

UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review

October 2004



Political developments

New President: Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was elected as President for the Somali Transitional Parliament by MPs meeting on October 10 in Nairobi, Kenya. The event was the culmination of two years of the Somali National Reconciliation and Peace talks facilitated by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which brings together Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda and Eritrea.

The election initially attracted 28 candidates. However, two of them, Mr. Jama Ali Jama and Mr. Hussein Mohammed Nur 'Shatigadud', withdrew from the race prior to the first round of voting and publicly stated that they would support the winner of the election. Mr. Abdirahman Jama Barre, Mr. Abdiqassim Salat Hassan (former Transitional National Government President) and Mohammed Hussein Addow withdrew from the race prior to the second round of voting. After three rounds of voting, Abdullahi was elected President of the Somali Transitional Federal Government with

189 votes, with Mr. Abdullahi Ahmed Addow following with 79 votes.

Before the voting began, all 26 Presidential candidates swore on the Koran and signed a declaration to support the elected president and demobilize their militia.



President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed. Credit: British Broadcasting Corporation

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed the election and pledged that the world body would support efforts to restore stability in the war-torn, Horn of Africa country.

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Highlights of President Abdullahi's life as provided in his political manifesto, *Towards a new vision for Somalia*

July 1998 - October 2004:	President of Puntland State of Somalia
October 1985 - May 1991:	Detained by Ethiopia's military regime for six years.
September 1978:	Formed the first armed Somali opposition front and became its first chairman for seven years.
April 1978:	Defected to Kenya following the failure of the military coup attempt of 1978 against Siyad Barre
July 1977 - April 1978:	Commander of Southern Front of the Somali National Army
October 1975 - July 1977:	General Manager of WAGAD (A public agency for transportation and spare parts).
1969 - 1975:	Political detainee of the Somali military regime.
March 1969 - November 1969:	Chief of Staff of the Northern Sector of the Somali National Army.
January 1968 - March 1968:	Head of Training Department of the Somali National Army.
1965 - 1968:	Somalia's Military Attaché to Moscow, USSR
1962 - 1964:	Promoted to the rank of Lt. Col. and awarded First Class National Merit Medal.
December 1960 - February 1962:	Company Commander of the Somali National Army in the Northern Somalia Regions.
February 1958 - January 1960:	Division Commander of Upper Jubba Regional Police.
1957 - 1958:	Sub-division Commander of Banadir Police (Mogadishu).
December 15, 1934:	Born in Mudugh Region.

Somalia ceased to function as a modern state in 1991 when armed groups overthrew the regime of Muhammad Siyad Barre, precipitating a civil war that saw numerous warlords and their militias carve the country into fiefdoms. Numerous earlier attempts to end anarchy in Somalia failed. A reconciliation conference in Djibouti in 2000 led to the appointment of Abdiqassim Salat Hassan as president, but his administration was only able to exert authority in some parts of the Somali capital, Mogadishu, and a few pockets of territory in the south of the country. The newly elected president and his government will have a five-year mandate, after which, general elections will be held inside Somalia.

The administration of the self-declared republic of Somaliland (Northwest Somalia) which announced its break away from the rest of Somalia following Barre's overthrow, refused to take part in the two-year reconciliation conference in Kenya. Somaliland has said it is an independent entity with a sovereign government. Somaliland's cabinet met after the election and warned that any attempt by Somalia's embryonic government to lay claim on Somaliland's territory would be opposed through the use of force, the official Somaliland radio reported.

Yusuf is a 69-year-old politician and former military officer who has served as president of the northeastern self-declared autonomous region of Puntland since 1998. He was born in 1934 and studied law in the Somali National University until his final year when he

was detained. He studied at the Frunze War College in the former Soviet Union and also studied military topography in Italy.

He was Somalia's military attaché to Moscow between 1965 and 1968. Barre detained him for several years when he refused to support his seizure of power in Mogadishu in 1969. Yusuf, a member of the Darod clan, was one of a group of people who in 1978 tried to oust Barre in a failed coup. Most of the coup plotters were executed, but Abdullahi Yusuf managed to flee the country. Later that year, he formed the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, one of the first armed groups to wage a military campaign against Barre's regime. Yusuf had his primary and high school education in Somalia and is married with four children and three grand children.

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, who is the current chairman of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the regional body that sponsored the peace process that culminated in the election of the president, said the organization would ensure that the peace process succeeded. "IGAD will not allow anyone to come in and mess up the peace process," said Museveni.

UNICEF Operational Areas...

Northwest Zone – Hargeisa Office

Awdal
West Galbeed
Togdheer
Sahil
Sool
Sanaag

Northeast Zone – Bossaso Office

Bari
Nugal
Mudug

Central and Southern Zone – Baidoa, Jowhar, Mogadishu and Kismayo Offices

Galgaduud
Hiran
Middle Shabelle
Lower Shabelle
Benadir
Lower Juba
Middle Juba
Gedo
Bay
Bakool



More smiles could be on the way if stability takes root. Credit: UNICEFSOM01-131/Taylor

The swearing ceremony was attended by the Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is the current chairman of the Africa Union, Rwandan President Paul Kagame, his Burundian counterpart Domitien Ndayizeye, the President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh and President Ali Abdallah Saleh of Yemen. Sudan was represented by Vice President Ali Uthman Taha and Ethiopia by Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin. Eastern and central African leaders later said they would recognise "with immediate effect" the new government.

At a meeting attended by the presidents of Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda and senior officials from Eritrea and Ethiopia, as well as the vice president of Sudan - the leaders pledged to give diplomatic, political, technical and financial support to Somalia's transitional government and appealed to the international community to do the same.

The leaders, who included South Africa's Deputy President Jacob Zuma, resolved

"to take collective action on any person or groups of persons whose actions are directly or indirectly inimical to the achievements" made at the Somali reconciliation conference in Nairobi.

Security developments

Arrests in Somaliland: A man suspected of killing two British teachers in Sheikh, Northwest Somalia ('Somaliland') about one year ago has been arrested. The suspect used to run a business in Burao town but disappeared immediately after the killing. The suspect was arrested in Djibouti and was handed over to Somaliland government. The suspect allegedly named two others whom he said were part of the plot. One of them was arrested in Burao. The other is said to be in Mogadishu.

In Bossaso, Northeast Somalia, one person was killed and two injured in a shooting incident at a car wash centre. Local police arrested a suspect in connection with the incident.

In Mogadishu, the Islamic Courts disarmed militia who were controlling a road block at Bakara Market. Militia of the Islamic Courts carried out the operation at the request of the business community following increased attacks by militia on civilians at the checkpoint.

Emergency

UNICEF staff held discussions with representatives of the Puntland administration, other UN agencies and NGOs on the impact of drought and resolved to use mobile teams of personnel to provide health and nutrition services to affected persons. The mobile teams will make it possible to reach many people in remote areas which have previously not had any services. Eight districts: Iskushuban, Bandar Bayla, Gardo, Eyl, Dangorayo, Garowe, Jerriban and Galdogob were identified as priority areas for interventions in Puntland.

Health programme update...

Support to hospital: Following talks between UNICEF and the Somaliland administration, UNICEF is to train paediatric staff of Hargeisa Group Hospital.

Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI): Children aged under five years in drought-affected areas of Sool and Sanaag regions were immunized against the six childhood killer diseases – polio, measles, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and tuberculosis. In Puntland, UNICEF in collaboration with the local administration and the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) supported vaccination of 2,494 infants. Also vaccinated were 818 pregnant women. Vitamin A and iron-folic acid supplements were distributed to

pregnant women/lactating mothers and children. In Bari, Puntland, 897 children aged under five years were immunized against polio. In Merka and Wanla Weyn districts of Lower Shabelle region, Central Somalia, some 11,442 children were immunized. Another 11,843 were vaccinated in Mogadishu. In Sablale town, Central Somalia, UNICEF in collaboration with an NGO immunized 348 children against measles after recurrent measles outbreaks in the town.

Nutrition programme update...

Deworming: UNICEF in collaboration with HEAL, a local NGO and the Somaliland administration started the de-worming of school children in Hargeisa on 12 October. Deworming medication was given to about 1400 children in Fadumo Bihi and Alif Doon primary schools. De-worming improves the nutritional status of school children and enables them to have better physical and mental capacities.

Screening: UNICEF in collaboration with Save the Children-US screened about 7,000 children for malnutrition in 154 drought affected villages in Togdheer region of Somaliland. During the screening, vitamin A supplements were distributed to children and iron-folic acid supplements given to pregnant women. In Bay and Bakool region of Central Somalia, 2,029

children were given supplementary food.

Anaemia: The first major testing of blood samples for anaemia among pregnant and lactating women and children through a system established mid this year was completed in Central/Southern Somalia. The testing started in July 2004 and covered 2,048 pregnant women, 562 lactating women, 161 non-pregnant women, and 1,149 children.

Due to insecurity it has not been possible to carry out micronutrient surveys in Central/Southern Somalia in order to get an estimate of the level of anaemia among children and women. However, the initial analysis of the test results show that anaemia is a very serious problem both among children and women.

Water and Environmental Sanitation update...

Projects: Rehabilitation and construction of four borewells and infrastructures and 12 wells continued in Sanaag and Sool regions, northern Somalia. These activities are funded by the European Community Humanitarian Organization (ECHO). In Central/Southern Somalia rehabilitation of Eldher and Haradhere village borewells started.

Training: UNICEF trained 25 staff from the Somaliland administration and the Somali Red Crescent Society (SRCS) to undertake hygiene education and sanitation promotion activities in Sool

and Sanaag regions. Fifty people from Adley and Marerey villages of Middle Shabelle were also trained in hygiene and sanitation training.

Education update...

Project: UNICEF and European Commission staff met representatives of the Somaliland and Puntland administrations to discuss the proposed Integrated Primary Education Project (IPEP). The project aims to increase school enrolment with special focus on girls. The project aims to ensure that at least 45 per cent of those enrolled are girls.



Increasing girls' enrolment is a priority in the education sector. Credit: UNICEF/SOM02-30/Taylor.

Policy development: UNICEF organized a workshop in Puntland that endorsed a draft of Puntland's education policy. Thirty participants who included education staff from the local administration, teachers, community education committees' members, members of CBOs and NGOs participated. The next step is for the document to be ratified by the local parliament and administration.

Supplies: UNICEF distributed 170 school benches to Dami, Ahmed Dhagax, Sheikh Ali Ibrahim and Hagal primary schools in Somaliland. The beneficiary schools are among six that UNICEF rehabilitated last year. UNICEF in addition donated a photocopier to the Education Development Center (EDC) in Hargeisa. In Central Somalia, UNICEF distributed education supplies to 35 schools in Benadir, Middle Shabelle, Bay and Bakool regions. The supplies will benefit 4,335 students.

Youth update...

Training: Twenty-five youth from Somaliland and another 25 from Benadir, Galgadud, Hiran and Mudug regions in Central/Southern Somalia were trained in peace-building and conflict resolution. In Puntland, 68 officials from 21 youth organizations in Puntland were trained in leadership and organizational development.

HIV/AIDS prevention and control update...

Training: UNICEF held a three-week course on voluntary, counseling and testing in Hargeisa for 22 health workers from Somalia and Somaliland.

Advocacy: Local radio stations in Puntland continued to disseminate information to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS. UNICEF distributed copies of print materials to women's and youth groups. HIV/AIDS components were

integrated into leadership training that was conducted for members of 40 youth groups in Galkaiyo.

Youth week: The week between 24 and 30 October was marked as the Youth Week for HIV/AIDS prevention in Somalia. The activities organized to highlight HIV/AIDS issues included sports tournaments, rallies, debates and quizzes. Youth HIV/AIDS network meetings were held in Mogadishu, Baidoa, Jowhar and Belet Weyne.

Child Protection update...

Girl in custody: UNICEF is liaising with local organizations in Somaliland to chart the way forward on how to respond to the case of a girl who had travelled from Bossaso and who was arrested and imprisoned in Hargeisa, Somaliland. The girl has been in custody since August 15, initially in Hargeisa Central Police station, but later in Hargeisa Prison. She has made accusations of rape and torture against her interrogators which are being investigated by an independent medical panel. Human rights organizations have hired lawyers for her and are trying to get her out of prison on bail.

Advocacy: Child protection advocates participated in a training session in Jowhar, Central Somalia, that discussed gender-based violence. Some 25 participants from international NGOs, women's, youth and human rights groups attended.

Another meeting was held in Mogadishu to discuss a religious booklet on child protection issues. The participants included religious leaders who helped interpret references in Islam which support protection and care of children.

Communication for Development update...

Youth Broadcasting Initiative:

Broadcasting equipment that UNICEF procured for eight youth groups from Somaliland arrived in Hargeisa. In Puntland, eight members of youth groups who are involved in the Youth Broadcasting Initiative were trained in digital recording and editing. Through the initiative, UNICEF has trained members of youth groups from different locations in Somalia to produce radio and video programmes.



The UNICEF supported Youth Broadcasting Initiative gives voice to the youth. Credit: UNICEF/SOM03-17/Taylor.

Besides producing programmes of their own choice the youth also produce programmes covering areas of UNICEF's mandate for which UNICEF provides technical expertise and

briefing sheets to ensure the programmes have the correct content.

In Central/Somalia, Horyal youth group from Jowhar distributed seven video programmes produced by youth broadcasters. The programmes focused on malaria prevention, girl education, female genital mutilation, EPI, mine awareness and child labour. The programmes were distributed to four video parlours in Jowhar which will be screening them to audiences that comprise mostly of youth.

If you have questions about the UNICEF Somalia Monthly Review please contact:

Denise Shepherd-Johnson, Communication Officer.
E-mail: dshepherdjohnson@unicef.org

OR Robert Kihara, Assistant Communication Officer.
E-mail: rkihara@unicef.org

Tel: 254-2-623958/ 623950/ 623862/ 623959/ 350410
Fax: 254-2-520640/ 623965

Credit for majority of content in this report goes to UNICEF staff in Somalia.

For this month's report, special mention goes to the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) for information on Political Developments.