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SOURCE: UNTMIS Strategic Communication and Public Affairs Group (SCPAG)

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CREDIT REQUIRED: UNTMIS Strategic Communication and Public Affairs Group (SCPAG)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

DATELINE: 24/JANUARY/2025, MOGADISHU, SOMALIA

**At the fourth graduation ceremony in Mogadishu, University for Peace graduates called to tackle global challenges**

**Mogadishu, 24 January 2025** – Seventy-nine students from Somalia and five other countries graduated from the University for Peace (UPEACE), pledging to use their knowledge and skills to address the challenges facing their nations and the world.

The event marked UPEACE's fourth graduation ceremony in the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

“I am sure your journey has been one of perseverance, dedication, and determination. I encourage you to carry forward the values and principles instilled in you by UPEACE and continue to be ambassadors for peace, champions of development, and advocates of human rights,” said George Conway, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Somalia, in his remarks to the graduates.

The ceremony honoured 25 doctoral and 54 master’s graduates, including five women - three doctoral and two master’s graduates. In addition to Somalia, the graduates hailed from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Somalia’s Prime Minister, Hamza Abdi Barre, attended the ceremony.



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“Education is a cornerstone of development for any community, nation, and the world at large. The Federal Republic of Somalia recognizes education as a key component to peace, development and stability within a country,” stated Prime Minister Barre.

He also announced that 60 new students would receive full scholarships for their master’s programmes at UPEACE. This initiative illustrates the Somali government’s commitment to enhance access to education and forge partnerships with international organizations to strengthen educational frameworks.

Other guests attending the graduation ceremony included Somalia’s Minister of Education, Culture and Higher Education, Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir; Deputy Force Commander of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM), Major General Peter Muteti, who represented the Head of AUSSOM; and representatives from various diplomatic missions and UPEACE.

“Always remember that the knowledge you have gained here is not the end of your learning journey nor should it be limited to the degree you have attained. You are expected to actively contribute to leadership and the development of peace with transparency and openness to new ideas,” said Mohamed Yusuf, Director of UPEACE Somalia.

### **Education in Somalia**

Established in 1980 by the UN General Assembly, the University for Peace’s focus areas include conflict prevention, human security, human rights, environmental security and post-conflict rehabilitation. In Somalia, it offers specialised post-graduate programmes with a focus on governance, economic development, peacebuilding, conflict prevention, human rights, environment, disaster resilience and post-conflict resolution.

“UPEACE Somalia is equipping its graduates with specific knowledge and skills necessary for Somalia, looking towards its future to drive positive change and foster development in support of Somalia’s national priorities, and investment in knowledge in human capital is in the best interest,” said Mr. Conway.

The recent Statistical Abstract of Somalia, published in November 2024 by the National Bureau of Statistics, highlights education as a vital driver of development and a cornerstone for building human capital. The data shows a gradual improvement in adult literacy rates, particularly



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among women and rural populations, as well as an expansion in primary school enrollment in recent years.

Despite these improvements, significant disparities remain between urban and rural areas, and the pupil-teacher ratio indicates mixed progress in enhancing educational quality, emphasizing the need for sustained investments and policies to improve educational quality, retention, and equity.

“We have been facing many challenges and the biggest mistake that society can make is ignoring education. It’s a costly mistake. Being educated will change a lot of things in the country. It will develop all sectors, economically, politically, socially and environmentally,” said Ms. Salado Hussein Ahmed, a master’s degree recipient in International Law and Human Rights.

"The peace is not just a matter of talk or discussion. Peace has evolved into a field of study that requires thorough research into the processes and methods necessary for its sustainability. The peace we seek is not merely the absence of fear—what we call negative peace—but rather a positive peace that embodies justice and freedom," said Minister Abdulkadir.

### Day of Education

This year, like in 2024, the UPEACE graduation ceremony took place on the International Day of Education. In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 24 January as International Day of Education, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.

“This year's theme is ***Artificial Intelligence and Education: Preserving Human Agency in a World of Automation***, and this is clearly an issue that resonates deeply with our global society these days,” said Mr. Conway.

“On this World Education Day, we are reminded that education is a fundamental human right that every individual around the world should have access to. This is why we urge everyone to contribute to the advancement of education, particularly for the youth, so that they can actively participate in the peace, development, and unity of our country,” said Prime Minister Barre.



## **UPEACE and Somalia**

The University for Peace, headquartered in Costa Rica, initiated its Somalia programme in 2018.

“UPEACE will provide the technical expertise and research support necessary to ensure that Somalia’s contribution to the UN Security Council leaves an enduring legacy. We hope that Somalia’s leadership will inspire future generations and secure its place as a returning member of the UNSC in the years to come,” said Francisco Rojas Aravena, Rector of the University for Peace during his keynote speech.

Among the graduates from the UPEACE Mogadishu campus is Somalia's president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. In 2022, he was conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). His dissertation was titled "Examining the Challenges of Clan Politics in State-building: A Case Study of Somalia.”

“Higher education is much needed in Somalia, and this is going to contribute a lot to Somalia’s stability and reconstruction of the country,” said Abdulkadir Dahir Moalim, who graduated with a PhD, having focused on peace, governance and development.

The UPEACE Somalia programme aims to promote stability in the country following years of conflict. The graduating students now add to a growing list of over 400 alumni of the university, positively contributing to global peace, stability and prosperity.

**Ends.**