

UN Chief Urges International Support for Somalia

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United Nations chief Ban Ki-moon is urging the international community to strengthen security in Somalia as the country tries to move beyond its transitional government.

Mr. Ban spoke Friday at a conference on Somalia held in Istanbul, focusing on helping the east African country establish a stable government and elect a new president by August 20.

He says the new government should be based on the tenets of an established constitution.

“It must reflect international human rights standards. It should be put to referendum open to all Somalis. And all Somalis regardless of gender, clan or political affiliation should be able to take part in elections.”

Mr. Ban told the gathering of representatives from 54 countries that Somalia needs solidarity in the face of terrorism, piracy, and drought.

The U.N. chief said success in building Somalia's security sector and the rule of law demands more engagement from Somalis and the international community as a whole.

Mr. Ban went on to urge donors to, in his words, support “this critical effort.” He said Somalia's private sector also has a role in rebuilding the country.

“Somalia's women and youth, if given the opportunity, can transform the nation. But partners have to step up and do their part.”

Mr. Ban said it is important that Somalia build resiliency and break the cycle of emergencies.

Somalia's transitional government is battling an insurgency from the Islamic extremist group al-Shabab.

The country has also been plagued with recurrent droughts, and its coast is home to pirate gangs that have hijacked dozens of ships in recent years.

Somalia has not had a stable central government for two decades, since the fall of President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991.