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Situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution [2461 \(2019\)](#) and paragraph 33 of Council resolution [2472 \(2019\)](#) and provides updates on the implementation of those resolutions, including on the mandates of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS). The report covers major developments in Somalia during the period from 5 February to 4 May 2020 and specific measures related to UNSOS between 1 November 2019 and 30 April 2020.

II. Political, security and economic overview

A. Political developments

2. On 20 February, the President of Somalia, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed “Farmajo”, signed the electoral bill into law, following its passage through Parliament a day earlier. In the federal member states, steps were taken towards reconciliation among some stakeholders in Galmudug, the new members of the state assembly in South-West State took office and Puntland held a consultative conference of political stakeholders. However, relations between the Federal Government and some federal member states remained strained. The deployment of Somali National Army forces to the Gedo Region of Jubbaland resulted in clashes, with wider regional implications, and opposition parties in Mogadishu continued to express concern about limited political space. A decision-making forum of leaders of the Federal Government and the federal member states has not been convened since June 2018.

3. On 19 February, the House of the People approved bills concerning civil aviation, quality control, the national census, the media, and retirement and benefits for members of the armed forces, and submitted them to the Upper House for review and approval. Mr. Farmajo commended the two houses on their cooperation, which enabled the passage of 20 bills during the parliamentary session.

4. On 5 March, in Istanbul, Turkey, opposition politicians belonging to the Forum for National Parties stated their intention to form a single political alliance ahead of national elections, urging like-minded opposition parties to join them.



5. On 16 March, Somalia confirmed its first case of coronavirus disease (COVID--19). The authorities announced a two-week ban on all international flights from 18 March, which was subsequently extended indefinitely.
6. On 15 April, the Speakers of both houses of Parliament announced their decision to postpone the start of the next parliamentary session, originally scheduled for 10 April, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the advice issued by the Ministry of Health, until alternative virtual arrangements were in place.
7. In South-West State, the selection of new state assembly members concluded on 19 March. The members were sworn in on 23 March. On 1 April, Ali Said Fiqi, Mohamednur Mohamed Moallim and Shamsi Mohamed Yarow were elected Speaker and First and Second Deputy Speakers, respectively. On 20 April, the state assembly voted in favour of a motion to give the state President, Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed “Laftagareen”, a one-year extension, aligning the terms of office of the state President and the state assembly.
8. On 8 February, 2 March and 22 April, armed clashes erupted in Beledxaawo, Gedo Region, near the border between Somalia and Kenya, between the Somali National Army and militiamen loyal to the Minister of Security of Jubbaland, Abdirashid Hassan Abdirur “Janan”. The clashes heightened tensions between Somalia and Kenya. Mr. Farmajo and the President of Kenya, Uhuru Kenyatta, took steps to de-escalate tensions, including through a telephone conversation on 5 March, followed by high-level ministerial visits to Mogadishu and Nairobi. On 23 April, in Nairobi, the President of Jubbaland, Ahmed Mohamed Islam “Madobe”, and his political opponents from the Jubbaland Council for Change reached an agreement to recognize his contested election in August 2019 and form a coalition government.
9. Heavy fighting erupted between Ahl al-Sunna wal Jama’a (ASWJ), the Somali National Army and the special “Haramcad” police in the Dhuusamarreeb area of Galmudug on 27 and 28 February, which resulted in dozens of casualties. On 29 February, the ASWJ leadership surrendered to the Federal Government. Following his election on 2 February, the President-elect of Galmudug, Ahmed Abdi Kaariye, continued to reach out to the outgoing President of the state, Ahmed Duale Gelle “Haaf”, and the political opposition, which culminated in the peaceful handover of power on 12 April, albeit in the absence of the ASWJ leadership.
10. On 24 March, the Hirshabelle state assembly approved a budget of \$14 million for 2020, with the possibility of a supplemental budget in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.
11. On 6 February, Puntland ordered the closure of the National Independent Electoral Commission office in Garoowe and suspended its activities in the state. From 15 to 17 March, the President of Puntland, Said Abdullahi Mohamed Deni, hosted a consultative conference in Garoowe to discuss the state’s trajectory. A delegation of the Federal Government led by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ahmed Isse Awad, also attended. The conference participants issued a communiqué, in which they called for the postponement of the constitutional review process until after elections and criticized the new electoral law, stating, *inter alia*, that it contradicted the Provisional Federal Constitution. They also called for a consultative conference of all Somali political stakeholders to deliberate and agree on ways to hold elections in 2020/21. At the conclusion of the conference, Mr. Deni announced his intention to travel to Mogadishu and federal member state capitals to advance the dialogue.
12. On 29 February, in the Sool and Sanaag Regions disputed by “Somaliland” and Puntland, intermittent skirmishes resumed between forces loyal to the two sides, in breach of the *de facto* ceasefire brokered in 2018 by the United Nations and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

13. On 27 February, the President of “Somaliland”, Muse Bihi Abdi, and opposition party leaders signed an agreement on organizing parliamentary and local council elections by the end of 2020.

14. On 11 February, Mr. Farmajo and Mr. Bihi met for the first time since each assumed office in 2017. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Abiy Ahmed, brokered the meeting, which was held in Addis Ababa. On 13 February, Mr. Farmajo asked for the forgiveness of the people of “Northern Somalia”, expressing regret for human rights violations committed by the regime of Siad Barre. Mr. Bihi accepted the gesture on 18 February during his annual address to the Parliament of “Somaliland”.

B. Security developments

15. The security situation remained volatile, with 235 incidents in January, 274 in February, 278 in March and 299 in April. This was due mainly to higher numbers of terrorism-related incidents, such as mortar attacks, improvised explosive device attacks and assassinations. Levels of crime and armed conflict-related incidents have remained steady since January.

16. Al-Shabaab significantly increased its mortar attacks in Mogadishu. The Aden Adde International Airport zone, in which the United Nations compound is located, was attacked with 60 mm mortars on 17 February, 1 and 18 March and 19 and 26 April, the highest number of indirect fire attacks on the zone ever recorded. None of the mortars that landed in the attack on 17 February detonated. The attack on 1 March injured an international contractor. The attack on 18 March resulted in slight injuries to an international staff member. The attack on 19 April resulted in minor injuries to an international contractor. The attack on 26 April left five civilians injured and one dead in the vicinity of the zone, where one of the mortars landed. In a separate incident on the same day, an improvised explosive device detonated near one of the gates to the zone, without casualties.

17. Mortar attacks also increased countrywide, with a total of 29 between February and April, compared with 7 between November and January. The attacks mainly targeted the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and local security forces in Bari, Hiraan, Shabelle Dhexe, Shabelle Hoose and Juba Hoose. On 11 March, mortars targeting a police training centre in Jawhar, Shabelle Dhexe, landed near the runway and the United Nations-AMISOM base, but caused no casualties or damage.

18. In addition to mortar attacks, Al-Shabaab maintained the capability to conduct larger attacks against security forces in southern Somalia. In Shabelle Hoose on 19 February, the group launched two complex attacks with vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices against AMISOM and Somali National Army bases in Qoryooley and Ceel Saliini, Marka district. The latter reportedly resulted in over 20 casualties among members of the Somali National Army. On 16 March, the Somali National Army and AMISOM liberated the town of Jannaale. In response, Al-Shabaab increased its attacks in the area, including with indirect fire and a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device against AMISOM troops on 16 March, reportedly leaving at least five soldiers dead. The group detonated two additional devices of the same kind on 24 April in a foiled attack on the AMISOM-Somali National Army base in Baraawe, Shabelle Hoose, in which the two suicide bombers were killed.

19. While a general decrease was observed in the number of civilian casualties from Al-Shabaab activity, the group increased its high-profile attacks. In March, the Governor of Nugaal was killed by a person-borne improvised explosive device in Garoowe, while the Chief of the Somali Defence Forces was targeted by an improvised explosive device in Shabelle Hoose, resulting in injuries to two soldiers. A second person-borne improvised explosive device targeted a restaurant in

Mogadishu on 25 March, leaving four people dead. Al-Shabaab also used such devices to destroy closed-circuit television cameras in Mogadishu for the second time in 2020, thereby reducing the ability of the Somali authorities to prevent attacks.

20. An increase in assassinations claimed by Al-Shabaab was also recorded, with 7 in January, 16 in February, 21 in March and 16 in April. Six were attributed to pro-Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) elements in Mogadishu and Boosaaso, Bari Region, representing a slight increase compared with the previous period, when only three incidents were recorded. A total of 9 air strikes in February, 11 in March and 10 in April were recorded, mainly in Juba Dhexe, Juba Hoose, Bakool and Bay, targeting Al-Shabaab. In the first four months of 2020, there were 37 air strikes, compared with 47 in 2018 and 63 in 2019.

21. On 4 May, an African Express Airways aircraft registered in Kenya, chartered by the non-governmental organization INTERSOS to carry humanitarian cargo, crashed on approach to Bardaale, South-West State, reportedly killing all six persons on board. The cause of the crash has not been identified.

C. Economic developments

22. On 25 March, Somalia reached the decision point under the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. The country's arrears to the World Bank and the African Development Bank were cleared on 5 March through bridge loans from Norway, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. IMF secured funding from over 100 member countries to clear the Somali arrears to the Fund.

23. On 6 March, the World Bank and IMF issued a joint staff advisory note on the ninth national development plan, for the period 2020–2024, noting that the plan exceeded the standards of a typical interim poverty reduction strategy. Key drivers of poverty are identified in the plan, and it provides a road map for strengthening national resilience, building on the recovery and resilience framework.

24. The COVID-19 outbreak has already had a significant economic impact. The Federal Government has projected an 11 per cent decline in nominal gross domestic product for 2020, with inward transfers and remittances expected to fall by an estimated 40 per cent. Revenue collection has declined. On 27 March, the Federal Government issued a socioeconomic impact and required response plan costed at \$503.5 million, describing key macroeconomic, sectorial, fiscal and health sector considerations that require additional and rapid support to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

25. The United Nations and the World Bank are coordinating their reviews of existing programming as they plan their responses to COVID-19 across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. The plans are focused on accelerating or scaling up existing programmes to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the disease, while adapting and adjusting other programming to changing market realities.

III. Support for peacebuilding and state-building efforts

A. Establishment of a functional federal state

1. Preparations for elections

26. In the electoral law, a new first-past-the-post electoral system is proposed, with 275 constituencies in the House of the People and 54 Upper House seats. However,

several key issues require clarification for the law to be implementable, including defining constituencies, allocating seats and ensuring the representation of women. On 28 February, the Speakers of both houses of Parliament established a 17-member joint ad hoc committee to formulate recommendations that address key issues of the law, in consultation with the National Independent Electoral Commission, the federal member states and other stakeholders. The committee is scheduled to present its recommendations at a joint parliamentary session, but timelines for the completion of its work are unclear on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in collaboration with UNSOM and the World Bank, will provide videoconferencing facilities so that Parliament can continue to work on elections and the constitutional review. UNDP and UNSOM also supported the drafting of amendments to the parliamentary rules and procedures to allow for virtual proceedings and voting.

27. The first reading of the amendments to the political parties law was deferred to the next parliamentary session. The delay in the resumption of Parliament will have an adverse impact on deadlines for political parties to receive official registration and nominate candidates.

28. In a meeting held from 15 to 18 March, the National Electoral Security Task Force adopted its terms of reference and reviewed the draft concept of security for voter registration. Police commissioners present provided an update on threat assessments for Galmudug, Hirshabelle, South-West State and Banaadir. They also agreed to conduct detailed assessments of provisional voter registration sites and to establish state security task forces.

2. Deepening federalism

29. The protracted political stalemate between the Federal Government and some federal member states continued to hamper progress on critical national priorities. While technical cooperation between federal and state ministries continued, a new round of ministerial consultations on debt relief was postponed owing to the withdrawal of Puntland and Jubbaland.

30. The United Nations continued to support international efforts aimed at facilitating the resumption of political dialogue between the Federal Government and federal member states. My Special Representative, in coordination with international partners, met on several occasions with Mr. Farmajo and the Prime Minister, Hassan Ali Khayre, to urge them to repair the frayed relationship in order to advance national priorities. My Special Representative conveyed similar messages to the federal member states, including during meetings held with the leaders of South-West State and Puntland on 8 and 9 March, respectively, and through telephone calls with other federal member state leaders. Mr. Farmajo has designated a focal point for relations between the Federal Government and federal member states and has invited federal member state leaders to appoint representatives to a secretariat that will prepare for a summit in the second quarter of 2020.

3. Constitutional review

31. On 6 February, the joint parliamentary Oversight Committee submitted to the Speakers of the two houses of Parliament its report on the tripartite working session held in Istanbul on 5 November, as well as a revised draft constitution.

32. Further to the commitment of the Federal Government in the Mutual Accountability Framework to conclude the constitutional review consultations by the end of March 2020, the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, the joint parliamentary Oversight Committee and the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission launched multi-stakeholder consultations in

Hirshabelle, Galmudug and South-West State on 1 March. Unresolved differences between the Federal Government and Puntland and Jubbaland meant that consultations were not held in those two states. The political impasse, the inability of Parliament to resume its work in April and COVID-19-related movement restrictions make it unlikely that a revised constitution will be adopted by June 2020, contrary to the Mutual Accountability Framework.

4. Prevention and resolution of conflicts

33. On 7 March, the Hirshabelle administration stated that the land dispute between the Abadalla Aroni and Eli Omar clans in Cadale district, Shabelle Dhexe, had been resolved, with the parties agreeing, inter alia, to pay compensation to some of the victims. On 10 March, the Ba'ide and Sa'ad Yonis sub-clans, long-term antagonists in Ceel Afweyn, Sanaag Region, began an exchange of compensation for the victims of the conflict, following an agreement brokered by traditional and religious leaders under the auspices of "Somaliland".

34. Following the armed clashes near the Somali-Kenyan border in the Gedo Region between the Somali National Army and militiamen loyal to Mr. Janan, my Special Representative, together with international partners, engaged with the Federal Government and the Jubbaland authorities to stop the violence and de-escalate tensions. On 8 March, the United Nations and 10 international partners issued a joint statement in which they called upon all actors to exercise restraint, reduce the presence of security forces in Gedo and avoid any actions that could trigger violence. They also urged dialogue between the Federal Government and Jubbaland and underscored the importance of cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states to achieve national priorities.

35. On 11 April, elders from the Majerteen and Awramale clans agreed to a ceasefire following intermittent clashes over disputed land south-west of Kismaayo. The clashes claimed more than 50 lives between 2 February and 2 April. Meanwhile, in early April, following a clan conflict that resulted in over 25 fatalities in Wanlaweyn, Shabelle Hoose, Mr. Laftagareen constituted an intervention committee to de-escalate the conflict. On 24 April, a reconciliation conference involving the clans, the regional administration and the Somali National Army began in the affected district. In addition, on 6 April, an inter-clan conflict erupted between the Wagarda'a of Marehan and the Saleeban of Habar Gidir in the villages of Balli-Cad and Foronta-Fora, Galgaduud. Security forces were deployed on 7 April to stop the fighting and the Galmudug authorities initiated reconciliation efforts.

B. Cross-cutting issues

1. Gender equality and the empowerment of women

36. The new South-West State assembly has 14 members who are women (15 per cent) and 81 who are men. This is a significant decrease in the representation of women compared with the 22 per cent of members who were women in the previous assembly, falling short of the minimum constitutional requirement of 20 per cent.

37. International Women's Day on 8 March was observed in Mogadishu and federal member states as a platform to increase awareness of gender equality and women's rights. UNSOM provided financial and technical support to all federal member states and "Somaliland", contributing to discussions on laws protecting women's rights, as well as to advocacy on the 30 per cent quota for women and their enhanced leadership role in politics.

38. On 7 March in Garoowe, the Ministry of Women Development and Family Affairs organized a panel discussion on ways and strategies to include a 30 per cent quota for women in the Puntland local council elections law. On 11 March, UNSOM trained 39 women in Kismaayo on gender mainstreaming and conflict-related sexual violence as part of a three-day training workshop jointly organized by AMISOM and the Ministry of Women, Family Affairs and Human Rights of Jubbaland.

2. Youth empowerment

39. On 18 February, Mr. Bihi established the “Somaliland” youth development fund to help to encourage creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship among young people.

40. Youth programmes implemented during the reporting period addressed connections between employment, youth marginalization and inclusion, in particular the political empowerment of young people and their inclusion in governance mechanisms. The joint programme on the political empowerment of young people, implemented in partnership by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in South-West State and Jubbaland, targeted the development of inclusive processes to support and collectively empower young people in the development trajectory of Somalia, including by establishing district youth councils and providing capacity-building workshops for young people.

41. In February, with the support of UNFPA, 40 midwives graduated from the Hargeysa Health Institute and 25 from the Mogadishu Midwifery Institute after two years of intensive competency-based training.

42. UNFPA renewed efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation in Somalia by engaging with young men and women through forums and community dialogue. On 6 February, it supported youth-led public forums in Garoowe and Hargeysa in commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. A total of 1,000 government officials, women activists, young people and internally displaced persons participated in the events.

C. Development coordination

43. The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to further delays in various development coordination processes and the postponement of key milestones expected in March, such as the endorsement and operationalization of a refined aid architecture aligned to government road maps and the national development plan. Improvements to the triple nexus are proposed under the architecture; however, different visions of the architecture within the Federal Government continue to hinder progress on aid and development policy cooperation. The United Nations, development partners, donors and the Federal Government are discussing alternative measures to facilitate development coordination, including virtual means.

IV. Human rights and protection

A. Human rights

44. During the reporting period, UNSOM recorded 277 civilian casualties, including 158 killed and 119 injured, compared with 183 killed and 267 injured during the previous reporting period. Clan militias were the main perpetrators, responsible for 28 per cent of civilian casualties (78), followed by Al-Shabaab with 27 per cent (75). Other perpetrators included State security forces with 23 per cent (64), unknown

perpetrators with 16 per cent (43, including 11 casualties from fighting in Dhuusamarreeb, Galgaduud Region, between federal security forces and ASWJ), unidentified foreign forces conducting aerial attacks with 3 per cent (9) and AMISOM with 3 per cent (8).

45. On 18 February, Al-Shabaab carried out its first targeted assassination in 2020 when it shot dead a former electoral delegate in the town of Buurhakaba, Bay Region. The delegate had participated in the electoral process in South-West State in 2016/17.

46. Violations of freedom of expression remain a concern, and attacks against journalists continue. During the reporting period, six journalists were arrested in Mogadishu, five in Puntland, two in South-West State and one in Jubbaland. Of these, one journalist was charged with publishing false information and another was arrested for canvassing public opinion about COVID-19. In addition, on 15 February, one journalist was shot dead by unidentified armed men in Afgooye district, Shabelle Hoose, and another was stabbed to death in Mogadishu on 4 May.

47. A total of 89 individuals were arbitrarily arrested or detained, of whom 49 were subsequently released without charge or being brought before a court, as required under the Code of Criminal Procedure. Most of those arrested or detained were suspected of being Al-Shabaab members (55).

48. Two civilian men were executed in Boosaaso, Bari Region, after being sentenced to death for raping and killing a 12-year-old girl in Gaalkacyo, Mudug Region, on 11 February. Five members of the Somali security forces (police and military) were sentenced to death by military courts in Mogadishu, South-West State, Jubbaland and “Somaliland”. One suspected pro-ISIL affiliate was sentenced to death by the Mogadishu military court after being found guilty of killing a police officer.

49. In line with United Nations guidance on protecting human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic, UNSOM provided technical assistance to the government authorities to support mitigation of the effects of the pandemic on human rights, including the rights of persons in detention. To ease overcrowding in prisons, the Somali authorities pardoned 936 inmates in April: 574 in “Somaliland”, 194 in Puntland, 148 in Mogadishu, 11 in South-West State and 9 in Hirshabelle.

50. In response to concerns relating to the protection of civilians in the stand-off in Gedo, my Deputy Special Representative, in his capacity as Humanitarian Coordinator, called upon all parties to take all precautionary measures to minimize harm to civilians and safeguard their movement out of conflict areas so that they might have unobstructed access to humanitarian protection and assistance.

B. Compliance with the human rights due diligence policy

51. UNSOM supported the implementation of the human rights due diligence policy by providing technical assistance to the Mine Action Service on the implementation of mitigation measures for the Somali Police Force and by helping with the development of a human rights training session for police officers supported by the Service. UNSOM also assessed the implications, in connection with the policy, of United Nations support for non-United Nations security forces in Gedo, focusing on the Somali Police Force, and recommended measures to prevent violations. In accordance with established coordination mechanisms, two alleged incidents of human rights and international humanitarian law violations by AMISOM, involving 10 civilians, were communicated to AMISOM. UNSOM also met with relatives of the victims of some incidents in which AMISOM was implicated, to discuss the outcome of a related board of inquiry and the status of the ex-gratia payment process. AMISOM agreed to update the affected communities and finalize the report. The

Ministry of Defence is currently investigating allegations that Somali National Army troops raped a 30-year-old woman and a 13-year-old child while conducting operations in Jannaale, Shabelle Hoose.

C. Children in armed conflict

52. The country task force on monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children in armed conflict reported 826 grave violations affecting 750 children (600 boys and 150 girls), 11 attacks on schools, 2 attacks on hospitals, one military occupation of a school and nine cases of denial of humanitarian assistance. A total of 258 children were victims of recruitment and use, 241 were abducted, 226 were victims of killing and maiming and 79 were victims of sexual violence.

53. The violations were attributed to Al-Shabaab (526, or 63.7 per cent), unknown armed elements and militias (143, or 17.3 per cent) federal and state armed forces (104, or 12.6 per cent), clan militia (48, or 5.8 per cent), AMISOM (4, or 0.5 per cent) and Westland militia (1, or 0.1 per cent). A total of 16 incidents of deprivation of liberty affecting 37 boys were attributed to the Somali security forces. A total of 1,283 children (699 boys and 314 girls) were separated from armed forces and armed groups and handed over to partners of the United Nations Children's Fund for rehabilitation and eventual reintegration.

54. On 12 February, during the commemoration of the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers, the Federal Government reiterated its commitment to screening its soldiers and forces being integrated into the Somali National Army, to identify and separate any children. On 1 March, UNSOM negotiated the release and transfer of nine children, allegedly associated with Al-Shabaab, from Huduur to Baidoa for rehabilitation and eventual reintegration.

D. Prevention of sexual and gender-based violence

55. The sexual offences bill remains with the Cabinet for further discussions. Meanwhile, UNSOM and the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development continued preparations for the new national action plan on ending sexual violence in conflict. On 5 March, it was agreed that consultative meetings would be held with the Somali security and justice sectors and at the state level.

56. UNSOM continued to provide capacity-building and training for prosecutors in the Office of the Attorney General on a survivor-centred approach and on investigations of sexual crimes. The Office recently established a task force to ensure access to justice and defined pathways for victims and survivors to work with police and service providers. On 10 March, it also released the annual report of the task force, which highlighted progress on providing victims and survivors with access to the formal justice system, notably with the support of women prosecutors.

57. In February, UNFPA supported the training of 210 health and social workers from the public sector and non-governmental organizations to improve the access of victims and survivors to timely and confidential services relating to gender-based violence. In March, it supported the capacity enhancement of 27 national data-gathering organizations to improve and harmonize data reporting for the monitoring analysis reporting arrangement for conflict-related violence and the Gender-based Violence Information Management System.

58. In total, from January to April, 56 incidents affecting 62 victims/survivors of conflict-related sexual violence were documented. All those affected were women and girls (56 minors and 6 adults). On 12 March, UNSOM followed up with the authorities

regarding the reported rape of a pregnant woman on 29 January in Baidoa. She had received no medical treatment after the assault and gave birth five days later. A police officer was found guilty of the crime and sentenced to death by the Baidoa first instance military court on 19 February. The family of the survivor rejected the intervention of traditional elders and insisted that the sentence be carried out.

V. Humanitarian situation

59. Despite some improvement in food security, the humanitarian crisis in Somalia remains worrying. The COVID-19 pandemic presents specific risks, given the limited health-care facilities, the potential disruption of aid delivery and the reliance of many Somalis on diminishing remittances from the diaspora. The heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence during the pandemic is also a concern.

60. Somalia had recorded 722 COVID-19 cases as at 4 May. To support government efforts, United Nations entities and partners launched the Somalia COVID-19 country preparedness and response plan on 23 April, seeking \$689 million to bolster preparedness for and response to the direct public health and indirect immediate humanitarian and socioeconomic consequences of the disease. The plan is focused on the triple nexus and is aligned with the comprehensive socioeconomic impact and response plan for COVID-19 of the Federal Government, launched on 27 March.

61. In February and March, there was a significant increase in displacement in Jubbaland, where an estimated 56,000 people were displaced by conflict in Gedo, adding to the 207,000 already displaced in that region. Overall, at least 2.6 million people remain displaced by ongoing conflict and recurring climatic shocks. Many of the internally displaced live in over 2,000 highly congested settlements, often at risk of eviction from their homes. Thus far in 2020, more than 48,000 persons have been evicted. Evictions are among the most prevalent protection threats, now compounded by COVID-19. On 13 April, my Deputy Special Representative, in his capacity as Humanitarian Coordinator, called for a moratorium on evictions for a three-month period.

62. Levels of food insecurity and malnutrition remained high in many areas despite the favourable *deyr* rains (from October to December 2019). Food security is additionally at risk from the desert locust infestation in the Horn of Africa, the worst such outbreak in over 25 years. On 2 February, the Federal Government declared a national emergency over the locust upsurge, and on 27 February issued a desert locust crisis action plan in conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The plan requires \$57 million to implement activities until December, of which \$24.7 million had been provided as at 4 May.

63. The *gu* rains (from April to June) began with moderate to heavy showers in some regions, prompting many farmers to begin cultivation. The rains should boost crop production and replenish pasture and water sources, but have already caused flash flooding in several regions. In Puntland, a heavy downpour on 27 April left 8 people dead and displaced more than 22,000 others in the town of Qardho, Bari Region. The rains will also elevate the risk of water-borne diseases and create conditions conducive to locust breeding. Since January, at least 2,789 cases of acute watery diarrhoea and cholera have been reported in Somalia, mostly in Hiraan, Banaadir, Bay and Shabelle. Compared with the same period in 2019, the numbers are expected to rise as the rains intensify. The triple shock of floods, desert locusts and COVID-19 is likely to exacerbate an already vulnerable situation for the 5.2 million people in need.

64. Security continues to be a major constraint to humanitarian operations. From 1 January to 4 May, 54 incidents were recorded, in which two humanitarian workers were killed, six injured, six abducted and three detained or temporarily arrested. One third of the country is considered by humanitarian workers to be hard to reach, including 23 districts where around 1.3 million people in need reside. In February, aid agencies reached 845,000 people with humanitarian assistance. To build on that response, agencies need prompt and adequate funding. As at 4 May, the 2020 humanitarian response plan was only 18 per cent funded, at \$186.6 million of the \$1.05 billion requested.

65. On 6 March, Somalia officially deposited the instruments of ratification for the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa with the regional body.

VI. Comprehensive approach to security

A. Operations

66. Transition operations in Shabelle Hoose resumed on 16 March with the seizure of Jannaale by Somali National Army and AMISOM troops. Disruption operations continued elsewhere in the region but planning for the second phase of Operation Badbaado (securing the roads from Mogadishu to Baidoa and Beledweyne) has not yet begun. During the reporting period, international partners supported the generation of two new Somali National Army battalions, with a further two regenerated by the Army from existing troops.

67. Following the liberation of Jannaale, an interim administration appointed by South-West State was deployed to the town and launched community outreach and initial stabilization activities identified together with the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation, South-West State, the interministerial task force and stabilization partners. To date, mobile clinics and food distribution have been provided to approximately 2,000 vulnerable people, with the launch of cash-for-work projects focused on brush clearance along roads into and within Jannaale, as well as small canal repairs.

B. Institutional capacity-building

68. On 27 February, the federal Cabinet endorsed the federal police legislation. While 300 Federal Darwish forces had finalized training by mid-February, their deployment to Shabelle Hoose hinges on the provision of weapons and equipment. In Jawhar, 198 recruits finalized basic training, bringing the total number of state police to 579. The integration of the state security forces of Puntland into the state police continued. Following the development of an asset management policy, with support from the United Nations police, AMISOM police, the United Nations Office for Project Services and UNDP, the joint police programme approved \$218,000 on 4 March for its implementation.

69. In Mogadishu on 10 and 11 February, as part of the constitutional review process and with United Nations advisory support, the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs led a consultation session with relevant federal line ministries on the justice and corrections model. Discussions resulted in proposals for the composition of the Judicial Service Commission and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, on which consultations will be held with federal member states.

70. In Mogadishu on 5 March, the Minister of Justice, representatives of federal member states, international partners and the United Nations discussed justice and corrections priorities for 2020. Conclusions included the need for continued support for the constitutional review, reaching a political agreement on a justice and corrections model and support for the expansion of justice into newly liberated areas.

71. During the reporting period, UNSOM provided training on prison management and human rights to 88 Custodial Corps staff (70 men and 18 women) in Puntland, Beledweyne and Kismaayo. As a measure to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, the justice authorities, inter alia, suspended prison visits, new prison admissions, court proceedings (except priority criminal cases, to be adjudicated online) and the execution of judgments.

72. On 20 February, Somalia acceded to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea. On 12 March, eight federal ministries and the respective state ministries agreed on an action plan for women in the maritime sector that will allow Somali women to play a prominent role in the country's blue economy.

73. On 18 March, the Office of the Defector Rehabilitation Programme, under the Ministry of Internal Security, issued new operational protocols on handling voluntary defections from Al-Shabaab. They are aimed at mitigating risks associated with COVID-19 and avoiding the interruption of activities. In collaboration with UNSOM, AMISOM and partners, the Ministry is revising standard operating procedures on the reception and screening of former Al-Shabaab members.

C. Supporting activities

74. On 3 March, the Diinsoor district council was inaugurated. The process was facilitated by the Ministry of the Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation and South-West State and was supported by a Peacebuilding Fund project. The council is noteworthy because of its significant youth representation, as well as the selection of 10 women for 21 seats.

75. On 11 March, the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism Coordination Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister organized a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, the Director of the Defector rehabilitation programme and the Ministry of Justice to clarify their mandates on the prevention and countering of violent extremism and future collaboration.

76. From 13 to 15 April, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Communication conducted a three-day joint COVID-19 awareness campaign in the 17 districts of Mogadishu with the network of religious scholars on the prevention and countering of violent extremism, coordinated by the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism Unit and with technical and financial support from UNDP.

77. UNSOM and the International Organization for Migration continued to support the national programme of the Federal Government for the treatment and handling of disengaged combatants. In April, over 230 former Al-Shabaab members received transitional rehabilitation support through centres located in Baidoa, Kismaayo and Mogadishu, while 50 graduated from the programme. Following the conclusion of the Peacebuilding Fund pilot project targeting women formerly associated with Al-Shabaab, two new rehabilitation centres for women were built, in Baidoa and Kismaayo. The centre in Baidoa is providing gender-sensitive rehabilitation support to 30 former female Al-Shabaab members and their dependants. An additional

30 women in Kismaayo are yet to receive support owing to operational constraints linked to COVID-19.

VII. United Nations Support Office in Somalia support for the African Union Mission in Somalia and the Somali National Army

A. Support for African Union Mission in Somalia operations

78. On 5 March, AMISOM completed the reduction of its troop ceiling by 1,000 troops, in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution [2472 \(2019\)](#). UNSOS is currently providing logistical support to 19,626 AMISOM uniformed personnel.

79. UNSOS continued to support AMISOM internal troop rotations and resupplies to most forward operating bases in all sectors by air on account of the main supply routes being impassable and insecure. As a result, UNSOS conducted over 1,000 flying hours per month within Somalia, of which approximately 530 on average were dedicated to transporting life support for AMISOM. UNSOS also increased borehole drilling across all sectors to reduce overreliance on transporting potable water.

80. The planned road convoy to transport contingent-owned equipment for the incoming Ghanaian formed police unit from Mogadishu to Baidoa remains under consideration. Owing to the bulky nature of some of the equipment and the poor status of the runway in Baidoa, UNSOS was unable to airlift all of it to Baidoa and therefore requested AMISOM to escort the convoy by road from Mogadishu. The equipment, consisting of several sea containers and vehicles, arrived in Mogadishu in September and continues to incur high demurrage charges and monthly reimbursement costs payable to Ghana for the unutilized equipment. The African Union has advised that a new plan for the convoy will be prepared after the *gu* rains in May and June.

81. As at 30 April, the balance of the United Nations trust fund in support of AMISOM was \$2.9 million. Of that amount, \$1.6 million is restricted by donor Member States to specific purposes. UNSOS is engaging with donors for the purpose of removing those restrictions to make the funds available for AMISOM priorities, including emoluments for consultants and medical liaison officers.

82. Following the signature on 10 November 2019 by the United Nations, the African Union and Uganda of a tripartite letter of assist for the deployment of four military helicopters to AMISOM, and in order to ensure accountability and transparency, the United Nations and the African Union jointly concluded two predeployment visits to Uganda, from 11 to 13 February and on 12 and 13 March, to confirm the readiness of the aviation unit to deploy. On 20 February, a delegation of the Uganda People's Defence Forces aviation unit, led by the Joint Chief of Staff, had inspected the facilities at the Baledogle camp, where the crew will be based. When the unit is deployed, AMISOM will have seven military helicopters. UNSOS has made the arrangements necessary to support the deployment.

83. In response to the request by troop- and police-contributing countries for increased training in the management of contingent-owned equipment, self-sustainment and preparations for electoral security, UNSOS delivered training to 18 officers from Burundi (17 men and 1 woman) in Bujumbura on 9 and 10 March to enhance efficiency in the management of contingent-owned equipment.

84. There was limited progress in the joint AMISOM-UNSOS wellness programme aimed at enhancing security and facilities at 21 AMISOM forward operating bases.

Poor road conditions continued to hinder the delivery of mission-enabling units to 19 locations. Meanwhile, field defence stores and other materiel were pre-positioned at eight forward operating bases, awaiting improved weather conditions to recommence work.

85. With support from UNSOS, the Mine Action Service continued to support AMISOM security operations and stabilization efforts by providing advice, analysis, training and mentoring on the use of specialized equipment, explosive detection dogs, community liaison officers and explosive ordnance clearance teams. From 5 February to 3 May, it delivered training to 2,715 AMISOM uniformed personnel to enhance their capability to find and destroy improvised explosive devices and to safely operate within the threat environment. The Service conducted predeployment training sessions for 200 AMISOM troops in Uganda from 25 February to 2 April and for 310 AMISOM troops in Burundi from 5 March to 18 April. It contributed to the safety and security of strategic infrastructure through the deployment of 21 teams working with 42 detection dogs to conduct searches of 29,943 pieces of luggage, 112,711 vehicles, 252 buildings, 168,042 m² of built-up areas and 10,372,197 m² of open areas throughout the sectors.

B. Support for Somali national armed forces operations

86. In support of joint AMISOM and Somali National Army operations in Shabelle Hoose, UNSOS supplied material for two forward operating bases to be constructed in Jannaale. Construction of the National Army logistics base with the AMISOM forward operating base at KM50 was completed on 15 March.

87. The Head of UNSOS met with the new Chief of Defence Forces of Somalia, Brigadier General Odawa Yusuf Rage, in Mogadishu on 24 February and discussed the provision of logistical support to the Somali National Army. UNSOS also presented the Defence Forces with communication equipment to enhance interoperability with AMISOM. The Chief of Defence observed that improvised explosive devices had caused more fatalities to the National Army and the Somali population than bullets and requested that threat mitigation measures for such devices be added to the United Nations logistical support package.

88. In response to requests from the Federal Government, the Mine Action Service provided threat mitigation awareness on improvised explosive devices to 192 Somali National Army personnel (190 men and 2 women) from 5 February to 25 April. In addition, it provided explosive ordnance disposal and improvised explosive device disposal refresher training for the Somali Police Force explosive ordnance disposal teams in Cadaado and Baidoa from 2 to 6 February and from 16 to 20 February.

VIII. United Nations presence in Somalia

89. United Nations entities continued to be present in Baidoa, Beledweyne, Berbera, Boosaaso, Dhooble, Dhuusamarreeb, Doolow, Gaalkacyo, Garoowe, Hargeysa, Jawhar, Kismaayo and Mogadishu. As at 4 May, 370 international staff and 1,267 national staff were deployed throughout Somalia.

90. The United Nations continued to hold consultations with the Federal Government to address the remaining challenges to the status-of-mission agreement signed in 2014. In particular, the denial of gratis visas and work permits for United Nations international contractors and United Nations personnel not in possession of laissez-passer remained unresolved.

91. In line with the Organization's global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations presence in Somalia is developing and disseminating communication on the disease. It is also providing technical assistance to the Federal Government and federal member states in order to continue the constitutional review process and preparations for the elections.

IX. Observations

92. The people of Somalia, just as the rest of the world, are affected by the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I commend the Somali authorities for their actions to prevent and respond to the pandemic and for their decision to extend additional resources from the Federal Government to the federal member states for that purpose. I reiterate the full commitment of the United Nations to working closely with Somalia in these efforts. In order to address the pandemic, the country will need the continued support of the international community to tackle the pandemic.

93. The pandemic has highlighted, more than ever, the need for federal and state leaders in Somalia to come together, in a spirit of unity and compromise, to effectively address one of the most serious global challenges of the era. There is no time to lose. I remain deeply concerned that, despite my previous calls, as well as the continued efforts of my Special Representative and the international community, the relationship between the Federal Government and some of the federal member states remains tense. I encourage Mr. Farmajo to revive a regular forum for the country's leaders in order to discuss and move forward on all national issues. I call upon leaders of the federal member states to respond positively to such steps, beginning with the appointment of representatives to the secretariat that will prepare for a summit of federal and state leaders.

94. The year 2020 is critical for the advancement of national priorities, chief among which is the holding of credible and timely "one person, one vote" elections. The enactment of the electoral law is a sign of the commitment of Somalis to national elections. I now urge swift action to formulate the regulations needed to make the law implementable and for Parliament to adopt the amendments to the political parties law. An implementable electoral framework also requires the broad support of all federal member states, political opposition and civil society. I am concerned that the electoral law does not include a 30 per cent quota for the representation of women in Parliament. I call upon the Somali authorities and stakeholders at all levels to ensure the participation and representation of women and minorities in the electoral process, including by enshrining such aspects in relevant legal frameworks. Robust electoral security planning is also crucial. I urge the National Electoral Security Task Force to advance preparations aimed at securing the electoral process, including by completing an assessment of securable areas.

95. I congratulate Somalia on reaching the decision point in the World Bank and IMF Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. It is a significant milestone that will allow the country to gain access to additional resources from international financial institutions that can contribute to the delivery of long-term inclusive growth and to poverty reduction. It illustrates the commitment of the Federal Government and the federal member states to achieving progress despite the continuing economic, political and security challenges. I urge the federal and state authorities to build upon that positive step to strengthen their cooperation in advancing national priorities.

96. I am deeply concerned about armed clashes in the Gedo Region of Jubbaland between federal and state forces, which resulted in casualties and the displacement of civilian populations. I call upon all actors to exercise restraint and avoid actions that

could spark further violence. It is essential that cooperation and dialogue be restored between the Federal Government and the Jubbaland authorities.

97. I deplore the clashes that took place in Galmudug on 27 and 28 February between the Somali National Army and ASWJ. Political differences must not be addressed through violence. I am encouraged by the peaceful state presidential transition on 12 April. Longer-term stability requires all stakeholders to work together to establish an inclusive administration.

98. The meeting between Mr. Farmajo and Mr. Bihi is a positive step. I commend Mr. Farmajo for issuing a public statement in which he acknowledged past human rights violations by the regime of Siad Barre, and Mr. Bihi for accepting the gesture. I call upon both leaders to build upon this engagement to improve relations and make progress towards a resumption of the dialogue between Somalia and “Somaliland”.

99. The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to exacerbate human rights challenges in Somalia. In my briefing to the Security Council, I highlighted some of the challenges witnessed in other countries, such as the rise in hate speech and discrimination and limits on the media, civic space and freedom of expression. As elsewhere, human rights have to be at the forefront of the Somali response to the pandemic, with due attention given to supporting the most vulnerable people and groups. I also urge the Somali authorities to protect freedom of expression, the bedrock of a democracy, and to ensure the physical safety of journalists and their freedom from harassment and arbitrary arrests.

100. The weak health-care system in Somalia lacks the capacity to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. A further spread of the virus would exacerbate the dire humanitarian situation, in which 30 per cent of the population is already in need of assistance. Immediate, fast-tracked and flexible donor funding is urgently required to respond to the disease and mitigate its health, social and economic impacts. I applaud the swift actions taken by the Federal Government to mitigate the threat and facilitate continued access for emergency relief supplies. I urge the country’s neighbours and the wider international community to continue to maintain unimpeded access for health and humanitarian personnel and cargo and to facilitate the movement of essential assistance and supplies into and within Somalia, including United Nations shipments and personnel and those of its partners.

101. Somali National Army and AMISOM operations in Shabelle Hoose to recover the town of Jannaale from Al-Shabaab demonstrate progress on the transition. The further generation of numbers and capacities in both the Somali National Army and the police is required to secure recovered areas, facilitate stabilization activities and consolidate gains. Progressive investment in robust and community policing alongside the effective delivery of justice will be crucial in preventing the resurgence of Al-Shabaab in recovered areas. I urge the Federal Government to extend transition operations to other areas and accelerate its force generation and security sector reforms, together with the federal member states, with the support and coordination of AMISOM and international partners.

102. Strengthening the improvised explosive device threat mitigation capabilities of Somali security forces implementing the transition plan is key to enable them to protect themselves and better prevent harm to civilians and critical infrastructure, as they gradually assume security responsibilities from AMISOM. I call upon Member States to contribute to the AMISOM and Somali National Army trust funds and to allow more flexible use of their contributions.

103. I strongly condemn the attacks by Al-Shabaab, which disproportionately affect civilians, and note the evolving threat posed by the group. Mortar attacks targeting the United Nations and AMISOM facilities in Mogadishu are also unacceptable and

a matter of grave concern. I call upon the Federal Government to take all measures, in coordination with the United Nations in Somalia and AMISOM, necessary to ensure the security of the international presence, without which the United Nations cannot deliver on its mandate and support for Somalia and its people.

104. I remain grateful to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the European Union, Member States, non-governmental organizations and other partners for their continued support for peacebuilding and state-building in Somalia. I pay tribute to the sacrifices of AMISOM and Somali security forces in pursuit of peace and stability in the country.

105. I thank my Special Representative, James Swan, and all United Nations staff in Somalia for their continuing efforts and hard work in very challenging conditions. Their security and welfare remain a top priority.

