



## **Official Statement**

**WORKNEH GEBEYEHU, IGAD EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**

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**MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE TROOP CONTRIBUTING COUNTRIES  
(TCCs) TO THE AFRICAN UNION SUPPORT AND STABILIZATION  
MISSION IN SOMALIA (AUSSOM)**

**AT**

**KAMPALA, UGANDA**

**THURSDAY, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025**



- Your Excellency, **Jacob Marksons**, our host and Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs of the Republic of Uganda;
- Honourable **Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence** of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)
- Esteemed **Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Delegation** and **Senior Officials** of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)
- Distinguished **Chiefs of Defence Forces** of the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs)
- Your Excellency, **Mahmoud Ali Youssouf**, Chairperson of the African Union Commission;
- Excellencies the Ambassador of the **United States**, High Commissioner of the **United Kingdom** and Commissioners of the **European Union**;
- Representatives of the **United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia** (UNTMIS) and the **United Nations Support Office in Somalia** while (UNSOS),
- Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols duly and respectfully observed.

Good Morning

1. I have the privilege of addressing you today not just as the Executive Secretary of IGAD, but as a fellow citizen of our troubled region. First and foremost, allow me to express my heartfelt gratitude to H.E. President Museveni and the warm people of Uganda for welcoming us to this beautiful country, aptly named the pearl of Africa at such a critical moment for Somalia's future.



2. Similarly, I wish to equally pay homage to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud for the significant political gains and strong efforts that the Government of the Federal Republic of Somalia and Somalia security forces continue to deploy, despite the challenges being encountered.
3. We gather in Kampala at a time when our regional security faces its toughest test in decades. IGAD has never been stretched so thin by the multiple conflicts in our region. For the past 2 years just as we were recovering from the global pandemic, IGAD has been continuously visiting and engaging with the conflict and insecurity-affected parts of our region.
4. And it is what I have witnessed so far that compels me to speak with urgency today. The security situation has deteriorated in ways that deeply concern all of us and with particular regard to this summit, those who have invested so much in Somalia's journey toward peace.
5. Al Shabaab's offensive throughout these early months of 2025 has undermined much of what we accomplished together. Notwithstanding, our brave troops are nevertheless resolved to hold the line against the terrorists. Our courageous men and women in uniform are steadfastly defending their positions, even though the supply lines are severely stretched.
6. This situation reflects the essence of what AUSSOM faces today. The mission that began on New Year's Day under UN Resolution 2767 inherited not just ATMIS's mandate but also a funding shortfall of 96 million dollars.
7. When only 75% of our budget is secured exclusively through UN assessed contributions, commanders in the field face impossible choices about fuel, ammunition, and even basic necessities.



8. Your Excellencies, brothers and sisters, I must acknowledge the timely and comprehensive recommendations from the Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officials' Meeting of Troop Contributing Countries to AUSSOM plus the Federal Republic of Somalia, which concluded on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2025.
9. Their deliberations have provided us with crucial insights that align perfectly with our mission objectives of peace, security, and stability in the IGAD region.
10. These recommendations identify critical priorities including the urgent need to increase AUSSOM troop strength by at least 8,000 personnel, deploy additional bilateral forces, enhance air assets and intelligence capabilities, and strengthen coordination between Somalia's federal government, member states, and traditional leaders.
11. The recommendations also emphasize the importance of proper training for Somalia's security forces, recruitment of local defense forces to secure liberated areas, and addressing operational shortfalls through sustainable funding mechanisms.
12. For our troops to accomplish this mission, it's imperative to address these fundamental challenges. And this brings me to what IGAD proposes not as abstract policy but as practical solutions born from the ground truths in Somalia.
13. There is a need to consider establishing backup supply mechanisms. IGAD countries are called upon to expand access to facilities and capabilities as logistics hubs for our troops who are holding the terrorists at bay.



14. The 25% funding gap under Resolution 2719 keeps mission planners awake at night. IGAD continues to fully support the efforts of your Excellencies over the past months as you lead discussions with potential donors, and I believe there is need for a coordinated approach, resulting focused donor conferences to critical shortfall.
15. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the tremendous contribution of Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). Our forces operate in the most contested areas, and they need our collective support.
16. IGAD calls on all Troop Contributing Countries to consider how we might supplement AUSSOM operations with additional logistics resources. Great emphasis must be placed on the need for joint contingency planning for when, not if supply lines are disrupted.
17. IGAD is committed to action. My team stands ready to facilitate the coordination between our member states to streamline cross-border operations. We are ready to further mobilise and avail technical experts to assist in the development of the strategic roadmap. We are prepared to support the Political Oversight Body with both personnel and resources.
18. I was in Mogadishu 90 days before ATMIS transitioned to AUSSOM and I remember that the overwhelming sentiment was that our people are not primarily concerned with what the mission is called. They care more that it keeps our children and our families safe. This is a strong reminder that behind all our diplomatic discussions and military strategies are real lives that are depending on our decisions today.



19. The investments required are substantial, I know. But as I look at the human cost of failure, the refugee camps and the abandoned hospitals and the empty schools, I am convinced these investments are essential.
20. In line with the recommendations from the Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officials' Meeting, we must address operational shortfalls through adequate, sustainable, and predictable funding.
21. We need to expedite the establishment of the Troop Contributing Countries plus Somalia Peer Review Mechanism supported by the African Union Commission and consider utilizing additional resources from the African Union Peace Fund to address the current financial constraints facing AUSSOM.
22. From the outcomes of the Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officials' Meeting, I am convinced that we were convened in Entebbe not just to read prepared statements but to look each other in the eye and collectively say; we can and must do better. Somalia's stability and our regional security depend on it. IGAD stands with you, ready to work hand in hand until our shared vision of a secure Somalia in 2029 becomes reality.
23. I thank you for your attention and, more importantly, for your renewed commitment to this vital cause and look forward to fruitful deliberations on efforts to stabilize Somalia