

24 June 2024

Senator Penny Wong  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Canberra

Dear Minister,

I am writing to express my gratitude for the Australian government's response to the ongoing humanitarian crises in the Horn of Africa region. However, I believe that this assistance can be more effectively delivered directly rather than, as your statement suggests, via NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and UN partners. I offer this perspective based on my many years of experience, including my work in Somalia as a private citizen and government minister.

As you mentioned in your press release of June 22, 2024, Somalia is experiencing acute food insecurity. This issue is not new, and the methods employed over the years to address it have yielded limited success. Therefore, I propose that we explore innovative approaches to avoid repeating the same strategies and expecting different outcomes.

Your advocacy for political solutions to these conflicts is commendable. It is welcomed as part of a longer-term solution. In the meantime, the immediate food shortage needs to be addressed. The real problem in Somalia is the experimentation with aid delivery methods, such as the now-abandoned WFP initiative of delivering cash via mobile phones for refugees to purchase food. This kind of wastage of taxpayers' money frustrates well-meaning local Somali volunteers and some government agencies.

Therefore, as mentioned in my earlier letter of 24 Oct 2022, I suggest working towards the delivery of food aid or any assistance direct to the Somali Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) centers or refugee camps. It will be more efficient and have a more positive impact if the Australian government purchases \$3 million worth of food in Australia and has it delivered directly to Somali refugee camps. There are many members of the Somali community here in Australia who could attest to the effectiveness of such an approach.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mohamed". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Mohamed Ibrahim

Concerned Somali/Australian citizen Former  
Somali Telecommunication Minister  
Researcher, Swinburne University/Melbourne University.