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UNITED NATIONS

Press Release

HUMAN RIGHTS MANDATE-HOLDERS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT HOSTILITIES IN MOGADISHU

1 May 2007

The Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Mr. Ghanim Alnajjar; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, Mr. Philip Alston; the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Mr. Leandro Despouy; the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Mr. John Dugard; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Ms. Yakin Ertürk; the Special Representative of the Secretary General for human rights in Cambodia, Mr. Yash Ghai; the Special Rapporteur on the adverse effects of the illicit movement and dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes, Mr. Okechukwu Ibeanu; the Special Rapporteur on the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, Mr. Paul Hunt; the Representative of the Secretary General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Walter Kälin; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, Mr. Miloon Kothari; the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Mr. Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, and the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Jean Ziegler, issued the following statement today:

"Within the past week, severe hostilities have again been taking place between Ethiopian and Somali forces and insurgent groups in the Somali city of Mogadishu. It is reported that up to 400 people have been killed and over 700 have been injured in this latest fighting. An estimated sixty per cent of the dead and wounded are the elderly, women and children.

Several thousands of people are stranded in Mogadishu and since early February 2007, over 320,000 people have fled the city adding to the more than 400,000 internally displaced persons already in Somalia. Many of these displaced people are forced to live in crowded camps where there is a lack of water, food, sanitation, basic health services and shelter and where diseases, like cholera, are spreading.

We are also deeply troubled about reports of indiscriminate artillery fire, shelling and car bombs in civilian areas. There are reports that non-military

targets, such as hospitals and schools have been bombed in the fighting and civilians, included the wounded are being prevented from fleeing or from receiving humanitarian assistance and protection. During this recent fighting, it has also come to our attention that urgent deliveries of food aid are being hampered or blocked.

All parties to the conflict must respect applicable international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We wish to remind all that humanitarian access and safe passage for those civilians fleeing the conflict must be granted.

This is the second major escalation in fighting in Mogadishu in the past month alone and we are very concerned that civilian fatalities and casualties will increase in the coming days. We reiterate the call of the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon that parties cease hostilities immediately and we remind all concerned that the relevant obligations under international law must be respected."

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