



Speech by H.E. Mr Philippe Kridelka, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Security Council

Security Council Meeting on Somalia

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Dear Colleagues,

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the African Union's Peace and Security Council for their reports and actions. I would like to reiterate here our full support for them. Our thanks also go to Ms Hassan for her efforts to establish greater inclusion.

Today I would like to address the political situation, human rights issues and the humanitarian situation, as well as the latest security developments.

With regards to the political situation:

Belgium noted the authorities' choice of an indirect electoral model for the 2020-2021 elections. We welcome the dialogue that made it possible to reach this consensus. We appreciate the authorities' commitment to holding genuine elections by universal suffrage in 2024-2025 and encourage them to do their utmost to ensure that they take place in the best possible conditions. We also welcome their commitment to ensuring the participation of women in these processes. We also strongly encourage the authorities to broaden the democratic space in order to allow a large part of the population, so including women, as well as young people and displaced

persons, to participate in these processes, which are crucial for the country's future. In this context, we again express our concern about the attacks on journalists as they conduct their work and use their freedom of expression. These violations and obstacles, by their very existence, also contribute to the lack of consensus and public support for the authorities. However, the appointment by the Federal Government of a Special Prosecutor to investigate the murders of journalists represents a hope that justice will be done in this case.

Once the elections are over, we hope to see continued cooperation between the Federal Government and the federated member states. Dialogue is necessary, I would even say crucial, for deepening a functional federal model. The revision of the Constitution must also continue.

Alongside these expectations and challenges, Belgium would like to applaud the government's adoption of a national policy on climate change. This was discussed last Friday at the first meeting of the Council's Informal Expert Group on Climate and Security.

With regard to the human rights and humanitarian situation:

Belgium remains very concerned about the many grave violations against children documented in the report. We underline the importance of following up the latest conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. We call on all parties to put an end to these violations. In that regard, we welcome the release of 33 children by the Somali security forces last August.

Belgium also encourages the Government to continue the efforts required to implement the necessary legislation to combat several types of violation,

such as the draft law on sexual violence. On this point, we remain extremely concerned about the introduction into parliament of a new text that is clearly incompatible with Somalia's international obligations.

Lastly, we regret that the Independent National Commission on Human Rights has still not been set up three years after its official launch. This institution would, however, play a crucial role in monitoring human rights in Somalia.

The humanitarian situation remains complex. It is now impossible to ignore the triple threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, flooding and the locust invasion, which comes on top of persistent fragility. It is expected that four million Somalis will receive humanitarian aid by 2021. Belgium calls for broad support for these efforts.

Finally, a few words about the security sector:

Al-Shabaab remains the primary threat to the security and stability of the country. We strongly condemn the criminal actions committed by this group. The development and deployment of the Somali army is critical to containing this threat and protecting the population. We recall that the sanctions regime is another tool for combatting this threat. The fight against Al-Shabaab must, however, be carried out with respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

Belgium welcomes the ongoing consultative process aimed at revising the transition plan. This document will be crucial both in guiding Somalia, with the help of its partners, towards a resumption of security and in enabling the reconfiguration of AMISOM.

The independent evaluation of AMISOM will provide the Council with options regarding this reconfiguration. We hope that the African Union will soon become involved in joint reflections on this subject.

In conclusion, I would like to recall the support that the European Union is providing to Somalia, whether through the financing of AMISOM, the EUTM and EUCAP missions or the ATALANTA maritime counter-piracy operation. The aid for institutional capacity development is significant. Once security is restored, the Somali authorities must provide the population with the basic services and freedoms to which they legitimately aspire.

Thank you.