

STATE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR RELATIONS

United States Recognizes Government of Somalia After Two-Decade Hiatus

In January 2013, the United States announced that it was recognizing Somalia's government led by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.¹ For many years, the United States had not recognized a Somali government. The White House released the following statement regarding the recognition decision:

This morning, President Obama joined a meeting between Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor Denis McDonough and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in the Roosevelt Room. Following the meeting, the Somali President met with Secretary of State Clinton, who announced formal U.S. recognition of his government as the Government of Somalia. This is the first time the United States has recognized a Somali government since 1991.

The President congratulated Hassan Sheikh on his election last September and the establishment of the first permanent, representative government in Somalia in two decades. The President noted the impressive security and political gains over the past year in Somalia. He acknowledged the many challenges facing Somalia but expressed optimism about Somalia's future, and reaffirmed his commitment to work in partnership with the new Somali government to promote peace and security, improve fiscal management, and increase the provision of social services. The President urged President Hassan Sheikh to seize this unique opportunity to turn the page on two decades of civil strife in Somalia by building on the recent progress and working closely with regional and international partners to improve the lives of all Somalis. . . .²

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's statement announcing U.S. recognition summarized the circumstances leading to the U.S. action.

There is still a long way to go and many challenges to confront, but we have seen a new foundation for [a] better future being laid. And today, we are taking an important step toward that future. I am delighted to announce that for the first time since 1991, the United States is recognizing the Government of Somalia.

. . . When I entered the State Department in January 2009, al-Shabaab controlled most of Mogadishu and south and central Somalia. It looked at the time like it would even gain more territory. The people of Somalia had already endured many years of violence and isolation, and we wanted to change that. We wanted to work together, not only with the people of Somalia but with governments across the region, the international community, and other likeminded friends.

¹ Bradley Klapper, *US Recognizing First Somali Gov't in 2 Decades*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Jan. 16, 2013, at <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/us-recognizing-first-somali-govt-2-decades>; *Somalia: U.S. Recognizes Government*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 18, 2013, at A8; *U.S. Gives Formal Nod to Somalia Gov't*, UPI.COM, Jan. 18, 2013, at http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/01/18/US-gives-formal-nod-to-Somalia-govt/UPI-64301358519721; Karen DeYoung, *U.S. Recognizes Somalia, Cites Success of Fight Against Militants*, WASH. POST, Jan. 18, 2013, at A9; Editorial, *Hope, and Lessons, in Somalia*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 26, 2013, at A18.

² White House Press Release, Statement by the Press Secretary on the Visit of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia to the White House (Jan. 17, 2013), at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/01/17/state-statement-press-secretary-visit-president-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-somalia->

In early 2009, the final Transitional Federal Government began its work. Somali security forces, supported by the African Union Mission in Somalia, and troops from Uganda and Burundi and now Kenya and Djibouti began to drive al-Shabaab out of cities and towns. Humanitarian aid finally began getting to the people in need. Local governments resumed their work. Commerce and travel began to pick up. Now progress was halting at times, but it was unmistakable. And today, thanks to the extraordinary partnership between the leaders and people of Somalia, with international supporters, al-Shabaab has been driven from Mogadishu and every other major city in Somalia.

While this fight was going on, at the same time, Somalia's leaders worked to create a functioning democratic government. Now that process, too, was quite challenging. But today, for the first time in two decades, this country has a representative government with a new president, a new parliament, a new prime minister, and a new constitution. Somalia's leaders are well aware of the work that lies ahead of them, and that it will be hard work. But they have entered into this important mission with a level of commitment that we find admirable.³

While the United States envisions greater diplomatic engagement with Somalia, it does not now plan to open an embassy in Mogadishu. According to a U.S. Department of State statement:

In recognizing President Hassan Sheikh's government as the Government of Somalia, the United States is committing to sustained diplomatic engagement with the Somali authorities. The United States will continue its engagement in Somalia through personnel in the Somalia Unit, which is co-located with the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, and led by Special Representative for Somalia James Swan. We have increased our travel to Somalia over the last six months, and plan even more robust engagement within the country as security permits.⁴

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

United States Promotes Informal Multilateral Counterterrorism Mechanism

The United States is increasingly utilizing informal processes and institutions, rather than established public international organizations having international legal personality, to pursue significant foreign policy goals. One such institution is the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), which in December 2012 held a ministerial-level plenary session in Abu Dhabi.¹ The Forum "aims to help countries around the world enhance their capacities—and especially those of their civilian institutions—to meet the terrorist threats within their borders and regions."² Following is a substantial excerpt from a fact sheet describing GCTF as issued by its cochairs, Turkey and the United States:

³ U.S. Dep't of State Press Release No. 2013/0040, Remarks with President of Somalia Hassan Sheikh Mohamud After Their Meeting (Jan. 17, 2013), at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2013/01/202998.htm>.

⁴ U.S. Dep't of State Press Release No. 2013/0039, Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's Visit to Washington, DC (Jan. 17, 2013), at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/01/202997.htm>.

¹ U.S. Dep't of State Press Release No. 2012/1991, Ministerial Plenary Co-chairs Fact Sheet: The Deliverables (Dec. 14, 2012), at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/12/202090.htm>.

² *Id.*