

1 **SOMALIA: PROSPECTS FOR LASTING PEACE AND A UNIFIED RESPONSE**  
2 **TO EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM**

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4 **Statement**

5 **House Committee on Foreign Relations**  
6 **Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health**

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8 **Presented by H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Farole)**  
9 **President of Puntland State, Somalia**

10  
11 **June 25, 2009**

12  
13 Good afternoon Chairman Payne and Members of the Committee. On behalf of the people and  
14 Government of Puntland, I wish to express my gratitude to the Subcommittee for drawing attention to the  
15 grave situation in Somalia. Extremism threatens peace and stability not only in Somalia, but also in the  
16 surrounding region. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify today about security, humanitarian  
17 aid delivery and anti-piracy efforts in Somalia.

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19 Puntland is a stable region in northeastern Somalia with a surface land comprising one-third of Somalia  
20 and close to half of the country's coastline. Approximately 3 million people live and work in Puntland,  
21 where there is not only a functioning constitutional government with security forces and public finance  
22 management, but it is built on a unique democratization process. Most recently, in January 2009, the State  
23 of Puntland held its third peaceful and transparent election followed by a smooth transition and a major  
24 shift to a new government. Puntland was established in 1998 as a result of a community wide  
25 constitutional conference aiming to form a basis for a future federal system in Somalia.

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I believe there are five issues that continue to hamper the progress that the people of Somalia seek. They include:

1. Bleak political and security conditions in Somalia in the southern and central regions;
2. **Uncertainty yet hope;**
3. Extremism that produces terrorism – threat assessment;
4. Under-development that breeds violence and criminality; and
5. Piracy problems that are products of civil war.

I will try to be brief in my remarks, but the people of the United States need to understand the history of my country – Let me begin by saying I was born in Puntland, raised in Mogadishu where I enjoyed a good life...but I was then displaced...something that is far too common in Somalia.

Since the collapse of the central government in 1991, the Somali nation-state has been fragmented. Currently, there are two stable northern states, Puntland and Somaliland. The south-central part of the country and the capital Mogadishu continues to be unstable.

Mogadishu is where the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) is isolated in pockets by religious factions. These factions claim different Islamic ideological orientations and control most of the region. The political and security conditions in Somalia can be best described as bleak and, increasingly problematic.

Puntland is committed to a comprehensive and lasting peace in Somalia. Through broad-based political dialogue, we hope to produce an all-inclusive representation and institutional stability. Somali and foreign humanitarian aid workers are increasingly being targeted in south-central Somalia, disrupting the delivery of vital humanitarian assistance and life support. So far in 2009, five Somali journalists have been killed in Mogadishu and the perpetrators are still at large.

Due to the increasing violence, the displacement of civilians continues, contributing to a worsening humanitarian crisis that leaves 3 million people in need of food assistance, according to U.N. estimates.

58 There is a massive exodus of displaced civilians (IDPs) to neighboring regions, including Puntland, creating  
59 economically and socially unsustainable conditions and causing internal security and health concerns for  
60 Puntland.

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62 In Puntland, we have achieved stability and have even become a safehaven for hundreds of thousands of  
63 IDPs, despite our meager resources. Taken as a case study, the “Puntland model”, which involves  
64 community commitment to establish self-governments at the grassroots level, is a **win-win solution**.

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66 In addition to the humanitarian issues, the threat posed by extremist and terrorist groups in Somalia is  
67 serious. If not tackled strategically, and in time, the regional and global security impact will be devastating.  
68 Since 1991, predatory warlords have caused instability to flourish in Somalia, setting the stage for  
69 extremism and terrorism. These threats, are based on several factors, including 1) the strategic  
70 geographical location of Somalia; and 2) foreign interests taking advantage of a power vacuum since 1991.

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72 The unique strategic position of Somalia, particularly of Puntland, places it along the Gulf of Aden and  
73 Indian Ocean, at the core of international maritime trade. With over 20,000 commercial vessels passing  
74 through these vital sea-lanes annually, widespread lawlessness in south-central Somalia has encouraged  
75 different interest groups, with or without political agendas, to take advantage of the power vacuum,  
76 including groups that breed and spread extremism.

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78 Currently, the growing power of hardliners threatens peace and security in Somalia and the overall Horn of  
79 Africa region. The diminishing authority of the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu and an  
80 insurgency that is gaining strength marks the deteriorating situation in south-central Somalia.

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82 Most recently, on June 18, the TFG Security Minister was killed among 20 others by a suicide bomber in  
83 Beledweyne, 2752 miles south of Puntland. On June 21, the TFG Parliament Speaker pleaded for  
84 international military intervention within 24 hours to defend against the insurgency, while the Cabinet  
85 asked the President to declare a state of emergency – today, Mogadishu remains in a state of emergency.

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87 This present state of emergency is forcing tens of thousands of displaced civilians to flee to Puntland. This  
88 new exodus being imposed on the Puntland government includes: an economic burden; massive  
89 humanitarian needs and security concerns. Therefore, Puntland Government needs sufficient defense  
90 capacity in the Mudug region, which borders south-central Somalia.

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92 There are limited options for dealing with extremist and terrorist threats in Somalia. The international  
93 community must support stable regions (for example, Puntland) and offer long-awaited development  
94 incentives in order to attract the attention of other Somali regions that see the benefit as counterweight to  
95 join extremism. With development, Puntland will become **a model state** for a future Federal Republic  
96 of Somalia where the focus is on institution-building and development, instead of violence and criminality.

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98 I want to stress FEDERALISM. Puntland eventually wants to join a genuine Federal Republic of Somalia.  
99 There is none now. We are determined to be a building block for a stable and prosperous Somalia. Think of  
100 the United States and its growing pains. There is hope for Somalia. **We need your help** so that we  
101 can play a constructive role.

102  
103 I conclude with the largest problem - Piracy off the coast of Somalia and the State of Puntland. This act  
104 poses a continuing threat to maritime traffic, local and regional economies, and has provided a steady  
105 source of income for criminals. The Puntland government policy is strongly against ransom payments,  
106 which is the number one factor fueling the escalation of pirate attacks.

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108 This phenomenon of piracy did not exist on its present scale in previous years. Our history tells us that the  
109 root cause of piracy is illegal fishing. After the collapse of the Coastal Defense, Somali fisherman began  
110 attacking foreign trawler. Once the trawlers were armed, these fisherman turned into pirates and began  
111 attacking commercial vessels and demanding ransom payments.

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113 As we look at solutions, we need to strengthen the capacity for an offshore of Puntland and to create a  
114 development project to enhance the livelihood of coastal communities. In an effort to combat these

115 crimes, the Puntland government appointed an Anti-Piracy Commissioner in February 2009 to lead the  
116 anti-piracy campaign.

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118 In order to provide a comprehensive and effective response to the problem of piracy, **we need**

119 **assistance** in establishing eight coastal stations, with jetties, along the Puntland Indian Ocean and Gulf  
120 of Aden village centers. These stations will be placed in the following towns and villages, all of which are in  
121 Puntland:

- 122 • Garacad, Eyl, Beila, Bargaal, Caluula, Kandala, Bosaso and Laas-Qorey.

123

124 We will need equipment at each of these Coastal Task Force stations, which is not limited to: Port  
125 Command Centers – Intelligence coordination and surveillance capabilities shared by Puntland  
126 Government agencies; Speed Boats and Aircraft; Communications Equipment and Training for the 600  
127 member Coastal Task Force. We will also need to provide incentives for the Coastal Task Force to ensure  
128 the first priority is to the Puntland Government.

129

130 Also, we must not forget about our natural resource, which is fishing. Prior to the political collapse of  
131 Somalia, Puntland had the only three fish-canning factories in Somalia – each vital to our economy. With  
132 the restoration of these facilities and by instituting government licensing, residents will increase their  
133 income and the Puntland government can track who is fishing off our shores.

134

135 The Puntland Government is determined to effectively address the above challenges and find a lasting  
136 solution to the instability and criminality posed by the pirates. **But we cannot do it alone.** The cost  
137 of helping Puntland will be far less than what is currently being spent on expensive naval patrols.

138

139 The Puntland Government believes that piracy can be effectively tackled through:

- 140 1. Anti-piracy operations by Puntland security forces with bases inland and along the entire coast to  
141 protect the State's marine resources;

- 142 2. Religious scholars leading an educational and spiritual campaign to discourage new recruits,  
143 convince active pirates to quit and help rehabilitate reformed pirates;  
144 3. Rehabilitate and train former pirates in employable skills; and  
145 4. Reinstigate abandoned fishing industry activities in Puntland to create sustainable livelihoods for  
146 the coastal communities.

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148 Foreign warships off the Somali coast cannot fight the pirates alone. It is a fact that pirate attacks are  
149 organized on land and therefore targeting pirates on the ground will be a crucial part of the anti-piracy  
150 effort, for which Puntland requires assistance. Furthermore, strengthening cooperation between foreign  
151 navies and local authorities (especially Puntland) in order to gather and share intelligence, isolate pirate  
152 targets and prevent future piracy attacks is instrumental in defeating piracy.

153  
154 The Puntland Government is committed to fighting and defeating pirates. **We need your help.**

155  
156 The Puntland government has jailed over 100 piracy suspects, including the conviction and sentencing of  
157 62 pirates. Despite these efforts, there are elements including the media that are waging a negative  
158 propaganda campaign to discredit Puntland's anti-piracy efforts. This propaganda is spread by elements  
159 that are opposed to the peaceful election in Puntland and our commitment to federalism and playing  
160 positive role in regional stability.

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162 It is worth mentioning that the U.S. Government's effort to help Somalia, in a time of desperate need in  
163 the early 1990s, was an unprecedented and remarkable humanitarian relief effort. U.S.-led Operation  
164 Restore Hope intended to restore law and order and help save the lives of Somali families at the peak of  
165 the civil war and famine to which the Somali people are forever grateful to the American people. The U.S.  
166 Government's policy to help the plight of mass exodus from Somalia by transporting, hosting and  
167 accepting Somali refugees fleeing war and famine was a heart-felt and commendable humanitarian  
168 gesture.

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170 The U.S. Government can help Somalia recover from two decades of instability and violence by taking a  
171 leading role of political and economic recovery and strategically addressing the core issues that have kept  
172 Somalia embroiled in chaos. This does not and should not involve direct military intervention.

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174 The vital issues include:

- 175 1. Providing security and development aid to reinforce Puntland's stable self-government;
- 176 2. Coordinating U.S. Navy anti-piracy effort on the high seas with the Puntland Government's  
177 campaign on the ground to target, isolate and contain piracy; and
- 178 3. Encouraging U.S. Government allies and friendly nations to conform to this new approach, allowing  
179 stakeholders with constituencies to participate at international conferences for Somalia and to  
180 ensure fair resource sharing for all administrations.

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182 The following are recommendations for Congress and the U.S. Administration to address the critical  
183 situation in Somalia in terms of humanitarian aid delivery, combating extremism and terrorism, and  
184 tackling piracy:

- 185 1. **Ensure humanitarian aid supply** reaches the needy Somali population fairly – despite the huge  
186 displacement population in Puntland, the State receives a low and disproportionate amount of  
187 support;
- 188 2. **Combat extremist and terrorist elements** spreading throughout Somalia by supporting existing  
189 administrations in stable regions in terms of security, development and resource-injection;
- 190 3. **Tackle the piracy problem** by coordinating U.S. Navy efforts with ongoing multi-faceted anti-piracy  
191 operations in Puntland – Puntland needs support to train, equip and fund the new Coastal Task  
192 Force (CTF);
- 193 4. **Guarantee a balanced approach** with Somali stakeholders to participate at international  
194 conferences and ensure resource-sharing for Somalia;

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196 I thank you for your time and for the opportunity to address you. I look forward to answering any  
197 questions you may have. Thank you.