the national army and Mission operations

A. Support for Mission operations

68. As mandated by Security Council resolution [2472 \(2019\)](#), UNSOS continued to provide logistics support to AMISOM personnel deployed in 77 locations in south-central Somalia. In support of the transition plan, UNSOS provided support to AMISOM Burundian troops to hand over Afmadoow in sector 6 to Jubbaland security forces, while Kenyan troops executed an operational evacuation of the bases at Busar and Fafadun, in order to push forward to Bura Hache and Guerille in sector 3. Consequently, Burundian troops were relocated from Afmadow to Maslah, 20 km east of Mogadishu.

69. UNSOS responded to perennial challenges in providing potable water to national army and AMISOM by drilling boreholes in the forward operating bases and

in the Shabelle Hoose operational area, and through the provision of chlorine purification tablets, jerrycans and water tank services.

70. UNSOS has also addressed challenges affecting maintenance of equipment, through the establishment of warehouses and vehicle maintenance workshops in all the sectors, which will strengthen its ability to maintain equipment and support AMISOM mobility.

71. In support of the national army-led transition-related operations in Shabelle Hoose, which commenced in April, UNSOS provided logistics support to Ugandan troops taking part in the operations. The support included field defence stores, fuel, medical and casualty evacuations, movement of personnel and equipment and mission enabling units.

B. Support for Somali national armed forces operations

72. UNSOS continued to provide logistics support to 10,900 eligible national army troops in 21 different locations in all AMISOM sectors, including to the ongoing national army-led joint operations in Shabelle Hoose. The support included field defence stores, rations, fuel, water tanks, first aid kits, very high frequency (VHF) radios, chlorine tablets, mosquito nets and air medical evacuations.

VIII. United Nations presence in Somalia

73. United Nations entities continue to be present in the following locations in Somalia: Baidoa, Beledweyne, Boosaaso, Dhooble, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu. Progress continues on the establishment of the United Nations office in Dhuusamarreeb. As at 25 July 2019, there were 603 international staff and 1,367 national staff deployed throughout Somalia.

74. Following the 1 January 2019 mortar attack on the United Nations compound in Mogadishu, located within Aden Abdulle International Airport, UNSOS continues to enhance security measures at the Airport and all AMISOM bases and has to date completed reinforcement works at four of the five access gates to the Airport, and reinforced office and accommodation infrastructure for UNSOS, UNSOM and AMISOM. My Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, visited Somalia from 12 to 17 June to engage with UNSOM staff and discuss United Nations support with the Federal Government, international partners and civil society. She also conducted a one-day visit to Kismaayo. My Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare, visited Somalia from 6 to 8 July, and discussed issues of security, logistical support for AMISOM and the national army, joint coordination on the implementation of the status-of-mission agreement and environmental responsibility in peacekeeping. He also conducted a site visit to Jawhar, accompanied by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, where he engaged with the AMISOM sector 5 contingent.

75. During the reporting period, consultations continued between UNSOM and UNSOS leadership and the Somali authorities to address challenges resulting from the imposition of taxes and other fees, in contravention of the status-of-mission agreement. Following the establishment of the joint coordination office in March, there has been some progress on the processing of visas for United Nations personnel who do not hold a United Nations laissez-passer. Challenges remain, however, with the Federal Government and federal member states still imposing visa fees and taxes

on United Nations contractors. Payments for taxes and other fees, made under protest, continue to burden the UNSOS budget, diverting funds away from mandated support.

76. The United Nations continued to support the Federal Government in its efforts to raise revenue from local businesses. The United Nations has thus been cooperating with the Federal Government and AMISOM to map out all contractors and subcontractors operating within the Aden Abdulle International Airport, to determine a list of United Nations-exclusive contractors. This will help to ensure that contractors and subcontractors fulfil their tax obligations to the Federal Government.

IX. Observations

77. In the past three months, Somalia has made progress on political, economic and security matters, while facing continued challenges that, if not addressed soon, could jeopardize the gains achieved thus far. The progress necessary to achieve the country's priority benchmarks of federal elections, strengthened security and debt relief will be increasingly difficult without the resumption of dialogue among the leaders of the Federal Government and federal member states. The window for achieving critical progress on those issues is narrowing. I urge the Federal Government of Somalia, federal member states, the two chambers of the Federal Parliament and all stakeholders to engage in a spirit of consensus and cooperation, while making every effort to accelerate political discussions on key issues as an immediate priority.

78. Regional electoral processes will continue to attract political attention for the remainder of the year and must not delay dialogue between the Federal Government and federal member states. I urge all parties concerned to ensure transparency of processes and avoid any recourse to violence. It is important that the selection of new members of the Jubbaland assembly and election of the state president is due to follow a fair, transparent and acceptable process. I am encouraged by the dialogue in Galmudug to bring all parties together. I urge all stakeholders to take forward broad-based and inclusive reconciliation, leading to a transparent and peaceful electoral process in Galmudug. It is ultimately important that these regional electoral processes contribute to a renewed dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states for the overall benefit of the country.

79. The efforts of the Federal Parliament to advance the legislative agenda, including the anti-corruption commission bill, in recent months is encouraging. This momentum should be sustained. I welcome the announcement of the resumption of cooperation between the lower house and the Upper House, and the spirit of dialogue that has prevailed to resume the serious legislative work required of Parliament. It is important that bills are enacted into law in a timely manner, in order for Somalia to meet its aspirations.

80. Nowhere is the need for legislative progress more urgent than to advance the legal framework for the national elections in 2020 and 2021. I urge the Federal Government and federal member states to reach consensus on a political framework covering key electoral issues. It will also be important that the electoral bill is adopted by Parliament and reflects the amendments that the National Independent Electoral Commission deems necessary to carry out its work. This will also demonstrate clear political commitment to national elections, which, together with more clarity on the Government's elections financial contribution, will help to garner donor interest and confidence. The inability to attract adequate and timely financial support for the conduct of electoral activities may become an additional obstacle to holding the elections on time. Establishing electoral security coordination mechanisms will also be important for proper electoral planning and operations. In this regard, I encourage

Member States to contribute funding to the electoral process. I commend the Commission for advancing technical preparations for the voter registration process.

81. I encourage the political participation of women and their effective role in decision-making at all levels. I urge the Federal Government, the Federal Parliament, federal member states, civil society and the international community to increase their action towards the enhanced participation of women in the political reform agenda, through clear gender-focused provisions in the electoral legal framework for the elections in 2020 and 2021, and advancing the ability to meet the 30 per cent quota of women in Federal Parliament in 2020 and 2021.

82. The Federal Government has enhanced security measures in Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab continues to demonstrate its ability to adapt its tactics, however, including in evading aerial strikes. Senseless acts of terrorism must not derail the progress towards reconciliation and political stability. I welcome the progress in coordinating transition-related operations in Shabelle Hoose and am encouraged by the increased focus on coordination between the Federal Government and South-West State authorities as demonstrated during these operations. Importantly, they have been conducted with strengthened joint planning at all levels, including on stabilization. The Federal Government must redouble efforts towards developing predictable and sustainable modalities to generate Somali military forces. This includes the acceleration of transition-related operations and the integration of existing forces. This will be a key condition for maintaining current gains and achieving further progress under the national security architecture and towards the Somalis assuming the lead for their security in 2021.

83. I remain concerned about civilian casualties and urge all parties to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law in the conduct of hostilities. The continuation of targeted killings of persons involved in the electoral process of 2016 remains an issue of particular concern, especially as preparations for the elections in 2020 and 2021 get under way. I urge the Federal Government to end impunity for these assassinations to avoid undermining future political progress. Violations by authorities against freedom of expression and freedom of assembly continue, and they could increase in the period leading up to the federal elections.

84. I welcome the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the steps being taken to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of human rights, including the development of the relevant legislation on disability, and on the rights of the child. I urge the Federal Government, Federal Parliament, federal member states and civil society to enhance the participation of marginalized communities, internally displaced people and people with disabilities in the political reform agenda. I once again encourage the Federal Government to finalize the process of establishing the Independent Human Rights Commission.

85. The deterioration in the humanitarian situation comes during a time of resource constraints, forcing aid agencies to limit or reduce relief efforts. I commend the Federal Government for demonstrating leadership by prioritizing the scaling up of its drought response and collaboration with aid agencies, as well as efforts to tackle the cyclical nature of these events. The 2019 humanitarian response plan is only 40 per cent funded, as at late July. I urge donors to increase efforts to support the delivery of life-saving assistance and protection. I also remain deeply concerned about the challenging security environment and the continued impact of military operations, clashes among armed groups and the presence of non-state armed actors on civilians, as well as the restrictions on key access roads needed for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and commercial supplies. I welcome the stronger role being taken by state and local authorities in monitoring and implementing humanitarian programmes. I call for respect for humanitarian principles in these undertakings.

86. In a rapidly evolving regional context, it is all the more important that countries in the Horn of Africa act in a spirit of mutual cooperation. I encourage all the parties to address possible differences through constructive dialogue, in the interest of enhanced regional relations, which will ultimately harness the immense potential of all people in the Horn region.

87. I thank the African Union, AMISOM, IGAD, the European Union, Member States, non-governmental organizations and other partners for their continued support for peacebuilding and state-building in Somalia. I pay tribute to AMISOM and Somali security forces for the sacrifice that they continue to make for the achievement of long-term peace and stability in Somalia.

88. I am pleased that the partnership between Somalia and the United Nations remains strong. I remain committed to deepening this partnership for the benefit of the Somali people, in support of the country's continued progress. I appreciate the warm welcome extended by the Federal Government of Somalia to my new Special Representative, James Swan, since his appointment on 30 May. I also express my deep appreciation for my Deputy Special Representative, Raisedon Zenenga, for his leadership in the challenging months prior to Mr. Swan's arrival; and to all United Nations staff in Somalia for their continued commitment and excellent work under arduous conditions.



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