



**Jamhuuriyada Soomaaliya
Ergada Joogtada ah ee Qaramada Midoobay**

**Permanent Mission of the Somali
Republic to the United Nations**

**“Somalia: Prospects for Lasting Peace and
a United Response to Extremism and Terrorism”**

**Congress of the United States, House of Representative
Committee on Foreign Affairs’s
Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health**

Statement by

**H.E. Mohamed Abdulahi Omaar
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia**

Delivered by

**Mr. Idd Beddel Mohamed
Deputy Permanent Representative
Somali Mission to the United Nations**

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Washington DC**

**Mr. Chairman Donald M. Payne;
Ranking Member Christopher H. Smith;
Distinguished Members of the Committee;**

**Excellencies;
Distinguished guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Chairman Payne, Ranking Member Smith, I am here to deliver statement on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Abdulahi Omaar and represent him on this important hearing on Somalia.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia planned to address distinguished members of the Subcommittee. However, due to unexpected development in Somalia and necessary consultation within the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, it became impossible for the Minister to participate such hearing.

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased to have the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss both the narrow issue of piracy, the wider situation in Somalia, as well as terrorism and extremism and promotion for lasting peace and stability in the country.

First of all, On behalf of the people and government of Somalia, let me thank you and your team for our profound appreciation and gratitude on your recent visit to Mogadishu in order to meet leadership of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, assess the situation and see the facts on the ground.

We also recognize and appreciate your valuable moral and diplomatic support you have consistently shown to the people of Somalia and Horn of Africa region at this very difficult time in our history.

The great importance you and other distinguished members of the Committee attaches to democracy, good governance, human rights and accountable and transparent government our Horn of Africa region is testimony to commitment the Committee attaches for the plight of people in Horn of Africa to shape their destiny through democracy, rule of law and good governance.

Mr. Chairman,

Coming to specificity of our discussion, I am to inform you that the territorial waters off Somalia are key economic route for global trade. But they are also essential life line to the delivery of humanitarian supplies to the people of Somalia. And piracy off the coast of Somalia has become increasingly rampant, sophisticated, organized and threat to international peace and security.

Their actions are increasingly bold and violent. It is multi-million international criminal networks involving 2000 people and using over 60 small boats and several mother ships. Reports indicate that pirates operating in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden have received close to \$100 million in ransom payments since January 2008.

On January 2009, United Nations reported that "an 11 percent increase in the number of incidents of piracy or armed robbery at sea against ships in 2008. of the 293 incidents recorded for the year, 111 occurred off the coast of Somalia. This represents an annual increase of nearly 200 percent in the critical trade corridor linking the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean. In comparison to 2007, incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea in 2008 trebled".

In this context, piracy and armed robbery are now an international matter posing a great threat to international navigation, maritime trade, and security at sea and serious economic losses for many States.

That is why the Somali Government and international community have supported the adoption and implementation of the numerous UN Security Council Resolutions on the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia. Among them are 1814, 1816, 1838, 1846, 1848 and 1851 (2008). The Resolutions permits states, in corporate with Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, to eliminate the threat of piracy.

In December 2008, former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice convened high level Security Council Ministerial meeting to address this menace which led the adoption of the Security Council Resolution 1851 (2008).

The Resolution allows states to take appropriate actions against pirates. In paragraph 6, it permits States, with consent of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, to use all necessary actions that are appropriate in Somalia, for the purpose of suppressing acts of piracy. It enables States and regional organization to act using force if necessary against pirate activities on land. This is important additional tool to combat those who plan, facilitate or undertake acts of piracy from the territorial of Somalia.

It gave the international community what it required, sufficient legal authority and available mechanisms to apprehend and prosecute pirates as well as authorization to enter into Somali waters and use of force if necessary. It also created the establishment of Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia in New York.

These mechanisms demonstrated once again the commitment and confidence of the part of the international community and Somali Government in coming together and fighting piracy. The Somali Government has indeed cooperated with international community in the fight against piracy. We will continue to do so now and in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

We cannot look at the issue of piracy through the prism of international trade or shipping alone. Piracy off the coast of Somalia is not an isolated phenomenon. It is mere symptom of profound political, economic, social and humanitarian crises confronting Somalia. If we accept that

premise, I hope we will have no difficult in seeing the real way to tackle both piracy and instability in Somalia.

Therefore, there is a need to formulate an integrated strategy that is comprehensive and systematic undertaking between the Somali Government and international community.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent fighting in Somalia between the legitimate government of Somalia and radical groups in the country highlighted that the country may become haven for foreign extremist groups in Somalia. These groups have been using Somalia to destabilize the country and undermine the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia due to fragile security institutions. Extremists elements has been carrying out some time a war of intimidation and abduction. They have been practising a targated killing of innocent civilians as well as government officials th.

They have assassinated Somalis as well as non-Somalis who work life saving humanitarian aid agencies, journalists and women working for international NGOs. They had had links with international extremists groups. Therefore, the threat of extremism and terrorism in and from Somalia is real. Recently, they have been attacking Government of Somalia in an attempt to overthrow the government

Mr. Chairman,

The Transitional Federal Government of Somalia has been in office for about five months. It is a government that faced daunting challenges in terms of enhancing security in the country with no financial resources in place. The position of TFG was exasperated by inadequate or little financial support from the international community.

However, since the inception of the new unity government, a major step forward has been taken in the search for peace and stability in Somalia. During this short period, the Somali Government has successed in demobilizing some militias, established police stations, deploying Somali Police forces in the Capital and recruited former soldiers of the Somali National Army for enhancing security in the country.

A judicial system has been put in place; sea and airport are open and functioning. And for the first time in 15 years the Somali Government is collecting taxes and revenue from the local population.

On reconciliation front, the Government has taken tangible steps to reach out to those opposition groups which remained outside of the Djibouti peace process. Somali elders, scholars and religious groups have also engaged with opposition groups to convince them to join the government. The intention of the Somali government is to win hearts and minds of the Somalia through reconciliation and to bring about security and stability in the country through peaceful means.

Reconciliation as a Somali owned initiative has attracted concrete support for the Somali Government from local population while some hardeners will continue to pursue a hard-line agenda and refuse any efforts of peaceful reconciliation.

The approach also weakened Al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam since two pillars of its political platform have been removed by the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces and the decision of the new government to institute Sharia Law.

However, insurgency groups continue to attack Somali Government and AMISOM forces with a new influx of foreign fighters allied and in support of Shabaab and its radical agenda. Attacks by radical groups against combined forces of TFG and AMISOM are becoming more sophisticated, coordinated and lethal.

Most lethal of these was the double suicide bombing of the Burundi forces on 22 February 2009 in which 11 peacekeepers were killed and 28 soldiers injured. The second deadliest attack took place in Beledweyn on 18 June 2009 which killed Somali Minister of National Security, Hon. Omar Hashi Adan along with community leaders and other innocent civilian. It is therefore deeply regrettable that extremists groups in Somalia still continue to be the major impediment to the peace and stability in the country.

Mr. Chairman,

Indeed piracy and extremism, as twin threat to the peace and stability in Somalia, are merely the symptoms of a more fundamental challenge to peace and stability in Somalia. Its durable resolution lies not in the territorial or high sea but on land.

Therefore, the only sustainable way to address the problem of piracy and extremism is for the international community to assist in the restoration of peace and stability in Somalia, build local capacity of governance, and strengthen the Somali state by strengthening its security forces through the provision of resources, training and equipment.

At the same time, the international community and donor countries have fundamental responsibility to support in sustainable financial resources to African Union Forces in Somalia (AMISOM). The people and government of Somalia pay tribute to the dedication and courage of AMISOM troops who are paying a vital role on the ground in very difficult conditions.

Mr. Chairman,

As the people of the Somalia tackle the challenge, they will need sympathetic understanding and support of the international community. The search for peace in Somalia will not be smooth; nor will full peace be achieved that quickly.

The government that emerged from Djibouti conference will be a government in name unless the international community commits prompt and timely technical and financial resources to the new government in terms of rebuilding state institutions so it can play a meaningful role in restoration of peace and stability in Somali. In this difficult time in Somalia, lack of funding and resources constitute a major stumbling block.

There is two options before the international community in dealing with the situation in Somalia: to watch the country slide back into instability and chaos or empower the government to improve the lives of Somalia people by ending conflict and laying foundation for sustainable peace in the country.

This is referred to specifically in the Security Council resolution 1838 (2008) which states that peace and stability, the strengthening of state institutions, economic and social development, respect of human rights and rule of law are all essential to establishing the conditions to eliminate piracy and armed robbery in the waters off the coast of Somalia as well as addressing the threat to international peace and security.

The Somali Government and international community have now the opportunity to forge partnership in re-building of state institutions. The task in Somalia is not so much of narrow issue of piracy, but the wider situation of helping the Somali Government to devise institutions which are trusted and legitimate, which command the allegiance of the population. That is the goal of the Somali Government and I think it is still a reasonable aspiration for the international community.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member and Members of the Committee, I want to thank you for your leadership and wisdom in holding this hearing today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.