

Cameron warns global security rests on Somalia's future
By Faith Karimi and Moni Basu, CNN
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British Prime Minister David Cameron urged the international community Thursday to help Somalia's feeble government tackle piracy, militants and hunger.

Otherwise, he said, the world risks terror threats from the troubled African nation.

World leaders met Thursday in London to address terror and a raging insurgency in the Horn of Africa nation and find ways to resolve other critical problems including famine and weak leadership that have dogged the nation for decades.

Representatives from 40 countries, including U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, attended the conference on stabilizing and rebuilding Somalia after decades of war.

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"These problems in Somalia don't just affect Somalia. They affect us all," Cameron said at the event.

"In a country where there is no hope, chaos, violence and terrorism thrive," he said. "Pirates are disrupting vital trade routes and kidnapping tourists. Young minds are being poisoned by radicalism, breeding terrorism that is threatening the security of the whole world."

Cameron said the world cannot afford to look the other way any more.

"If the rest of us just sit back and look on, we will pay a price for doing so," he said. "For two decades, politicians in the West have too often dismissed the problems in Somalia as simply too difficult and too remote to deal with."

Clinton pledged to boost U.S. efforts in the nation, and said the focus should be on political progress and bolstering security.

"The transitional federal government was always meant to be just that —transitional," she said. "It is past time for that transition to occur, and for Somalia to have a stable government. "

Somalia has not had a central government since 1991, and the Islamist Al-Shabaab has waged war against the transitional federal government for years.

Clinton said the United States will continue to work with Somali officials to create jobs, provide health and education services, and conflict resolution.

"And today I'm pleased to announce that the United States is providing an additional \$64 million in humanitarian assistance to the Horn of Africa countries," she said.

She said the funds bring the total U.S. emergency assistance to the region up to more than \$934 million since last year, including more than \$211 million for life-saving programs in Somalia.

Thursday's session aimed to galvanize the international community to develop a more comprehensive approach to addressing Somalia.

"We are realistic -- Somalia's problems cannot be solved in a day, but its people deserve a better future, and our own security requires their country to become more stable," U.K. Foreign Secretary William Hague said.

The meeting comes a day after the U.N. Security Council voted to increase the African Union force in Somalia from about 12,000 to close to 18,000 troops to help battle Al-Shabaab.

"We must keep up the pressure on Al-Shabaab so that their grip on Somalia continues to weaken," Clinton said.

The terror group, which announced recently that it joined al Qaeda, has lost ground but remains a potent threat in the country. The international community hopes the bolstered force will further degrade the group, creating space for a political solution.

Established in 2004, Somalia's transitional government is weak and needs significant capacity building to consolidate the country's security gains with political ones.

The international community wants it to meet a timeline for establishing a new government, including writing a constitution, before August when its mandate expires.

The crisis in Somalia has drawn in neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia, which have both sent troops directly, while Uganda, Djibouti and Burundi are contributing peacekeepers.

The United States has used drones to target militants in Somalia.

Adding to Somalia's burdens is the fight against famine, which has forced a constant stream of refugees into neighboring nations.

The United Nations declared an end to the famine recently, but said the hunger situation is still dire.

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