

# Communiqué

## **FINDING A WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT SOMALI CRISIS**

### A NORTH AMERICAN SOMALI DIASPORA CONFERENCE

**Columbus, Ohio:** Over the past seventeen years, the Somali people have paid an unimaginable human cost. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives and millions fled the country, some caught up in deplorable refugee camps, and others died on makeshift refugee boats either in the Red Sea or the Mediterranean in the hope of reaching a safe destination. At the same time, an entire generation of Somali children missed out on normal childhood with no basic education other than what comes out of a failed national existence. Mindful of this condition, a number of concerned Somali professionals from both Canada and the United States spent several months discussing the best possible way to reclaim our nation and restore it to its rightful dignity. Recognizing the need for an open dialogue, the organizing committee invited several hundred Somalis representing a cross-section of Somali communities from Canada and the United States to participate in a two day intensive and transparent discussion where each and all views were heard without any preconceived bias.

On March 10 and 11, 2007, over 150 Somalis from Canada and the United States extremely concerned about the deepening crisis in the motherland came together to work for the restoration of peace, stability, and the re-establishment of the national institutions of Somalia. The participants, divided into small discussion groups, spend two days sharing their concerns and differences with each other and agreed on the following statements through consensus:

WE believe that the current occupation and continued presence of Ethiopian troops in our country poses an incalculable threat to the identity and the very existence of our beloved nation. For this reason, WE DEMAND the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces from our country.

In order to achieve this goal, WE resolved to:

- Create and facilitate a world wide political campaign to end Ethiopian occupation
- Document Ethiopian atrocities committed against the Somali people.
- Unify Somalis to revive Somali nationalism.
- Put pressure on the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to seek the complete evacuation of these foreign troops from our country.

WE ALSO DEMAND from the international community the urgent replacement of the Ethiopian troops with financially and logistically supported neutral peacekeeping forces from Africa and Islamic States. However, these neutral peacekeeping forces must have a clear mandate and appropriate rules of engagement. On our part, WE will help:

- Educate the Somali public about the mandate of the neutral peace keeping forces
- Educate the neutral peacekeeping forces about Islamic and Somali cultural values.
- Create a monitoring group—which include SOMALI CITIZENS--to oversee and document the activities of the peacekeeping forces.

Given the fact that the core mandate of the TFG is NATIONAL RECONCILIATION, WE urge it to carry out this mandate with deliberate speed and in a diligent manner. This national reconciliation should include:

- TFG, the UIC, Somalis in the Diaspora, civil society, and particularly women and marginalized groups.
- The creation of an inclusive National Reconciliation commission.
- A clear mandate for this National Reconciliation Commission.
- A well-planned mechanism to ensure the ownership of the Somali people of the national reconciliation process.

The attendees of this meeting agree on the creation of North American ad hoc committee, whose task is to:

- Formulate a clear mandate based on the resolutions adopted in this meeting.
- Mobilize, harness and channel Somali Diaspora expertise for the benefits of the progress in Somalia.
- Organize and mobilize local chapters based on the above mandate.

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