

UN Special Envoy, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, is Part of the Somali Problem

A protest letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Prepared by: Concerned Somali Citizens

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To:
The Secretary-General of United Nations,
Cc:
UN Security Council Members
EU Member States, Arab League, IGAD Member States
Other Stakeholders of the Somali State
President of the TFG of Somalia
Prime Minister of the TFG of Somalia
President of Puntland State of Somalia
President of Somaliland

Your Excellency,

We are a group of concerned Somali Citizens in the Diaspora, who strongly believe that the UN Special Envoy to Somalia Mr. **Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah** has become part of the Somali Problem. We would like to develop in the following paragraphs some facts that substantiate our opening argument.

The Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah as the UN Special Envoy to Somalia in September 2007. Back then the Transitional Federal Parliament was in Baidoa City. The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) had full control of most of the Capital City Mogadisho. Large areas in South and Central Somalia were also under the TFG control. The National Reconciliation Conference of the Somali Clans has been concluded in Mogadisho, and the Resolutions have been signed by 191 Clan Leaders ¹. There was hope and optimism that the political process of the country would move forward.

In September 2009 the TFG had lost control of all territories it controlled except few blocks in the Capital Mogadisho. The active conflicts are displacing innocent people in large numbers. Foreign extremist elements are streaming into Somalia in big numbers². The political and reconciliation process has seriously been damaged.

And why are all these negative developments happening? The Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed **Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah** as the UN Special Envoy to Somalia in September 2007. Since then, Mr Ould-Abdallah has been engaged in a series of activities that are inconsistent with the mandate of his office. We will examine 3 areas where the UN Special Envoy had played damaging roles.

His engagement in local politics

Since **Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah** came to the Somali scene he was playing heavy-handed politics, aligned himself with some of the stakeholders in the country and alienated others in the process. He involved himself deeply in the country's intricate local politics. He clashed publicly with the TFG's first President when the later asked him to stop meddling in the TFG's internal affairs^{3,4}. He lobbied other stakeholders and the international community for support⁴ and steered the country's political system to the dangerous situation it is in today. The office of the UN Special Envoy to Somalia has been instrumental in the development of the Djibouti Reconciliation Process that created the existing TFG system, which is holed in the Presidential Villa and protected by AMISOM troops. The 550-member parliament has difficulty getting the quorum or the venue to deliberate. By all counts this was seriously flawed project that produced unsustainable governance structure for the country.

He has assumed the demeanor of a Senior Statesman of Somali Nation, directly competing against the Somali administrations. He has been organizing Somali Diaspora meetings^{5,6,7} around the world, giving lectures and sending messages all in the name of Somali State. A lot of Somalis see his actions as patronizing, provocative and too much of meddling in the internal affairs of the nation.

A nation that cannot defend itself, that has no institutions to run its affairs, that is broke and fully dependent on handouts from the international community is indeed at the mercy of **Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah**, and he is not steering the ship in the right direction. He has indeed become part of the Somali problem.

His focus in Top-Down Approach to Solution of Somali Crises

There has been recognition by all stakeholders in Somalia that there are 2 important elements to the resolution of the Somali Crises:

- The Somali Crises have to be solved by the Somalis themselves.
- The country needs to be reconstituted slowly from bottom-up approach.

The UN system recognized these important elements when the former General-Secretary of the United Nations Mr. Kofi Anan issued a comprehensive 16-page Report (S/1999/882) on 16th of Aug 1999 and stated that, " ..with Puntland joining hands with Somaliland the first step could be taken towards the resuscitation of Somalia.." ⁸

The UN Special Envoy to Somalia has put the efforts of his Office and the international community efforts towards the support of the centralized top-down approach to the solution of Somali Problem. While we understand and support the assistance to the humanitarian crises in Mogadisho, we take the position that Somalia is not Mogadisho only. The return on investments in the peaceful parts of the country is more effective than the troubled areas, which have been receiving disproportionate support and attention.

Unfortunately, The UN Special Envoy to Somalia shows little respect for the Recovery Zones in Somalia that have organized their communities and achieved a degree of governance. He rarely visits The Recovery Areas, rarely mentions their name(s) in his Diaspora speeches and never complements the tremendous good work some communities are doing to help each other and rebuild their lives. His actions are stark contradiction to statements he made in his book *BURUNDI ON THE BRINK (1993 – 95)*⁹, in which he criticizes the unintended consequences of humanitarian assistance the world system offers to the poor⁹.

His Role in Questionable Secret Deals

The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Mr Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah initiated in Oct 2008 a process to prepare preliminary information indicative of the outer limits of the continental shelf of Somalia beyond the 200 nautical miles ^{10,11,12, 13}. The SRSG “accepted an offer of assistance from the Government of Norway” ¹¹. There is no evidence in this report that the SRSG has informed the relevant TFG authority of the activities he is undertaking on its behalf. The new Djibouti TFG was sworn in on 22 Feb 09. According to this report, the SRSG has informed the TFG for the first time in a Nairobi meeting on 10 March 09. The meeting was, reportedly, attended by Prof Ibbi, deputy SRSG and an official from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This is a bizarre story! Based on the records in this report, the SRSG has been keeping secret his dealing with the Norwegian Party that produced the Commission Report for about 6 months. But Mr. Ould-Abdalla denies that he knew anything about the matter when repeatedly questioned by Mathew Russel of Inner City Press in May 2009, in a Press Conference at the UN Headquarters¹³.

It is important to establish what the SRSG actually did, and what the legal standing of this kind of activities are, under International Law.

A memorandum of understanding based on the Norwegian Report¹¹ was signed between Kenya and TFG in Nairobi on April 7, 2009, only to be rejected by the TF Parliament in Aug, 2009.

Concluding Remarks

You Excellency, the actions by the UN Special Envoy to Somalia described above have undermined the efforts of World Body and the International community to revive the collapsed Somali State. We believe his activities are inconsistent with the mandate of his Office, and as a result the UN credibility has suffered. Therefore, we respectfully ask for an investigation into the activities of this Office, and appropriate actions to correct the situation.

Thanks

Concerned Somali Citizens

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2. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/12/world/12terror.html> - Some in Qaeda Leave Pakistan for Somalia and Yemen.
3. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5836&l=1> Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State.
4. <http://somalitalk.com/2008/dec/19dec508.html> ICG Meeting in UN Headquarters in New York on 16 December 2008.
5. http://www.un-somalia.org/Pressroom/Press_Releases/UNPOS_Media_Advisory71.asp Letter to the members of the Somali Diaspora - Nairobi, 28 May 2008:
6. http://www.un-somalia.org/Pressroom/Press_Releases/UNPOS_Media_Advisory117.asp Letter to the members of the Somali Jaaliyadda Djibouti, 28 January 2009:
7. <http://www.un-somalia.org/docs/14%20Letter%20to%20the%20Diaspora.doc> Letter to the members of the Somali Jaaliyadda (no 14) Nairobi, 7 May 2009
8. <http://www.somaliawatch.org/archivemar02/020311501.htm> - The International Community can help Somalia if it accepts that Somali Crises have to be solved by the Somalis themselves.
9. *ON THE BRINK* (1993 – 95) Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah "Humanitarian assistance can not only hamper a speedy return to normal economic activity but also permanently hobble the economies of countries in which shortages of food, social services, and infrastructure are customary. Once the machinery of assistance has been created, neither the local population -- who quickly come to rely on the supplies and services provided -- nor the aid workers themselves -- who understandably come to see themselves as indispensable -- are willing to return to the pre-crisis situation. Furthermore, the growing dependence of the local population on foreign assistance is matched by a growing cynicism regarding the motives for its provision." (Page 127).
10. <http://www.innercitypress.com/los1somalia041909.html> - Matthew Russell Lee - Pirates of the Pen - Off Somali Coast, Norway, UN and Kenya Make Plan for Drilling Rights
11. <http://www.innercitypress.com/los3somalia.pdf> Norwegian Report – the SRSG "initiated the preparation of preliminary information indicative of the outer limits of the continental shelf of Somalia beyond 200 nautical miles... In the preparation of this material the SRSG accepted an offer of assistance from the Government of Norway... Both the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate have been involved in the preparation... All of the expenses related to the preparation of the present submission have been covered by the Government of Norway."
12. <http://www.innercitypress.com/los2somalia.pdf> - Memorandum of understanding between the government of Kenya and TFG, April 2009.
13. <http://webcast.un.org/ramgen/ondemand/pressconference/2009/pc090529pm2.rm> UN webcast, SRSG getting questions from Mathew Russel of Inner City Press.
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