

Presentation to the UN Security Council
14 January 2010
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Mr President

I would like to begin by offering my sincerest condolences for the victims of the terrible earthquake in Haiti.

Recent well publicized international and regional developments have shone a new, stronger spotlight on Somalia. The crisis, which has become more than ever a tough challenge, can no longer be ignored. *Indeed the conflict is no longer local or even regional.* It is global. Since my last briefing to the Council, the Government of Somalia has made significant progress, despite repeated armed assaults to overthrow it by externally funded extremists.

The Government's accomplishments include: establishing itself in the capital; drawing up a budget for the first time in years, presenting its priorities and plans; recruiting and training security forces and keeping its political legitimacy over violent and extremist groups. At the same time, it has remained open to all Somalis who are ready for dialogue and reconciliation. The United Nations fully backs this peaceful approach which is already making progress on the ground with some patriotic Somali groups.

After years of conflict the situation in Somalia will not change overnight. However we are moving *from a failed state to a fragile state.*

To prevent the situation from deteriorating further, and spilling over into the region and further afield, we should join the dots. In Somalia the international community still has some good cards. It should play them right. That will allow it to overcome two main challenges.

The first is the absence of a concrete commitment and a determined international policy towards Somalia and its present leadership. Continued hesitation and the absence of effective action have encouraged the extremists and, at the same time, weakened the Government. A Government which is frequently attacked by well supported extremist groups. These groups have made it clear that their agenda is global and that Somalia is an easy and convenient entry point.

Here, it should be understood that the extremists responsible for the violence include many foreigners, who seek not only to overthrow the Government by force, but also to oppose the establishment of any Authority. Their ultimate objective is either to maintain a permanent state of anarchy or to establish a militant state. Their ambitions go well beyond Mogadishu and Somalia. Neither of these objectives – anarchy or a militant regime - represents the desire of the Somali people whose basic wish, like all people the world over, is to have peace and a Government that protects them and delivers services.

Moreover, the objectives of the extremists pose a real threat to the neighbouring countries, the IGAD region and countries afar. In fact, a closer evaluation of the situation demonstrates what we already know: – that Somalia has long been a threat not only to itself, but also to the wider world, with piracy being only the latest costly reminder. Even more worrying is the extremists' deep conviction that the crisis in Somalia is not important to the larger international community. This perceived lack of engagement provides them with a strong incentive to keep fighting. As a consequence, a line has been crossed in relation to security threats to many countries in and outside Africa exposing their vulnerabilities.

The second challenge is that, despite a massive consensus of support for the Government from the international community, that backing has yet to be translated into the necessary material assistance. For example, at the Brussels donors' conference on Somalia in April 2009, chaired by the UN Secretary General, USD 213 million were pledged. However, what has been disbursed is too small to have had the desired impact. In fact, since its formation, the Government has been operating with limited external resource disbursements. The only direct financial contributions were made by a small group of committed countries through a mechanism managed by a well known international auditing firm. Another Government has innovated with payment directly through the Central Bank of Somalia.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, the International Community has spent more than USD 8 billion in various forms of assistance for Somalia. Although this is a vast amount, it dealt primarily with the symptoms of the crisis and may have exacerbated the overall situation. At the same time, the Government lacks the resources to fund even some of the most basic requirements needed to function, such regularly paying salaries, including those of the Parliamentarians and the Security Forces. By contrast, the opponents of the Government and allied extremists receive unlimited and unchecked financial support.

Mr President

The crisis in Somalia has persisted for almost twenty years. The conditions will never be totally perfect for intervening in an optimum way. *Therefore, we can not afford to keep managing the status quo while waiting for the perfect conditions.* We should start somewhere. The Djibouti Agreement provides the international community with a practical entry point and the Government is the body through which to channel resources provided by the international community.

As a contribution to your debate, I would like to propose the following recommendations as crucial measures towards improving the situation.

The first is for the International Community to depart from past practices of uncoordinated efforts and individual diplomatic initiatives including one after another reconciliation conferences, meetings etc. A common policy objective must be supported. In that context the Djibouti Agreement should remain the means through which the combined efforts of the Somalis and their international partners achieve progress.

The second recommendation is to fully support the Government. The Security Council should send a strong and clear signal to the extremists by strengthening the Government in a practical manner. The Government needs to be helped to gradually become more effective in delivering services to the population and a more able international partner. Specifically, the international community should provide more vigorous moral, diplomatic and financial assistance. *Assistance delayed is assistance denied.* In the face of the mounting danger, sitting on the fence is no longer an option.

Thirdly, working more closely with the sub-regional organization, IGAD, the African Union, along with the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Conference, has become imperative. The African Union's peacekeeping mission to Somalia, AMISOM, deserves, as a matter of emergency, support through the following: increase of troop allowances to the international level, their timely disbursement and payment for lethal equipment. This is not only fair and a boost to the morale of the troops on the ground, but will send the right message of interest from the international community to potential troop contributing countries.

Fourthly the Council should address vigorously the role of the spoilers. It should encourage or pressurize these spoilers, both internal and external, to cease supporting violence. A clear and effective message, backed by concrete action, would demonstrate that those who fund the extremists, creating misery for innocent civilians, violating international laws including the widespread recruitment of child soldiers and threatening peace and stability in the whole region, will no longer enjoy impunity. The protection of civilians is an obligation long ignored in Somalia.

Lastly these recommendations will be more effectively implemented once the UN family working on Somalia operates, as in other UN political and peacekeeping missions, in an integrated and harmonized manner. Resolution 1863 (January 2009) has addressed this question. I believe the leadership at the Secretariat will ensure that this is put into action in the next few weeks. At the same time the move by the UN and the International Community to Mogadishu should be accelerated. To help the Somalis, especially the victims, we have to be with them.

Mr President

I realize the Security Council has numerous critical issues to address. Somalia is only one of them. However failure to actively intervene to restore stability to that country is already threatening the effectiveness of the international community in addition to costing vast amounts of resources. Failure to act now in a decisive manner can only dramatically increase that cost.

Thank You