



Olof Skoog
Permanent Chair
Political and Security Committee

EU Permanent Representatives
Political and Security Committee

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Your Excellencies,

Visit to the EU Training Mission Somalia

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of the armed conflict in southern and central Somalia, where scores are killed and injured in indiscriminate and targeted attacks. While many human rights abuses are committed by non-state armed groups, there are regular reports that pro-Transitional Federal Government (TFG) troops and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) have responded to attacks without taking all feasible precautions to avoid loss of life or injury to civilians, in violation of their obligations under human rights and international humanitarian law.

Amnesty International has made recommendations to states engaged in supporting security sector institutions in Somalia, such as:

- ending all supplies of weapons, military and security equipment and financial assistance for the purchase of weapons to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) until effective mechanisms are in place to prevent such material assistance from being used in committing serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law;
- respecting and enforcing the UN arms embargo on Somalia, in place since 1992; and
- providing training in international human rights and humanitarian law to TFG forces.

In view of the EU's important engagement in supporting capacity-building of TFG security forces through the EU Training Mission Somalia (EUTM), we encourage you to raise the following questions during your visit:

Training on human rights and international humanitarian law:

- Does the EUTM curriculum provide for substantive and in-depth training on international standards in human rights and international humanitarian law? What training methods are applied (e.g. number of training hours, combination of lectures and practical exercises), and is training considered as a cycle (including through adequate evaluation, refresher courses)?
- Are comprehensive practical exercises carried out with TFG forces on the application of international human rights and humanitarian law principles, including the principles of distinction and proportionality?

- With specific regard to gender issues, which training elements related to women, peace and security were provided to date? Was attention paid to the different pillars of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (participation, protection, prevention)?

Accountable arms management:

- In light of previous reports of diversion of weapons and defections between opposing parties to the conflict, is the EUTM providing training to TFG security forces on accountable arms management and safe storage, according to international standards and best practice procedures, such as the OSCE Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons (2003) and the recommendations of the UN Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/72 on conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus (A/63/182)?
- Does the EU, through the EUTM, provide support to the TFG to establish effective systems and mechanisms ensuring proper accountability and arms management?

Child Soldiers:

- What steps are taken to ensure that the trainees are screened so as not to include persons under 18 years of age, and that any individual within the TFG responsible for recruiting children in the armed forces is held accountable?
- Is the EU, through the EUTM or other mechanisms, providing technical assistance to the TFG to establish screening and oversight mechanisms to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers in the TFG forces? In the event that children are found among TFG forces, what steps are taken to ensure their demobilisation and reintegration into society?

Vetting of participants:

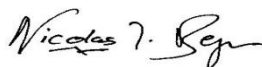
- How does the EU ensure that trainees are vetted so that anyone reasonably suspected of having committed human rights abuses does not benefit from the EUTM training?
- Is the EU, through the EUTM or other mechanisms, providing technical assistance for the establishment of effective, independent and impartial accountability and oversight mechanisms for all TFG forces and affiliated militia?

Follow-up and impact of training:

- What steps are taken by the EUTM to monitor the integration of trainees into existing TFG forces in Somalia and the strengthening of an adequate command and control structure for TFG forces?
- What steps are taken to monitor the conduct in hostilities of those trained by the EUTM and to ensure they respect international human rights and humanitarian law once back in Somalia, particularly in light of the current TFG military offensive?
- How does the EU encourage increased monitoring, documenting and public reporting of alleged serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law by TFG security forces and pro-TFG forces? Are there capacity-building initiatives to help the TFG establish independent investigations into such violations?

Upon your return to Brussels, we would appreciate learning about your assessment as to the EUTM's capacity and readiness to ensure that its efforts are contributing to improved respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and thus to increased protection of civilians on the ground.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director