

**AN APPEAL TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN UNION
IN RESPONSE TO THE ICG REPORT**

By: **The Unionists of Northern Somalia (UNS)**

The Web, Saturday, June 03, 2006

You're Excellency,

We, the Unionists of Northern Somalia (UNS), a newly formed Somali group, wish to express our shock and disappointment at the position taken by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in relation to the Somali crisis. Their report: "Somaliland: Time for African Union Leadership", which reads as an open letter to the AU, stands for non other than dismembering our country—the Somali Republic. We believe that the African Department of the ICG has lost its credibility on the question of Somalia. The ICG Report, we believe, is mainly contaminated by the influence of individuals such as Suliman Baldo and Matt Bryden.

It is noteworthy that the latter of these two individuals is married into "Somaliland", and particularly into a 'zip code', which staunchly supports the secession. Both of these individuals have, in the past, openly drummed up support for the secession of "Somaliland", and, therefore, the dismemberment of the Somali Republic. Marrying into a different nationality offers a lot of opportunities to both sides, but does not, should not include, helping to dismember the entity into which one marries. Indeed, with all its benefits, marriage does not, should not, necessarily become a ticket to cause havoc and turmoil in one's new community of in-laws.

Marriage should not either be exploited as an opportunity to destructively delve into the affairs of the nation of one's in-laws with a view to fulfill inbred or unwittingly acquired imperialistic tendencies and objectives by individuals, such is what Mr. Matt Bryden's actions reflect. Their new found skills to speak the Somali language, does not give them the authority to claim expertise on the Somali affairs, either. These individuals, and similar others from other organizations, have become a plague in the politics of our nation and are misrepresenting themselves by claiming to be authorities on the Somali affairs. They advise on policy without ever having the moral realism, deep understanding and/or the intellectual or emotional capacity that one requires to appreciate the issues and questions facing a nation—including its history and the depth of interdependencies between the sectors of its beautiful people. The **ICG should therefore review** its stance on the inputs provided by such individuals as Suliman Baldo and Matt Bryden.

"Somaliland" is part and parcel of the Somali Republic. The members of the UNS are all Somalis, originally, from that part of Somalia which the ICG calls "Somaliland", we repeat. We wish to inform the world that "Somaliland" is a misnomer for **our** North West region of Somalia, formerly, the British Protectorate of Somaliland. The protectorate re-

amalgamated with the Italian Somaliland, an Italian trusteeship, upon their independence on 26 June and July 1, 1960, respectively.

We are glad that the ICG has finally come to reckon with the voice of the unionists of the North West of Somalia, albeit, it calls us a “small but vocal minority”. That description in itself is suggestive of the bias of the ICG towards the secession. We wonder why!

Far from being a minority, those who reject the secession in the NW comprise not only the regions of Sool, Eastern Sanaag and Cayn, but also the silent majority of the people of the Awdal region, to the west of Hargeisa. Even the population at the heart of the area calling for the session—namely the triangle between Hargeisa, Berbera and Burao—is far from being monolithic on that stance. A significant segment of the population, among the clan spearheading the secession, is questioning the motto and rationale of the secession, if not indeed vehemently objecting to it. The ICG knows this for a fact; but deliberately ignores it or maliciously conceals it. Again, we wonder why!

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG), although at an embryonic stage, is a representative government in which the people of the North West are equitably represented in both its legislative and executive branches. It is not a “government of the South” as the ICG advances. This confirms the fact that the people of the North West region are divided on the secession. The point further confirms that the conflict is more regional than it is national in this respect. Hence, there is no evidence that the TFG will ever attack its people in the North West, as the ICG Report openly and maliciously predicts. In our considered view, there shall never be an attack on the North West from the TFG—which neither has the warewithal nor the intention to do so. Hence, the call for intervention on the AU, by the ICG, is a misconception, at best, if not a deliberate piece of sophistry at dismembering Somalia, on the part of the ICG. Otherwise, there would be no other way for them to conceive of a Somalia at war with one of its regions—a region already proposed for autonomy under the new Federal Constitution.

Hence, the intervention of the AU, if at all, in this matter, should be one in which the august organization of Africa would encourage, consolidate and complete the reconciliation process commenced in Embagathi, the Republic of Kenya, and build on its fruits, as founded under the aegis of the sub-region of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and conceived by delegations from all over Somalia, including the North West. We urge IGAD, the African Union (AU), the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the European Union (EU) and the Security Council of the United Nations to unequivocally condemn the Report of the ICG, since it merely and staunchly call for the dismemberment of Somalia, contrary to the position of all these distinguished international bodies.

We urge our brethren in the North West not to succumb to the callous and irresponsible action taken by the ICG in producing such a report in an attempt to sow discord within the Somali nation. We, instead, pray that our people everywhere come together to prevent any such calamitous option of war which the ICG looks forward to instigate. We pray that things never escalate to a situation where there will be war to settle the differences, on other side.

On the contrary, we are indeed worried that, if recognition for “Somaliland” is propelled forward, as the ICG group seems to advocate, the result may become a rekindled civil war within “Somaliland” itself—a region which has hitherto been the envy of many other regions in terms of peace and stability. Further more, such violence can spill over the border with Ethiopia. All must know that the peace in “Somaliland” is only as delicate as a spider’s web, built, indeed, on the tolerance of the unity-oriented community of the region from all clans. An illegal and reckless push towards the secession can cause renewed tension and violence. The last thing Somalia, as it is, needs is the instigation of war, such is what the ICG Report may do. The ICG should, hence, publicly withdraw its proposal and apologize to Somalia and the international community for this reckless action.

Excellency, therefore, the ICG cannot act as an honest broker to suggest solutions on the Somali question, at all, lest we become prey to its un-objective advice and dishonest designs.

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