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AU Special Representative's statement on Wednesday's political developments in the Lower House of Parliament

6th April, 2018

Distinguished members of press, senior AMISOM colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

1. As you are all aware, we are going through difficult political challenges. The Lower House of the Somali Parliament also known as the house of the People, is now divided into two factions opposing each other.
2. This standoff culminated in a political and security situation last Wednesday, leading to the intervention of Amisom Forces working in support of, and coordination with the Somali National Security Forces to address the situation.

Distinguished members of the Press, Senior AMISOM colleagues present, Ladies and gentlemen,

3. I am instructed by my most senior leaders in Addis Ababa to inform you that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is mandated to work in support of the Somali Security Forces to provide security to Somali National Institutions and that includes the Parliament. The African Union Commission and AMisom respect the sovereignty of the people of Somalia and recognize their rights and have full confidence in the capacity of its Leadership to address the challenges besetting their country including the current political challenges that saw the Lower house of the parliament being split in two. In this context, AMISOM has no mandate to impose on the Somali people and, indeed, on the Parliament, the way they should conduct their business. AMISOM will, therefore, not take control of the House of the People unless the competent Somali authorities request it to do so in full respect and within the parameters of AMISOM mandate. In any case we are alert and on standby, ready to come in support of Somalia in Parliament or elsewhere.
4. On behalf of the African Union commission, the entire AMISOM family and on my own behalf, I wish to state that our views is that the current political standoff is between two sides of members of the Lower House of Parliament also known as the House of the People.

5. AU and AMISOM recognize and respect the right of the Somali Federal Parliament to determine when, where and how they conduct their business. It is therefore not the responsibility of AMISOM to determine where and how they should handle their parliamentary activities.
6. I wish to further state, that the African Union, through AMISOM, under the UN Security Council Resolution 2372(2017), is implementing a phased and conditions-based transition of security responsibilities to the Somali National Security Forces and the current political crisis cannot, in any way influence or force AMISOM to withdraw its forces. At no time we will unilaterally abandon the friendly people of Somalia and we will, as we have so far done, stand by them at all times until they tell us they are ready to take over from us. Until then, we will continue to support the Somali national security forces as they strive to ensure the safety and security of their country and its institutions, including the Parliament.
7. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is deeply concerned with the security implications of Wednesday's developments in Parliament. I appeal to the Members of Parliament, legitimate representatives of the people of Somalia, to continue to exercise restraint as they strive to resolve the differences that oppose them.
8. I wish to thank the Somali National Army, the Somali Police Force, AMISOM and other branches of Somalia national security forces for the professional manner they were able to successfully contain the situation, prevent violence and preserve peace during Wednesday's special sitting of Parliament.
9. The African Union is here for all the people of Somalia. We will continue to engage with all of you at all levels and support you as you work to restore the glory of this great nation, put an end to violence, bring a lasting peace to the country and build a better future for each of its citizens. As we do so, our mandate does not allow us to take sides with anyone of you because the African union loves you all.

thank you