

Ex-N.Y. teacher named prime minister in Somalia



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MOGADISHU, Somalia — A Somali-American who taught at a community college in western New York was named prime minister of Somalia yesterday.

Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed replaces Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, who had a long-running feud with the president of the African nation and resigned last month.

A statement from the Somali government said Mohamed is a former Somali diplomat. He worked in the Somali Embassy in Washington from 1985 to 1988, according to the government's website.

Mohamed has taught conflict resolution and leadership skills at Erie Community College and has a master's degree in political science from the State University of New York at Buffalo, according to his resume.

The president of Somalia announced the appointment. Mohamed will be asked to name a Cabinet within one month.

Mark Bowden, a top UN official with oversight of Somalia, said Mohamed's Cabinet is expected to be smaller than the bloated group that Sharmarke had control over. Among officials in Sharmarke's Cabinet was a minister of tourism in a violence-plagued country that sees only a handful of tourists each year.

Somalia's Transitional Federal Government controls only a few blocks of Mogadishu and is generally seen as corrupt, weak, and ineffective. The government has accomplished little since its inception in 2004. Somalia has not had a fully functioning government since 1991, when warlords overthrew the president.

The United States announced last month a new approach to Somalia that will see continued US support of the transitional government but also new, direct support of other groups and regions in Somalia. The approach includes increased support to the semiautonomous Somali regions of Somaliland and Puntland. ■