

Statement of Assistant Secretary Linda Thomas-Greenfield
Bureau of African Affairs
U.S. Department of State
Before the
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Subcommittee on African Affairs
Security and Governance in Somalia: Consolidating Gains, Confronting
Challenges, and Charting the Path Forward
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INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon, Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is my pleasure to appear before you today to talk about Somalia, which, during my tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, will remain a top foreign policy priority for the Department of State, as it is for the Obama Administration. The past year marked significant changes in Somalia and in our bilateral relationship with Somalia. The election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was a welcome signal that room for political progress in Somalia was opening. This was made possible, in part, by the international community's support of the Djibouti Peace Process and the leadership role of our regional partners, notably the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). On January 17, we formally recognized the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), after two decades of transitional governments. Nonetheless, the U.S. government also understood very clearly that Somalia would face considerable challenges as it worked to rebuild its statehood.

The successes of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), AMISOM troop-contributing countries, and strategic partners to combat and eviscerate al-Shabaab are demonstrating the strength of an Africa-led model. Nonetheless, this Somalia-based al-Qa'ida affiliate remains a dangerous presence. The all-too-recent terrorist attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, for which al-Shabaab has taken credit, is a chilling example of the challenges for Somalia and the region. This attack suggests that violent extremism in the Horn of Africa may be evolving. It also makes clear that al-Shabaab presents a threat to U.S. partner nations in East Africa, to American citizens, and to U.S. interests. Al-Shabaab must be stopped. The Federal Government of Somalia must increase its capacity to counter al-Shabaab, unify a fractured political system, and provide basic services to the Somali people. For all this, the government of Somalia needs our support – and much more of it. Our primary interest in Somalia is to help the

people of Somalia build a peaceful nation with a stable government, able to ensure civil security and services for its citizens. This in turn will prevent terrorists from using Somali territory as a safe haven.

U.S. Policy and Engagement in Somalia

Prior to our recognition of the Federal Government of Somalia, our Somalia policy had three primary elements:

- 1) provide support for the African Union Mission in Somalia, or AMISOM as it is commonly known, and AMISOM's strategic partner Ethiopia, to combat al Shabaab and provide political space for the government to operate;
- 2) respond to humanitarian crises and initiate stabilization where possible; and
- 3) promote our "dual-track" policy.

Post transition, these three elements of our Somali policy have evolved as follows:

- First, we continue to support AMISOM as the primary stabilizing force in Somalia, as we expand our assistance to the Somali National Army to build its institutional and operational capacity. From FY2007 through FY 2013, the United States obligated approximately \$512 million in support of AMISOM, in addition to our assessed contributions for the UN logistics support package for AMISOM. During that same period, we obligated more than \$170 million to support the Somali National Army to counter al-Shabaab more effectively.
- Second, we have shifted focus from humanitarian crisis response, now concentrating on security and stability, laying the foundation for economic recovery through our development-focused programming. In FY 2012 and FY 2013, we provided nearly \$140 million in funding to support Somalia's stabilization, democracy, and economic growth activities.
- Third, our dual-track approach concluded with the successful completion of the Djibouti Peace Process and the recognition of the Federal Government of Somalia. The United States has underscored the importance of outreach and engagement with the regional administrations to form the federal framework. We will continue to fund humanitarian assistance and civil society programs in

Somaliland and Puntland, with an objective of improving regional collaboration towards federalism.

Our assistance to Somalia includes an emphasis on human rights and accountability, child soldier prevention, countering human trafficking, and budget transparency and fiscal management.

Westgate Attack

The tragic and cowardly attack on innocents at Kenya's Westgate Mall has underscored vulnerabilities in the Horn of Africa and demonstrates that al Shabaab has a capable network in East Africa and is willing to carry out attacks outside Somalia. Concerted pressure from AMISOM and the Somali National Army has weakened al Shabaab's ability to wage conventional military offensives and to hold territory inside Somalia. We attribute this to the success of the African-led model for achieving greater stability in Somalia. However, al-Shabaab can still conduct destabilizing operations in the East Africa region. The Department is working closely with our regional partners on counterterrorism efforts, and we are reviewing internally what further resources we can shore up to further support AMISOM, secure the borders of Somalia and its neighbors, and contribute to the international effort to shape the Somali National Army into a cohesive, professional, and effective force

U.S. Presence

For the United States to effectively engage on these complex issues, understand local dynamics, build relationships, and manage our expanding programs in Somalia, we eventually need to establish a permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in Somalia. Ultimately, it is the security conditions in Somalia that will dictate when we can establish a more permanent presence and we recognize that the time is not right to do this. However, we are moving in that direction. Our current posture allows for our Nairobi-based diplomatic team to travel into the Somali capital and other key regions with increased frequency and duration, as security conditions permit.

Federalism/Political Cooperation

Building political cooperation among Somali regions and clans in support of the Federal framework is essential, if democracy, economic growth, and security

are truly to take hold in Somalia. This is a message that President Hassan Sheikh emphasized during his Washington meetings with Secretary Kerry, Secretary Hagel, and National Security Advisor Rice. We see budding signs that Hassan Sheikh is meaningfully engaging regional administrations: The Somali Federal Government signed the Jubbaland Accords on August 22, recognizing the regional entity and mapping a way forward to become a federal state; the Federal government introduced a roadmap to the 2016 elections with a focus on political inclusion and security; and Mogadishu and Somaliland came to an agreement on regulating air-space, a step towards wider reconciliation.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the development of participatory, accountable, and representative governmental institutions that respond to the needs of the Somali people will secure the country's future. We are committed to work with the Government and people of Somalia to help them realize this vision.