



HIGHLIGHTS

- Top UN official meets Somalia's leaders at federal and federal member state levels
- UN calls for urgent climate change adaptation
- UN condemns terrorist attack on Mogadishu beach
- On Nelson Mandela Day, Somali government and UN highlight state of Somalia's prisons
- UN launches training to reduce threat of explosive devices
- Feature - Baidoa Youth Hub, a centre for young somalis
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TOP UN OFFICIAL MEETS SOMALIA'S LEADERS AT FEDERAL AND FEDERAL MEMBER STATE LEVELS

Over the past three months, Acting UN Special Representative James Swan continued his engagements with Somalia's political leaders in various meetings in which he reaffirmed the world body's commitment to support national priorities.

Early in the quarter, Mr. Swan met with Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, including the UN's contribution to the Federal Government's stabilization efforts, the country's long-term security and development objectives, and UNSOM's transition.

During his visit to Baidoa, the capital of the South West State, in July, Mr. Swan

held talks with President Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed 'Laftagareen' on the security and humanitarian situation in the state. He commended President Abdiiaziz's commitment to advancing state-building as well as in fighting the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. Mr. Swan also acknowledged the constructive role that President Abdiiaziz played in national processes such as the constitutional reform process and plans for elections.

In September, the Acting UN Special Representative visited Garowe, the capital of Puntland, where he met with its leader, President Said Abdullahi Mohamed 'Deni.' They discussed a range of local and national topics, including the democratization process, security developments, and the need for dialogue to advance national priorities.

"Let me reiterate the United Nations' commitment to working closely with President Deni and his government to support the advancement of the people of Puntland and all Somalia," Mr. Swan said at the time.

In late September, the top UN official travelled to the city of Dhusamareb, where he met with Galmudug's President Ahmed Abdi Karie 'Qoor Qoor.' Among the topics discussed were issues of state and national importance, including reconciliation efforts and support for development.

Earlier this year, Mr. Swan also met in Kismayo with Jubaland's President Ahmed Mohamed Islam 'Madobe' to discuss security issues and humanitarian needs.





UN CALLS FOR URGENT CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN SOMALIA

Somalia is currently one of the countries most affected by the global climate crisis, with it negatively impacting livelihoods, exacerbating the displacement of populations and increasing inequality and insecurity.

In response to these climate-related challenges, the United Nations called for a significant shift in Somalia's approach to climate change at a symposium held in Mogadishu in September – the focus of the event was on enhancing investment in climate adaptation and resilience to protect the livelihoods of millions.

"2023 started with the cumulation of the worst drought that the country has ever seen in half a century that impacted millions of people, and ended with the worst flooding in 100 years," the UN Secretary-General's Deputy Special Representative for Somalia, George Conway, said in his opening remarks to the gathering.

"Humanitarian responses are important to save lives. But if we are not making the investment in adaptation, in resilience building, then the levels of chronic vulnerability and risk will continue to rise for the country," added Mr. Conway, who also serves as the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator.

The UN-supported symposium, organised by the Institute of Climate and Environment (ICE) at SIMAD University and the Somali Federal Ministry of Environment and Climate Change under the theme "Fostering resilience, strengthening adaptation, and uniting for action," brought together government officials, private sector representatives, civil society, academia, youth and international organisations.

Human rights and climate

The attendees heard how while urgent humanitarian responses remain vital, given the magnitude and recurrence of the climate-related crises in Somalia, more comprehensive climate actions with a human rights approach are needed.

"The climate crisis is a crisis of human rights, of the right to life, the right to food, the right to health, the right to water and the right to sanitation," said Mr. Conway.

"We need," he continued, "to put human

rights very much at the centre of the discussion and the work that we do for Somalia on the climate agenda," he added.

The UN official called for a change in the policy dialogues that can shape the way Somalia deals with climate change. He stressed the need for inclusion, representation and participation of those groups that were less present in such fora, such as women, marginalised groups and persons with disabilities.

In her remarks, one of the attendees, climate activist Sucdi Nor, noted that she was familiar with the disproportionate effects of climate change on women, particularly for those working in agriculture, which is a primary source of income for many families.

Droughts and floods severely limit agricultural productivity, leading to loss of income and reduced purchasing power for many



“Droughts and floods severely limit agricultural productivity, leading to loss of income and reduced purchasing power for many,” Ms. Nor said.

The Federal Minister of Youth and Sports, Mohamed Bare Mohamud, underscored the critical role that youth play in combating climate change in his remarks. He noted that the active participation of young people in climate initiatives and their contributions to community awareness efforts are essential.

Collective efforts

Looking ahead, the Somali government has committed to several key actions, including the establishment of a national climate resilience plan and a climate financing framework to ensure that discussions translate into tangible improvements.

The Somali Federal State Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Ahmed Omar Mohamed, announced at the symposium an ambitious plan to plant 10 million trees over the coming years, with 400,000 already planted.

Additionally, Somalia is set to ban single-use plastics from October.

“Climate change is not a distant issue. It requires our immediate attention. Together,

we can make Somalia a greener place,” said Minister Mohamed.

The symposium ended with the adoption of a position paper presented by ICE, which outlined climate change policy recommendations for the Somali government and international stakeholders.

The Director of ICE, Mohamed Okash, emphasised the need for rights-based interventions led by local communities and innovative mechanisms to attract climate finance for national adaptation programs.

“We must prioritise adaptation strategies that empower local communities and ensure their voices are heard in the climate dialogue,” he said.

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UN CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACK ON MOGADISHU BEACH

In August, the United Nations in Somalia strongly condemned the terrorist attack at Lido Beach in Mogadishu, which killed at least 32 people and injured many more.

“Lido Beach is a popular place for Somalis to spend time with family and friends and enjoy the beauty of the Somali coastline. Targeting this location is an abhorrent act that warrants the firmest condemnation,” said the UN Secretary-General’s Acting Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan.

“As we join all peace-loving Somalis in mourning this sad loss, I reaffirm the United Nations’ support for and solidarity with the Federal Government of Somalia in its efforts to ensure peace, security, and stability in the country,” he added.

According to reports, the Al-Shabaab terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack, which involved a suicide bombing and a gun battle between the terrorists and Somali security forces.



ON NELSON MANDELA DAY, SOMALI GOVERNMENT AND UN HIGHLIGHT STATE OF SOMALIA'S PRISONS

Marking Nelson Mandela International Day in July, the United Nations and the Federal Government of Somalia highlighted the state of the country's prisons and the importance of improving prison conditions and protecting prisoners' rights.

“Prisons are sometimes the forgotten part of the justice system. Yet, the conditions of our prisons and the rights of those within them are of profound importance. We start from a simple proposition: prisons should be a place of last resort,” said Nasrin Khan, the Chief of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia’s (UNSOM) Joint Justice and Corrections Section.

“They are expensive for the state to run, and unless prisoners are rehabilitated and reintegrated into the community, they can increase the risk of re-offending – today is therefore an important opportunity to take stock of where we are and reflect on the priorities for the future,” she added.

Ms. Khan was speaking at a joint event to commemorate the Day, as well as to launch a UN assessment report on prison conditions in Somalia.

The event’s attendees included representatives from the Somali government, parliament, international partners and UN agencies, funds and programmes. The latter included the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which shared insights into how it is implementing the so-called Nelson Mandela Rules with the Somali government through the UN’s Joint Justice and Corrections Programme.

In his remarks to the gathering, parliamentarian General Bashir Abdi Mohamed – who serves as the chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Correctional Services – noted that the legislature’s oversight role, and echoed Ms. Khan’s points about rehabilitation.

“For instance, we asked the Ministry of Education to support prisoners’ rehabilitation. The purpose of prison should be to rehabilitate inmates rather than punish them. This will ensure that they can return to society as contributors when reformed and knowledgeable. We asked the Ministry to provide vocational training such as electrical installation, bricklaying, plumbing, or even formal education. In response, the ministry has donated textbooks and the process to educate inmates is ongoing,” said Gen. Bashir.

Prisons report

The UNSOM report, titled ‘Prison Conditions in Somalia – A Holistic Assessment,’ gives a snapshot of key issues, and recommendations.

Among the challenges, the report mentions overcrowding, poor sanitation, a lack of clean water and electricity, and access to healthcare.

In some facilities, the prison buildings are in poor condition and are at risk of collapsing, which poses a danger to the lives of inmates and prisons staff. A high proportion of detainees have not been convicted of serious crimes, including most women and children in prison.

The report recommends legal and policy reforms to reflect contemporary needs of prisoners, the renovation of prison facilities

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and infrastructure, the establishment of well-equipped medical facilities, the reliable provision of adequate and food and clean water, and the implementation of educational and vocational training programs in prisons, among other reforms.

Along with various UN agencies, funds and programmes, UNSOM's Joint Justice and Corrections Section has been supporting Somalia's corrections sector, in partnership with the Somali government, for many years.

This assistance has included providing capacity-building and technical support to Somalia's corrections system, in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules, towards ensuring that the human rights and dignity of persons deprived of their liberty are upheld, focusing on vulnerable groups including women and children.

"At the heart of our approach are the 'Mandela Rules,' a beacon guiding us towards a humane, secure, and rehabilitative approach to incarceration. These rules are not mere suggestions but a moral compass, directing us towards respecting the inherent dignity of every individual," said Ms. Khan.

"As we move forward," she continued, "let us pledge to transform our prisons into places where respect for human rights paves the way for true rehabilitation.

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Let us work together to ensure that our approach to corrections is not only about containment but also about contribution – contribution to the lives of the incarcerated, their families, and ultimately, the fabric of our society."

Addressing today's gathering, the Permanent Secretary of Somalia's Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MoJCA), Faisal Aden Hassan, stated that prison staff lack professional training and resources, as well as inadequate professional basic needs and awareness of international standards relating to rehabilitation and prisoner rights.

He noted that MoJCA was working to address these issues.

"The system is operated in a military style which has led to complications and inefficiencies. In response to this, the Ministry of Justice – with the help of our international partners – has been working on a new corrections model and that the proposed new model aims to establish

a civilian-led corrections service," Mr. Hassan said.

Nelson Mandela International Day

The UN General Assembly designated 18 July as Nelson Mandela International Day in 2009 to honour the former president of South Africa's vision of a world free from oppression, poverty and inequality.

Prior to his becoming president, Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in jail during the Apartheid era in South Africa, before finally being freed in 1990.

While at the Robben Island prison, Mr. Mandela led a movement of civil disobedience that led to better conditions for inmates. This eventually led to improvements in food and other conditions.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners – also known as the 'Nelson Mandela Rules' – which are based on an obligation to treat all prisoners with respect for their inherent dignity.





UN LAUNCHES TRAINING TO REDUCE THE THREAT OF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES IN SOMALIA

As Somalia advances in its journey towards self-reliance and sustainability in national security, the threat of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) remains critical – their impact on local communities and national armed forces is devastating.

Over the last 12 months, about 600 IEDs resulted in around 1,500 casualties throughout the country.

The Somali National Army (SNA), with support from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), has been leading the fight against the persistent threat posed by IEDs.

“I think everyone in the room knows how serious this threat is. The primary targets are your fellow soldiers in the SNA. It’s crucially important that a solution be found to address this threat,” said the UN Secretary-General’s Acting Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan.

He was speaking at the opening ceremony of a month-long ‘train-the-trainer’ course aimed at enhancing the SNA’s capabilities in countering IEDs. The event took place in Mogadishu in September.

A harrowing reality

Many of the guests at the launch had experienced first-hand the perils faced by soldiers.

“We encountered numerous dangers, including enemy blockades and remote-controlled IEDs. We lost many comrades,” recalled Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Mohamud Awale from his many years of operational experience in the Hiraaan and Galgaduud regions.

Another official, Colonel Faisal Ali Noor, shared a vivid memory of tragic IED incidents.

“At times, IEDs detonated while we were digging, resulting in casualties. Due to our limited knowledge, we even resorted to lighting fires to defuse the IEDs, which led to further fatalities,” he said.

Statistics underscore the grave consequences: in 2023, the SNA reported 378 deaths and 451 injuries due to IEDs, highlighting the ongoing risk to both military personnel and civilians.





Mentoring for self-reliance

As Somalia moves towards assuming full responsibility for its security, courses such as this one help ensure that the country's national forces are better equipped through training, mentoring and shadowing.

Since 2020, the SNA has demonstrated a growing capacity to counter the threat posed by IEDs partly thanks to trainings, mentoring and the provision of specialised equipment. UNMAS provided a steady support to Somali forces, training 46 Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams.

To ensure long-term self-reliance of SNA, the course continues this support, as 14 additional trainees will go through EOD and Route Search sessions, building on previous training from UNMAS and their operational experience.

"As we move forward, we see this 'train-the-trainer' course as a crucial part of continuing to build Somali capacity to handle and counter IEDs," said Mr. Swan.

"This course marks a significant milestone, with Somali trainers for the first time



training Somali students, ensuring sustainability for the SNA in responding to the threat posed by explosive hazards to communities across the country," said the Chief of UNMAS in Somalia, Fran O'Grady.

UNMAS, in collaboration with the United Kingdom and the United States governments, continues to support the SNA in promoting long-term self-reliance in IED risk mitigation.

Also present at the ceremony were the Deputy Chief of Defence Forces of the Somali National Army, General Madey Nurey Sheikh; representatives from the Central Monitoring Department in the Office of National Security; various members of the Somali military corps; and officials from other UN and international partner organisations.

In his remarks at the event, General Sheikh expressed pride in the SNA's capability to conduct its own training thanks to international support.

"Our gratitude goes out to the UN and international partners for their efforts to support the SNA," he said.

UN support in Somalia

In Somalia, UNMAS ensures that people are safer and more secure due to the increased

ability of Somali national authorities and security services to reduce the threat posed by explosive ordnance, including IEDs.

Since 2009, UNMAS Somalia has supported the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), now the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), by delivering tailored training in explosive-threat mitigation and carrying out pre- and post-deployment briefings.

As an integrated component of the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNOSOM) and the UN Support Office in Somalia (UNOSOS), UNMAS leads initiatives critical to the successful transition of security responsibilities from ATMIS to the Somali security forces.

“Our gratitude goes out to the UN and international partners for their efforts to support the SNA”





BAIDOA YOUTH HUB

FROM AGRICULTURAL DEPOT,
MILITIA HIDEAWAY AND KHAT STORAGE SITE TO
CENTRE FOR YOUNG SOMALIS

The Baidoa Youth Hub is located at the end of Wakaladda Biyaha Street in the heart of Baidoa. At its main entrance, there is a constant stream of young Somalis passing through.

Their easygoing energy and smiles match the fresh paint and well-maintained trees and buildings which house the Hub's modern facilities. These include state-of-the-art technology training rooms, a well-stocked library, a football pitch, conference room and a cafeteria.

The current state – and use – of the space is in stark contrast to the building's chaotic past.

“This establishment has faced numerous challenges before emerging as the Baidoa Youth Hub – and they were indeed challenges,” says Abdiiaziz Abdirahman Mohamed, the Director General of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) for Somalia's South West State, of which Baidoa is the largest city.

“It was originally built in the 1970s by Somalia's former central government to house agricultural advisory services,” he adds. “But, with the war, it fell into the hands of armed militias in the early 1990s following the government's overthrow.

It was subsequently used as a residence for clan militias and a hub for miraa (khat) distribution.”

Troubled times

At first, it was not clear if the building could ever return to more civic and legitimate uses.

“It had been seized by militias, along with business people, following the outbreak of the Somali civil war. But it was recovered in the early 2000s by organised youth groups in Baidoa,” says Mr. Mohamed.

The youth groups lobbied the occupants and other local power-brokers for it to be re-purposed for the public good.

Initially, local non-governmental organisations, such as the Kanava Youth Development Organisation (KYDO) and then WARDI Relief and Development Initiatives, managed the building as a youth centre for more than 15 years, using it as a base for their community work.

But, after the departure of the former occupants, the state of the building was precarious, best characterized as a dilapidated and pockmarked shell, wrecked on the inside and outside through years of neglect and conflict.

However, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the building was renovated and transformed into an earlier version of what it is now – a hub for community-based organisations in Baidoa, helping youth and vulnerable communities.

“It was unusable after we recovered it. Fortunately, UNDP renovated the old buildings and added new toilets,” Mr. Mohamed says.

In November 2015, after South West State was formally established as one of Somalia's Federal Member States, its government set a goal to recover public properties which were under private control. One of these was the building housing the youth centre.

“We took over from local organizations in 2018 and began seeking support for constructing a new youth training centre from multiple agencies. Fortunately, UN-Habitat responded and helped us build the new Baidoa Youth Hub with start-up funding,” Mr. Mohamed says.

The Hub was built by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) as part of the Youth and Urban Regen-





eration Somalia (YOURS) project aimed at enhancing local youth skills, and funded by the Government of Sweden.

It was opened in September 2023 – its transformation into its current iteration is complete but its transformative effect on the lives of Baidoa youth is expected to continue for many years to come.

“The new and purpose-built youth centre is designed to incorporate facilities and services that will address the needs of young people in Baidoa such as safe spaces, sports, upskilling, access to employment, and advice and guidance. The youth centre will provide a wide range of bespoke services and training programmes in employability and livelihoods, democracy and peacebuilding, health and wellbeing, and sports and recreation,” the Hub states on its website.

MoYS manages the establishment and, less than a year since its opening, the Hub has

already made a significant impact on the lives of hundreds of local young people.

“I came here to attend this peacebuilding training organized by the Ministry – it has just started today, and I expect to increase my knowledge on reducing risks and conflict management,” says Fadumo Adam, a young attendee at a recent three-day workshop.

“I am glad to have learnt basic computer skills at the Baidoa Youth Hub. We thank the South West State’s Ministry of Youth and Sports, as well as funding organizations, for facilitating for us these life skills programmes – we are now in a better place than yesterday,” says Husein Ali, a 21-year-old youth as he left the centre recently.

The impact extends across various areas.

“I’m part of the youth who have benefited from this newly-built hub. I have learnt entrepreneur skills,” says 20-year-old Zakariye

Mohamed. “And, on top of that, I come to this beautiful football pitch every afternoon to play with my friends and colleagues. It can be easily accessed as it is located in the centre of town!”

New prospects

In a country where youth make up 70 per cent of the population, unemployment is high, and the informal sector is the main source of jobs, the Baidoa Youth Hub has been pivotal in tackling these challenges locally, both during and after its construction.

In addition to the centre’s construction, UN-Habitat funded a four-month start-up project – the Youth and Urban Regeneration Somalia project – after the hub’s construction. A local NGO, the Somali Youth Volunteers Association (SOYVA), implemented it.

“From October 2023 to February 2024, the centre trained over five hundred local students in life skills, including peacebuilding, literacy, numeracy, computer skills, entrepreneurship, and employability. We are grateful to UN-Habitat for the new hub and the skills training funding. Our thanks also go to SOYVA for their work,” says Mr. Mohamed.

“The majority of South West State’s youth lack access to education, employment, and training, which drives some to join armed groups involved in violence”





However, more support is needed to extend the venue's ability to assist local youth. Due to funding challenges at the MoYS, there are few other options.

"The majority of South West State's youth lack access to education, employment, and training, which drives some to join armed groups involved in violence. To combat this, we need increased funding for youth

programmes," says MoYS' Mr. Mohamed, who has taken a hands-on approach in overseeing the centre's operations, regularly engaging with its director, teachers and students.

The government official's call is echoed by local NGOs.

"As SOYVA, we call on international partners to aid in building the capacity of youth and women in the South West State, focusing on peacebuilding, life skills, and entrepreneurship that foster employment," says the youth group's programme manager, Mohamed Abdisalam.

UN support

UN-Habitat is the world body's agency dedicated to all urbanization and human settlement matters within the UN system. It works with partners to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities on the premise that urbanization is a positive transformative force

for people and communities, reducing inequality, discrimination and poverty.

The UN agency has been active in the Somalia urban sector for more than 30 years. The interventions have evolved from responding to immediate local needs to systematic attempts to address sustainable urban development through integrated human settlement programmes.

"The Baidoa Youth Hub is a key investment by UN-Habitat to tackle the diverse challenges Somali youth face. It provides education, job opportunities, and fosters social cohesion, playing a crucial role in peacebuilding, especially in South West State," says UN-Habitat National Programme Officer Abdirahman Barkhadle.

"The Hub offers a safe and inclusive space for young people to gather, share their views, and engage in positive activities," he adds. "This helps reduce the risk of recruitment by militant groups or involvement in violence."

The Baidoa Youth Hub is a key investment by UN-Habitat to tackle the diverse challenges Somali youth face





MOHAMED HASSAN MOHAMUD: MEETING HEALTH NEEDS OF DISPLACED COMMUNITIES

As Somalia continues rebuilding after decades of war, political strife and humanitarian crises, its needs are many.

These needs extend into the country's health sector, which falls far below the minimum global expectation of doctor/patient ratios.

According to the United Nations health agency, the World Health Organization (WHO), there are currently only eight skilled professionals – such as doctors, nurses and midwives – for every 10,000 people in Somalia. The minimum recommended by WHO to achieve the world's Sustainable Development Goals' health targets is 44.5 professionals for every 10,000 people.

In addition, one out of every 25 women dies due to causes related to pregnancy, and one out of every ten Somali children dies under the age of five.

For some health workers, the need for healthcare could mean a lucrative career in a busy urban clinic or a regional hospital.

Not so for Mohamed Hassan Mohamud, also known by the nickname 'Arab.'

For Mr. Mohamud, his attention is fully on the health needs of the thousands of women and girls at the Jowle Internally

Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp, located on the outskirts of Garowe, the capital of Somalia's northern Federal Member State of Puntland.

"The Jowle IDP camp hosts a large number of people, and one or two health facilities cannot easily cover this vast need, but we strive to provide daily healthcare to the needy, particularly the most vulnerable, such as mothers, children, and the elderly," he says.

Beginnings

Unlike the southern parts of Somalia, Puntland is relatively safer than other parts of the country. But it still plays host to a considerable number of people displaced by conflict and humanitarian crises from other regions.

According to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are some 500,000 internally displaced people in Puntland – of these, some 50,000 of them are in the Jowle IDP Camp, located on the outskirts of Garowe.

The camp has a clinic that provides health and nutrition services to residents. Initially established by the United Nations' International Organization for Migration (IOM), the clinic is now managed by a non-governmental organisation, Save the Children International.

Mr. Mohamud started at the camp in 2013, when he was 24 years old and before even starting his tertiary education. Serving as a volunteer, he started as a community health worker.

"I had a tremendous desire to help marginalized people living in underdeveloped and distant villages in Somalia. My knowledge in the field of public health enabled me reach out to those I wanted to aid," he adds.

Mr. Mohamud was born in 1989 in the country's capital, Mogadishu. The growing tensions there, which soon led to the outbreak of the civil war, caused his family to return to Puntland – from where his family hailed and where he subsequently grew up in Garowe.

There he graduated the Gambool Secondary School, finishing in 2008, before later going on to earn a Bachelor of Nursing degree from Bosaso University in 2018.

The Jowle IDP Camp's sole health facility offers basic services such as vaccinations, treatment for communicable diseases and mother-and-child care, as well as an outpatient therapeutic feeding programme for severely malnourished children, and a targeted supplementary feeding programme for young children.

"Our services are wide-ranging, and they include providing healthcare and nutrition to children under the age of five and pregnant mothers," Mr. Mohamud notes.

"Patient records and follow-ups at this facility are under my supervision," he continues. "For those needing immediate medical care, I act as a bridge between the feeding centre and the supporting organisations. I also train health workers and advocate on their behalf, particularly during illness outbreaks."

Personal development

The past decade of work at the IDP camp has not meant that Mr. Mohamud has rested on his laurels – far from it.

Over the years, the father of four's responsibilities have grown. He now oversees the entire health clinic, managing a team of a dozen employees who deal with an average of 100 patients on a daily basis.

But he is determined to keep growing in his chosen field, and is putting in the effort now for his own long-term development, as well as long-term benefit of the displaced people he cares for. Mr. Mohamud is currently enrolled in a Master of Science in Healthcare Management programme at UNICAF University, which he hopes to complete in 2025.

It is not always easy balancing work, study and family responsibilities, but Mr. Mohamud is determined.

"It is difficult for a young person like myself, who lives in a city with a pretty high quality of life, and has a wife and children, to work for an extended period of time separated from my family. Fortunately, my family fiercely have supported me while I have dedicated my time and energy to serving the disadvantaged population of the Jowle IDP camp," he says.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, his work and personal life have merged to a certain degree.

"During my time with this community, they became like a part of my family. We got to know each other, and I became their advocate," Mr. Mohamud says.

"I always feel welcome the moment I step foot in the camp for the first day of work. Instead of treating me like an unfamiliar doctor, the residents of this camp seem more like family," he says. "Health and nutrition support requests began pouring in as soon as word gets out that we are open.



All these wonderful things have made me proud, but I do feel bad that I can't provide all the services they need."

On top of his work and studies, his area of work has been changing.

"My primary responsibility is to provide health and nutrition to the Jowle IDP community, but things evolve in this sort of setting, and now I also raise awareness about other issues, including domestic violence, rape, early marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM)," Mr. Mohamud says.

"We face daily problems that men impose on girls," he adds. "For example, I remember how surprised I was to learn that underage marriage is common in this camp, with girls as young as 13 forced to marry with their guardians' permission."

Mr. Mohamud's perspective on the plight of the camp's residents – as well as those in other camps around Somalia – has evolved.

"Under both domestic and international law, internally displaced people have the same rights and freedoms as other citizens of their country, with full equality," he says. "So, besides from my health specialty,

“Many efforts are already ongoing to integrate these persons directly into the host community in Garowe, but there is still a long way to go”

I have also been advocating for IDPs to fully integrate with host communities to enjoy the same rights."

As for the long-term, Mr. Mohamud hopes to see IDPs in Puntland fully integrate with their local communities and receive basic social services such as health care, education and security.

"Many efforts are already ongoing to integrate these persons directly into the host community in Garowe, but there is still a long way to go. Their current living conditions are marked by inadequate and poor housing, and insufficient education," he says.

National challenge

According to UNHCR, the UN entity responsible for aiding displaced people, there are 3.8 million individuals currently displaced in Somalia due to conflict, insecurity and the effects of climate change such as cyclical droughts and floods.

Along with other UN agencies, funds and programmes, UNHCR is working to ensure that the voluntary repatriation of Somali refugees is sustainable and that returnees are effectively integrated into their communities.

Efforts by Somalis like Mr. Mohamud are appreciated – and necessary.





“He is one of the most energetic and effective young health workers in the Jowle IDP camp. The camp considers him a son! He remains with us, offers support, and advocates for us. I don't want to single him out for praise, but his performance definitely deserves it,” says Abdirashid Garane Awl, one of the Jowle IDP Camp’s managers.

“I recall one significant event that is related to him: three months ago, there was an outbreak of diarrhea in which some members of the community perished,” Mr. Awl continues. “In response, he performed an excellent job of mobilizing health personnel and informed the Ministry of Health – his response saved numerous lives.”

In 2022, following a panel’s report into the matter, the UN Secretary-General’s so-called Action Agenda on Internal Displacement was issued, reflecting the growing importance of the matter.

The Action Agenda has three overarching goals: helping IDPs find a durable solution to their displacement, better prevention of new displacement crises from emerging, and ensuring that those facing displacement receive effective protection and assistance. It sets out 31 commitments by the UN system to better resolve, prevent and address internal displacement crises.

According to the United Nations, the three goals are inextricably linked as no solution is sustainable if another crisis is looming, no assistance will be sufficient if underlying drivers of displacement remain unresolved, and prevention cannot succeed if past crises have not been addressed.

The UN Secretary-General’s Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement, Robert Piper, visited Somalia in 2023 – the country is one of the 16 UN Member States selected to pilot the Action Agenda.



FEATURED PHOTO

The United Nations recognizes that peace requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation. Shown here, youth gathered in a social setting in Baidoa.



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