

STATEMENT ON SOMALIA

**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
RELIEF COORDINATOR VALERIE AMOS**

28 November, 2011

I am extremely concerned by Al-Shabaab's seizure of property and equipment belonging to several non-governmental organizations and UN agencies working to alleviate suffering in southern Somalia.

Humanitarian relief efforts have saved thousands of lives since the declaration of famine in July, but the situation in central and southern Somalia remains critical. Four million people are still in crisis, and 250,000 face famine.

Any disruption to ongoing humanitarian efforts threatens to undermine the fragile progress made this year, and could bring back famine conditions in several areas.

I call on groups associated with Al-Shabaab to withdraw immediately from humanitarian compounds seized this morning in the regions of Bakool, Bay, Lower Shabelle and Hiraaan, and to desist from any further actions which would threaten humanitarian operations and the safety of humanitarian workers.

I also call on Al-Shabaab to reverse its announcement, made earlier today, that a number of UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations working in areas under its control have to cease their operations.

Humanitarian organizations working in Somalia remain strictly neutral, and their only task is to save lives. I call on all parties to respect international humanitarian law.

For further information, please call:

Amanda Pitt, OCHA NY, pitta@un.org, Tel. +1 212 963 4129 (desk), +1 917 442 1810 (cell)

Mark Turner, OCHA NY, turner5@un.org, Tel. +1 917 367 5707 (desk), +1 917 951 3047 (cell)

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