



International Institute for Justice and DevelopmentSM

2343 Washington Street, 2nd Floor Boston, MA 02119 – 3216
Tel: 617-541-9500 Fax: 617-541-9501
www.iijd.org

IIJD Call for Action

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Contact: Ken Kitchin
Media Coordinator
International Institute for Justice and Development
Phone: 617-541-9500, Facsimile: 617-541-9501
communication@iijd.org

AU Deployment Offers Chance for Stability in Somalia

The International Institute for Justice and Development (IIJD), Inc. calls upon the international community to help resolve the situation in Somalia, in which the instability of the country poses a serious threat to Somali citizens as well as those of the neighboring countries in the region. The country, which has not had a stable government since 1991, has been in a state of civil war since just before Christmas 2006. As a result, years of fighting between rival warlords and an inability to deal with famine and disease have led to the deaths of up to one million people. Over the past seven months, radical Islamic militias have swept over the country, and in early December, Ethiopian troops were called in to help rid the country of militias. The IIJD believes peace and stability can be restored only through international assistance, coupled with agreement of the Transitional Federal Institutions of Somalia to work toward achievable developmental goals. A refusal to do so will result in a return to the state of anarchy and warlord rule of the past.

The IIJD feels that the time for action in Somalia is now. On Tuesday, February 20, the United Nations Security Council authorized the African Union to deploy troops to Somalia for a six month mandate as part of a mission established to help stabilize the country and relieve Ethiopian troops, after which UN peacekeeping forces are most likely expected to assume full responsibility for the situation. In addition, the Ugandan Parliament has pledged to send 1,500 troops to aid the mission in Somalia as well. Although these are significant steps taken by the international community, Somalia will certainly need sustained financial, technical, and political support to ensure that stability is maintained. This prescription complies with Resolution IX determined in the ICSSA 2006 Conference, which states that a call upon the international community is necessary to support the creation of groups which will serve as supervisors to monitor foreign aid accounts and projects, and ensure transparency and local participation from project planning to execution.

The need for committed action on the part of the international community is crucial, not only for the improvement of the Somali state, but also for the security of neighboring countries. The increased flow of weapons, movement of refugees, and the transmission of human and livestock diseases, are significant trans-boundary issues that can only be resolved through cooperation and the elimination of conflict. The importance of securing a permanent stability in Somalia cannot be overstated; if violence and instability persists, Somalis will continue to flee to neighboring countries ill-prepared to deal with hundreds of thousands of refugees, and the increased arms flow will only contribute to an escalated level of violence in the region.

Because the Somali government is currently incapable of guaranteeing the rights of its citizens, the IIJD believes it is the responsibility of the international community to see that those rights are



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re-established and protected. As an organization committed to providing justice and development solutions for long-lasting positive change, the IIJD has been closely monitoring the situation in Somalia. In light of the Transitional Federal Charter's plan for a path towards a more stable future, Resolution V, determined at the ICSSA, which states the demand that aid primarily focuses on institutional reforms that establish a separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary for more accountability and transparency, applies to the plan of the Charter. Along with these institutional changes, it is also critical to focus on establishing an independent electoral body to oversee elections and ensure they are free and fair. These focuses should be maintained through the processes taken until the state and national elections are held in 2009, and the security sector reform is complete.

The IIJD hopes that its call for international involvement is answered. The people of Somalia deserve a government that is receptive to their wants and needs, and even more crucial, an immediate reduction in violence and increased stability. The IIJD encourages the international community to work for peace and stability in Somalia so it will not be forced once again to reflect upon what should have been done for the people of Africa and for global security. It is the responsibility of the international community to ensure that the people of Somalia live in peace; we must act to protect the basic rights to which all Somalis are entitled. Ending the violence is the first step toward our goal of justice and development in Somalia, but it is by no means the solution. The international community must be committed to sustained support for Somalia or any peace attained will be fleeting at best.