



**THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA**

**The Permanent Mission of the Federal Republic of Somalia to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other  
specialized institutions in Switzerland  
The Ambassador**

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Geneva December 19, 2014

*His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein*

Ambassador, Dear High Commissioner,

*Assalamu aleykum wa RAHMATULLAH wa barakatuu.*

I would like to take this opportunity to very warmly congratulate you on your appointment as the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. May the peace and blessings of ALLAH swt be upon you in order to excel in your new and important endeavour.

Further to our telephone conversation on 17 December, I would like to reiterate the Federal Government of Somalia's urgent request that you kindly consider to retain Dr. Miranda Brown as Chief of the East and Southern Africa section (Africa I section), at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The reasons are simple: Dr. Brown plays a crucial role for our continued engagement on human rights and this is in the national interest of Somalia and all the Somali people.

I shall briefly explain the background. In March 2008, my Government decided to change its approach and to proactively engage with UN Human Rights Council, its mechanisms and subsidiary bodies. From March 2008 until September 2013, my Government's pro-active engagement with the United Nations Human Rights Council resulted in the adoption by consensus of ten resolutions on technical assistance and capacity building to Somalia in the field of human rights, with an unprecedented level of co-sponsorship.

Two High-level innovative stand-alone interactive dialogues were held at the HRC in Geneva (September 2010 and September 2013) in order to harmonize and coordinate the technical cooperation between the concerned UN Agencies and the Government with a particular focus on the promotion and protection of human rights. A major achievement in the year 2011 was Somalia's frank and robust engagement in the important Universal Periodic Review process in the face of tremendous human rights challenges. This was the first time that Somalia submitted a report to an international treaty body since 1984. The process was a true reflection of the situation in Somalia which continued to present major challenges for the protection of human rights in Somalia at the time. It resulted in 155 recommendations being made to Somalia by the HRC unity of which Somalia fully accepted 151 and 4 in-part.

Sadly despite this unprecedented record of proactive engagement and our willingness to work with the United Nations system on human rights, there was no support and even resistance from OHCHR, and for this reason and many others, on 3 April 2011 the then Transitional Federal Government of Somalia had no choice but to declare *Persona Non Grata* the then Chief of Section I of the Africa Branch of the OHCHR Mr. Scott Campbell and the then Head of the Human Rights Unit of UNPOS Ms. Sandra Beidas.



The relationship with OHCHR had broken down.

Dr. Brown has worked closely with the Federal Government of Somalia over the past seven years. Without her engagement, none of the achievements above would have been possible. My country is among the few non-Western countries willing to engage proactively with the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, to advocate for a country specific mandate and to welcome increased scrutiny by the United Nations of its human rights record. This is in large part due to Dr. Brown's engagement with us. She was instrumental in establishing the Group of "Geneva Friends of Somalia" and raised millions of dollars of funding. Over USD 1.1 million of extra-budgetary funding was provided by Austria, Australia, Germany and Israel, earmarked for Somalia. Sadly OHCHR appeared unable to spend this funding on Somalia, and even attempted to convince those donors who had provided it, that their funding should have been unearmarked. This is unacceptable. At the time, my Government chose not to raise this publicly, but we will have no option but to do so and to speak about all of our concerns, should these not be addressed.

Since Dr. Brown's arrival at OHCHR as the Chief of the Africa I section, just two years ago, relations with your Office have improved dramatically. We now have a known and trusted individual as our key contact and leading the human rights work in our region. The fragile trust with your Office has been restored and we are now able to work productively together and to engage in sometimes very difficult discussions and to accept the constructive criticism, which Dr. Brown does not shy away from. She has also shown the same integrity, insight and commitment in engaging with other states throughout the region and she is highly regarded and appreciated by other African states, within the international community and by NGOs.

The Federal Government of Somalia would be gravely concerned, should Dr. Brown not be retained as Chief of the Africa I section because of the return of Mr. Campbell to Geneva. The argument that that position is no longer available to her, because of Mr. Campbell's incumbency, is clearly not valid. Indeed, we understand that Mr. Campbell was transferred to another position when he returned to Geneva and has not resumed the duties and functions of the position of Chief of the Africa I section. Had Mr. Campbell returned to the Chief of the Africa I position, my Government would have objected in the strongest possible terms. As explained above and in the attached correspondence, my Government took the unprecedented step of declaring Mr. Scott Campbell *Persona Non Grata*, when he held the position of Chief of the Africa I section and of suspending cooperation with your Office. This was the culmination of a long period of very difficult relations with your Office and we do not want to return to those times.

From Somalia's perspective, the timing for losing Dr. Brown as Chief of the Africa I section could not be worse, with a new Director of the Africa Branch at OHCHR, a new Independent Expert on the situation of Human Rights in Somalia and a new Head of the UNSOM Human Rights component to be appointed shortly. In addition, to be confronted with a new Chief of the Africa I section would reawaken our fears that Somalia is not a priority for your Office and we would be very concerned about a lack of institutional memory. With all due respect we kindly but strongly urge you not to appoint a new Chief of Africa I section at this time.

As you know, this is a critical period for Somalia from a human rights and political perspective, and not least because Somalia must present its second UPR report to the HRC in early 2016. We cannot afford to lose the highest ranking official in OHCHR who is familiar with the current Somali human rights and political dossier.

Dr. Brown is the only senior OHCHR official to have been around Somalia in recent years and to have met the Prime Minister and other Ministers in Mogadishu and Garowe (Puntland), and to have won trust at the highest level of Government.



*His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein,*

My Government requests that you would kindly confirm that OHCHR will retain Dr. Brown as Chief of the Africa I section so that we can continue our important human rights work - the Somali people deserve nothing less -. I feel sure that you and the Deputy High Commissioner H.E. Dr. Flavia Pansieri will see the merits in this decision and the value of our ongoing good cooperation your Office.

I am taking the liberty of copying this letter to the newly appointed Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia, H.E. Ambassador Omar Abdulrashid Ali Shermarke.

In conclusion, *His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein*, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Deputy High Commission H.E. Dr. Flavia Pansieri for the warm hospitality she has kindly granted to me during our constructive meeting that took place on 29 November, 2014 despite the extremely short notice.

Please, accept, *His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein*, assurances of my highest and distinguished consideration.

I wish you a happy and healthy year 2015.

May ALLAH swt easy your task and bless and protect you and all your loved ones always and wherever they be.



Yours sincerely,

Yusuf Mohamed Ismail "Bari-Bari"  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,  
Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Somalia to UNOG

Annex:

- I) the copies of the letters signed the former DHC Ms. Kyung-wha-Kang dated on 18 March 2009 and 8 February 2011 respectively;
- II) the copies of the letters signed by the former High Commissioner Ms. Navanethem Pillay dated on 17 December 2010 and 16 June 2011 respectively;
- III) the copy of the letter signed by the then acting Prime Minister of the Federal Government of Somalia H.E. Mr. Abdihakim Mohamud Haji dated on 13 January 2011;
- VI) the copy of the letter signed the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation H.E. Prof. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali dated on 20 March 2011;
- V) the copy of the NV of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia dated 1 April 2011;
- VI) the copy of the article published on Africa Review reporting the declaration of PNG;
- VII) the copy of the MOU signed by the then Transitional Federal Government of Somalia and the OHCHR on 11 May 2012;
- VIII) the copy of the letter of the African Group in Geneva dated on 28 January 2014;
- IX) the copy of the letter signed by the former President of the United Nations Human Rights Council H.E. Ambassador Baudelaire Ndong Ella.