



Security Council

Distr.: General
1 August 2019

Original: English

Letter dated 30 July 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In response to the request of the Security Council, in its resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), asking me to conduct a technical assessment regarding the Somalia arms embargo, with options and recommendations for improving implementation, an assessment team was deployed to Mogadishu and Nairobi from 22 to 28 June 2019. The team, led by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, comprised technical experts from the United Nations Mine Action Service and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

The assessment team held consultations with the National Security Adviser to the President of Somalia and his staff, including the National Focal Point for Weapons and Ammunition Management; the Directors-General of the Ministries of Defence, Internal Security and Justice and Judicial Affairs; and representatives of the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force. The Federal Government of Somalia also enabled the assessment team to visit four armouries in Mogadishu: Villa Somalia; Battalion 60 of the Somali National Army; the Somali Police Force headquarters; and the Halane central armoury. The assessment team also met with representatives of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), including the United Nations Mine Action Service, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Panel of Experts on Somalia (which is based in Nairobi), as well as representatives of the Governments of Belgium, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the European Union and the European Union Training Mission in Somalia. The assessment team also consulted with the Bonn International Centre for Conversion and the organization Conflict Armament Research.

Arms embargo and context

By resolution [733 \(1992\)](#), the Security Council imposed a general and complete arms embargo on Somalia, and by its resolution [1844 \(2008\)](#) the Council decided to monitor the implementation of targeted measures, in addition to an arms embargo, on individuals and entities designated by the relevant sanctions committee. In subsequent resolutions, most recently in its resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), the Council introduced exemptions¹ and exceptions² to the territorial embargo and further refined its scope.

¹ Exemptions are processed through the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#); they are for the Committee's information or for its approval, or they require the absence of a negative decision by the Committee in order for a particular arms embargo related-activity to proceed.

² Exceptions do not need to be submitted to the Committee.



In its resolution [2093 \(2013\)](#), the Council decided to partially lift the arms embargo in relation to deliveries of weapons or military equipment or the provision of advice, assistance or training intended solely for the development of the Security Forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, and to provide security for the Somali people. In its resolution [2111 \(2013\)](#), the Council introduced an exemption for the delivery to the Federal Government of certain additional categories of items³ not covered by the partial lift. In the same resolution, another exemption was provided for supplies intended to help to develop Somali sector institutions – those other than the security forces of the Federal Government, as subsequently clarified⁴ by the Committee.⁵

In its engagement with the Federal Government of Somalia, the assessment team received a strong commitment to complying with the arms embargo, including the terms of its partial lifting. The Federal Government recognizes that effective governance and accountability regarding arms and related materiel is not only an international obligation aimed at limiting the possibility of diversion but also an important national security-related responsibility. At the same time, the Federal Government reiterated its position that the embargo hinders the fight against Al-Shabaab by restricting the access of the Federal Government to heavy weapons.

The impact on Somalia of arms-smuggling activities in the region, in particular arms trafficking from Yemen into Somalia, was also a concern raised by the Federal Government of Somalia, and expressed also by the Security Council in its resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#). The listing of arms traffickers by the Council or the Committee, as subject to the targeted sanctions, could act as a deterrent against smuggling activities and help improve implementation of the arms embargo. The Panel of Experts on Somalia, in collaboration with the Panel of Experts on Yemen, is a source of information to the Council on arms traffickers.

Since my previous assessment of the Somalia arms embargo, requested by the Security Council in 2014 ([S/2014/243](#)), the Federal Government of Somalia has made notable progress in its efforts to establish a national weapons and ammunition management framework. In particular, in Mogadishu, the Federal Government has made significant advancements in strengthening accountability of newly imported materiel prior to distribution by implementing a system of marking and record-keeping at the point of initial reception. However, challenges remain, in particular in the areas of coordination and capacity. Further progress towards weapons and ammunition management, and, more broadly, in security sector reform, is also dependent on the implementation of the National Security Architecture and inclusive political agreements, which will require political cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states to resume.⁶ Technical cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states should be

³ Surface-to-air missiles, including: man-portable air defence systems; guns, howitzers and cannons with a calibre greater than 12.7 mm; and ammunition and components specially designed for those items, excluding shoulder-fired anti-tank rocket launchers; mortars with a calibre greater than 82 mm; anti-tank guided weapons and ammunition and components specially designed for those items; charges and devices intended for military use containing energetic materials; mines and related materiel; and weapon sights with night-vision capability.

⁴ Paragraph 11 (a) of Security Council resolution [2111 \(2013\)](#) contains a reference to supplies of weapons or military equipment and technical assistance or training intended solely for the purpose of helping to develop Somali sector institutions. Paragraph 28 of the Committee's Implementation Assistance No. 2, last updated on 8 May 2019, specifies Somali sector institutions other than the Security Forces of the Federal Government of Somalia.

⁵ Renamed "the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia" as at 14 November 2018.

⁶ In the National Security Architecture of Somalia, adopted in April 2017, the sizes, distributions and compositions of regional and federal forces are defined, and command and control and resourcing responsibilities are outlined.

strengthened to ensure the roll-out of weapons and ammunition management to the federal member states.

Assessment of components of the arms embargo

Procedures related to the partial lifting of the arms embargo

The partial lifting of the arms embargo was followed by the establishment of a set of procedures, advance delivery notification,⁷ post-delivery confirmation⁸ and post-distribution notification,⁹ to be followed by the Federal Government of Somalia with specified content and within specified timelines, all of which are to be submitted for the Committee's information. Requests for items listed in the annex to Security Council resolution 2111 (2013) were to be submitted in advance for the Committee's approval.

Advance delivery notification and post-delivery confirmation

In its resolution 2142 (2014), the Security Council decided that the primary responsibility for making the advance delivery notification rested with the Federal Government of Somalia, while the supplying Member State or States could make the notification in place of the Federal Government, in consultation with the Federal Government. The assessment team found that this requirement proved to be challenging for the Federal Government to implement. While acknowledging internal coordination issues as a contributing factor to missed or late notifications, the Government noted that supplying Member States, when arranging deliveries, often bypassed the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia, the designated focal point for arms embargo issues, which prepares and submits the required notifications to the Committee.

In addition to deliveries of weapons, ammunition or military equipment, advance notification is also a requirement for the provision of advice, assistance or training. Medical equipment and musical instruments have also been included in the past as forms of assistance to the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia. A definition of "assistance", with a narrower scope, could help to provide clarity to the Federal Government and Member States on what does and does not need to be included in advance notification, as well as ease the reporting burden.

In relation to the post-delivery confirmation, a review by the assessment team of some of the documentation submitted to the Committee between 2017 and 2019 indicated gaps in timeliness and content, pointing to the desirability of providing periodic feedback to the Government. The Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia expressed confidence about achieving full compliance with this requirement.

⁷ The Committee must be informed at least five working days in advance of the date of the proposed delivery of weapons, ammunition or military equipment, as well as assistance, intended for the development of the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia.

⁸ No later than 30 days after the delivery of arms and ammunition, written confirmation of the completion of delivery, including the serial numbers for the arms and ammunition delivered, shipping information, bills of lading, cargo manifests or packing lists, and the specific place of storage, is to be provided by the Federal Government of Somalia.

⁹ Upon distribution of the imported arms and ammunition, information regarding the destination unit is to be incorporated in the biannual reporting by the Federal Government of Somalia to the Security Council on the structure, composition, strength and disposition of its security forces, including the status of regional and militia forces.

Post-distribution notification

In its resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council requested the Federal Government of Somalia to incorporate the notification, previously to have been submitted to the Committee within five days of distribution to the destination unit, into its biannual reporting to the Council. This change in procedure makes an aspect of the terms of the partial lifting of the arms embargo less onerous for the Federal Government. Since the adoption of the resolution, the Federal Government has submitted one report to the Council, dated 15 March 2019. The report did not contain information on the distribution of acquired arms and ammunition, which should be included in the next report, due by 15 September 2019.¹⁰ The information contained in the next report will enable a proper assessment of the effectiveness of the modified procedure on distribution.

Annex to Security Council resolution [2111 \(2013\)](#)

The Federal Government of Somalia informed the assessment team of its requirement to acquire a higher calibre of weaponry to fight Al-Shabaab. While such weaponry, listed in the annex to Security Council resolution [2111 \(2013\)](#), is allowed under the arms embargo, its import is subject to the Committee's advance approval. The approval requirement, according to the Government, had dissuaded potential suppliers.¹¹ International partners with whom the assessment team met did not perceive the procedures related to the items listed in the annex to be an impediment.

The assessment team is aware of the lack of clarity in the annex to resolution [2111 \(2013\)](#). While the annex covered the provision of explosives for military use, it, and indeed other provisions of the relevant Council resolutions, were silent on the question of explosives for commercial use and for improvised explosive device disposal support for the Federal Government of Somalia. In April 2019, the Committee determined, in connection with a specific shipment to Somalia, that a certain type of commercial explosive meant exclusively for commercial use fell outside the scope of the arms embargo and highlighted the need for appropriate safeguards to be put in place to minimize the risk of diversion.

Exceptions for training

In 2013, a range of exceptions was also integrated into the arms embargo, including supplies of weapons and military equipment and technical training and assistance intended solely for the support of or use by the European Union Training Mission in Somalia.¹² The Government of Turkey, an international partner that has provided training to the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia in Mogadishu since 2017,¹³ expressed its wish to the assessment team that its training

¹⁰ The destination unit for an import, in January 2019, of 1,000 AK-47s rifles and 2,000 AK-47 magazines was not included in the report of the Federal Government of Somalia dated 15 March 2019.

¹¹ Since the partial lifting of the arms embargo, in 2013, four exemption requests submitted by Member States pursuant to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution [2111 \(2013\)](#), which concerns the items listed in the annex thereto, have been approved by the Committee. One exemption request was not approved.

¹² Exceptions are also in place for support for AMISOM and its strategic partners.

¹³ Turkey has also provided training to the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia in various military institutions based in Turkey since 2013.

programme, the Turkish Task Force Command in Somalia, which is expected to intensify its activities in the coming months, be covered by a similar exception.¹⁴

Support for federal member states

In both Security Council resolution 2111 (2013) and the Committee's Implementation Assistance Notice No. 2, it is indicated that support (supplies of weapons or military equipment and technical assistance or training) to develop Somali sector institutions other than the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, required notification to and the absence of a negative decision by the Committee.¹⁵ In its engagement with the Federal Government of Somalia, the assessment team was made aware of concerns regarding support for the federal member states of which the Committee had not been notified. In resolution 2444 (2018), the Council stressed the obligations of Member States in relation to such notifications and urged them to strictly follow the notification procedures for providing assistance to develop Somali security sector institutions. There is, however, no elaboration by the Council or its Committee of procedures¹⁶ aimed at preventing the diversion of the notified items.

Weapons and ammunition management

The Somalia arms embargo and the terms of its partial lifting encompass weapons and ammunition management obligations applicable to the Federal Government of Somalia. The consultations held with the Federal Government on weapons and ammunition management were informed by and built on previous work done by UNIDIR in this area.¹⁷

National framework

The presidential decree of 18 September 2018 on the Control of Arms and Ammunition of the National Army serves as the primary national policy on weapons and ammunition management and is a significant step in enabling the distribution of weapons to the federal member states in an accountable and transparent manner. Through this decree, Halane has been designated the central armoury for the registration of all newly imported weapons, and a series of nine standard operating procedures¹⁸ was put in place for all ministries engaged in security. The decree, together with the standard operating procedures, provides the basis of a national weapons and ammunition management framework in Somalia at this time. The

¹⁴ The Turkish Task Force Command in Somalia provides advisory, mentoring, training and education activities to the Somali National Army, as well as infrastructure and logistic support. A total of 88 military and 72 non-commissioned officers were expected to graduate from the Task Force in July 2019. In addition to the training of the first light infantry battalion, comprising 450 soldiers, a programme for the training and equipping of three battalions per year, comprising 550 soldiers, has been developed.

¹⁵ Since the partial lifting of the arms embargo, in 2013, the Committee has received 11 notifications under paragraph 11 (a) of Security Council resolution 2111 (2013) for support for Somali sector institutions other than the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, one of which was not successful.

¹⁶ For example, confirmation of delivery and information on distribution.

¹⁷ For more information, see United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), "Towards a National Framework for Arms and Ammunition Management in the Federal Republic of Somalia: A Narrative Report 2014–2017" (Geneva, 2017).

¹⁸ The standard operating procedures concern: general armoury procedures; armoury procedures for weapons; armoury procedures for ammunition and explosives; accounting of weapons, ammunition and explosives; marking of weapons; destruction of weapons and ammunition; transport of weapons and/or ammunition; reception and documentation procedures at Halane armoury; and management of captured weapons.

assessment team found that the implementation of the decree by relevant ministries and security forces, which remain hampered by limited capacity in various areas, technical, logistical and financial, remains a challenge for the Federal Government of Somalia. Furthermore, the assessment also indicates that the standard operating procedures could be extended to select operational issues that would describe the control and reporting on the distribution of weapons to subordinate units, including distribution down to the lowest level of individual soldiers and the return of receipts up the chain of custody.

With regard to a legal framework governing civilian-owned firearms, the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia drafted two acts in 2017 to regulate small arms and light weapons and the modalities for weapons issued to private security companies in Somalia. Both acts are currently in the national legislative process of approval. Their timely adoption, and the subsequent outreach to and awareness-raising of the population regarding these laws, will further advance the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia to govern arms and ammunition throughout the country.

Coordination

The Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia is responsible for the oversight of weapons and ammunition management, in addition to serving as the focal point on arms embargo issues. In 2017, the Office of the National Security Adviser formally appointed a weapons and ammunition management national focal point to support the coordination and planning of weapons and ammunition management throughout the national security forces and relevant ministries.

Between 2014 and 2017, the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia convened, a meeting of the Arms and Ammunition Management Steering Committee, on a quarterly basis, to facilitate national and international coordination, cooperation and assistance regarding weapons and ammunition management at the strategic level. Relevant national ministries, security forces and international partners regularly participated in the Steering Committee during this period.¹⁹ The Steering Committee has not convened since the start of 2018, however, and it remains dormant. This has resulted in lack of information-sharing among relevant national and international partners working on weapons and ammunition management since.

In June 2019, the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia, in cooperation with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States, set out a road map to establish a formal national coordinating mechanism on small arms and light weapons, which, once created, will serve as the coordinating body among relevant ministries and security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia on small arms and light weapons control in Somalia. This is a noteworthy development. As set out in the road map, the Office of the National Security Adviser intends to establish such a coordinating mechanism, with the support of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons, by the end of 2019. It is also envisaged that the national coordinating mechanism on small arms and light weapons will support the coordination of implementation activities relevant to the arms embargo.

¹⁹ As noted in my most recent assessment (S/2014/243), the Steering Committee was chaired by the National Security Adviser and composed of representatives of the Ministries of National Security and Defence, the Somali National Army, the Somali Police Force, the National Intelligence and Security Agency, the Custodial Corps, UNSOM, the Mine Action Service, AMISOM, the European Union, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and non-governmental implementing partners.

The Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia indicated that strengthening weapons and ammunition management coordination beyond Mogadishu remains a priority for the Federal Government of Somalia. In the context of implementing the National Security Architecture agreed upon between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states in April 2017, as well as the Transition Plan for the progressive transfer of security responsibilities from AMISOM to the Somali security institutions, adequate coordination and planning will be required to monitor how the security forces will be supplied and equipped with arms. In this regard, training programmes on how those supplies would be managed and accounted for throughout the chain of custody – that is, the distribution and management of materiel from the point of initial reception and storage at the Halane facility to the Somali National Army, the Somali Police Force and the Custodial Corps headquarters, to sector-level headquarters to individual units at field levels – are required.

In developing a strategic plan for weapons and ammunition management activities, the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia is currently planning to convene a conference on weapons and ammunition management in 2019, with a view to developing a plan of action on weapons and ammunition management, in cooperation with relevant international partners. The development of such a national plan, with specific outputs and timelines, will support the coordination of weapons and ammunition management activities among relevant national institutions, security forces and international partners.

Marking and record-keeping

As a prerequisite for establishing a verification mechanism for the distribution of arms in Somalia, in 2014 the Security Council appealed to Member States to support the efforts of the Federal Government of Somalia to start a weapons-marking and record-keeping process (S/PRST/2014/9). Since then, notable progress has been made by the Federal Government in the area of marking newly imported weapons. According to the Federal Government, a total of 20,240 weapons have been marked either through a fixed marking programme at Halane and at the Ministry of Internal Security or through a Somali National Army mobile marking team in Mogadishu. The assessment team was able to confirm that information on newly imported marked weapons has been entered into logbooks at Halane. A written standard operating procedure on marking, drafted by the Federal Government, has been completed. The Federal Government is seeking international support for the roll-out of the mobile marking programme at the sector level.

The Federal Government of Somalia has begun to integrate arms registration into the wider security sector biometric registration of the Somali National Army during the second phase of the exercise, to be completed by the end of 2019, thereby linking individual weapons (including through their serial numbers) to individual biometric files for soldiers.

With regard to record-keeping, the assessment team observed both progress made and challenges in implementation. The storage facilities visited by the assessment had logbooks in which records of weapons and ammunition held in those storage sites were kept. The Federal Government of Somalia should strengthen its record-keeping procedures, however, in particular to monitor the internal distribution of weapons and ammunition from Halane to the various receiving units, down to the company level. The absence of a national weapons registration system, including of an electronic central national registry or database allowing for the recording and tracking of all internal transfers of weapons to units and individuals, is one of the most important steps in and a prerequisite for effective tracking and verification, and

it remains a gap in the management system. The process is expected to take some time and requires adequate implementation support from relevant international partners.

Stockpile management

During the assessment, the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia indicated that the enhancement of physical security and stockpile management of weapons and ammunition remained a priority with regard to weapons and ammunition management. The storage site visits by the assessment team revealed several storage-related challenges to the safe and secure storage of weapons and ammunition in Mogadishu. Consultations with international stakeholders also indicated the need for increased international assistance for strengthening storage capacity at the sector and unit levels. This highlights the need to assess storage conditions and needs comprehensively throughout Somalia.

Since 2014, progress made towards developing infrastructure required to safely store weapons and ammunition has been modest. Larger and purpose-built storage in Mogadishu, necessary for storing large amounts of ammunition with explosive components outside populated areas, has yet to be implemented because of the complex security situation. Funding has been insufficient to support the effort of the Federal Government of Somalia in this regard.

Since 2014, the Halane central armoury has served as the main processing point for the marking, recording, initial storage and distribution of imported weapons and ammunition. Progress was made to improve the security of weapon stocks through the construction of a second storehouse in Halane, where arms and ammunition could be stored separately. The assessment revealed that further practical improvements could be made at the Halane storage site to increase the safety and security of the stocks.

The assessment team observed a pressing need for international assistance to the Federal Government of Somalia in developing technical expertise and infrastructure to manage ammunition for conventional weapons safely and securely. This is particularly concerning, given that ammunition stocks with large amounts of explosive content are being stored by the Federal Government of Somalia, in populated areas. The threat of mortar attacks in Mogadishu also underlines the urgent requirement to securely and safely store ammunition.

Captured weapons

In resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council urged increased cooperation by the Federal Government of Somalia, federal member states and AMISOM, as set out in Council resolution [2182 \(2014\)](#), to document and register military equipment captured as part of offensive operations or in the course of carrying out their mandates. Inspection of the items by the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, now succeeded by the Panel of Experts on Somalia, prior to redistribution or destruction, was also requested by the Council in its resolution [2182 \(2014\)](#). The Federal Government has developed a dedicated standard operating procedure to address this requirement. Such procedures should be further harmonized with AMISOM in order to ensure the accuracy of the records, and this effort is now under way. Moreover, either with the support of the Joint Verification Team or the Panel of Experts, those items that have been captured and stored by the Federal Government security forces could be physically inspected periodically and possibly traced.

During the assessment, the Federal Government of Somalia noted that, in practice, the Somali National Army may integrate into its existing stocks weapons captured during operations. In this regard, practices on documentation and registration vary considerably throughout units. Furthermore, on the basis of

information regarding the lack of adequate storage facilities at the sector levels, the assessment team observed that effective registration and safe and secure storage of the captured materiel remain a challenge.

In the context of joint operations, AMISOM indicated its commitment to cooperating closely with the Somali National Army on handover procedures and documentation of captured materiel.

Monitoring and verification

The Panel of Experts is the designated monitoring mechanism on compliance with the sanctions regime. Its mandate includes monitoring and investigating the implementation of the arms embargo and reporting violations thereof. In addition to these aspects, the mandate includes assisting in identifying areas in which the capacities of States in the region can be strengthened to facilitate the implementation of the sanctions measures. In its resolution [2142 \(2014\)](#), the Council requested the Somalia and Eritrea Monitoring Group, which preceded the Panel of Experts, to provide feedback to the Federal Government of Somalia on its reporting to the Committee, which served as a form of assistance to the Federal Government. The request could be reiterated in the next Council resolution on the Somalia sanctions regime.

Following the recommendation made in the 2014 technical assessment, the Federal Government of Somalia established a joint verification team in 2015. In resolution [2317 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council welcomed the efforts of the Federal Government in establishing the Joint Verification Team, whose membership currently includes the Federal Government and experts from the Conflict Armament Research organization, tasked with conducting routine inspections of the stockpiles, inventory records and supply chain of weapons of government security forces for the purpose of mitigating the diversion of arms and ammunition to entities outside the security services of the Federal Government. The Joint Verification Team submitted its first report to the Committee in April 2018, and has since provided a midterm report in March 2019.

The provision for a joint verification team is a unique provision to the arms embargo. It enables the Federal Government of Somalia to take ownership of accountability of its stocks, while it embeds an external verification mechanism by including international experts as part of the team. The Joint Verification Team and its reports can play an essential role in supporting the Security Council in its assessment of the arms embargo as it serves as an avenue to periodically evaluate the regulation and control of the Federal Government over its imports, marking, registration, storage and distribution of arms and ammunition in the country.

Since its inception, the Joint Verification Team has conducted a total of 30 site visits in Mogadishu, South-West State and Jubbaland, resulting in the verification of more than 2,030 weapons and 500,000 rounds of ammunition throughout 16 Somali Police Force, eight Somali National Army and three Custodial Corps units.

The monitoring and verification of weapons and ammunition flows, including record-keeping and documented distribution to subunits and soldiers, still presents a significant challenge in Somalia. A crucial challenge to the effective operationalization of the Joint Verification Team remains the restricted access to armouries, as each planned assessment still needs to be authorized by the relevant Somali security force, and inspections were conducted where access was possible, instead of following an all-inclusive plan established by the Federal Government. In addition, verification could be performed only against the compiled lists from newly imported and marked weapons, in the absence of a central national registry or database that would list all the weapons assigned and distributed to a specific unit. The Joint Verification Team mechanism has yet to reach its full potential.

Options and recommendations for improving the implementation of the arms embargo

With respect to the notification obligations of the Federal Government of Somalia, there is a need to strengthen internal coordination between the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia and other ministries whose forces may receive deliveries of materiel or assistance falling under the scope of the partial lifting of the arms embargo. A reversal of the primary responsibility or the assignment of sole responsibility to a supplying Member State in consultation with the Government for advance delivery notification could be considered. Taking such a step would not weaken the control measures implemented by the Security Council under the partial lifting of the arms embargo or take away from the ownership of imports by the Government, because the post-delivery confirmation and post-distribution notification would still be in place under the responsibility of the Government.

Supplying States should coordinate closely with the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia on all incoming transfers prior to their delivery to ensure that the Office of the National Security Adviser has records of all materiel received by the Federal Government of Somalia security forces and that weapons and ammunition are accounted for prior to distribution to units.

The determination by the Committee on the status of explosives exclusively for commercial use, including the creation of appropriate accompanying safeguards to mitigate the risk of diversion, could be reflected in the next Security Council resolution on the sanctions regime. In general, in order to provide for contingencies in which an item or equipment not covered by an exemption would legitimately need to be imported to Somalia, the Council may wish to consider incorporating a catch-all exemption provision into the arms embargo measure.²⁰ Furthermore, a discussion on updating training exceptions, such as in the case of the Turkish Task Force Command in Somalia, deserves attention.

The Security Council may also wish to consider how best to elaborate further on the obligations of Member States in relation to the provision of support to develop Somali sector institutions other than the security forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, with a view to putting in place appropriate safeguards to prevent diversion. In addition, a more comprehensive Committee implementation assistance notice or fact sheet bringing together all the key provisions of the arms embargo would assist in increasing the understanding of the requirements and obligations in the Federal Government of Somalia and the international community.

In resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#), the Security Council reiterated its commitment to monitoring and assessing improvements in order to review the arms embargo when all conditions as set out in Council resolutions were met. A clear elaboration by the Council of those required areas of improvement would provide clarity to the Federal Government of Somalia on the steps that it needs to take in order to achieve the adjustments to the arms embargo that it seeks. Maintaining, and even strengthening, the measure against non-State actors is just as important.

It is also important that the Government establish priorities with respect to weapons and ammunition management, through a national plan of action, from which specific activities, timelines and resource mobilization for weapons and ammunition management could be initiated. It will be important to review and assess gaps in existing sets of standard operating procedures and develop new procedures, as appropriate.

²⁰ See, for example, para. 9 (c) of Security Council resolution [1970 \(2011\)](#) in connection with the Libya sanctions regime.

The need to ensure ongoing and increased coordination among all the national actors involved in weapons and ammunition management is essential. It is crucial to establish a national coordinating mechanism for weapons and ammunition management that can support national coordination of weapons and ammunition management as well as international cooperation and assistance with international partners on weapons and ammunition management measures, including the implementation of the arms embargo. The Joint Action Plan of 4 July 2019 is a welcome initiative to pave the way for a national commission on small arms and light weapons, which would serve as the national coordination mechanism, and it should be supported by donors and international partners. As an interim measure, the work of the Arms and Ammunition Management Steering Committee could be revitalized in order to ensure transparent and coordinated oversight among national and international actors on weapons and ammunition management activities.

Given the need to extend the progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia on weapons and ammunition management outside Mogadishu, the Federal Government should establish weapons and ammunition management focal points embedded in the regional security office architecture, in order to facilitate weapons and ammunition management implementation at the federal member states level, including to facilitate the implementation of arms embargo provisions. Coupled with this, through the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia, the Federal Government could conduct outreach and consultations on weapons and ammunition management with federal member states based on established weapons and ammunition management policies and procedures. Such outreach activities could include: (a) enhancing awareness-raising with regard to Security Council obligations and the relevant national legal framework; (b) the roll-out of practical weapons and ammunition management activities, such as marking, record-keeping, storage and verification programmes in federal member states, in line with established standard operating procedures; and (c) assessment of weapons and ammunition management needs and priorities by federal member states, from which assistance programmes could be considered by international partners in consultation with the Federal Government.

At the technical level, it is important that the Federal Government of Somalia establish effective issue and receipt procedures for all forces in Mogadishu and at sector and unit levels, and establish, with the assistance of partners, a centralized electronic database system for imports, stock records and issue and receipt, administered by the Office of the National Security Adviser of Somalia.

As a matter of urgency, the Federal Government of Somalia should identify and construct a new central storage site to store arms and ammunition safely and securely. Partners in a position to do so are encouraged to provide assistance in this regard. With respect to storage needs throughout Somalia, the Government should assess and identify such needs for all forces, with inputs from the sector level, and subsequently establish a plan to facilitate resource mobilization.

Given the particular need for the Federal Government of Somalia to address gaps with respect to ammunition storage, Member States and other international partners in the position to do so are encouraged to provide assistance by developing the ammunition management capacity of the Federal Government. Partners providing training and equipment should be encouraged to integrate dedicated training and/or mentoring of personnel in ammunition management over the long term, and suppliers of ammunition should consider providing assistance in the safe and secure storage of the items, including through controlled issuance procedures and/or support for infrastructure. Furthermore, purpose-built temporary or field ammunition stores with adequate risk mitigation measures are required in Mogadishu and at the sector level in order to ensure that distributed materiel can be stored at a safe distance from the civilian population and secured to deter diversion to unauthorized recipients.

With respect to captured weapons, the standard operating procedure on processing captured weapons should be disseminated and implemented by all security forces. It is important that there be an agreement with AMISOM on a coordinated approach to processing captured weapons, with access provided to the Joint Verification Team and the Panel of Experts to documents and sites for the purposes of inspection and tracing.

There is merit to considering an enhancement of the mandate of the Panel of Experts to include the identification of assistance and capacity needs in implementing the arms embargo and in providing feedback to the Federal Government of Somalia on its notification and reporting obligations. Such an enhancement of the mandate, without detriment to its core investigative aspects, would also serve to promote engagement between the Panel and the Federal Government. The Federal Government should continue to roll out the Joint Verification Team programme and expand its locations. It is also important to build national capacity of the Joint Verification Team through training and assistance programmes, including logistical support for it.

Observations

I thank the Federal Government of Somalia for its strong collaboration and active participation in this assessment, including for the full access granted to my assessment team. Furthermore, I wish to express my gratitude to the United Nations family in Somalia, AMISOM, the Member States and the international organizations for their support for the assessment team.

I commend the progress made with regard to the implementation of the arms embargo, as well as the biometric registration of the Somali National Army, as important milestones in the institutionalization of the security forces. The second phase of the reform of the Somali National Army should also be focused on the improvement of weapons and ammunition management, including the registration of weapons, accountability and distribution chains. However, while the Federal Government of Somalia is facing challenges, continued progress towards security reforms will require the necessary political agreements to be reached between the Federal Government and federal member states to fully implement the National Security Architecture and the Transition Plan. Hence, cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states on the implementation of the National Security Architecture and the Transition Plan will be key to securing progress.

It is important that the international community support the implementation of the recommendations of the assessment agreed upon by the Security Council and that it continue its support for the security sector reform efforts. Efforts should also be focused on achieving Somali responsibility for security, the most important of which is the capacity-building of Somali counterparts. No less critical is the strengthening of coordination and coherence among the international partners to guarantee the most efficient and effective support for the Federal Government of Somalia in implementing the arms embargo.

The Security Council and its Committee could also take stock of all elements of the arms embargo, with a view to streamlining, clarifying and updating the related provisions and procedures, which may promote a greater understanding of them, help to ease the reporting burden on the Federal Government of Somalia and chart a way forward for further adjustment to the measure, as sought by the Federal Government following the partial lifting of the embargo in 2013.

The sanctions regime has played an important role in supporting the peacebuilding process in Somalia. Therefore, an arms embargo adjusted according to the developments in the country can continue to make a positive contribution. The Security Council and the sanctions Committee and its Panel of Experts, as well as other international and regional partners, all have an important role to play in supporting the Federal Government of Somalia on arms embargo issues. I call upon the Federal Government to work closely with all of these actors in the implementation of the arms embargo.
