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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

Report of the independent expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Shamsul Bari*

* The present report was submitted after the deadline in order to include the most recent developments.

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 10/32, in which the Council expressed its serious concern about the situation of human rights in Somalia and renewed the mandate of the independent expert for a period of six months, requesting him to present an update to his report to the Council at its twelfth session.

In his previous report submitted to the Council (A/HRC/10/85), the independent expert described the situation in Somalia as one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today. The independent expert still holds that view and indeed believes that the situation has worsened in recent months, with renewed violence and bloodshed. The Somalis with whom the independent expert met almost universally expressed their dismay at the fact that the international community's attention to Somalia has remained woefully limited. However, while reporting on the context of their plight, the independent expert reports on the new hope that he observed among Somalis and others met during his recent mission to the region.

The independent expert undertook his third mission to Somalia from 1 to 13 June 2009, a year since his first mission to Somalia and the neighbouring countries. While in November and December 2008 he was unable to visit Somalia at all as the entire country was under the highest United Nations security alert (phase V), in June he was able to visit the north-western and north-eastern regions, namely Somaliland and Puntland. The south-central region of Somalia, which has witnessed continuous armed conflicts for almost two decades, remains out of bounds.

In the present report, the independent expert presents background information on the activities conducted during the mission, the places visited and the people met. He outlines developments since his previous report in the fields of security, human rights and humanitarian law, including the human rights situation in Puntland and Somaliland. He then shares some personal observations on the Somali crisis generally before concluding with some recommendations for stakeholders.

The report covers the period from March to August 2009. The information presented is based on the independent expert's meetings with Somali stakeholders, members of the Transitional Federal Government and Parliament, civil society organizations and the United Nations, as well as on reports of the Human Rights Unit of the United Nations Political Office for Somalia and international non-governmental organizations, among others.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. While the conflict in Somalia has been largely based on clan rivalry since the fall of the Siad Barre regime in 1991 and the collapse of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in 1993, the involvement of religious issues in 2006 has compounded the situation further. Conditions have worsened since the emergence of more hard-line Islamist opposition forces vying for power in early 2009. As a result, the human rights and humanitarian law situation in the country continues to swing between bad and worse, as it had for almost two decades.

2. In his previous report (A/HRC/10/85), the independent expert expressed some cautious optimism on the prospects of the Djibouti Agreement signed between the main warring factions in June 2008. The situation indeed improved significantly after the peaceful installation of an internationally supported Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in late December 2008 and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops. Hopes were however, soon dashed by the emergence of the hard-line Islamist Al-Shabaab opposition forces, which immediately launched a violent drive to oust the Government, causing more bloodshed and violence in and around Mogadishu and many other parts of south-central Somalia.

3. While the optimism of the independent expert was thus belied to an extent, he continues to believe that the situation in Somalia has reached a critical juncture that, if handled properly, is likely to yield positive results. Firstly, the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement has kindled new hope for the people, who have suffered senseless violence for too long. The departure of the Ethiopian troops has removed a great deal of earlier antipathy of the people towards the Government. The adoption by the new Government of sharia law as the basis of governance in Somalia has weakened opposition forces. The imposition by the latter of a stricter Islamic regime in areas under their control has weakened their support. Furthermore, traditional clan rivalry that has fuelled the conflict for years appears to be on the wane since the introduction of Islamic objectives into the conflict. The time has come for the international community to take the bull by the horns and make an all-out effort to bring the crisis to an end.

4. Many may find the optimism of the independent expert misplaced under the present circumstances. At the current time, a great deal of violence is ongoing in and around Mogadishu and other parts of south-central Somalia. The independent expert nevertheless believes that, for the reasons mentioned above, it is possible to remain optimistic. Moreover, the international community has the responsibility of pursuing its efforts with regard to Somalia in a more positive vein, to bring the long-standing human rights and humanitarian law abuses in that country to an end.

5. The international community has used security concerns to limit its involvement in Somalia for far too long. It is time to break out of that mindset and search for a more imaginative, creative, innovative and robust engagement. Despite formidable challenges, new possibilities have to be unearthed. The focus of the independent expert's recommendations are, therefore on opportunities that must be explored to make the positive happen. As mentioned in previous reports, the human rights situation in Somalia is inextricably linked to the reality on the ground; any effort to improve the former must take the latter into account and be built around it.

II. PLACES VISITED, PEOPLE MET AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

A. Meetings in Nairobi

6. The independent expert's first visit was to Nairobi, the hub of international activities relating to Somalia and where all 16 United Nations agencies comprising the United Nations system in Somalia are based, coordinated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) representative for Somalia, who is also the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. The United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, is also based in Nairobi. Collectively, the United Nations system for Somalia covers the whole spectrum of humanitarian and human rights, recovery and development work relating to Somalia from Nairobi.

7. The major embassies accredited to Somalia are also based in Nairobi, as are other humanitarian agencies and regional organizations serving Somalia, such as the African Union and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Nairobi is also the hub of a large number of national and international non-governmental organizations covering Somalia. The first half of the mission was thus spent in discussions with people working for and with these agencies. A great deal of information and ideas on Somalia was obtained from these meetings, for which the independent expert is grateful.

8. The independent expert would like to thank some of the key persons met in Nairobi. Foremost among them, the UNDP Resident Representative and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, Mark Bowden. As in the past, a meeting with him as well as the debriefing meeting with members of the United Nations country team under his leadership enriched the independent expert's understanding of the situation in Somalia and of the need to prioritize immediate over long-term issues. The immediate issues that require prompt action from the international community are the security concerns, the protection of civilians, the recruitment and use of children by different parties to the conflict, combating impunity, and the provision of basic social services and economic and social rights, including access to food, education, health care, water and sanitation, among others. The long-term strategy should include institutional and capacity-building as well as recovery and core development needs.

9. Although the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah, was absent from Nairobi during the visit, the independent expert benefited a great deal from talking with his staff about the latest developments relating to the Djibouti peace process and their prognosis for the future.

10. During his visit to Nairobi, the independent expert met the new Prime Minister of Somalia and the Minister for Constitutional Affairs, who were visiting Nairobi, as well as with a number of Somali parliamentarians. Together they provided the independent expert with the only opportunity to discuss matters relating to his mandate with the federal authorities.

11. The meeting with the Prime Minister of Somalia gave the independent expert the opportunity to convey his concerns and those of the international community about the renewed human rights violations in the country. The independent expert also reminded the Prime Minister of the help that the United Nations could provide in the field of technical assistance and capacity-building of Government and non-government personnel for the promotion and

protection of human rights in Somalia. The Prime Minister agreed to appoint a focal point in the Ministry with whom, among others, the Human Rights Unit of UNPOS, one of whose staff had accompanied the independent expert at the meeting, would be able to liaise with in this regard. The independent expert thanks the Prime Minister again for his assurances. The independent expert hopes it will be possible to arrange for more in-depth meetings with the Somali authorities in the future.

12. The independent expert was impressed by the will of the Minister for Constitutional Affairs to involve the Somali people through participatory processes, by drawing up a new constitution for Somalia based on the ideals and aspirations of the people. The independent expert was pleased to learn that the United Nations had already set up a mechanism to coordinate support in this regard. This is an area where a great deal of technical assistance and capacity-building is needed.

13. The independent expert's meeting with three members of parliament representing the minority clans of Somalia was extremely useful to understand the situation of Somalia from their perspective. They shared their views on how minority rights and interests in Somalia could be safeguarded in any future arrangements.

14. The Ambassador of the African Union to Somalia, based in Nairobi, provided a very useful analysis of the national, regional and international perspectives of the Somali crisis, as well as equally important information on the role and activities of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISON) troops. The independent expert raised reports on alleged human rights abuses by the troops, which led to a discussion on the extremely difficult circumstances and severe restrictions under which the troops have to serve in Somalia.

15. The meetings held with the community of non-governmental organizations, both national and international, were, as usual, a source of most useful information on the human rights situation on the ground. Most of the organizations were linked to other non-governmental organizations, humanitarian workers and human rights defenders on the ground in Somalia. The independent expert was again impressed by the dedication of the latter, who work in Somalia under most difficult and dangerous circumstances. Without them it would be difficult for the international community to obtain a reasonably reliable picture of the terrible plight of the people. They are often the only source for verifying information on human rights abuses by different parties to the conflict.

B. Visit to the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya

16. Owing to the fact that the independent expert was unable to visit south-central Somalia, where the violence and human rights violations are more endemic, he had to depend during his three missions on talking with recently arrived refugees from these areas, in Kenya or Yemen, to find out about their experiences in Somalia. His visit this time to the Dadaab refugee camps in Kenya took place in the context of very large arrivals. About 36,000 new Somali refugees arrived in Dadaab in the first six months of 2009. With some 300,000 refugees, the Dadaab camps host the largest concentration of refugees in any single area of the world today.

C. Visit to Hargeisa, Somaliland

17. When arriving in Hargeisa, Somaliland, it is easy to forget that Somalia has been in turmoil for such a long time. This is because Somaliland has managed to largely shelter itself from events in the rest of Somalia since 1991, when it made a unilateral declaration of independence and proclaimed its return to the separate status that it enjoyed as a British protectorate before joining the Somali Federation in 1961. Somaliland today is, for all practical purposes, like any other third-world developing country more or less at peace. There are of course instances of human rights violations, to which the independent expert will return below.

18. During his short stay in Hargeisa, the independent expert had a number of useful meetings with Somaliland officials, including a very long session with the Minister for Justice. The main thrust of his interlocutors was the same as a year ago, namely that Somaliland was a sovereign and independent State, and that recognition of this fact by the international community would help the cause of peace in Somalia.

19. The independent expert also met with the leaders of the main opposition parties in Somaliland. This was important in the light of the tension in Somaliland around the presidential elections, which had been postponed by the Government. Other scheduled meetings had to be cancelled owing to shortage of time. More time should have been allowed for the visit to Somaliland.

20. An important aspect of the independent expert's schedule in Somaliland was his visit to Hargeisa University, where a legal aid programme had been set up in collaboration with UNDP to help those in need of legal aid and to build the capacity of students and young lawyers. The independent expert had a good exchange of views with the participants, who impressed by their sense of dedication and the results achieved in helping those who needed their assistance, including many victims of human rights violations. This is a very useful programme, which is worthy of replication in other places in Somalia.

21. The meeting with the Somaliland non-governmental organizations was focused more on local concerns. It showed how much the Somaliland people regard themselves as a separate nation. They reported on their perception of the human rights situation in Somaliland. The representative from the disabled community made a strong plea that special attention be paid to their situation.

22. The independent expert met separately with representatives of United Nations agencies in Somaliland, who briefed him on their work and particularly the situation since the bomb blasts of October 2008, which had killed a number of United Nations staff members and destroyed the main United Nations compound in Hargeisa. They stated that, though there was an appearance of normalcy on the ground, fear of attack by the Al-Shabaab insurgents was always there. This had obviously imposed serious restrictions on the work and movement of United Nations personnel in the area.

D. Visit to Garowe and Boosaaso, Puntland

23. The highlight of the independent expert's visit to Puntland was his meeting with Abdirahman Muhammad Farole, the President of Puntland, an autonomous state within Somalia.

The wide-ranging discussions held touched to a large extent on the concerns of his Government and people about what he thought to be the shortcomings of the Djibouti peace process, particularly the exclusion of Puntland from it. The conflict in Somalia and the role that Puntland could play in resolving the Somali crisis figured prominently, as did the measures that Puntland had already taken to fight piracy along the coast of Somalia.

24. The independent expert was impressed by the President's commitment and dedication to the development of Puntland and by his vision on how it would help Somalia as a whole. They discussed generally the measures that the international community could take to solve the conflict in Somalia and what Puntland could do in this regard. The President expressed his displeasure at the way the Djibouti peace process was being conducted without a role for Puntland, the largest State in Somalia, running a successful administration next door to the war-torn south-central region. The independent expert is pleased to learn of the subsequent signing of a cooperation agreement between the Transitional Federal Government and Puntland in August 2009.

25. Another highlight of the trip to Puntland was a visit to Boosaaso, which hosts a large proportion of internally displaced persons from Mogadishu and other areas of south-central Somalia. The visit to the camps of displaced persons, and talking to both the long-stayers and new arrivals revealed the support and hospitality that they enjoyed from the local government, the assistance provided to them by the United Nations and other members of the international community, and the very difficult circumstances that they had to endure in a terribly hot climate. The new arrivals also provided the independent expert with useful information on the situation of human rights and humanitarian law in Somalia.

III. SECURITY, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

A. Security

26. The security situation in Somalia has turned more volatile and unpredictable in recent months. The withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces in December 2008 and January 2009, and the formation of the new Transitional Federal Government led to a lull in violence, which however resumed soon after the realignment of armed factions and groups. Insurgent attacks increased, and a new influx of foreign fighters allied to radical groups was reported. Armed attacks by the groups have, as a result, increased and become more sophisticated, coordinated and lethal.

27. The Government, with the support of AMISOM, has maintained its control of the strategic southern districts of Mogadishu, as well as the airport and seaport. Al-Shabaab and its ally Hizbul Islam control most other parts of south-central Somalia.

28. In a dramatic development, on 7 May 2009, the armed opposition groups launched a ferocious attack on the presidential palace. The Government forces, though outnumbered, succeeded in repelling the attack. A few days later, Government forces launched their first counter-attack in several months, in which they dislodged the insurgents from a number of strategic locations in Mogadishu. On 19 June, the insurgents launched yet another attack, which the Government forces again repelled. Attacks and counter-attacks thus became a regular event for some time.

29. The civilian population has been heavily affected by the fighting. A very large number of people have been displaced; approximately 350 people have been killed and at least 1,500 injured in Mogadishu since 7 May 2009. A major concern during this period has been the drawing of the fighting into areas populated or frequented by civilians, and indiscriminate mortars shelling by all parties, causing casualties, property damage and destruction in civilian areas.

30. The recruitment, training and use of children in the fighting, especially by armed groups, have caused consternation among parents of young children. Many have chosen to move to other areas or to seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

31. While aid agencies have increased their efforts to provide assistance to the displaced, they have been constrained by security conditions. Recently, Al-Shabaab announced a ban on activities by UNDP, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia in south-central Somalia. The expulsion of the Department of Safety and Security could affect the work of humanitarian agencies in these areas. Although violence against humanitarian personnel and assets was lower in the first half of 2009 than during the same period in 2008, workers continue to be killed, abducted or subjected to violence. For example, since January 2009, seven aid workers have been killed and seven abducted. A total of 16 aid workers are still in captivity, some since 2008. They include three abducted in Kenya in July 2009 and taken to Somalia.

32. Despite their control over large parts of south-central Somalia, the popularity of Al-Shabaab and allied forces appears to have been weakened owing to their imposition of a hard-line interpretation of sharia law, together with summary executions, floggings and mutilations. There are reports of popular resistance to them from some areas in the south-central region. In Baidoa, for example, hundreds of protestors took to the streets on 26 March 2009 to protest against a ban on the sale of the narcotic *khat*. A moderate Islamist group, Ahlu Sunnah, was formed in some areas to fight Al-Shabaab. The destruction of graves of prominent religious clerics by Al-Shabaab partly provoked this strong response. In June 2009, Ahlu Sunnah signed an agreement with the Transitional Federal Government to be integrated into the peace process, indicating the possibility that other Islamist groups might follow suit.

33. AMISOM troops guard the port and key Government installations in Mogadishu. While their number has reached 5,000 with the arrival of another battalion of troops from Burundi, it still remains well below the target of 8,000. The troops have been frequently targeted by armed opposition groups; at least five peacekeepers were killed between 6 May and 11 July 2009. AMISOM troops have reportedly retaliated in response to some attacks, and there were allegations that civilians were being killed or injured as a result. In June 2009, the African Union Peace and Security Council called for a review of the AMISOM mandate with a view to strengthening it.

34. Instances of violence, include a massive car bomb explosion outside a hotel in Belet Weyne, which killed the Minister for Security, Omar Hashi Aden, and a former ambassador to Ethiopia, community leaders and clan elders, as well as many others, on 19 June 2009. In the incident on 11 July, three African Union peacekeepers died and another one was injured after a mortar struck the presidential palace in Mogadishu. On 12 July, three Government soldiers were reportedly killed in northern Mogadishu, when Government

forces, backed by AMISOM peacekeepers, battled insurgent groups. The fighting was concentrated near the presidential palace, as is often the case. The 11 July 2009 attack claimed the life of Nor Daqli, head of security for Mogadishu and the surrounding Benadir region. A foreign fighter was among those killed.

35. Three aid workers from Action against Hunger were kidnapped in Mandera, Kenya, and taken across the border into Somalia on 18 July. In May 2009, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) compound in Jowhar was entered and looted. On 20 July 2009, two United Nations compounds were broken into and looted in Baidoa and Wajid by Al-Shabaab forces. At the same time, Al-Shabaab released a statement calling for the closure of offices of three United Nations agencies in Somalia. The group accused the agencies of "working against the benefits of the Somali Muslim population and against the establishment of an Islamic State in Somalia".

36. Insecurity was the reason why some 36,000 Somalis sought refuge in Kenya in the first half of 2009, while some 12,000 people have found temporary shelter in the town of Boosaaso in northern Somalia since 7 May. Most of them are reportedly awaiting the opportunity offered by smugglers to take them on the perilous journey across the Gulf of Aden. After a review of security arrangements in the aftermath of the bombing of the UNDP office in Hargeisa in October 2008, United Nations activities inside Somalia were scaled down and the number of international staff members were lowered. Several critical programmes in Mogadishu are maintained by a small number of national staff.

37. In the light of the continuation of direct threats against United Nations staff, a further significant expansion of activities will require more robust security arrangements and improved contingency support. The announcement in late July 2009 by the insurgents of a ban on the activities of UNDP, UNPOS and the Department of Safety and Security in areas under their control, as reported earlier, will particularly affect decisions in this regard. This development, however, offers an opportunity for the United Nations bodies concerned and others to consider innovative or alternative ways of dealing with the situation in Somalia. The independent expert will return to this point below.

B. Humanitarian situation

38. The humanitarian crisis in Somalia has continued to deepen owing to the ongoing conflicts, drought, inflation and continued lack of humanitarian access to the most badly affected areas. According to a United Nations food security assessment, in August 2009, some 3.7 million people or 50 per cent of the population of Somalia were in need of livelihood and humanitarian support, up from 3.2 million in January 2009. The drought is worsening in the central regions and has extended to the northern parts of the country. Increased food insecurity is exacerbated by diseases caused by poor access to health services. One in five Somali children is acutely malnourished, compared to one in six in February. On a more positive note, parts of southern Somalia recorded a nearly normal crop production thanks to good rains from April to June 2009.

39. The levels of severe acute malnutrition warrant sustained humanitarian relief efforts. In addition, the compounded effects of prolonged drought, hyperinflation of staple commodity

prices and civil insecurity have not only contributed to loss of livestock in pastoral livelihood, but also continue to limit access to water, food and sustainable livelihoods, necessitating an ongoing humanitarian response.

C. Human rights situation in Mogadishu and south and central Somalia

40. The human rights situation in Somalia has deteriorated markedly as a result of the escalation of armed conflict since May 2009. Improvements gained following the installation of the new Government in the earlier months were thus lost and the conflict continued to have a heavy impact on civilians in many ways.

41. Monitoring the human rights situation in south and central Somalia remains very difficult because of the serious constraints to gathering information owing to security conditions. The independent expert was himself unable to visit the region. Nevertheless, major human rights concerns have been documented and the independent expert remains deeply concerned at the deterioration of the situation.

1. The right to life and physical integrity

42. Repeated, inaccurate and indiscriminate exchanges of mortar fire between all parties have resulted in numerous civilian deaths and many injuries, with bombs landing on civilian homes and mosques, and have caused tens of thousands to flee the capital. Media reports and direct testimony taken from refugees, internally displaced persons and other sources show that insurgents have violated international humanitarian law by taking the conflict into areas populated or frequented by civilians. Reports of death threats and intimidation have also been common. Journalists covering the conflict have faced particular risks because of targeted killings and the danger of being caught in cross-fire.

43. Civilians, especially women and children, suffer most from indiscriminate attacks and retaliatory acts from both sides in the Somali conflict, including armed opposition and local clan militias. Punishments such as amputations and stoning illustrate the extent to which violence still substitutes for the rule of law in many areas of Somalia. United Nations human rights staff have received credible reports that, in areas controlled by insurgent groups, ad hoc tribunals are judging and sentencing civilians without due process, including death sentences by stoning or decapitation, and amputation of limbs and other forms of corporal punishment. The lack of accountability, especially with regard to serious violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law, has contributed to a culture of impunity. With the exception of Somaliland and Puntland, rule of law is virtually non-existent in Somalia, in particular in the south-central regions.

44. A more worrisome development is the extreme interpretations of sharia law by hard-line Islamists in areas under their control. They have led to severe corporal punishment, including the amputation of hands of alleged criminals. According to one report, in an incident on 3 July, Islamist forces in the Marka district of Shabelle Hoose amputated the right hand of a man accused of stealing cattle in Gandabe. The sentence was carried out publicly in front of hundreds of residents. After the amputation, the man was reportedly taken to the hospital for treatment while his hand was paraded around town to serve as a lesson to other residents.

2. Arbitrary arrest and detention, and summary executions

45. Arbitrary arrests and detentions, including prolonged detention before the initial court appearance, and executions following proceedings by Islamic courts have been documented in some parts of the country. In addition, impunity for violations of human rights and international humanitarian laws, which has accompanied the Somali crisis since the beginning, has remained entrenched.

3. The right to freedom of opinion and expression

46. Six journalists have been killed in south-central Somalia since the beginning of 2009, some in targeted killings attributed to insurgents, others caught in cross-fire during fighting. In addition, journalists face increasing risks in the form of threats and intimidation from and by the authorities and armed opposition groups. As a result, the work of journalists in the south-central region has become particularly precarious and limited.

4. Violence against women

47. As is often the case in traditional societies, violence against women in Somalia is rarely reported. However, Somali non-governmental organizations working with victims of gender-based violence report that this type of violence occurs on a daily basis.

(a) Violence against women in Somalia directly related to the armed conflict

48. Since both sides to the armed conflict are involved in indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population, women are especially affected, as they run most small businesses (for example, in markets) or stay in the family home. Most attacks occur during the day.

49. Women-headed refugee families are especially vulnerable in Somali society. Women heading households in camps of internally displaced persons often work as house helps in private homes, risking their health and lives on their way to work because of the insecurity in the streets. They are often subjected to sexual exploitation and abuse by their male employers.

(b) Violence against women in Somalia related to the absence of rule of law and a culture of impunity

50. Women human rights defenders continue to be targets of attack by those who find that their work goes against their interest. Four women journalists were reported to have been accused and intimidated by both sides for being partisan. The insurgency accused them of being engaged in activities contradictory to Islam, while the Government is said to detain women journalists in detention facilities that do not guarantee the basic rights of women in detention as a means of intimidation.

51. In all parts of Somalia, including Somaliland and Puntland, there are no adequate detention facilities for women, who are thus extremely vulnerable to violence by fellow male detainees or male wardens.

52. In contradiction to applicable Somali law, sharia law is applied in an extreme form in areas not controlled by the Transitional Federal Government. This is often extremely detrimental to

women's rights. Sharia law includes execution by stoning for the crime of adultery. The public lapidation of a young woman alleged to have been raped after having been sentenced to death for adultery by a local sharia court, mentioned in the previous report of the independent expert, still haunts the minds of people. Fortunately to the independent expert's knowledge, the case has not been repeated.

53. Women, who run most small businesses as well as the *khat* trade in Somalia, are increasingly targeted by armed groups to force them out of business. Also, uniformed personnel linked to the Transitional Federal Government are reported to be involved in looting, and the targeting of businesses run by women.

(c) Violence against women in Somalia linked to the social fabric

54. In Somalia, the prevalence of female genital mutilation and cutting is about 98 per cent and is primarily performed on girls aged from 4 to 12 years. The practice is especially widespread in rural communities.

55. Domestic violence victimizing women continues to be a major problem in all parts of Somalia. Because of the destruction of formerly functioning clan structures, in many places, women have no access to any formal or traditional protection. Young adolescent girls are often brought by their families to detention centres for "misbehaving" and are held in custody until the family asks for their release.

56. Women victims of gender-based violence have no functioning judicial system to turn to. Even in Somaliland and Puntland, where courts do function, access to justice for such women is extremely limited. Rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence are dealt with by clans as a civil dispute, not involving the victim, and are often solved by either the payment of blood money or forced marriage between the victim and the perpetrator.

5. Children's rights

57. As elsewhere, women and children are the most vulnerable in places where they live and as they flee from those places, and in some places also when they arrive, such as at camps for internally displaced persons. Grave violations against children and women have been reported throughout the country, including the recruitment and use of children by parties to the conflict, killing and maiming as a result of the fighting, indiscriminate or excessive use of force and rape, and other forms of violence against women and children.

58. More evidence is emerging on the scale and nature of child recruitment and the use of children by all sides in the conflict. Children are being recruited, very often for use on the front. The majority of the children are aged from 14 to 18 years, though, there is also evidence of children as young as 9 years of age being recruited. Recruitment is systematic, and often involves force or deception. Children are mostly recruited from schools, madrasas and camps for internally displaced persons inside Somalia and from refugee camps in neighbouring countries. Vulnerable or destitute adolescent boys are the ones mainly targeted. There are also reports of girls recruited by the insurgents to marry fighters, provide logistical support and collect intelligence.

59. UNICEF has been monitoring the violation of children's rights by parties to the conflict in Somalia for more than three years. Earlier in 2009, UNICEF commissioned a study on the subject, which was conducted by an independent consultant with an extensive network of contacts inside the various armed groups in Somalia. The information received from these sources indicated the number of children recruited by different armed groups, the training camps and their locations where the children are trained, the methods used, the nationalities of trainers and the kinds of children targeted for recruitment. The recruitment of children by Government forces has been found to be somewhat less systematic, targeting a slightly older age group (14-18 years) than the recruitment patterns of some of the insurgent groups. There is nonetheless evidence of recruitment of children by all sides to the conflict.

6. Economic, social and cultural rights

60. After two decades of conflict, almost two generations of young Somali boys and girls have been denied the benefit of a full education. Existing education systems, already limited in their scope, have been badly affected by the conflict. Somalis have nevertheless managed to organize strong networks of independent and private schooling in many parts of the country, and Government efforts are focused on extending schooling, albeit with extremely limited funding, especially in the case of secondary education. In addition, given the various existing curricula, the Ministry of Education and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF are working to harmonize them.

61. Many other economic, social and cultural rights have been badly affected by almost two decades of armed conflict in Somalia. Most particularly affected are the rights to work, to health and to well-being of all family members including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to culture.

7. Migrants

62. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and its partners in Boosaaso, Puntland, the ongoing fighting in Mogadishu and central Somalia is pushing thousands of Somalis to risk their lives to cross the Gulf of Aden and seek asylum in Yemen. Some 12,000 people are now in Boosaaso and are part of approximately 232,000 Somali internally displaced persons who have been forced to leave their homes since 7 May 2009, when fighting between opposition and Government forces erupted in several districts of the Somali capital.

63. In 2008, more than 50,000 new asylum-seekers had reached the shores of Yemen - a 70 per cent increase from 2007. The trend continued during the first six months of 2009, when around 16,500 Somalis arrived in Yemen. More than 1,000 migrants reportedly drowned en route in 2008, either thrown overboard or forced to disembark far from the shore by unscrupulous smugglers. According to UNHCR, by the end of July 2009, almost 300 had died or gone missing. Following the independent expert's visit to Yemen in early December 2008, he reported on the desperate situation of Somali asylum-seekers crossing the Gulf of Aden in his report to the Council.

IV. HUMAN RIGHTS IN PUNTLAND

64. In Puntland, elections took place peacefully at the beginning of 2009. A new President and Government took office; they are committed to establishing multiparty democracy through a new constitution within two years. Members of the Puntland parliament endorsed, on 29 June 2009, a new law on political parties under which 66 members of parliament were to be appointed by the President, while only three political parties were allowed to compete in the presidential elections.

65. Although life in Puntland is relatively peaceful, given its proximity to the violence and chaos of south and central Somalia, with the serious efforts made by the Puntland Government to maintain law and order, albeit with many shortfalls, there are still many concerns in the field of human rights, particularly with regard to the application of traditional forms of justice that are often in conflict with universal principles of human rights. In spite of the impressive dynamism of legal aid programmes and civil society organizations, there have been some recent instances of murder trials under the Puntland judicial system which fell short of the standards expected of a fair and equitable trial. However, this, the independent expert was informed, was not due to the lack of political will on the part of the authorities, but to the capacity of the judiciary system and the coexistence of many conflicting laws, particularly customary law, sharia law and formal modern law.

66. In discussing the above matters with the authorities, the independent expert was informed that, while the Government of Puntland was trying to avoid the application of traditional *Xeer* law in cases of serious crime, by bringing them before the ordinary judiciary, the latter did not have the capacity to ensure a fair trial and the technical means to prove a case beyond reasonable doubt. Alleged perpetrators thus continue to be sentenced to death. According to civil society sources, courts in Puntland bring murder cases to justice quickly and issue a first judgement soon thereafter, especially if eyewitnesses are available or alleged perpetrators confess, to prevent inter-clan fighting. In accordance with *Xeer* law, the family of the victim has the right to kill a family member of the alleged perpetrator. The victim's family often renounces this right if a death sentence against the alleged perpetrator has been issued. This might have been the case in two recent murder trials.

67. On 5 August 2009, the Minister for Information was assassinated by unknown gunmen in Galkayo, a trade town that links Puntland to the south-central regions. The Minister had been appointed by the President of Puntland to facilitate talks between stakeholders and leading figures of the Mudug region in view of the formation of the regional administration. According to reports from the region, the murder was a sub-clan's revenge crime rather than a politically motivated killing.

68. During the independent expert's visit to Puntland, he requested that the Minister for Justice organize a visit for the independent expert and his colleagues from UNPOS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to the central prison of Garowe. The independent expert had the impression that the conditions at the detention centre were terribly bad, more because of lack of the capacity to hold large number of prisoners than intentional abuse. Subsequently, he recommended that the UNPOS Human Rights Unit organize training sessions for the penitentiary officials on the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners to raise their awareness of relevant standards.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOMALILAND

69. In Somaliland, the situation remained more or less stable during the reporting period. The decision by the President and the House of Elders to postpone elections in March 2009 provoked protests, and the Government responded with arbitrary arrests and the banning of demonstrations. These raised concerns with regard to the freedom of association, assembly and expression. Through negotiation and reconciliation, a peaceful settlement between the opposition and the Government was reached by mid-year regarding the elections, but the situation deteriorated once more and subsequent developments led to the dissolution of the agreement and a further postponement of the elections, which are now due in September 2009.

70. Sexual violence, including a rise in the number of reported cases of gang rape of teenage girls (and younger), has been reported. A total of 11 cases of rape were reported by UNICEF monitors in the camps for internally displaced persons in Puntland in May alone, and 13 were reported in Somaliland. Some cases involved mentally and physically handicapped children and boys. Beside the brutality often employed, the most disturbing aspect of these cases was the near-universal impunity for perpetrators. Most cases were unreported, and when they were, they were most often settled by clan resolution, involving no direct punishment of the perpetrator. In 2008, in the Hargeisa regional court, only 12 cases of rape resulted in a conviction.

71. Female genital mutilation is almost universally prevalent in Somalia. UNICEF supports community development processes in all zones to seek the collective abandonment of this harmful practice. Simultaneously, UNICEF is working with religious leaders from the Sudan and universities in Puntland and Somaliland to bring about a change in attitude of the Islamic hierarchy in Somalia, towards the prohibition of female genital mutilation. UNICEF has also supported a zero-tolerance policy development with the Ministry of Family Affairs in both Somaliland and Puntland.

VI. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE SOMALI CRISIS

72. During his trip to Somaliland and Puntland, it occurred to the independent expert that, while Mogadishu largely remains out of bounds, there are other areas in Somalia where initiatives could be taken in relation to, among other things, some basic economic, social and cultural rights of the people, far removed from the war zones.

73. As stated above, the independent expert believes that, despite the recent upsurge in violence, the prospects for a resolution of the long-standing crisis in Somalia have improved in recent months. The Somali crisis has run its full course and some light can be seen at the end of the tunnel.

74. After having talked with Somalis from all walks of life, including many who most recently left war-ravaged areas of Somalia, the independent expert is convinced that the support many people had for the opposition before the change of Government and the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops in late December 2008 has eroded significantly. The decision on 18 April by the new Parliament to introduce sharia law in the country has weakened the hard-line Islamist opposition, which had made this an important platform of its policy. The strict interpretation of sharia law and the imposition of extremely harsh justice and restrictions on some social practices in areas under the opposition's control are resented by the people, who have long been used to a more

tolerant Sufi tradition of Islam. The emergence of more moderate Islamist forces in opposition to the hard-liners in some areas perhaps indicates the beginning of change from within the opposition as a whole. The concern of parents who do not wish their young boys to be forcibly recruited by the opposition forces to fight the Government is an important element of the people's disenchantment with them. Another factor linked to the introduction of religious objectives in the conflict is the consequent waning of clan rivalry, which has long been the basis of conflict in Somalia. Last but not least, there are clear indications of war-fatigue in the population, who aspire to a normal life once again.

75. More defections from the opposition forces is likely if the Transitional Federal Government lives up to expectations. Among other things, it will have to ensure that its own forces, and those of its allies, including AMISOM, do not violate and in fact take care to respect human rights and the principles of humanitarian law. In addition, it will have to foster confidence in the minds of the people about its determination and ability to effect change in Somalia.

76. With regard to the latter, the Government will, first of all, have to demonstrate that it sincerely cares for the welfare of the people. The negative image that the people have had about their Government - that its primary concern is to stay in power, that it is the source of most corruption in the country and that it lacks commitment to improve the people's lot - will have to change.

77. The independent expert sees some hope in this regard. He was impressed by the sincerity of the members of the new Government that he met. He has also been informed by many in the United Nations system, who liaise with them on a regular basis that they too are impressed by their goodwill. Many others have a similar, positive impression of the new Government.

78. The Government will obviously need the assistance of the international community to meet these expectations. It will have to be helped to take advantage of the new opportunities that are opening up. Both the Government and the international community will have to take some bold decisions and initiatives in this regard, and show creativity in dealing with this exceptional situation.

79. The focus of the United Nations on the security situation in Mogadishu and south and central Somalia, though understandable, has led to possibilities that exist in other areas, where security concerns are of much lesser magnitude, being overlooked. Foundations could be laid in these places for initiatives that would inspire people's confidence in the Government, for example helping to develop the capacity of the people to earn a livelihood, to revive beneficial institutions destroyed by the war, and so on. The experience from such initiatives could then be replicated in other areas when circumstances permit.

80. The support of the international community to the Transitional Federal Government and its allies in fighting insurgency must be coupled with inducements and support for activities that would promote respect for human rights and humanitarian law, and ensure people's support for the Government. Setting up some conditions for assistance in this regard may help the Government to think of alternative and creative ways of tackling the situation.

81. The exclusive focus on Mogadishu has led to the neglect of other places which could serve as temporary hubs for certain Government activities. The independent expert is not suggesting

that Mogadishu should be abandoned; he understands its historical and psychological importance for Somalia as a whole. However, the difficulties in Mogadishu should not undermine the Government's and the international community's efforts to take beneficial initiatives for the people, which would help them and at the same time prepare the country for the future.

82. The mission helped the independent expert to form some ideas in this regard. With regard to education, one thing that struck the independent expert about the armed conflicts in Somalia, apart from the killings, bloodshed and human suffering they have caused for so long, was their impact on the education sector. The fact that almost two generations of Somali children have been deprived of education opportunities that would prepare them for a profession in the modern world and help them to earn a livelihood is terribly saddening. One shudders to think of a Somalia devoid of educated personnel to tend to the affairs of the State when peace returns. The independent expert recalls the reasons many parents gave for fleeing Somalia, the foremost of which was lack of education opportunities for their children and the prospect of their recruitment by the armed forces and groups. Many Somali youths told the independent expert about the lack of educational and livelihood opportunities in Somalia, which compelled many of their friends to join the opposition forces simply to keep them occupied and earn a living at the same time.

83. With some imaginative planning, it should be possible to arrange for the education of a large number of Somali children and youths, who are the prime targets for recruitment by armed forces and groups. For example, projects could be set up in Puntland, where the President supported the idea. Setting up similar projects in Somaliland should also be feasible. A crash programme for selected students to make up for the lost years of their education and provide them with vocational training could be a good beginning. Innovative thinking may also lead to the productive engagement of youths trained for income-generation activities. If nothing else, it would at least rekindle hope in a nation that has long forgotten it.

84. Also in the field of education, similar arrangements could be made either in Puntland or Somaliland for refresher courses and/or training of teachers, doctors, nurses and so on. Police training is already held in these two regions. Among other things, such activities would create the impression that better days are in sight. Creating positive impressions by itself should be a primary objective of the Government.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. For the Government

85. **The most important task for the Government is to foster confidence in the minds of the people that better days are ahead and that it is committed to bringing them about. The demonstration of sincere will by the Government will be of primary importance in this regard.**

86. **With regard to the protection of basic human rights, including the right to life and safety, there must be a clear demonstration that the Government is taking all measures possible in this regard, including those necessary to ensure that its own security forces are not the source of violations. Human rights abuses are unacceptable whoever commits them, but the Government has special responsibilities to protect. An excellent beginning would be to dismiss officials and commanders who are known for their corruption, inefficiency and**

violation of human rights and humanitarian laws. The naming of a human rights focal point who could liaise with the United Nations and others in this regard would be very useful.

87. Measures to end the deep-rooted culture of impunity in Somalia and to ensure accountability for all Government servants must be a key priority. As a party to the Djibouti Agreement, the Government is committed to taking the necessary measures to deal with all abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed throughout the entire Somali conflict. It must honour its commitment, however challenging that task may be. Apart from developing mechanisms to deal with the perpetrators of past crimes, the Government will also have to take measures to prevent impunity in the future. To that end, it will have to rebuild and re-orient the security forces with a command and control leadership that promotes professional behaviour.

88. Capacity-building and the training of Government forces and officials on human rights and humanitarian law principles should continue as long as old habits and practices remain. The United Nations is committed to helping in this regard. That help must be used on a priority basis. More specifically, arrangements will have to be made to train and brief the new authorities - presidential office, Government and parliament - to create an awareness of their obligations with regard to human rights and the implementation of ratified treaties and covenants. These training sessions could be held alternatively in different locations in the country where circumstances permit, and include local, regional and national authorities.

89. Training and briefing sessions should include strategies to raise awareness of the human rights framework and what it means in practice, including increasing the participation of women in all processes. Over time, support for establishing parliamentary oversight mechanisms and an independent national body to promote and protect human rights will also be necessary. Ensuring the incorporation of human rights into the drafting process of a new constitution will be an important task for the coming months.

90. The assurances given by the Prime Minister during his meetings with the independent expert to set up an independent national human rights commission must be followed up in the shortest possible time, notwithstanding the challenges that an ongoing conflict poses.

91. An important challenge for the Government will be the introduction of sharia law as the source of legislation. The task of adopting legislation in full compliance with international standards will be an extremely difficult task. The independent expert is pleased to learn that UNDP is already liaising with the Government in this regard.

92. Since the tasks facing the Government to improve the human rights of the people is an enormous one, the Government should draw up a road map with clear immediate, medium- and long-term objectives. While improving the physical security should indeed remain the top priority in the immediate term, there are other objectives that could be included. The Government could immediately pledge to set up activities relating to the exercise of certain economic, social and cultural rights that have been denied for so long in areas where circumstances permit. For example, higher education and vocational training of selected youths from Mogadishu and other areas of south-central Somalia could be set

up in Puntland. Similar activities could be considered for training teachers and nurses. Indeed, any activity that would create an impression in the minds of the people that the Government is concerned about their welfare would be useful.

93. The Government, with the assistance of the international community, should develop and implement formal, concrete, time-bound plans of action to halt the recruitment and use of children. It should also facilitate the release of all children recruited or used unlawfully by its armed forces and secure their access to protection and reintegration programmes.

B. For the international community

94. It is of utmost importance that the international community recognize that Somalia is not only facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world today, but also a very serious security challenge linked to global terrorism which, if not handled urgently, could worsen. Outside help that is reportedly constantly arriving in support of the opposition appears to have accelerated in recent months. Not only is more money being injected, but more foreign fighters are also being introduced. This must be checked with a greater sense of urgency than has been the case to date.

95. Nearly two decades of almost incessant warfare has shattered the lives of the ordinary people of Somalia, who have somehow managed to survive. They live in a fragile State in which many national institutions have more or less been destroyed or severely damaged and require rebuilding, in terms of both infrastructure and capacity. The police and security forces in the entire south-central region are in a very poor state and must be revived, revamped and reconstructed. In Somaliland and Puntland, where institutions exist, there are gaps that must be filled and additional capacity built. Access to justice in all parts of the country is very limited, especially for women. Turning the situation around will require the wholehearted support of the international community.

96. The international community must therefore ensure that financial and other resources required by the Government are fully provided. The pledges made at the international conference held in Brussels on 23 April 2009 were a good beginning, but not enough for actual needs.

97. Fortunately, the attention of the international community has recently turned to Somalia, albeit mainly in relation to the growing menace of piracy along the Somali coast. It is also fortunate that there is growing international recognition that the problem of piracy cannot be dealt with without addressing the root cause linked to the chaos and deprivations in Somalia. In a country with hardly any source of livelihood for youth, where the fish resources in the surrounding waters are plundered by foreign fishing trawlers and where nuclear and other wastes are dumped by foreign ships on the coasts unchallenged by any Somali naval force, piracy is a lucrative - albeit dangerous - alternative source of income for many. Unless this reality is taken into account, piracy cannot be eliminated. The independent expert strongly recommends that, among other things, the programmes implemented by the Government of Puntland in this regard be supported by the international community.

98. The international community should consider providing scholarships to Somali students, particularly those staying in refugee camps in Kenya and Yemen. Long years of armed conflict have taken a heavy toll on education in Somalia. There will be a serious dearth of educated and trained staff to assist in running the affairs of the State when peace returns.

99. To facilitate the involvement of all States, large or small, rich or poor, in supporting the process of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction in Somalia, it is important to bring the plight of the people of Somalia into focus. The independent expert is deeply pained at the ignorance of otherwise knowledgeable people about the situation in Somalia. For most, it is another problem in another place. Most are not aware of the gravity of the situation in Somalia and the terrible human rights and humanitarian law abuses that have been taking place there for so long. Ways and means must be found to change this state of affairs. The organization of a special session of the Human Rights Council would be a good start. The efforts made by the independent expert to raise the profile of the crisis have, it seems, failed to make an impact to date.

C. For the United Nations

100. In Somalia, the United Nations is faced with one of its most difficult challenges. On the one hand, it has the task of negotiating peace in a country long ridden by armed conflict; on the other, the difficulties it faces relating to activities in the field of human rights, humanitarian assistance, recovery and development. To date it has done a reasonably good job, given the circumstances, but could certainly do a better one.

101. While the peace process is being ably advanced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the independent expert would only recommend that serious considerations be given by him and others to finding ways and means to involve and ensure the full support of the Puntland and Somaliland authorities in the process. It will be important to have their full support for all United Nations activities in Somalia. The Governments of Puntland and Somaliland already host a number of important United Nations activities, such as the training of police and security forces and of members of correctional and judicial services, which will have an important bearing on the future of Somalia. United Nations agencies should now begin their long-awaited move to undertake their activities for Somalia from within the country itself, by making Puntland and Somaliland the hubs of their activities. This will have a psychological impact on the people which would be important for the success of the peace process in Somalia. The independent expert is pleased that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General recently visited Somaliland and that the Special Representative will be visiting Puntland in early September, after the signing of the agreement between the Transitional Federal Government and Puntland in August 2009.

102. The independent expert welcomes the efforts made by UNPOS to progressively increase the presence of its human rights officers in Somalia, through its frequent missions to Somaliland and Puntland, and to Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia when security permits. The independent expert hopes that this will lead, in the shortest possible time, to the establishment of their presence on the ground on an enduring basis. The independent expert has noted the increase in the number of staff of the UNPOS Human Rights Unit and

has been informed that additional staff will be deployed soon to strengthen its capacity. It is important to have a clear road map for the durable presence of United Nations human rights staff in Somali itself.

103. The implementation of Council resolution 10/32 will enable UNPOS and OHCHR to step up cooperation with and support for national and regional Somali institutions through a comprehensive agreement. A framework for UNPOS/OHCHR technical cooperation and assistance in the field of human rights has been developed in collaboration with the Somali authorities, covering six areas of support: (a) strengthening legislation/Government capacity in human rights; (b) support for the establishment of a police force more compliant with human rights standards; (c) corrections and judiciary; (d) support for addressing impunity, justice and reconciliation; (e) monitoring and reporting; and (f) education and public awareness-raising on human rights. The independent expert hopes that the framework will be endorsed in the near future and that it is implemented immediately.

104. While commending the above-mentioned efforts, the independent expert believes that the United Nations as a whole should do more in Somalia. He recommends that UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNESCO also consider strengthening their presence in Somalia, including in Puntland and Somaliland. They could share the tasks of training law enforcements officials, corrections/judicial officials, civil society organizations, education officials, teachers, students, doctors, nurses and so on, from all regions of Somalia. Their strengthened presence in the field will make a difference and send a strong message to the authorities in Somalia about the commitment and dedication of the United Nations to the cause of human rights in that country.

105. UNPOS and OHCHR should also consider organizing, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies as necessary and with the participation of lawmakers, members of the judiciary, including those from Somaliland and Puntland, and experts in both Islamic and international law a workshop to address the harmonization of Somali laws, in particular the harmonization of Islamic sharia law and customary and international human rights and humanitarian law. Such a workshop could also benefit from the participation of relevant special procedures mandate holders.

106. From the briefings with the United Nations Coordinator and the representatives of United Nations agencies serving Somalia from their bases in Nairobi, the independent expert is aware of the immediate, medium- and long-term plans that the Organization as a whole has for humanitarian assistance, recovery and development in Somalia. Steps should continue to be taken by the agencies to serve Somalia from inside the country, for example from Puntland and Somaliland, in the shortest possible time.

D. For the African Union

107. While recognizing the importance of the role played by AMISOM peacekeepers in the protection of certain strategic areas in Somalia (such as villa Somalia, the airport and sea ports), there is a need for the African Union to consider providing AMISOM with a protection mandate, including the use of force if necessary, as provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to protect civilians, including women, children, Somali

minorities, internally displaced persons, human rights defenders, aid workers and United Nations staff, among others. However, extreme care should be taken to ensure proper training of the troops before entrusting them with these tasks. The independent expert commends Burundi for sending another battalion to Somalia, and encourages other States Members of the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to strengthen and augment the capacity of AMISOM.

VIII. CONCLUSION

108. The independent expert cannot overemphasize the importance of concerted international action to bring the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, one of the contemporary world's longest and most painful crises, to an end in the shortest possible time. He has two reasons for this. Firstly, in terms of the violation of human rights and humanitarian law, including possible war crimes committed in Somalia for almost two decades, the Somali crisis must be regarded as one that shocks the conscience of mankind. It is imperative, therefore, that the international community show greater resolve in finding a solution to it. In doing so, it must also seek to eliminate the culture of impunity that has flourished in Somalia for so long. In the context of heightened international awareness of the need to eliminate impunity from all society in order to strengthen the international regime for human rights and the rule of law, the situation in Somalia offers a good opportunity for example-setting. Secondly, the conflict in Somalia has reached a critical juncture which, if handled properly, may yield positive results soon. This opportunity must not be missed and should be utilized with greater commitment and creativity by the international community than has been exhibited to date. Otherwise, the forces of terror and violence will continue to triumph not only in Somalia, but spread elsewhere in the region too.
