



United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS)

Letter to the members of the Somali Diaspora (No. 21)

Nairobi, 06 January 2010

As-Salaamu Alaikum,

Dear friends,

1. My warmest greetings and best wishes to you all for a more peaceful 1431 and 2010.

2. 2010 marks not only the beginning of a New Year but also a new decade. Like all peace-loving Somalis and all others who support you, I wish that during this New Year, and especially at the beginning of a new decade, peace and stability will finally take hold in Somalia. Many around the world set personal goals to improve their lives on New Year's Day. Let our collective resolution for 2010 be the return of real sovereignty, dignity and the beginning of prosperous decade. Also, as I mentioned in earlier letters, it is still my hope that Somalis will follow the example of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the spirit of Al Hudaibiya Pact (I do not apologise for continuing to remind you of the important lesson of this Pact). It is my wish that compromise, forgiveness and inclusion will prevail over armed confrontation and exclusion.

3. As we all look forward to the New Year we should also look back and reflect on 2009 and, in particular, on the positive achievements.

4. Following the signing of the Djibouti Agreement in 2008, the Parliament was enlarged in January 2009 and elected the new President, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. Less than a month later, there was a new Prime Minister and shortly afterwards a Government. Both moved, along with Parliament and the President to Mogadishu. This Government, although under attack by externally funded extremists, has been in place for a year now and, despite some pessimistic predictions, was not defeated by the attempted coup in May.

5. In April 2009, the UN Secretary-General convened a meeting of the International Community at the highest level bringing together the leaders of the African Union, European Commission, European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference, the UN and World Bank along with senior representatives from about 60 countries and numerous other organizations. The Conference, aimed at supporting security in Somalia, pledged more than \$213 million for Somalia's security forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Even though disbursement is slow, this was still an unprecedented show of support for your country.

6. The International Community held four meetings of the International Contact Group under my chairmanship in 2009 – the last took place in Jeddah on 17 December 2009. This meeting, hosted by the Organization of Islamic Conference and attended by the Somali Prime Minister, welcomed the concrete progress made by the TFG and its plans for the future, as well as its commitment to continue its outreach to those Somalis ready to renounce violence and promote peace.

7. Overall in 2009 the Government was able to make some significant achievements. These included the improvement of the Government's ability to address basic governance especially the formulation of a budget, the first in five years, the recruitment and training of additional security forces, the reorganisation of the security sector, strengthening of ministries and a documented response to requests from the Nairobi-based international community. The Government also put Radio Mogadishu back on air using its own funding, making it an important tool in connecting with its people and dispelling misinformation. At the same time I would like to call on Parliamentarians to protect the Parliament and not to spend valuable time with counter productive motions to dismiss the Cabinet, Speaker etc. Somalia is in an emergency situation. Parliamentarians should show respect for constructive principles. The International Community should also respect its commitment vis-a-vis the Parliamentarians.

8. There were also some horrific attacks carried out by the extremists – not least the appalling December 3 suicide bombing of the graduation of medical students which left the future doctors of Somalia and their families dead alongside doctors, journalists and three ministers. This attack against a university, funded by some of your Diaspora colleagues, has united all Somalis, inside and outside the country, as never before, to challenge the violence and bloodshed. Their voices were united against the killing and this is the message that should follow us into 2010. Once again, I call on the traditional elders, businessmen, women and the young to unite against the murder of the innocents.

9. It was particularly troubling that the man responsible for so much carnage was a Somali living in Denmark. And he was not the first to return to Somalia, after being given sanctuary abroad to spill the blood of his countrymen and women. The suicide bomber in Bossasso in 2008 was a Somali-American from Minnesota. And we have since seen the attempted assault carried out last week in Aarhus, Denmark by a Somali living in the country. The sponsors of these young men are destroying the reputation of Somalia and contributing to the worsening plight of their compatriots inside and outside the country. Those abroad in the Diaspora, are likely to be regarded with increasing suspicion, and those inside the country may find no welcome abroad.

10. Another appalling dimension of the conflict is that those behind these murderous acts do not hesitate to openly claim responsibility for their actions. This is because they have enjoyed impunity for so long. I am surprised that they do not fear retribution from the Almighty or from an internal or international tribunal. It will however come, sooner or later.

11. No one will be able to blame the international community for turning its focus more towards security and terrorism and away from other forms of funding. Therefore in 2010 the Diaspora will be needed more than ever to step in and fill the gap. Somalia is your country and if you can contribute, in whatever way possible, towards helping state building, it will not only be of material use, but will also show the world that Somalis do not rely on handouts from others. Outside funders are also more likely to help, once they see Somalis helping themselves. And, as I have always maintained, a thousand dollars now is worth far more than a promise of ten thousand dollars next year.

12. It is my sincere hope that the New Year will be a year of expanding stability and peace.

Yours Faithfully,
Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah