



Independent Diplomat

a diplomatic service for those who need it most

www.independentdiplomat.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT

29 October 2008

+44 (0)20 7582 7797

Edward Mason

edward.mason@independentdiplomat.org

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN SOMALILAND

LONDON - Independent Diplomat is appalled by the terrorist attacks in Somaliland today and expresses its sympathies to the families of the victims of these horrendous crimes. Reports suggest that at least 25 people were killed in co-ordinated suicide car bomb explosions at the offices of the President, Ethiopian Trade Office and UNDP in Somaliland's capital, Hargeisa.

Edward Mason, who leads Independent Diplomat's project advising the Somaliland government on its diplomacy, said:

“Since the collapse of the Somali government in 1991, Somaliland has built a peaceful democratic state, in contrast to Somalia in the south. These terrorist attacks are a measure of how much extremist forces in Somalia resent the success of Somaliland and wish to destabilise it.

“The urgent need is for the international community, including countries in the region, to step up its engagement with Somaliland and help maintain its security. The UN Security Council should acknowledge Somaliland's existence and condemn attacks upon it. The African Union should launch a process to resolve Somaliland's undetermined status. Otherwise Somaliland's success story may be at risk.”

For further comment contact:

Edward Mason, Head of Office, Independent Diplomat London, on +44 (0)20 7582 7797 or +44 (0)7944 864335

Mohamed-Aar Abdillahi, Ambassador-at-large, Government of Somaliland, on +44 (0)7958 060730

Carne Ross, Director, Independent Diplomat (based New York), on +1 212 594 8295 or +1 646 508 5643

Soren Jessen Petersen, Head of Office, Independent Diplomat Washington DC, on +1 202 429 3874 or +1 202 294 0431

Sa'ad Noor, Representative of the Government of Somaliland in the US, on +1 703 2443 449

Background

Independent Diplomat is a non-profit diplomatic advisory group. Further information is available at www.independentdiplomat.org. Independent Diplomat advises the government of Somaliland.

Somaliland is a former British protectorate. It received independence in 1960 and was recognised as an independent state. Acting on the desire at the time of Somalis to live in one state, Somaliland joined with Italy's former Somali colony to form the Republic of Somalia. The union was disastrous for Somaliland. Somaliland and its people found themselves marginalised in the new state. In 1969 Siyad Barre took over the government of Somalia in a coup and began a policy of calculated repression of the people of Somaliland. When the Somali National Movement stepped up its armed resistance to Barre's oppressive regime in Somaliland in the late 1980s, the armed forces of Somalia bombed Somaliland and destroyed the capital Hargeisa, killing an estimated 50,000 people and displacing 500,000.

In 1991, after the fall of the Barre regime and the total collapse of the state of Somalia, Somaliland resolved to re-constitute itself as an independent state. Since then it has established and sustained a high level of peace and security and held democratic local, parliamentary and presidential elections. Somaliland stands in stark contrast to south-central Somalia which remains a violent failed state and a scene of terrible humanitarian crisis. Somalilanders are united in their desire to live in an independent state and will not return to union with south-central Somalia.

Somaliland meets the established criteria for recognition as a state. It has a permanent population, a defined territory, a stable government and capacity to enter into relations with other states in the international community. Its achievements have won widespread praise and its case for recognition has been favourably assessed by the African Union Commission, the conflict prevention NGO International Crisis Group and, most recently, the security and development policy think tank The Senlis Council.

Independent Diplomat, London

29 October 2008