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## Somalia president appoints new prime minister

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Somalia's President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed appointed a new prime minister Thursday, replacing the previous premier with whom he had differences and who resigned last month.

"After consultation I have appointed Mohamed Abdullahi (Mohamed) as the new prime minister. I wish him good luck," Sharif told lawmakers who gathered at his office in Mogadishu.

"I believe he is the suitable person for the position and capable of dealing with the tough situation in the country."

The little-known Abdullahi, also United States citizen, replaces Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke who stepped down on September 21 following a long-running feud with Sharif.

Born in Mogadishu in 1962, Abdullahi later served as a financial officer in the Somalia embassy the US in 1985 and then obtained a master degree in political science from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

He also worked as a senior local government official at Buffalo city as a well as Eric county. In 1994 he was selected Buffalo county housing commissioner where he worked as the finance chairman.

Abdullahi's appointment has to be approved by parliament within 30 days after which he can form a government, which is in turn subject to lawmakers' approval.

Since the formation of the Transitional Federal Government in neighbouring Kenya in 2004, the relationship between Somalia's president and the prime minister has been contentious, hampering the government's efforts to stamp its authority nationwide.

Sharmarke defied an attempt by lawmakers to remove him in May, rejecting their no-confidence vote as unconstitutional and initially refusing to resign.

His predecessor Nur Hassan Hussein "Adde" was also at loggerheads with ex-president Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, who was involved in a bitter political feud with previous premier Mohamed Ali Gedi, forced to resign in 2007.

Somalia has had no central government since a civil war erupted with the 1991 overthrow of former president Mohamed Siad Barre.

The fragile government has been confined to just a few streets in Mogadishu where Islamist Shebab insurgents have waged a war since May 2009 to topple the administration.

Its survival has only been guaranteed by a contingent of African Union troops from Uganda and Burundi.

Under a power-sharing accord in Somalia's transitional government, the president, the prime minister, the speaker of parliament and the supreme court chief should not be from the same clans.

The agreement known as the 4.5 formula divides Somalia into four major clans and an alliance of minority clans. Sharif is a member of the Hawiye clan and the new premier is from the Darod clan.



Somalia's President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, pictured in March 2010, appointed a new prime minister Thursday, replacing the previous premier with whom he had differences and who resigned last month.

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