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State of Somalia Report



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YEAR IN REVIEW

Acronyms

1. AMISOM	African Union Peace Keeping Mission in Somalia
2. ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah
3. CBS	Central Bank of Somalia
4. CPC	Council of Presidential Candidates
5. EDRC	Electoral Dispute Resolution Committee
6. FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
7. FMS	Federal Member States
8. HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
9. HIPS	Heritage Institute for Policy Studies
10. IMF	International Monetary Fund
11. NCC	National Consultative Council
12. NISA	National Intelligence and Security Agency
13. PSF	Puntland Security Forces
14. SNA	Somali National Army
15. STP	Somali Transitional Plan
16. UNSOM	United Nations Mission to Somalia

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1. Executive summary

This report covers the period from January 2021 to December 2021. It presents and analyzes the main developments in the country with a focus on politics, security, economy, humanitarian issues and the role of external actors. The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies (HIPS) is publishing this report with the following objectives: (i) to document and analyze the impact of key events in Somalia throughout the year (ii) to provide context and analytical framework for policymakers, academics and the general public and (iii) to support peacebuilding and state-building efforts in Somalia with a comprehensive overview of key events in the country.

The country's political atmosphere was heating up in 2021. The federal elections were a flashpoint between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), the Federal Member States (FMS) and the Council of Presidential Candidates (CPC). When the mandates of parliament, the president and the government expired, President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo and the leadership of the House of the People orchestrated a controversial term extension. This move triggered an armed confrontation in Mogadishu in April 2021. Dozens of people were killed and tens of thousands were displaced in the subsequent conflict.¹

“
Under the agreement, the president handed over responsibility for steering federal elections and coordinating national security to prime minister Mohamed Hussein Roble. The agreement had also led to the formation of the National Consultative Council (NCC).”

When four out of the five FMS, the CPC, the prime minister and nearly all international partners rejected the two-year extension,² the leadership of the federal government and the member states reached the 27 May agreement. Under the agreement, the president handed over responsibility for steering federal elections and coordinating national security to prime minister Mohamed Hussein Roble.³ The agreement had also led to the formation of the National Consultative Council (NCC). This high-level body comprises the prime minister, the five presidents of the member states and the governor of the Banadir region.⁴

However, the implementation of the 27 May agreement is still facing enormous challenges that are rooted in the key political actors' determination to manipulate the results of the dispensation. The NCC, which is tasked with leading the indirect elections, has committed widespread electoral abuses for the seats that have been selected so far.

1. See “Gunfire erupted in Somalia’s capital on Sunday between soldiers loyal to the government and others angry at the country’s leader” (April 2021) Accessed at: <https://mainichi.jp/english/articles/20210426/p2g/00m/0in/073000c>

2. See “Somalia’s opposition welcomed President’s move to drop a controversial two-year extension” (April 2021) Accessed at: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_somali-opposition-welcomes-president-dropping-term-extension/6205170.html

3. See “Somalia’s Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble has accepted the new role to lead the election” (April 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/somali-pm-mohamed-roble-new-role-in-elections-3385598>

4. See “Political leaders in Somalia agreed on a framework for long-delayed national elections” (May 2021) Accessed at: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_somalia-leaders-agree-hold-election-within-60-days/6206295.html

In December, Prime Minister Roble fired seven members of the Dispute Resolution Committee for Elections.⁵ In response, President Farmaajo, believing that those fired were his supporters, took the extraordinary step of nullifying the 27 May Agreement, accusing Roble of failing to implement the agreement properly.⁶ The president also suspended the powers of the prime minister,⁷ a move that has no constitutional basis. These moves triggered renewed tension in Mogadishu. Roble rejected the president's decision and said he would continue to oversee elections and security.⁸

Most federal member states also experienced divisions and internal conflicts in 2021. The most notable took place in Puntland, which was an arch of stability for the last 23 years. In December 2021, an armed conflict broke out in the coastal city of Bossaso after president Said Abdullahi Deni sacked an influential commander of the Puntland Security Forces (PSF).⁹ As of this writing, the underlying factors of the conflict have not been resolved, though a ceasefire arranged by the elders is holding.

In Galmudug, Ahlu Sunna Wal-Jama'ah (ASWJ), an armed group, captured Guri'el and nearby villages.¹⁰ In response, the state administration fought back and recaptured some of the areas with the help of the FGS.¹¹ Dozens were killed in the weeks-long conflict, including the local commander of DANAB Battalion, the highly trained commando unit trained, mentored, and equipped by the United States.¹²

Jubbaland and Hirshabelle remained deeply divided over the power-sharing of the state among major clans. The province of Gedo, in Jubbaland, is effectively under the control of the FGS following an armed confrontation between forces loyal to Jubbaland and the federal government.¹³ In Hirshabelle, the power-sharing-related dispute among clans has persisted. Security wise, the FGS dominates the Hiiraan region. Yet, President Ali Guudlaawe who has been in power for a year was not able to visit the region because of clan grievances.¹⁴

5. See "Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble on Saturday dismissed seven Electoral Disputes Resolution Committee officials" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/somali/pm-roble-dismisses-7-dispute-committee-officials/>

6. See "President Mohamed Farmaajo had accused his Prime Minister Mohamed Roble of failing to deliver his election mandate and called for a national conference" (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Dec/184927/farmaajo_accuses_pm_roble_of_failing_to_deliver_elections_mandate_hints_at_his_removal_from_elections_management.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

7. See "President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed of Somalia on Monday suspended the powers of the prime minister" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-12-27/somali-president-suspends-prime-minister-amid-corruption-probe>

8. See "Somali prime minister refuses leave office" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/somali-prime-minister-refuses-leave-office-deepening-political-crisis-198687>

9. See "Seven killed in clashes between pro-government security forces" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/seven-killed-clashes-between-pro-government-somali-forces-2021-12-21/>

10. See "Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a (ASWJ) have taken control of Guriel town" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/somali/aswj-fighters-take-control-of-guriel-town/>

11. See "Galmudug regional forces claim to have captured Guriel town" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/somali/galmudug-forces-claim-recapturing-guriel-town-from-aswj-group/>

12. See "At Least 20 Killed as Somalia Troops Battle Moderate Islamist Militia" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-troops-battle-moderate-islamist-militia/6282882.html>

13. See "At least 11 people were killed on Monday after fighting broke out between the Somali federal army and Jubbaland state forces in the Gedo region" (January 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-somalia-security-idUSKBN29U1RQ>

14. See "Hawadle clan demands greater role in the power-sharing arrangements in Hirshabelle" (June 2021) Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/situation-somalia-report-secretary-general-s2021723#:~:text=On%2012%20June%2C%20the,Huud%20and%20the%20Administration>



The United Nations declared that more than half of Somalia's 15 million people were food insecure and that one-third were facing starvation unless emergency food aid was delivered

On the security front, al-Shabaab has taken advantage of the sustained political instability in the country. During the reporting period, the group captured new territory in Galmudug, Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and Southwest while also encroaching on Mogadishu, where it has moved underground.¹⁵ Al-Shabaab has shifted its military focus towards controlling major supply routes so that it can expand its revenue base by levying taxes on the movement of people and goods across the country.¹⁶

In addition to the political crisis and worsening security environment, the humanitarian situation deteriorated considerably during the reporting period. The United Nations declared that more than half of Somalia's 15 million people were food insecure and that one-third were facing starvation unless emergency food aid was delivered.¹⁷ Internal displacement was at its highest in a decade owing to widespread political violence and clan conflicts.¹⁸ The Covid-19 pandemic also wreaked havoc in the country as new variants emerged and the attention span of political leaders was consumed by the continued political crisis.¹⁹

In terms of foreign policy, Somalia has a good relationship with Ethiopia, Eritrea, Turkey and Qatar.²⁰ On the other hand, Mogadishu has cold and poor relations with Kenya, Djibouti and the UAE.²¹ Somalia has good relations with the rest of the international community, including the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union. However, the relationship between the FGS and AMISOM and UNSOM was complicated as President Farmaajo pushed for the withdrawal of African peacekeepers and clipped the wings of UN agencies.²²

Despite an overall bleak picture, there were a number of encouraging developments. Somaliland, which seceded from Somalia, has made significant progress in governance and on the economy. The government has held parliamentary elections in 16 years.²³ The successful election saw considerable gains by opposition parties in parliament as well as in municipal elections in major cities such as Hargeisa.²⁴ Somaliland has strengthened its democratic credentials with the latest election, which was widely praised as free and fair.²⁵

15. See "Regional turmoil and political infighting create space for the Islamist terror group to gain ground" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.ft.com/content/9a820013-fa81-4314-9441-0d4f93c2539c>

16. See UN report on Somalia (October 2021) Accessed at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_849_E.pdf

17. See "an estimated 7.7 million Somalis will require humanitarian assistance and protection" (DEC.2021) Accessed at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/12/1108302#:~:text=While%20these%20are,internally%20displaced%20communities>

18. See "Crisis in Somalia: Aid workers hampered as needs arise" (JAN.2022) Accessed at: <https://www.rescue.org/article/crisis-somalia-aid-workers-hampered-needs-rise>

19. See "Health cluster bulletin" (DEC.2021) Accessed at: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/hc_bulletin_nov_dec_2021.pdf

20. See "How the Cushitic Alliance, Antagonistic Diplomacy, and Divergent Strategic Interests in Somalia Have Botched Kenya-Ethiopia Relations | (2021) Geopolitics Press," Geopolitics Press. Accessed at: <https://geopolitics.press/cushitic-alliance-kenya-ethiopia-strategic-alliance-jubbaland/>

21. See "Africa in the News: Kenya-Somali Relations Sour, Cyclone Eloise Hits Mozambique, and Tensions in and around Ethiopia Escalate," (JAN.2021) Accessed at: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2021/01/30/africa-in-the-news-kenya-somali-relations-sour-cyclone-elioise-hits-mozambique-and-tensions-in-and-around-ethiopia-escalate/>

22. See "Somalia and African Union Discuss Future of AMISOM" (NOV.2021) Accessed at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-and-african-union-discuss-future-of-amisom/6307832.html>

23. See "Polls Open in Somaliland's Local and Parliamentary Elections" (May 2021) Accessed at: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_polls-open-somalilands-local-and-parliamentary-elections/6206427.html

24. See "Somaliland elections: Opposition parties win the majority of seats" (June 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/6/somaliland-opposition-wins-first-parliamentary-polls-since>

25. See "Joint statement on Somaliland Parliamentary and Local Council Elections" (June 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-on-somaliland-parliamentary-and-local-council-elections>

Somaliland has also expanded the Berbera port, its main economic hub, in collaboration with DP World Company.²⁶ The expansion of the Berbera port, which is a joint venture, would significantly increase the revenue of the Somaliland government.²⁷ Moreover, the Berbera Economic Zone is being built as part of Somaliland's ambitious economic revitalization.²⁸

Puntland state organized a successful pilot local election in three districts, paving the way for statewide universal suffrage elections in the coming years.²⁹ Nine political associations participated in the election with the view toward ultimately creating a multiparty democracy in Puntland.³⁰ In doing this, Puntland has set a good example for the rest of the federal member states on deepening the democratization.

Another commendable development in Puntland was the finalization of Gara'ad port in Mudug, which was almost entirely financed by the local community and the private sector.³¹ Although its capacity is limited, establishing a community-driven seaport is quite remarkable in any measure. The new port will serve the communities in Mudug province. Although the new port could impact the revenue of the Puntland state, its establishment could encourage other communities to build their own ports.

At the federal level, the Central Bank of Somalia (CBS) launched a payment system that, for the first time, would allow local banks to transfer money to each other.³² This is crucial to economic development and removing trade barriers among Somalis. The system was years in the making and was part of the CBS's longstanding objectives.

2. Crisis over federal elections

For much of 2021, Somalia faced a deepening political crisis over federal elections that were already a year behind schedule. On 17 September 2020, the FGS and FMS signed an agreement to hold indirect elections within six months. At the same time, the president and parliament unilaterally extended their mandate by two years. Most of the key stakeholders, including Prime Minister Roble, most federal member states, the opposition, civil society and international partners rejected the controversial extension.³³

26. See "DP World and Somaliland open new terminal at Berbera Port" (June 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/ports-logistics/dp-world-and-somaliland-open-new-terminal-berbera-port>

27. See "Somaliland gears up for 'healthy' battle of ports" (September 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.ft.com/content/f928ecda-2c96-4957-ae3c-94be56385fcd>

28. See "DP World To Transform Berbera To A World Class Centre" (July 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.busiweek.com/dp-world-to-transform-berbera-to-a-world-class-centre/>

29. See "Local elections kick off in Puntland's Eyl, Qardho & Ufeyn" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-59035063>

30. See "Amid fading democratic space in Somalia, Puntland prepares for 1st direct elections" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/featured/amid-fading-democratic-space-in-somalia-puntland-prepares-for-1st-direct-election>

31. See "Gara'ad project is what Africa needs" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001432936/garacad-project-is-what-africa-needs>

32. See "Somalia re-launches payments system after three decades of absence" (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.centralbanking.com/central-banks/financial-market-infrastructure/7866471/somalia-re-launches-payments-system-after-three-decades-of-absence>

33. See "Somalia President Extends Term by Two Years, Drawing Condemnation" (2021). New York Times. Accessed at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/14/world/africa/somalia-president.html>

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The term extension also triggered an armed conflict in Mogadishu after the Somali National Army (SNA) broke into various units supporting different political leaders

The term extension also triggered an armed conflict in Mogadishu after the Somali National Army (SNA) broke into various units supporting different political leaders.³⁴ According to UN agencies, dozens were killed and tens of thousands of people were displaced in Mogadishu.³⁵

President Farmaajo and Mohamed Mursal (the speaker of the House of the People) retracted the extension under intense domestic and international pressure.³⁶ This paved the way for negotiations among key stakeholders, including the FGS, FMS and CPC. In May, Prime Minister Roble convened a week-long discussion among the key actors which resulted in the signing of the landmark 27 May 2021 agreement.³⁷ The two houses of parliament endorsed it. President Farmaajo signed the agreement into law, giving substantial powers to the National Consultative Council (NCC) which consists of FMS leaders and the prime minister.³⁸

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The FMS presidents appointed most senate seats to their allies without any competition

Nevertheless, the NCC leaders engaged in a widespread rigging of the Upper House elections.³⁹ Out of the 54 Upper House seats, candidates engaged in real competition only about 15 seats - mostly in Hirshabelle and those allocated for Northern Dir clans that took place in Mogadishu.⁴⁰ The FMS presidents appointed most senate seats to their allies without any competition.⁴¹ The Lower House election wasn't any better as the NCC leaders exploited loopholes in the 27 May agreement to install their political allies.

Two high profile cases have dominated the election media coverage. For instance, Col. Yasin Abdullahi Farey, the Acting Director of National Intelligence and Security Agency has taken the HoP 067 seat in Galmudug.⁴² Similarly, the former speaker of the Lower House, Mohamed Osman Jawaari, was denied permission to run for the seat he occupied in Southwest state.⁴³ In both cases, the candidates challenged the decision and filed a complaint with the Electoral Dispute Resolution Committee (EDRC). The committee confirmed the conclusions that the state election committee reached, arguing that correct procedures were followed.⁴⁴

34. See “Somali opposition fighters ‘cordon off parts of Mogadishu’ (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/4/26/somali-opposition-fighters-cordon-off-parts-of-tense-capital>

35. See “UN says fighting displaces up to 100,000 people in Mogadishu fighting” (April 2021). Xinhua. Accessed at: [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-04/28/c_139912642.htm#:~:text=MOGADISHU%2C%20April%2028%20\(Xinhua\),of%20violence%20on%20April%2025](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-04/28/c_139912642.htm#:~:text=MOGADISHU%2C%20April%2028%20(Xinhua),of%20violence%20on%20April%2025)

36. See “Somalia’s lower house members have today discarded their previous decision to grant themselves and President Mohamed Farmaajo a controversial two-year term extension” (May 2021) Accessed at: <https://hornobserver.com/articles/871/Somalias-lower-house-annuls-Farmaajos-term-extension>

37. See “Somalia’s PM commits to free, fair polls after an impasse over elections resolved” (May 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalias-political-leaders-sign-agreement-resolving-impasse-out-elections-2021-05-27/>

38. See “Somali lawmakers vote for the country to hold indirect elections” (May 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/1/somali-lawmakers-vote-to-hold-indirect-elections>

39. For a detailed treatment, see “The Dangers of Rigged Indirect Elections” (November 2021) Heritage Institute for Policy Studies. Accessed at: <https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Election-Brief-English-Nov-24-2021.pdf>

40. See “Somalia’s Sham Election May Trigger Post-Election Violence” (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.jowhar.com/article/somalias-sham-election-may-trigger-post-election-violence.html>

41. Ibid.

42. See “Acting intelligence chief elected MP in Galmudug” (November 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2021/Nov/184653/acting_intelligence_chief_elected_mp_in_galmudug.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

43. See “Former speaker prof. Jawaari barred from running for the seat he occupied in the departing house” (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.jowhar.com/news/proff-jawaarigogol-nin-gob-ah-oo-oday-ah-wax-ka-soo-doontay-meeshaan-ma-taalo.html>

44. See “Dispute Resolution Committee Validates Yasin Farey’s Election” (December 2021). Hiiraan Online. Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2021/Dec/184837/dispute_resolution_committee_validates_yasin_farey_s_election.aspx

The Council of the Presidential Candidates have rejected the decision of EDRC.⁴⁵ As a result, Prime Minister Roble came under pressure to address the irregularities in the election. In December, he dismissed seven members of the EDRC for failing to follow the rules and procedures.⁴⁶ A few days later, members of the Federal Electoral Implementation Team (FEIT) announced they had sacked their chairman, Mohamed Hassan Irro.⁴⁷ Irro rejected the decision, accusing PM Roble of orchestrating his alleged ouster.⁴⁸ These election-related maneuvers have thrown the entire electoral process into disarray and reignited a rift between President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Roble.

2.1 Political rifts

In December, Prime Minister Roble called a meeting of the NCC, the body responsible for steering the elections,⁴⁹ for rectifying the irregularities that had been observed in the electoral process.⁵⁰ However, President Farmaajo saw the meeting as another move by the prime minister to effectively dismantle the infrastructure he had built over the years to ensure his re-election.

On 26 December, a day before the NCC meeting, President Farmaajo issued a statement accusing Prime Minister Roble of “failing to lead credible elections” and called for a new “national dialogue about the elections,” effectively canceling the 27 May agreement.⁵¹ A day later, President Farmaajo further escalated the tensions and announced that he was suspending the powers of the prime minister pending a corruption investigation.⁵² Under Somalia’s provisional constitution, only the Lower House of parliament can fire the prime minister.⁵³

Domestic and international actors have all rejected President Farmaajo’s decisions. As expected, the Puntland and Jubbaland leaders announced that they recognized Prime Minister Roble as the official in charge of the NCC and said they would travel to Mogadishu to join the meeting.⁵⁴

45. See “Midowga Musharraxiinta oo beesha caalamka ugu baaqay in si degdeg ah usoo faro galiyaan doorashada” (November 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2021/Nov/wararka_maanta30-179523.htm?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=WararkaMaantaFront

46. See “Somalia PM sacks election committee members amid crisis” (December 2021) Garowe Online. Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-s-pm-roble-sacks-election-committee-members-amid-crisis>

47. See “FIET members axed poll agency boss” (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Dec/184929/fiet_members_axe_poll_agency_boss.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

48. See “FEIT members axe poll agency poll” (December 2021) – Hiiraan Online. Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Dec/184929/fiet_members_axe_poll_agency_boss.aspx

49. See “Somali PM calls for consultative talks to speed up the electoral process” (December 2021) Accessed at: http://www.news.cn/english/2021-12/22/c_1310386615.htm

50. See “STAKEHOLDERS TO ‘ADDRESS’ IRREGULARITIES IN THE SOMALI ELECTORAL PROCESS” (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://puntlandpost.net/2021/12/28/stakeholders-to-address-irregularities-in-the-somali-electoral-process/>

51. See “Statement on Elections Directions” (2021) Villa Somalia. Accessed at: <https://villasomalia.gov.so/en/statement-on-elections-directions/>

52. See “Presidential Order: Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble” (December 2021) Villa Somalia. Accessed at: <https://villasomalia.gov.so/en/presidential-order-prime-minister-mohamed-hussein-roble/>

53. See “Article 69. The Powers of the House of the People of the Federal Parliament” Accessed at: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/Somalia-Constitution2012.pdf>

54. See “Prime Minister Roble meets with Jubbaland and Puntland presidents in Mogadishu” (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2022/Jan/wararka_maanta1-179833.htm?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=WararkaMaantaFront

Galmudug and Hirshabelle leaders also came to the meeting, though stopped short of declaring who they would support.⁵⁵ However, the Southwest leader endorsed the president.⁵⁶

International partners were also unequivocal in their support for the prime minister's NCC meeting and rejecting the president's attempt to undermine it. The US State Department said that "the attempted suspension of [Roble] is alarming and we support his efforts for rapid and credible elections."⁵⁷ Other members of the international community have also called for deescalating tensions and endorsed the need for an NCC meeting, providing tacit support for Prime Minister Roble.⁵⁸

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Somalia begins 2022 with even more confusion over the direction that the elections will take

The year of 2021 ended in the middle of major political crisis over the elections. Somalia begins 2022 with even more confusion over the direction that the elections will take. The NCC meeting took place in the first week of January 2022 and concluded with an 18-point agreement to correct election-related issues. The president and the opposition welcomed the agreement which diffused the tension. Four points are worth noting here: first, the agreement included assurances that all candidates that are interested in contesting for a seat will be allowed to do so. Second, it called for the empowerment of the legitimate traditional clans. Third, the agreement dropped the fees that were required from delegates. Finally, the agreement called for AMISOM to increase the security of the presidency.

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The most dangerous byproduct of the protracted political conflict between the president and the prime minister is the turmoil within Somalia's security institutions which was triggered by the attempted term extension

2.2 Turmoil in security institutions

The most dangerous byproduct of the protracted political conflict between the president and the prime minister is the turmoil within Somalia's security institutions which was triggered by the attempted term extension. The mysterious disappearance of Ikran Tahlil, a young cybersecurity analyst from the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) who was abducted on 26 June, only exacerbated the tension.⁵⁹ Several weeks after she disappeared, NISA announced that al-Shabaab had kidnapped and killed her.⁶⁰ This allegation was rejected by the militant group, which was seen as strange, as al-Shabaab would usually be eager to claim the killing of an intelligence official.⁶¹

55. See "Jubbaland iyo Koonfur Galbeed oo taageero u kala muujiyay madaxweyne Farmaajo iyo Raysal wasaare Rooble" (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/2021/Dec/wararka_maanta26-179775.htm?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=WararkaMaantaFront

56. See "Koonfur Galbeed Kama Soo Qaybgaleyso Shirka uu Iclaamiyey Raiisul Wasaaraha" (2021) Radio Kulmiye. Accessed at: <https://radiokulmiye.net/lafta-gareen-kgs-kama-qeybgalayso-shirka-uu-iclaamiyay-raiisul-wasaaraha/>

57. See Twitter message from the state department. Accessed at: <https://twitter.com/AsstSecStateAF/status/1475545405966491650?s=20>

58. See "International Partners Urge Restraint and Dialogue and Renewed Focus on Elections." (December 2021) UNSOM.

Accessed at: <https://unsom.unmissions.org/international-partners-urge-restraint-and-dialogue-and-renewed-focus-elections>

59. See "Case of missing spy aggravates tensions among fractious Somali leadership" (September 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2021/sep/08/case-of-missing-spy-aggravates-tensions-among-fractious-somali-leadership>

60. See "Somalia's spy agency says its missing female agent was abducted and killed by Al-Shabaab" (September 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Sept/183781/somalia_s_spy_agency_says_its_missing_female_agent_was_abducted_and_killed_by_al_shabaab.aspx

61. See "How Intelligence Officer's Disappearance has Ripped the Government Apart." (September 2021) Washington Post. Accessed at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/09/18/somalia-political-crisis-shabab/>

As public pressure grew over Tahlil's disappearance, Prime Minister Roble sacked Fahad Yasin, the director of NISA.⁶² President Farmaajo rejected the dismissal of the director.⁶³ The prime minister also replaced the internal security minister, Hassan Hundubey Jimale with Abdullahi Mohamed Nur who is a member of the Lower House Parliament.⁶⁴ President Farmaajo then also rejected this appointment.⁶⁵ The president and the prime minister later resolved their differences over these roles. The president appointed the acting director of NISA, Yasin Abdullahi Farey, while the prime minister kept Abdullahi Mohamed Nur as the new internal security minister.⁶⁶

Later in the year, the commander of the navy, Brig. Gen. Abdihamid Mohamed Dirir, publicly accused the prime minister of stealing land belonging to the coast guard.⁶⁷ It was unusual for a senior commander make accusations against a sitting prime minister. But the political nature of this move became clear when President Farmaajo used that allegation to suspend Prime Minister Roble on 27 December 2021⁶⁸ which the prime minister described as an "attempted coup against the constitution".⁶⁹

On 29 December, the chief of the SNA, General Yusuf Odawaa, convened an emergency meeting of all commanders and told them to steer clear of politics and stay neutral to protect the integrity of the security forces. Later, both the police and NISA chiefs also publicly stated that their agencies would stay away from politics.⁷⁰ The US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Molly Phee, also told president Farmaajo to ensure neutral security forces.⁷¹

62. See "Somali Prime Minister Mohamed Roble has sacked national intelligence chief, Fahad Yasin, over the death of female intelligence officer Ikran Tahlil" (September 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/somali/pm-roble-dismisses-nisa-chief-fahad-yasin/>

63. See "President Farmajo reinstates Fahad Yasin, declares PM sacking 'illegal'" (September 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Sept/183815/president_farmajo_reinstates_fahad_yasin_declares_pm_sacking_illegal.aspx?utm_source=hiiraan&utm_medium=SomaliNewsUpdateFront

64. See "Somalia's security minister fired as wrangles between PM and farmajo escalate" (September 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-s-security-minister-as-wrangles-between-pm-and-farmaajo-escalate>

65. See "Somali president suspends premier's power to hire, fire officials" (September 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somali-president-suspends-premier-s-power-to-hire-fire-officials/2366676>

66. See "Somalia President Farmaajo, PM Roble mend fences" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/somalia-president-farmaajo-pm-roble-mend-fences-3591986>

67. See Abdi Latif Dahir, "Somalia's President Suspends Prime Minister Over Corruption Allegations" (December 27, 2021). Accessed at <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/27/world/africa/somalia-prime-minister-suspended.html>. See also "Somalia's PM Accused of Land Grabbing Amid Renewed Rift with President" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://somaliguadian.com/news/somalia-news/somalias-pm-accused-of-land-grabbing-amid-renewed-rift-with-president/>

68. See "Somalia's President Suspends Prime Minister Over Corruption Allegations" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/27/world/africa/somalia-prime-minister-suspended.html>

69. See "Somalia's PM Accuses President of 'Coup Attempt' After Power Suspended" (December 2021) Reuters. Accessed at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/somalias-president-suspends-prime-minister-over-corruption-probe-2021-12-27/>

70. See "Somalia's military, spy, police chiefs seek to steer clear of the political row" (DEC.2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/somalias-military-spy-police-chiefs-seek-to-steer-clear-of-political-row/2462153>

71. See Twitter message: <https://twitter.com/AsstSecStateAF/status/1476280618673741830?s=20>

3. Economy

The World Bank reported that “Somalia’s economy is rebounding from the ‘triple shock’ that ravaged the country in 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic, extreme flooding, and the locust infestation. Real GDP growth is projected at 2.4 percent in 2021. This growth momentum is expected to continue in the medium term and reach pre-COVID-19 levels of 3.2 percent in 2023.”⁷² The national economy contracted less than expected, and the most severe effects of the triple shock were mitigated by “higher-than-anticipated aid flows, fiscal policy measures put in place by the Federal Government of Somalia to aid businesses, social protection measures to cushion vulnerable households, and higher-than-expected remittance inflows”⁷³

In 2020, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved Somalia’s application to receive a debt cancellation under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) program, the most important achievement of the FGS in the past four years.⁷⁴ Somalia has also reached a “decision point”—a midway mark in the complex debt forgiveness process jointly structured by the World Bank and IMF.⁷⁵

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Donors often remind Somali politicians that if the political crises are not resolved before March, the country will miss an important debt-relief milestone and this might reverse the progress made

However, Somalia needs to reach a “completion point” where total debt is wiped out and the country able to access fresh concessional loans. In 2021, the FGS was unable to make a tangible progress on the debt relief front, largely due to the political crisis that crippled state institutions. International partners have repeatedly warned that continued political crisis could reverse gains made so far in the debt relief process. Donors often remind Somali politicians that if the political crises are not resolved before March, the country will miss an important debt-relief milestone and this might reverse the progress made.

4. Humanitarian situation

According to the consolidated UN humanitarian report, Somalia’s humanitarian situation got dramatically worse in 2021, driven in large part by COVID-19, desert locust infestation, extreme flooding and persistent political conflicts.⁷⁶ Nearly half of the country’s 15 million people are in need of assistance and a third are facing severe food shortages, an increase from the year before.⁷⁷

72. See “Somalia Economy Recovering from ‘Triple Shock’”. (2021) World Bank. Accessed at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/09/14/somalia-s-economy-rebounding-from-triple-shock>

73. Ibid.

74. See “IMF and World Bank Consider Somalia Eligible for Assistance Under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative” (February 2020). Accessed at: <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/02/13/pr2048-imf-and-wb-consider-somalia-eligible-for-assistance-under-the-enhanced-hipc-initiative>

75. See “Somalia to Receive Debt Relief under the Enhanced HIPC Initiative” (March 2020) Accessed at: <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2020/03/25/pr20104-somalia-somalia-to-receive-debt-relief-under-the-enhanced-hipc-initiative>

76. See “Somalia: Situation Overview” (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/somalia/card/4ha9XmMN3m/>

77. See “2022 Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2022-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>

According to the UN, in 2021, “the country faced heightened political tensions, at times associated with violence, in the context of a delayed electoral process and power struggles at the leadership level. In southern and central Somalia, conflict and insecurity spiked, driving cycles of displacement, disruptions to livelihood activities, and constraints on trade and humanitarian access. Increased competition for natural resources and economic rents generated conflict at the local and sub-clan level.”⁷⁸

Internal displacement was the highest in a decade as the result of widespread political violence and incessant political conflicts. Some 413,000 people were displaced across the country including 207,000 who were displaced in Mogadishu in April when election-related violence broke out.⁷⁹ The report noted that an “increase in elections-related displacement was noted in April 2021, most of which occurred in Mogadishu, which provides an example of the levels of conflict-induced displacement that can be expected in case the current political stalemate is not resolved.”⁸⁰

Severe droughts gripped many parts of Somalia, mainly southern regions, leading to widespread crop failure and livestock mortality.⁸¹ Somalia is a frontline country for climate change because of its geographic location. Among East African countries, Somalia has experienced the greatest earth temperature increase.⁸² Climate change is not just an environmental disaster but also exposes vulnerable populations to scorching heat and extreme weather events, putting food security at risk and sustainable development goals out of reach. Climate change and poverty are very much intertwined because climate change disproportionately affects poor people in low-income communities and developing countries like Somalia. Nomadic communities eke out a living on just a few inches of rainfall each year. Consequently, an increase in drought frequency and intensity brought about by climate change could lead to an abject poverty. For example, when not enough rain falls, livestock die in large numbers and rain-fed crops fail, rendering communities dependent on humanitarian assistance.

A recent report on food security in Somalia estimated that over 2.6 million people were facing extreme food insecurity⁸³ caused by a combination of poor and erratic rainfall, floods, the desert locust invasion and the socioeconomic impacts of Covid-19. From a public health perspective, as the pandemic continues to ravage the world, its impacts on health and social wellbeing on Somalis has yet to be fully documented and analyzed.

78. See “2022 Somalia Humanitarian Needs Overview” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/2022-somalia-humanitarian-needs-overview>

79. See “UNICEF Somalia Humanitarian Situation Report” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/unicef-somalia-humanitarian-situation-report-no-10-1-31-october-2021>

80. Ibid, page 22.

81. See “Somalia | UNDP Climate Change Adaptation” (2022) Accessed at: <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/eastern-africa/somalia>

82. See “World Bank Climate Change Knowledge Portal” (2020) Accessed at: <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/somalia/climate-data-historical>

83. Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia. (July 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.fsnaui.org/node/1857>

5. External relations



Somalia maintained stable relations with most of the international community in 2021. Mogadishu also had a warm relationship with Turkey, Qatar, Ethiopia and Eritrea and cold and at times conflictual relations with Kenya, Djibouti and the UAE.

Somalia maintained stable relations with most of the international community in 2021. Mogadishu also had a warm relationship with Turkey, Qatar, Ethiopia and Eritrea and cold and at times conflictual relations with Kenya, Djibouti and the UAE.

Despite election-related disagreements, Somalia continued to work with its traditional partners in 2021. These donors continue to provide hundreds of millions in aid annually directly and indirectly through international organizations and international financial institutions. Somalia has had a particularly good relationship with the US, the UK and the EU which have provided most of the humanitarian and development aid to the Somali people.⁸⁴ Somalia has also maintained diplomatic relations with other countries including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, China and Norway.

The US, the UK and Europe are the largest donors to Somalia. However, these three major donors have largely given space to Somalia's political leaders. The US was without an ambassador in Mogadishu for much of 2021 following the departure of Donald Yamamoto, a veteran diplomat. In December 2021, the US Senate finally confirmed Larry Andre Jr as the ambassador to Somalia, and he's expected to arrive in early 2022. The US's most important leverage is its ability to threaten political leaders with sanctions—a cudgel that can change political behaviors, as was the case in December 2021 when Washington pressured President Farmaajo as he attempted to suspend Prime Minister Roble.⁸⁵

Additionally, Somalia's close and special relationship with Turkey, Qatar, Ethiopia and Eritrea grew stronger during the reporting period. These countries provided direct economic and security support. Turkey, for example, provided budgetary assistance and security training to Somali forces. Turkey's trade volume with Somalia has been growing for the last 10 years and was close to \$500 million in 2021. Turkey is also a destination for the Somali elite for tourism, education and medical treatment. Turkish Airlines also has a daily flight in Mogadishu. Qatar has provided infrastructure support such as the road that connects Mogadishu and Afgoye. Qatar has also reportedly provided financial support to Somalia.⁸⁶ Qatar Airways also flies to Mogadishu three days a week.

84. See "Aid flow in Somalia" (May 2019) Ministry of planning. Accessed at: <http://mop.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Aid-Flows-in-Somalia-2019-ENGLISH.pdf>

85. See Tweet from US State Department, accessed at: <https://twitter.com/AsstSecStateAF/status/1475545405966491650?s=20>

86. See "Somalia | Financial Tracking Service" (2021) UNOCHA Accessed at: <https://fts.unocha.org/countries/206/flows/2021?f%5B0%5D=destinationOrganizationIdName%3A8600%3ACARE%20Somalia&f%5B1%5D=destinationOrganizationIdName%3A1418%3AQatar%20Charity>

In the Horn region, Somalia is part of a trilateral partnership with Ethiopia and Eritrea. Somalia also expressed strong support for Ethiopia's war with the Tigray rebels. Ethiopian Airlines has daily flights to several cities around the country. Additionally, Somalia was reported to have sent thousands of troops to be trained in Eritrea to fight alongside Ethiopia's army. There are reports that troops trained will return to Somalia in the first few months of 2022,⁸⁷ but information on this has been scant.

On the other hand, Somalia had poor relations with Kenya, Djibouti and the United Arab Emirates. Regarding Kenya, the maritime boundary dispute was the source of the poor relationship between the two countries. The administration of former president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, took the maritime case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Kenya pressured Somalia to negotiate out of court settlement, but President Farmaajo refused to withdraw the case. In October, the ICJ ruled largely in favor of Somalia. Kenya rejected the court ruling and said that the decision would have "profound security, political, social and economic ramifications in the region and beyond."⁸⁸ In May, Somalia and Kenya restored diplomatic relations after high-level mediation by Qatar.⁸⁹ However, the relationship between the two countries continues to be difficult as they pursue competing agendas in the region.

Furthermore, the poor relations between Djibouti and Somalia began before 2021 and may be rooted to the tripartite agreement that Somalia has joined earlier. But, the report of the IGAD's fact-finding mission to investigate Somalia's complaints that Kenya was interfering in its internal affairs, triggered the public disagreements. The Djibouti delegation concluded there was insufficient evidence to support Mogadishu's claims.⁹⁰ Mogadishu rejected the findings and accused Djibouti of siding with Nairobi.⁹¹ Djibouti, for its part, denied the allegations.⁹² Against this backdrop, the relations between the two nations became antagonistic for the better part of last year. Djibouti is one of the troop-contributing countries in Somalia that operates in Hiiraan region.⁹³

87. See "Somali soldiers training in Eritrea set for return amid pressure from opposition." (2021) Garowe Online. Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somali-soldiers-training-in-eritrea-set-for-return-amid-pressure-from-opposition>

88. See "Top UN Court Sides with Somalia in Sea Border Dispute with Kenya." (2021) – Al Jazeera. Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/12/un-court-icj-somalia-kenya-maritime-border-dispute-ruling>

89. See "Somalia and Kenya Restore Diplomatic Ties" (2021) – VOA News. Accessed at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/africa-somalia-and-kenya-restore-diplomatic-ties/6205519.html>

90. See "IGAD says no evidence that Kenya interfered in Somalia's affairs" (January 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.keydmedia.net/en/news/igad-says-no-evidence-that-kenya-interfered-in-somalias-affairs>

91. See "Press Release" (January 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.mfa.gov.so/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/IGAD.pdf>

92. See "Djibouti Denies Somalia Claims that IGAD Favored Kenya" (January 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.ftlsomalia.com/djibouti-denies-somalia-claims-that-igad-favored-kenya/>

93. Djibouti - AMISOM. (2016) <https://amisom-au.org/fr/djibouti/>

The relationship between Somalia and the UAE did not improve in 2021. The source of the poor relations between the two countries goes back to the 2017 Gulf Crises. Before 2017, the UAE had good relations with the Federal Government of Somalia. It has also maintained good relations with Somaliland and Puntland administrations.⁹⁴ Somalia's government believed that Abu Dhabi was interfering with Somalia's internal affairs, and Mogadishu banned the Dubai port.⁹⁵ Then, Somalia announced that it would remain neutral regarding the 2017 Gulf crisis. UAE considered that Somalia sided with the Qatar camp.⁹⁶ With this background, when Somalia fell into political turmoil over election delays in 2021, Abu Dhabi released a statement describing the Somali government as an 'interim administration.' It appointed Abdullah Muhammad al-Naqbi as the UAE's trade office director in Somaliland.⁹⁷ Mogadishu accused Abu Dhabi of fueling a political stand-off.⁹⁸ By the end of 2021, Prime Minister Roble met with the UAE ambassador in Mogadishu for the first time since the relations between the two countries worsened. But this has not ended the rift yet.⁹⁹

With respect to the peacekeeping forces, the UN Security Council has extended the mandate of AMISOM by three months—until end of March 2022 - the shortest ever extension for the African Union peacekeeping mission.¹⁰⁰ The reason for this short extension is the insistence by the federal government that AMISOM should fit in with the Somali Transitional Plan (STP) which calls for the withdrawal of AMISOM forces by end of 2023.

The African Union Peace and Security Commission has been pushing to renew the mandate of AMISOM, largely under the existing arrangement. Under this plan, the UN Security Council would provide the mandate and resources and the AU operational and strategic leadership. In November, the FGS expelled the number two AMISOM official in Mogadishu. The Ugandan diplomat Simon Mulongo was accused of “undesired behavior.”¹⁰¹

94. See “What UAE's growing presence in Somaliland means for its Horn of Africa strategy” (MARCH 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/03/what-uaes-growing-presence-somaliland-means-its-horn-africa-strategy#ixzz7Jrql3rtI>

95. See “Somalia bans Dubai ports operator DP World, says contract with Somaliland null.” Reuters, Accessed at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-ports/somalia-bans-dubai-ports-operator-dp-world-says-contract-with-somaliland-null-idUSKCN1GP10E>

96. For the background of the poor relations between Somalia and the UAE, see “Somalia and the Gulf Crisis”, Report No. 260, International Crisis Group. (2018). available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/260-somalia-and-gulf-crisis>

97. See “Somaliland President receives credentials of Director of UAE Trade office in Somaliland.” (MARCH 2021) Accessed at: <https://wam.ae/en/details/1395302918982>

98. See “Somalia Accuses UAE of Promoting Political Standoff and Violent Protest” (FEB.2021) Accessed at: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_somalia-accuses-uae-promoting-political-standoff-and-violent-protest/6202411.html

99. See “PM Roble meets with UAE Ambassador to Somalia” (DEC.2021 Accessed at: <https://radiomuqdisho.so/pm-roble-meets-with-uae-ambassador-to-somalia/>

100. See “Security Council Reauthorizes African Union Mission in Somalia for Three Months” (2021) UN. Accessed at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14746.doc.htm>

101. See “Somalia Expels Ugandan Diplomat” (2021) – The Monitor. Accessed at: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/somalia-expels-ugandan-diplomat--3608522?view=htmlamp>

5.1 Somaliland

Somaliland declared unilateral secession from the Somali Republic in 1991.¹⁰² Since then, it has established a functioning government and enjoys greater stability than the rest of the country.¹⁰³ Hargeisa has been managing its political, security and economics separately from that of the rest of the country for the last three decades. However, Somalia and Somaliland have been in talks since 2012. Somalia is interested in the dialogue because it wants to find a way to bring Hargeisa back into the union.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Somaliland considers the dialogue as a platform for promoting its independence.

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Somaliland held its parliamentary elections in 16 years after repeated delays caused by disputes among political parties

Somaliland made significant gains around governance and the economy in 2022. During the reporting period, Somaliland held its parliamentary elections in 16 years after repeated delays caused by disputes among political parties. Opposition parties, Wadani and UCID, won a majority of the 82-seats of the Lower House, defeating the ruling party Kulmiye.¹⁰⁵ Opposition parties also won the mayorship of Hargeisa, the capital, and several other cities.¹⁰⁶ The presidential election is scheduled for the end of 2022.¹⁰⁷ The opposition parties have also formed a coalition against the ruling party so that they control the Lower House of parliament, as well as councils in major cities.

No women won a seat in the Somaliland elections, despite prominent women running in several constituencies. This raised fundamental questions about the structural impediments that women face if they are to participate in the political arena.¹⁰⁸ Commenting on this, the International Crisis Group wrote, “the 31 May vote revealed both the strength of Somaliland’s democratic culture and the limits of efforts to include under-represented constituencies in high-level politics. Women are now absent from parliament.”¹⁰⁹ The stunning victories of Barkhad Batun and Abdikam Ahmed Moge were the highlights of the election. Batun overwhelmingly won a parliamentary seat on the Wadani opposition political party ticket despite coming from a marginalized community.¹¹⁰ Moge also secured a city council seat with huge number of votes, paving the way for him to become the mayor of Hargeisa.¹¹¹

102. See “Somaliland profile” (December 2017) Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115069>

103. See “Somaliland: 30 Years of De Facto Statehood, and No End in Sight” (May 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publicazione/somaliland-30-years-de-facto-statehood-and-no-end-sight-30363>

104. See “Somalia-Somaliland: A Halting Embrace of Dialogue” (August 2020) Accessed at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/somalia-somaliland-halting-embrace-dialogue>

105. See “Somaliland elections: Opposition parties win the majority of seats” (June 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/6/somaliland-opposition-wins-first-parliamentary-polls-since>

106. See “Somaliland Opposition Win Majority in First Parliamentary Vote since 2005” (June 2021) Accessed at: https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_somaliland-opposition-win-majority-first-parliamentary-vote-2005/6206698.html

107. See “Somaliland elections: Opposition parties win majority seats” (June 2021) Al Jazeera. Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/6/somaliland-opposition-wins-first-parliamentary-polls-since>

108. See “Building on Somaliland’s Successful Elections” (August 2021) Crisis Group. Accessed at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somaliland/b174-building-somalilands-successful-elections>

109. Ibid, p. 4

110. See “Building on Somaliland’s Successful Elections” (August 2021) Crisis Group. Accessed at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somaliland/b174-building-somalilands-successful-elections>

111. See “Abdikarim Mooge: The man of the moment in Somaliland’s history” (June 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/featured/abdikarim-mooge-the-man-of-the-moment-in-somaliland-s-history>



The Somaliland-Somalia talks came to a complete halt after an active year in 2020. This was partly due to the expiring mandate of President Farmaajo and the looming presidential elections for both leaders



Somaliland authorities forcibly evicted more than 7,000 people from Las Anod and other districts

As 2022 begins, the debate about a potential delay to the presidential elections scheduled for November is raging in Somaliland.¹¹² President Muse Bihi Abdi wants to open political parties' competition prior to the presidential elections.¹¹³ Opposition parties have rejected Bihi's decision, arguing that the presidential election should be held first.¹¹⁴ According to Somaliland's constitution, new parties are allowed to join national parties once every decade if they meet a certain vote threshold.¹¹⁵ The Wadani and UCID parties have threatened to take drastic measures if polls are delayed and President Bihi rejected the opposition parties claims.¹¹⁶ Notably, every Somaliland president has extended his mandate by a few years, and many expect that the current president will seek a term extension.

During the reporting period, the Somaliland-Somalia talks came to a complete halt after an active year in 2020. This was partly due to the expiring mandate of President Farmaajo and the looming presidential elections for both leaders. Once Mogadishu and Hargeisa have elected leaders in 2022, dialogue between the two sides should begin again. There's a broad recognition on both sides that genuine dialogue is the only way to achieve a durable settlement.

In October, Somaliland authorities forcibly evicted more than 7,000 people from Las Anod and other districts, citing security concerns. The evicted people were mainly from southern Somalia, and many had lived in Somaliland for decades. Somalia's government condemned the evictions and some international partners called it "inhuman".¹¹⁷ Many of those evicted moved southward and were warmly welcomed by authorities in neighboring Puntland.¹¹⁸ Southwest state also organized an airlift for those who wanted to return to their original homes.¹¹⁹

112. See "Kulmiye Spokesman "Presidential Election Will Not Be Held In 2022"(August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.somalidispach.com/latest-news/kulmiye-spokesman-presidential-election-will-not-be-held-in-2022/>

113. See "Somaliland President Bihi reserves decision to open political parties" (February 2020) Accessed at: <https://somalilandstandard.com/breaking-news-somaliland-president-bihi-reserves-decision-to-open-political-parties/>

114. See "Why is opening political parties crucial for Somaliland?" (January 2022) Accessed at: <https://somalilandchronicle.com/2022/01/21/why-is-opening-political-parties-crucial-for-somaliland/>

115. See "Somaliland: Is clan-based politics inevitable?" (January 2019) Accessed at: <https://www.horndiplomat.com/2019/01/08/somaliland-is-clan-based-politics-inevitable/>

116. Abdirahman Irro, the leader of the Wadani party, threatened that Somaliland will have multiple presidents if presidential elections are delayed. See "Walaahi baan madaxweynayaal badan la sameyneyn. Ururada waa la furayaa" Madaxweyne Buuse Biix." (2021) Somaliland Post. Accessed at: <https://somalilandpost.net/walaahi-baan-madaxweynayaal-badan-la-samayn-ururrada-waa-la-furayaa-madaxweyne-muuse-biixi>

117. See "UN: Over 7,000 forcibly evicted from Las Anod, north of Somalia" (2021) Garowe Online. Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/un-over-7-000-forcibly-evicted-from-las-anod-north-of-somalia>

118. See "Puntland resettles at least 700 evictees from Lasa'anod" (October 2021) Accessed at: https://hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Oct/184134/puntland_resettles_at_least_700_evictees_from_lasa_anod.aspx

119. See "Southwest to airlift residents from Las'Anod" (October 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Oct/184190/south_west_to_airlift_residents_from_las_anod.aspx

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On the economic front, the Somaliland government opened a new terminal at Berbera port, significantly expanding the capacity of its main port

On the economic front, the Somaliland government opened a new terminal at Berbera port, significantly expanding the capacity of its main port. In partnership with DP World, the Somaliland authorities also laid the foundation for the Berbera Economic Zone, which is envisioned to be part of the Berbera Corridor, a trade and economic highway linking the port of Berbera to eastern Ethiopia.¹²⁰ In a statement, DP World said that “the economic zone will serve as a center of trade with the aim to attract investment and create jobs, and will target a range of industries, including warehousing, logistics, traders, manufacturers, and other related sectors. It will allow producers, suppliers, and customers to operate in a conducive and competitive environment for investment and trade.”¹²¹

6. Federal level and member state developments

The provisional federal constitution envisions federal member states made up of two or more of the 18 regions left behind by the military state. The federal government recognizes five federal member states: Puntland, Jubbaland, Southwest, Galmudug and Hirshabelle. Somaliland seceded in 1991. Banadir, the capital city, remains a region under the direct authority of the FGS.

6.1 Puntland

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Puntland faced profound security challenges. For a few days in December, armed clashes took place in the coastal city of Bossaso between Puntland’s regular security forces and forces loyal to the former head of Puntland Security Forces (PSF)

Somaliland aside, Puntland is the oldest, most stable and most developed state of the country.¹²² Since its establishment in 1998, it has made a significant progress. However, Puntland faces multiple challenges.

During this reporting period, Puntland faced profound security challenges. For a few days in December, armed clashes took place in the coastal city of Bossaso between Puntland’s regular security forces and forces loyal to the former head of Puntland Security Forces (PSF), a US-supported paramilitary unit established to fight Al-Shabaab.

120. See “Budd Group to Offer Services at Africa’s Expanded Berbera Port” (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/features/budd-group-to-offer-services-at-africa-s-expanded-berbera-port>

121. See “DP World and Somaliland Open New Terminal” (2021) DP World Accessed at: <https://www.dpworld.com/news/releases/dp-world-and-somaliland-open-new-terminal-at-berbera-port-announce-second-phase-expansion-and-break-ground-for-economic-zone/>

122. Somaliland controls parts of Sool and Sanaag and lays claim to the rest. Galmudug controls parts of Mudug.

On 24 November, president Said Abdullahi Deni sacked the commander of PSF, General Mohamud Osman Diyaano.¹²³ Diyaano refused to obey the president's orders and mobilized hundreds of his forces at a PSF base in Bossaso.¹²⁴ Dozens of people were killed and thousands were displaced in the fighting, which was the most intense that Puntland had seen in over a decade.

After a few days of fighting, President Deni declared a unilateral ceasefire and invited Puntland's traditional elders as well as former statesmen from the area to play a mediating role.¹²⁵ As of this writing, the delegation is in Bossaso and were optimistic that they would succeed in addressing the root causes of the conflict. Among those leading the mediation are Abdiweli Gaas (former federal prime minister and the former Puntland president), Abdirahman Faroole (former Puntland president), Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke (the former federal prime minister) and several traditional elders.¹²⁶

The conflict in Bossaso has a political dimension. Diyaano is the brother of Asad Diyaano who was also the former head of the PSF and a runner-up in the last presidential election of Puntland.¹²⁷ Their father was also a former head of PSF and several Puntland presidents have accommodated these officials. Over the past few years, the relationship between President Deni of Puntland and President Farmaajo soured. President Deni believed that Assad Osman Diyano was a close ally of President Farmaajo. Puntland authorities have even claimed that Farmaajo dispatched federal forces in support of the Diyaano family.¹²⁸

Puntland has also faced security challenges from the extremist forces that operate from the Galgala mountains. In March, al-Shabaab stormed a major prison in Bossaso and freed up to 400 militants—the largest single jailbreak for the group since its founding 15 years ago.¹²⁹ Seven prison guards were killed and vehicles and other military equipment were looted.¹³⁰ Finally, Puntland has experienced its share of inter-clan violence in the states, particularly in the Nugal and Mudug regions.

123. See "Puntland president fires PSF director" (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://shabellemedia.com/puntland-president-fires-psf-director/>

124. See "Clashes between two rival factions of the security forces in a port city in northeast Somalia have forced hundreds of families to flee their homes" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/25/clashes-northeast-somalia-security-forces-thousands-flee>

125. See "Somali Officials Announce Cease-Fire in Bosaso" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somali-officials-announce-cess-fire-in-bosaso/6365860.html>

126. See "Delegates arrive in Garowe in response to Deni's call for peace in Bosaso" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/delegates-arrive-in-garowe-in-response-to-deni-s-call-for-peace-in-bosaso>

127. See "Somalia: Puntland Security Force [PSF] director defiant after dismissal" (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/somalia-puntland-president-s-move-to-fire-psf-boss-sparks-munity>

128. See "Puntland oo sheegtay in Ciidamada Gorgor ay Qayb ka Yihiin Dagaalka Boosaaso" (2021) Caasimadda Online.

Accessed at: <https://www.caasimadda.net/puntland-oo-sheegtay-in-ciidamada-gorgor-ay-qeyb-ka-yihiin-dagaalka-boosaaso/>

129. See "Al-Shabaab militants storm Somali jail, seven soldiers killed." (March 2021). Reuters. Accessed at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-violence-idUSKBN2AX188>

130. See "At least seven soldiers were killed when al Shabaab fighters stormed a jail in Puntland. Al Shabaab said it had freed at least 400 prisoners" (March 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-somalia-violence-idUSKBN2AX188>

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On the political front, Puntland has organized a one-person, one-vote local election. The October pilot elections were organized in three districts: Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn

On the political front, Puntland has organized a one-person, one-vote local election. The October pilot elections were organized in three districts: Qardho, Eyl and Ufeyn.¹³¹ Eight political associations competed for local councils and more than 40,000 people registered to vote, according to the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC).¹³² The pilot elections were designed to pave the way for a fully-fledged universal suffrage election across Puntland in 2022. Two former presidents have tried and failed to hold such elections, but president Said Deni made it a signature policy. By all accounts, the pilot exercise was a huge success. International partners have lauded the elections as a major milestone.¹³³

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What made the local election especially successful is the fact that Puntland allowed citizens from other parts of Somalia to register and vote in the polls

What made the local election especially successful is the fact that Puntland allowed citizens from other parts of Somalia to register and vote in the polls. Hundreds of Somalis voted in Qardho where they have been living as internally displaced people. Another laudable element was the fact that the election paved the way for political associations to become fully fledged political parties recognized under Puntland's electoral law. The elections have distinguished stronger parties from weaker ones, setting the stage for multiparty democracy in Puntland.

Notably, President Deni's Kaah party didn't do as well as he had expected. Although it received plurality of votes in all three districts, it will struggle to lead the local councils. In Qardho and Ufeyn, the Mideeye and Justice and Equity parties have enough votes to dominate the local councils and have already signaled that they intend to form a coalition. In Eyl, the Kaah party needs the support of one of the smaller parties in order to lead the local council.¹³⁴

At the federal level, Puntland's parliament selected its 11 senators for the Upper House of the federal parliament.¹³⁵ Like most other states, the process was fixed in favor of candidates handpicked by President Deni. Almost all 11 seats had a favored candidate and a “bridesmaid”—a term coined by Somali elites to note the common practice of states selecting a weak candidate whose only job is to lose the election to the favored candidate.

131. See “Local elections kick off in Puntland's Eyl, Qardho & Ufeyn” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-59035063>

132. See “Natiijada Doorashooyinka Saddexda Degmo” (2021) – TPEC. Accessed at: <https://tpec.pl.so/plg-result-2021/>

133. See “International Partners Welcome Local Elections in Puntland” (2021) UNSOM. Accessed at: <https://unsom.unmissions.org/international-partners-welcome-local-elections-puntland-0>

134. See the results of the elections on the TPEC website: <https://tpec.pl.so/plg-result-2021/>

135. See “Puntland elects senators as Somalia's elections gain momentum” (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/puntland/puntland-elects-senators-as-somalia-s-elections-gain-momentum>



The establishment of the port will facilitate greater trade among the communities in Puntland and neighboring Galmudug, which relies on the main port on Bossaso

On the economic front, in November, the first ship docked at Gara'ad Port in Mudug province. It was the first community-funded private port in the whole of Somalia.¹³⁶ The establishment of the port will facilitate greater trade among the communities in Puntland and between Puntland and neighboring Galmudug, which relies on the main port on Bossaso. That said, authorities in Puntland and the private company that built the Gara'ad port have yet to agree on taxation and customs management, an important decision that the two sides need to make very soon.¹³⁷ In the meantime, Puntland is in negotiations with DP World, the Dubai-based conglomerate, to expand the port of Bossaso.

6.2 Jubbaland

Following the disputed presidential election in 2019, Jubbaland faced enormous political and security challenges including a power struggle between two major communities in the three sub-regions of the Jubbaland state: Ogaden and Marehan.¹³⁸ Like in Southwest, the FGS attempted to replace the president of Jubbaland, Ahmed Mohamed Islaan “Madobe”. President Madobe outmaneuvered the FGS by gerrymandering his own process. When the FGS attempt failed, Mogadishu took over the control of Gedo region and tried to systemically delegitimize president Madobe in Gedo province. For the last two years, Gedo has been under the direct control of the FGS. Early in 2021, intense fighting took place in Beled Hawo, a district on the border between Somalia and Kenya. This left Madobe with only parts of Lower Jubba province including Kismaayo. Middle Jubba province is entirely under the control of Al-Shabaab.

In June 2020, President Farmaajo recognized Ahmed Madobe as an “interim president” and asked him to organize fresh elections in two years—a move rejected by the Jubbaland administration.¹³⁹

The 27 May election agreement stipulated a special reconciliation process for Gedo province whereby president Madobe would submit two names for the mayor of Garbahaarrey city, to be approved by local clan elders and appointed by Prime Minister Roble.¹⁴⁰ The objective was to install a mayor that was acceptable to all sides who could oversee federal elections in the city. In July, Prime Minister Roble visited Garbahaarrey to finalize the agreement¹⁴¹ but he was unsuccessful. As of the end of 2021, the Jubbaland administration controlled Kismaayo and a few other districts in Lower Jubba province, and Gedo province remained under the FGS.

136. See “Garacad project is what Africa needs” (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/opinion/article/2001432936/garacad-project-is-what-africa-needs>

137. See “Garacad Port Overshadows DP World” (2021) Puntland Post. Accessed at: <https://puntlandpost.net/2021/11/29/somalia-garacad-port-overshadows-dp-world-project/>

138. See “A TURBULENT RUN-UP TO ELECTIONS IN SOMALIA” (April 2021) Accessed at: <https://acleddata.com/2021/04/07/a-turbulent-run-up-to-elections-in-somalia/>

139. See “FGS Recognizes Madobe as “Interim President”, invites FMS Leaders to a Meeting” (2020) Garowe Online. Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-fgs-recognises-madobe-as-interim-president-invites-fms-leaders-to-meeting>

140. See “Somali leaders sign revised electoral deal, elections to be held within two months” (May 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somali-leaders-sign-revised-electoral-deal-elections-to-be-held-within-two-months>

141. See “Somalia PM Roble Heads to Garbaharey as Part of His Jubbaland Tour” (2021) Garowe Online. Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-pm-robles-heads-to-garbaharey-without-jubbaland-s-consent>

Al-Shabaab has its strongest presence in Jubbaland. Middle Jubba is the only region among Somalia's 18 administrative regions that has been continuously under full al-Shabaab control for over a decade.¹⁴² The group also controls large swathes of territory throughout Jubbaland. Al-Shabaab is also active in and around Kismaayo itself. In July, the group claimed responsibility for a suicide blast that killed 20 football players as they were heading to a local tournament.¹⁴³ In December, the group also claimed that it captured the village of Yaqrar near Kismaayo airport, though this remains unconfirmed.¹⁴⁴

As federal elections drew closer, President Madobe is widely seen as backing his close ally President Deni of Puntland. The two leaders have visited each other several times over the past year and have even set up joint committees on politics and security.¹⁴⁵ They have also been closely coordinating electoral strategies and have, on more than occasion, issued a joint statement taking a similar position.¹⁴⁶ Although President Deni has never formally declared his candidacy for the presidency of Somalia, it's very obvious that he's counting on the support of the Jubbaland administration as a clear pathway to Villa Somalia. Together they control nearly 100 seats out of 329 seats in the federal parliament.¹⁴⁷

6.3 Southwest

The Southwest administration faced security, political, economic and humanitarian challenges in 2021. Al-Shabaab continued to pose a significant threat as it controlled almost all the major supply routes in the state. Since Southwest doesn't have a seaport, it relies on Mogadishu and Kismaayo ports for supplies. In both cases, goods must go through al-Shabaab-controlled areas in exchange for a substantial amount of money levied by the group.¹⁴⁸

The FGS-led Operation Badbaado 1, which aimed to liberate key bridges in Lower Shabelle province and create a direct connection between Mogadishu and Lower Shabelle, came to a halt, in part due to the political crisis in Mogadishu and underfunding.¹⁴⁹ Operation Badbaado 1 registered notable success in its initial phase but later failed due to well-known structural weaknesses stymying FGS forces.¹⁵⁰

142. See "Somalia Security situation Country of Origin Information Report" (2021). Accessed at: <https://doi.org/10.2847/32719>

143. See "Kismayo based Somali Premier League club lost 20 players in a terrorist attack targeted their bus." (July 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/07/breaking-newly-promoted-somalia-club-jcci-fc-lose-20-players-to-terrorist-attack-bombing/>

144. See "The militant group Al-Shabaab claimed Monday morning that it captured a locality near the Kismayo Airport." (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://goobjoog.com/english/al-shabaab-reportedly-captures-area-near-kismayo-airport/>

145. See "A TURBULENT RUN-UP TO ELECTIONS IN SOMALIA" (April 2021) Accessed at: <https://acleddata.com/2021/04/07/a-turbulent-run-up-to-elections-in-somalia/>

146. See "Puntland, Jubbaland Accuse FGS of Sabotaging Electoral Talks". (March 2021) Hiiraan Online. Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Mar/182153/puntland_jubaland_accuse_federal_government_of_sabotaging_electoral_talks.aspx

147. See "A TURBULENT RUN-UP TO ELECTIONS IN SOMALIA" (April 2021) Accessed at:

<https://acleddata.com/2021/04/07/a-turbulent-run-up-to-elections-in-somalia/>

148. See "The AS Finance System" (July 2018) Accessed at: <https://hiraalinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/AS-Finance-System.pdf>

149. See "UNSG, Situation in Somalia" (May 2021) Accessed at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9BFC9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2021_485_.pdf

150. For more information on Operation Babaado 1, see "Structural Impediments to Reviving Somalia's Security Forces" (April 2021) – Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, page 17. Accessed at: <https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Structural-Impediments-to-Security-English-version-April-17-Final-.pdf>

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Over the past year, the Southwest administration has focused on establishing local councils in selected districts. So far, the process has been completed in Baraawe, the official capital of the state (in Lower Shabelle province), Waajid and El-Barde (in Bakool province)

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Southwest completed the election of its eight Upper House seats. None of the seats was competitive as President Abdulaziz Laftagareen handpicked his allies

Over the past year, the FGS and al-Shabaab have carried out dozens of attacks and counterattacks across Southwest state.¹⁵¹ FGS operations, which are mainly conducted jointly with AMISOM, have become more surgical and tactical, but they lack strategic strength as government forces lack capabilities to hold onto land they capture.¹⁵² As a result, al-Shabaab focuses on major supply routes from which they generate substantial resources.¹⁵³ Al-Shabaab even took the unusual step of burning food destined for the city of Waajid in Bakool province after merchants tried to airlift food into the city. The FGS condemned the move as “barbaric” and vowed to liberate this major supply route.¹⁵⁴

Over the past year, the Southwest administration has focused on establishing local councils in selected districts.¹⁵⁵ So far, the process has been completed in Baraawe, the official capital of the state (in Lower Shabelle province), Waajid and El-Barde (in Bakool province). Forming local administrations is fraught with deep political contestations among clans residing in the area. In each case, Southwest administration spent considerable political capital to ensure that local councils were established.

In October, the Ministry of Interior started the process of forming the local administration for Baraawe district. An armed group attacked a hotel where the selection of local councils was underway.¹⁵⁶ The key controversy surrounds the seats allocated for “non-indigenous” clans who are mainly Hawiye subclans.¹⁵⁷ Similar dynamics are playing out in El-Barde in Bakool province where Digil and Mirifle clans are rejecting the number of council seats allocated for Ogaden and Hawiye clans in the area. As a result, that process has stopped until the state can come up with a new approach.

Southwest completed the election of its eight Upper House seats. None of the seats was competitive as President Abdulaziz Laftagareen handpicked his allies.¹⁵⁸ Several incumbents were not allowed to run for their own seats.

151. See “Somali National Army (SNA) killed 25 Al-Shabaab fighters in operation conducted in Lower Shabelle and Middle Shabelle regions” (March 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/somali/somali-military-kills-25-al-shabaab-fighters-in-operation/>

152. See “Al-Shabaab recaptures El-dhere town in central Somalia” (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://goobjoog.com/english/al-shabaab-recaptures-el-dhere-town-in-central-somalia/>

153. See UN report on Somalia (October 2021) Accessed at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_849_E.pdf

154. See “The Somali government condemned al Shabab’s barbaric action of burning food supplies to civilians in Wajid district.” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.jowhar.com/news/dowlada-soomaaliya-oo-cambaareysay-fal-ay-alshabaab-ku-gubeen-hanti-iyoo-raashin.html>

155. See “Knowledge Management Central in Advancing Inclusive Local Governance in Somalia” (2021) Accessed at: <https://www.kirkonulkomaanapu.fi/en/latest-news/articles/knowledge-management-central-in-advancing-inclusive-local-governance-in-somalia/>

156. See “Armed militia attack a hotel in Barawe during the local council elections.” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.caasimada.net/maleeshiyo-weerartay-hotel-ay-ka-socoatay-doorashada-golaha-deegaanka-baraawe/>

157. See “Controversy over local council formation in Barawe of Southwest.” (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.keydmedia.net/news/muxuu-yahay-buuqa-ka-taagan-golaha-degaanka-baraawe>

158. See “Federal state bosses set for kingmaker role in Somalia’s presidential election” (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/federal-bosses-set-for-kingmaker-role-in-somalia-s-election-3502596>

In the Lower House elections, the state's electoral committee disenfranchised the former speaker of the federal parliament, Mohamed Osman Jawaari, a highly respected veteran politician by denying him the chance to run for the seat he occupies, triggering a national controversy.¹⁵⁹ Although the Electoral Dispute Resolution Committee (EDRC) initially halted the certification of this seat, they later concluded that no irregularities were committed and cleared the way for full certification.¹⁶⁰ Southwest state has the highest number of representatives in the parliament: a total of 77 seats for both houses, making it one of the most important states in electoral terms.¹⁶¹

6.4 Galmudug

In 2021, Galmudug state was haunted by its past. The Ahlu Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah (ASWJ) made a comeback after a year in exile. In the summer of 2021, the leaders of ASWJ, who were forced out of the state in 2020 during the disputed presidential election, suddenly captured the town of Guri'el, the largest in the state in terms of population. More than 120 people were killed and over 100,000 were displaced during the weeks-long fighting in the area.¹⁶²

Galmudug security forces and hundreds of federal forces fought against ASWJ. The regional commander of Danab, an elite, American-trained unit that was established to fight al-Shabaab, was killed in that fighting.¹⁶³ Overwhelmed, ASWJ leaders left Guri'el under a negotiated ceasefire.¹⁶⁴ The ASWJ retreated to Bohol, a village 40 kilometers away from Dhuusamarreeb, the state capital.¹⁶⁵

The underlying factors of this conflict are linked to the disputed presidential election of 2020 in which President Ahmed Qooqoor was elected largely uncontested after the FGS created highly favorable conditions for him to win.¹⁶⁶ For over a decade, the ASWJ has fought against Al-Shabaab in central Somalia. They expected to be rewarded for their hard struggle against Al-Shabaab. Given their grassroots networks, it is possible that they would attempt to make another comeback when the opportunity avails itself.

159. See "Ex-House Speaker Jawari Fights Back Amid Vote Rigging Claims in Somalia" (November 2021) Garowe Online. Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/ex-house-speaker-jawari-fights-back-amid-vote-rigging-claims-in-somalia>

160. See "Somalia's election standoff intensifies, raising risk of political violence" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/12/27/somalia-farmajo-roble-crisis/>

161. See "Hannaanka Doorashada" Accessed at: <https://doorashada2021.so/hannaanka-doorashada/>

162. See "UN: More than 100,000 Somalis Displaced by Fighting in Central Galmudug Region" (October 2021) VOA News. Accessed at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/un-more-than-100-000-somalis-displaced-by-fighting-in-central-galmudug-region-/6286249.html>

163. See "At Least 20 Killed as Somalia Troops Battle Moderate Islamist Militia" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/somalia-troops-battle-moderate-islamist-militia/6282882.html>

164. See "Somalia militia agrees to a ceasefire in the central region" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/somalia-militia-agrees-to-ceasefire-in-galmudug-3597566>

165. See "Xoogaga Ahlu Sunna oo isku uruursanaya deegaanka Bohol" (October 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.universaltvsomali.net/topics/news/somali/34693>

166. For more information, see our 2019 policy brief "Galmudug Crisis: A Blueprint for Sustainable Settlement" (2019). Accessed at: <https://heritageinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Galmudug-Policy-Brief-2019.pdf>



Galmudug politics of 2021 was linked to that of the federal elections. Like most other states, all the Upper House seats were allocated for allies of President Qoorqoor

Galmudug politics of 2021 was linked to that of the federal elections. Like most other states, all the Upper House seats were allocated for allies of President Qoorqoor.¹⁶⁷ The state's electoral commission didn't even bother using the voting boxes as all eight seats were decided by acclamation after "bridesmaid" candidates resigned the last minute.¹⁶⁸ The competition was also not allowed in the selection of Lower House seats. One of the most controversial cases was that of Yasin Farey, the acting director of the NISA. A sitting security officer took the seat, yet the 27 May agreement calls for civil servants to resign three weeks before they can run for a political office.¹⁶⁹ In fact, opposition candidates use this case as evidence that the entire process was beyond repair.¹⁷⁰ President Qoorqoor of Galmudug is a close ally of President Farmaajo but faces enormous domestic pressure as Prime Minister Roble and many of the presidential candidates are from Galmudug.¹⁷¹

Al-Shabaab controls parts of the state including El-Dheer, El-Buur, Galhareeri and Haradheere.¹⁷² It has also attacked targets around the capital and other cities. In 2021, al-Shabaab recaptured Ba'ad Weyn and Amara.¹⁷³ Despite months of operational cooperation between federal and Galmudug forces with air support from the US, al-Shabaab remains a potent force in Galmudug and Somalia as a whole.

6.5 Hirshabelle

Hirshabelle state consists of Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle. It has experienced challenges from its inception on the eve of the 2016 political dispensations.¹⁷⁴ President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud rushed the process without genuine reconciliation and broad support for the new state. Hiiraan was one of the original regions of the Somali Republic in the 1960s.¹⁷⁵ Given this background, there were loud voices that demanded Hiiraan should maintain juridical regional status and be a federal member state, though the constitution clearly says two or more regions can become a state.¹⁷⁶ The FGS established Hirshabelle state in 2016.¹⁷⁷

167. See "Somalia's Sham Election May Trigger Post-Election Violence" (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.jowhar.com/article/somalias-sham-election-may-trigger-post-election-violence.html>

168. See "Doorashada aqalka sare Soomaaliya oo la soo afmeeray" (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/maxaa-laga-filayaa-doorashadda-galmudug>

169. See "Dispute Resolution Committee validates Yasin Farey's election" (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2021/Dec/184837/dispute_resolution_committee_validates_yasin_farey_s_election.aspx

170. See "Farmaajo top spy Yasin Farey elected MP in Galmudug" (2021) – Goobjoog. Accessed at: <https://goobjoog.com/english/farmaajos-top-spy-yasin-farey-elected-mp-in-galmudug/>

171. See "Somalia: Opposition candidates reject Qoorqoor's dinner invitation" (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-opposition-candidates-reject-qoorqoor-s-dinner-invitation>

172. See "Letter from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council" (October 2021) Accessed at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_849_E.pdf

173. See "Al-Shabaab militants have retaken Ba'adweyn and Amara localities in Mudug region barely a week after Somali forces wrested control of the two areas" (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://goobjoog.com/english/amara-baadweyne-towns-fall-back-to-al-shabaab-after-forces-pull-out/>

174. See "Hirshabele parliament elects a president" (October 2016) Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-37678040>

175. See "Somalia Regions" (2015) Accessed at: <http://www.statoids.com/uso.html>

176. See "Article 48 of the provisional constitution" (2012) Accessed at: <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/research/Somalia-Constitution2012.pdf>

177. See "Odayaasha reer Hiiraan iyo Raiisal Wasaaraha oo ku kala kacay kulankii Baledweyne" (March 2016) Accessed at: <https://www.universaltvsomali.net/topics/news/somali/11636>

Ali Guudlaawe became president in November 2020.¹⁷⁸ His election changed the power-sharing agreement between Abgal and Hawadle politicians that supported the formation of the state.¹⁷⁹ Even though his administration functions in the region, Ali Guudlaawe has not been allowed to visit the region since he became president.¹⁸⁰ Efforts to end this stalemate have so far failed, leaving the state effectively divided in half. This division has also impacted the federal elections, particularly the Lower House elections, which were supposed to start during the autumn of 2020 but have yet to begin. Beledweyn is the largest city in Hirshabelle, and it has more seats than Jowhar, the state capital.¹⁸¹ Nearly two-thirds of the seats available in the state are in Beledweyn, making it extremely important for aspiring politicians.

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Hirshabelle has organized a competitive Upper House election for most of its eight senators

Hirshabelle has organized a competitive Upper House election for most of its eight senators.¹⁸² President Guudlaawe supervised the process and has earned the compliments of domestic stakeholders and international partners.¹⁸³ On the Lower House, Hirshabelle has not started the House of the People election yet. This is largely a function of the deep division in the state and the inability of the state president to oversee the election in Hiiraan province. Another dimension is the role of Villa Somalia which has reportedly been ignoring president Guudlaawe and working closely with the vice president Yusuf Hagar.

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On security, the grievances emanating from the power-sharing disagreement in the state also triggered political violence in the summer of 2021. In August, the city of Beledweyn was split in half after fighting between federal security forces and clan militia

On security, the grievances emanating from the power-sharing disagreement in the state also triggered political violence in the summer of 2021. In August, the city of Beledweyn was split in half after fighting between federal security forces and clan militia.¹⁸⁴ The fighting was triggered when the vice president of the state, Yusuf Dabageed, a former governor of Hiiraan province, attempted to hold a cabinet meeting in Beledweyn for Hirshabelle ministers in a show of force. But Abukar Huud's clan militia, who are mainly from the Hawadle clan, disrupted the process.¹⁸⁵ Since then, the Hirshabelle administration functions in the city. The vice president is regularly in the city, as are other officials from the state and the federal government, but the dispute over the state formation and power-sharing remains frozen.

178. See “HirShabelle parliament elects Ali Guudlaawe as the new president” (November 2020) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2020/Nov/180667/hirshabelle_parliament_elects_ali_guudlaawe_as_new_president.aspx

179. See “Siyaasiyiinta beesha Abgaal oo bilaabay inay isu sharxaan xilka madaxweyne ku xigeenka Hirshabelle” (October 2016) Accessed at: <https://goobjooge.net/siyaasiyiinta-beesha-abgaal-oo-bilaabay-inay-isu-sharxaan-xilka-madaxweyne-ku-xigeenka-hirshabelle/>

180. See “Xildhibaanada beesha Xawaadle oo isugu tegay Beledweyne iyo ujeedka” (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.caasimada.net/xildhibaanada-beesha-xawaadle-oo-isugu-tegay-beledweyne-iyo-ujeedka/>

181. See “Hannaanka Doorashada” Accessed at: <https://doorashada2021.so/hannaanka-doorashada/>

182. See “Hirshabelle announces highly competitive Senate candidates list” (2021) Keydmedia. Accessed at: <https://www.keydmedia.net/en/news/hirshabelle-announces-list-of-senate-candidates>

183. See “Somalia's Sham Election May Trigger Post-Election Violence” (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.jowhar.com/article/somalias-sham-election-may-trigger-post-election-violence.html>

184. See “Khilaafka Hiiraan: Waa kuma Janaraal Xuud-ka dagaalka ka wada Beledweyne?” (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/somali/57705524>

185. See “Waa Kuma Janaraal Xuud-ka Dagaalka Ka Wada Beledweyne?” (2021) BBC SOMALI. Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/somali/57705524>

In addition to the political violence, the state continues to battle al-Shabaab on multiple fronts. Like many other states, al-Shabaab controls vast swathes of territory across the state, particularly rural areas and major supply routes. Most cities in the state are only accessible by air to state and federal officials as well as anyone who refuses to pledge allegiance to al-Shabaab. In September 2021, the group destroyed a small terminal building at Bulo Burde airport for the second time, even though the city and the airport is under AMISOM protection.¹⁸⁶ In December, the group also briefly seized the city of Mataban, the northernmost district of the state on the border with Galmudug. Also in December, Al-Shabaab entered the city of Bal'ad in the southernmost district which is only 30 kilometers away from Mogadishu. They killed seven people and looted the local police stations, taking vehicles and armed wagons.¹⁸⁷ Political divisions within the state and among federal leaders are stymying security operations intended to liberate the state. The promised Operation Badbaado 2 to eject the group from major supply routes and rural areas in Hirshabelle has never materialized.

6.6 Banadir

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Although Banadir is territorially small, it has a larger population than most states. It's the only region that the FGS fully controls. The provisional constitution states that

Banadir is one of the original eight regions of the Somali Republic.¹⁸⁸ The military government created three regions out of the former Banadir: Middle Shabelle, Lower Shabelle and Banadir (Mogadishu). Mogadishu became the city and it maintained its juridical regional status. Although Banadir is territorially small, it has a larger population than most states.¹⁸⁹ It's the only region that the FGS fully controls. The provisional constitution states that “The status of the capital city of Somalia shall be determined in the constitutional review process, and the two houses of the Somali Federal Parliament shall enact a special law with regards to this issue.”¹⁹⁰

167. See “Somalia’s Sham Election May Trigger Post-Election Violence” (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.jowhar.com/article/somalias-sham-election-may-trigger-post-election-violence.html>

168. See “Doorashada aqalka sare Soomaaliya oo la soo afmeeray” (November 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/maxaa-laga-filayaa-doorashadda-galmudug>

169. See “Dispute Resolution Committee validates Yasin Farey’s election” (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news/4/2021/Dec/184837/dispute_resolution_committee_validates_yasin_farey_s_election.aspx

170. See “Farmaajo top spy Yasin Farey elected MP in Galmudug” (2021) – Goobjoog. Accessed at: <https://goobjoog.com/english/farmaajos-top-spy-yasin-farey-elected-mp-in-galmudug/>

171. See “Somalia: Opposition candidates reject Qoorqoor’s dinner invitation” (December 2021) Accessed at: <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/somalia-opposition-candidates-reject-qoorqoor-s-dinner-invitation>

172. See “Letter from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council” (October 2021) Accessed at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/S_2021_849_E.pdf

173. See “Al-Shabaab militants have retaken Ba’adweyn and Amara localities in Mudug region barely a week after Somali forces wrested control of the two areas” (August 2021) Accessed at: <https://goobjoog.com/english/amara-baadweyne-towns-fall-back-to-al-shabaab-after-forces-pull-out/>

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177. See “Odayaasha reer Hiiraan iyo Raiisal Wasaaraha oo ku kala kacay kulankii Baledweyne” (March 2016) Accessed at: <https://www.universaltvsomali.net/topics/news/somali/11636>



The FGS leadership—both current and past—oppose making Banadir a standalone FMS, as the government would lose vast powers by doing so.

In 2016, when Hirshabelle, the last of the five federal member states, was set-up, residents of Mogadishu launched a campaign to recognize Banadir as its own federal member state. But the proposal remains politically complex. Moreover, the FGS leadership—both current and past—oppose making Banadir a standalone FMS, as the government would lose vast powers by doing so. The FGS president appoints mayors and several deputies and mobilizes them as needed for political, financial and security reasons. Moreover, security in the capital Mogadishu remains volatile.¹⁹¹ In December 2021 alone, FGS security forces killed a number of civilians in various “accidents” for which there has been little accountability.¹⁹²

7. Conclusion

The reporting period (year 2021) was marked by deep political upheavals over the much-delayed elections. Violence broke out in Mogadishu in April, and prospects for renewed violence in 2022 can’t be ruled out as the crisis deepens. At the state levels, several FMSs are suffering from deep internal divisions, notably Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and Galmudug.

Taking advantage of the deepening political crisis over elections, Al-Shabaab has extended its control in several parts of the country. Its main focus is on rural areas that are out of the reach of the FGS and AMISOM forces, and major supply routes where it levies taxes on the movement of goods and people. Military operations that were supposed to remove the group from Southwest and Hirshabelle have largely failed.

A worsening political and security environment directly contributes to the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Nearly half of the population was food insecure, and internal displacement was the highest in a decade owing to widespread political violence and clan conflicts.

External actors have been active in Somalia, aiming to produce favorable political outcomes in the dispensation. But in doing so, they have directly contributed to the worsening situation. The role of external actors in Somalia is likely to increase in 2022 as we edge closer to elections.

191. See “Two SNA soldiers arrested for allegedly shooting dead of two siblings in Mogadishu” (December 2021) Accessed at: https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Dec/184734/two_sna_soldiers_arrested_for_allegedly_shooting_dead_of_two_siblings_in_mogadishu.aspx

192. See “Dilkii Muqdisho: “Ciidamo Rasaas ku Furanaya Waddada ayaa Dilay Sakariye and Sowdo” (2021) BBC Somali. Accessed at: <https://www.bbc.com/somali/war-59515857>

HERITAGE

I N S T I T U T E