

POLICY VOICES SERIES

# Africa Research Institute



**AFTER BORAMA**  
Consensus, representation and parliament  
in Somaliland

Cover photo © Pete Chonka.

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## The *Policy Voices* Series

The *Policy Voices* series highlights instances of group or individual achievement. The publications are collaborations between Africa Research Institute (ARI) and leading practitioners in sub-Saharan Africa, which seek to inform policy through first-hand knowledge and experience.

In publishing these case stories, ARI seeks to identify the factors that lie behind successful interventions, and to draw policy lessons from individual experience.

The series also seeks to encourage competing ideas, discussion and debate. The views expressed in the *Policy Voices* series are those of the contributors.

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**Africa Research Institute**  
Aiming to reflect, understand and build on the dynamism in Africa today

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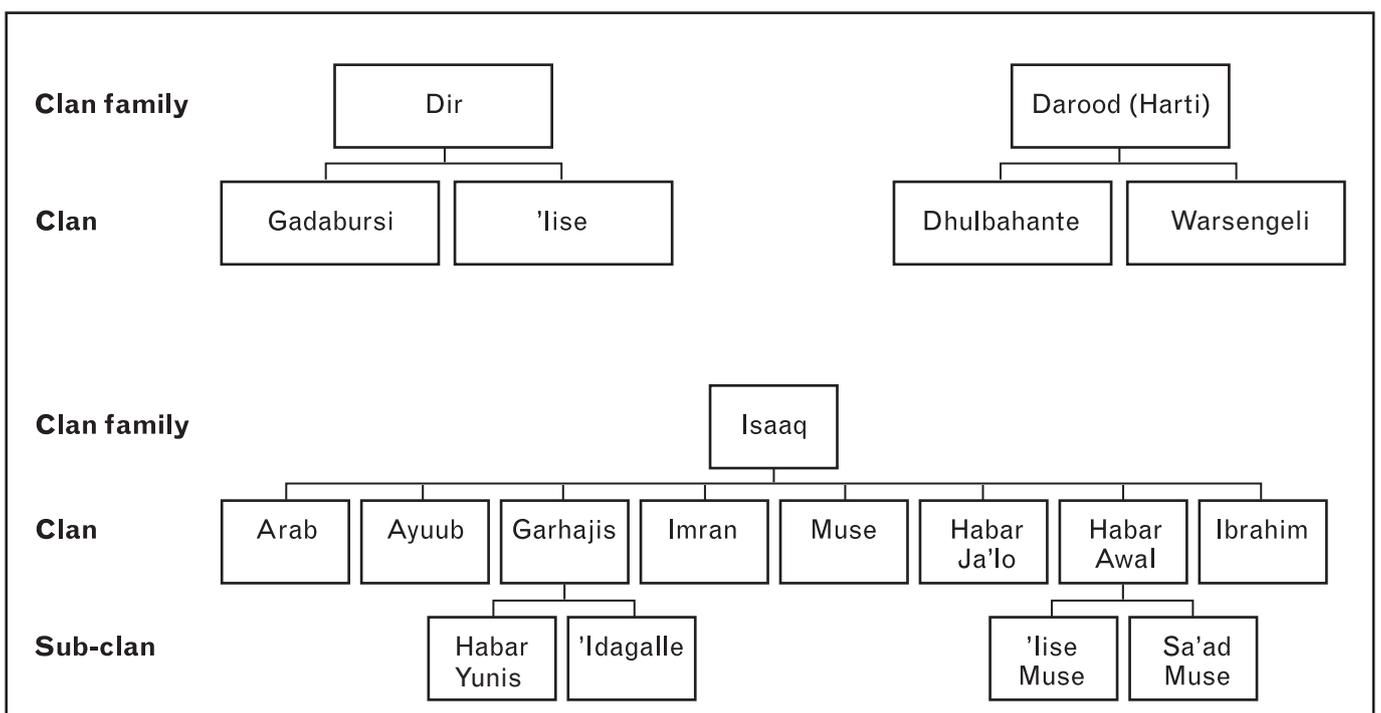
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*With the exception of the interviews with Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi “Irro” (which took place in February 2011) and Siham Rayale (which took place in London in February 2013), all discussions with contributors occurred in Hargeisa in July 2012. Job titles cited were correct at the time of interview. Dr Michael Walls’s contribution was written in February 2013.*

## Map of Somaliland



## Clans of Somaliland



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## Foreword

Elections matter in Somaliland. They are not mere formalities, conferring a thin veneer of legitimacy on a permanent incumbent; nor are they conducted solely as a sop to foreign donors insisting on greater democracy; nor is the prime motivation to further the pursuit of international recognition of Somaliland as a sovereign state. For most Somalilanders, elections are above all an essential component of internal peace and security. They present clans, sub-clans and individual voters with important choices and provide a forum for free expression of views and exchanges of opinion. Elections involve complex reshaping of relationships between regions and groups.

With the exception of the interviews with Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi “Irro” (which took place in February 2011) and Siham Rayale (which took place in February 2013), all discussions with the contributors to *After Borama: Consensus, representation and parliament in Somaliland* took place in July 2012. The publication is a departure from the normal format of Africa Research Institute Policy Voices series. It contains the record of conversations with many influential individuals rather than focusing on a single individual. This seems appropriate. In Somaliland, everyone is entitled to a voice in meetings.

In July 2012, Somaliland was preparing for local elections of particular significance. The previous local elections, in 2002, had established UDUB, Kulmiye and UCID as political parties. Ten years on, it was by no means certain that two of these three would exist beyond the November polls. Only the three political associations which attracted the most votes would win, or retain, legal status as political parties until the next local elections – which may not occur for another decade.

By July 2012, many of the supporters of UCID – and most of its MPs – had transferred their allegiance to a new political organisation, Wadani, led by the Speaker of the

House of Representatives, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi “Irro”. UDUB was widely thought to be dissolving. New alliances were being forged by the month, old ones were being redefined – and competition was intensifying daily.

Launch of *After Borama* coincides with the 20th anniversary of the conclusion of *Shirki Boorraama* – the Conference of Elders of the Communities of Somaliland in the city of Borama, in western Somaliland. This was, according to Mark Bradbury in his indispensable work *Becoming Somaliland*, “not only a defining political event in Somaliland, but also an example of an indigenous popular peace-making process that has few parallels in contemporary Africa”.<sup>1</sup>

At Borama, in 1993, Somalilanders embarked on a distinctive state-building process. More than 2,000 people attended the conference. The 150 members of the *Guurti* – a council of elders drawn from all clans – constituted the voting delegates. In the course of four months, consensus was reached about disarmament and demobilisation following the overthrow of President Mohamed Siyad Barre’s government, equitable political representation and the creation of institutions – the bedrock of two decades of relative peace and stability in Somaliland.

The conversations in this publication reflect what has been achieved since the Borama conference. They present a current assessment of political representation, the role of political institutions and national development priorities in Somaliland. The “sample” of voices was entirely random. Conflicting views were aired. None of the contributors would presume to claim that their opinions are anything other than personal, although each expresses some views which are widely held.

In compiling *After Borama*, ARI did not seek to accord undue prominence to any individual or group agenda. Although the conversations were recorded before local elections which fundamentally altered Somaliland’s political landscape, nothing said in anticipation of that event has been rendered irrelevant.

Writing with the benefit of hindsight denied to the contributors, it is true to say that Somaliland's local elections were keenly – even fiercely – contested. After all, seven political entities were competing for the right to contest parliamentary seats and the presidency in future elections. In certain places, at certain times during the poll, an unversed witness might have concluded that Somaliland was on the verge of serious civil unrest. Even had this been true, which it has proved not to be, Somalilanders have pulled back from the brink countless times since 1993. Some of the most perilous episodes are described by contributors, as are the means by which widespread violence has been averted. These means may be tried and tested, but it would be rash to assume that they are infallible.

Despite the intensity of the November 2012 local elections, some violence, and a good deal of rancour in the immediate aftermath, the results have been accepted. Kulmiye and UCID retained their legal status as political parties and were joined by newcomer Wadani. As ever, lessons have been learnt. In an address to both Houses of Parliament in February 2013, President Silanyo acknowledged the need for a new voter register before the next parliamentary elections – to counter electoral malfeasance and the possibility of more serious outbreaks of violence. This will be no easy task. A previous effort proved extremely divisive and had to be abandoned.

Good electoral management and fairness are vital – but so too is inclusiveness. Women remain substantially excluded from formal politics in Somaliland despite their pivotal roles in society, the economy and in negotiating peace. For most pastoralists, central government is a distant – even irrelevant – entity. The announcement by President Silanyo of a US\$1.3m stimulus plan for Sool, East Sanaag and Buhoodle regions will be welcome, but much more needs to be done by government both within and beyond the main towns and cities. The over-riding imperative to speed up economic and social development throughout Somaliland, and the constraints to pursuing

this course of action, are succinctly addressed in Section 4 by Dr Saad Shire, Minister of National Planning and Development.

Somaliland has – with occasional lapses – been successful at maintaining peace for more than two decades, held a succession of credible elections and effected peaceful transfers of power. These achievements should be acknowledged and lauded – but not romanticised, as Dr Michael Walls affirms in his postscript. Furthermore, Somaliland should not be regarded merely as a “laboratory” for possible solutions to Somalia's predicament or a bulwark against Islamic extremism and maritime piracy. These points are worth re-emphasising following the installation of a new government in Somalia and the resurgence of international involvement in efforts to build a durable peace there. For two decades, Somaliland has ploughed its own furrough – through success and setback.

ARI is extremely grateful to all the contributors to this publication who spoke so freely and with such conviction. ARI is also indebted to Michael Walls for his thoughtful and constructive postscript which draws on extensive knowledge of Somaliland and the region – and, most recently, his experiences as joint co-ordinator of the international election observation mission during the 2012 local elections.

**Edward Paice and Hannah Gibson**

Africa Research Institute

May 2013

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1 Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, Progressio/James Currey, 2008 p.106

## Somaliland timeline 1960-2001

**June 26th 1960** – British Protectorate of Somaliland gains independence.

**July 1st 1960** – Act of Union between State of Somaliland and former Italian Somalia creates the Somali Republic. Northern territories are represented by four ministers in a 14-member cabinet and hold 26% of parliamentary seats.

**October 21st 1969** – Following participation of more than 60 clan-based “parties” in the Somali parliamentary election, and the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, army commander Major-General Mohamed Siyad Barre seizes power in a *coup d'état*. Somali constitution suspended. Supreme Revolutionary Council established. “Scientific Socialism” adopted as ideological framework for development in Somalia.

**April 6th 1981** – Somali National Movement (SNM) formed in London by diaspora members of the Isaaq clan. SNM targets overthrow of Siyad Barre regime.

**1982** – SNM headquarters established in Ethiopia and insurgency launched in north-west Somalia.

**January 1983** – SNM launches first major operation inside Somalia – an attack on a prison and an armoury outside Berbera. By 1988 SNM force has grown to 3,500 fighters.

**April – May 1988** – Somalia and Ethiopia sign peace agreement ending a decade of hostilities. Deprived of the use of bases in Ethiopia, SNM attacks cities of Hargeisa and Burco but suffer very heavy casualties. Hargeisa and Burco ravaged by government air and artillery bombardment. Tens of thousands of civilians killed by Somali government forces, and hundreds of thousands flee to Ethiopia or abroad. Civil war and repression intensify in former Somaliland as militias of non-Isaaq clans – Gadabursi,

Warsangeli and Dhulbahante – are armed and funded by government.

**August 1990** – SNM in control of all rural areas in Isaaq territory of Somaliland. SNM unites with United Somali Congress (USC), led by General Mohamed Farah “Aideed”, and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), led by Colonel Ahmed Omar Jess in the Lower Jubba region, to bring down the Barre regime. In December, the USC fights its way into Mogadishu.

**January 27th 1991** – President Siyad Barre flees Mogadishu and Somali government overthrown by USC forces. In the north, SNM fighters oust national army from Berbera and – within a week – from Hargeisa, Burco, Borama and Erigavo.

**February 1991** – Berbera peace conference takes place, marking the formal cessation of hostilities between Isaaq and 'Iise, Gadabursi, Dhulbahante and Warsangeli clans of north-west Somalia. Agreement that all clans should restrain militias from carrying out reprisals. In Mogadishu, Ali Mahdi's faction of the USC announces formation of a Somali government without consulting SNM, which favours a federal system with all economic and security powers devolved to the regions.

**May 1991** – Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples convenes in Burco, Somaliland's second city, to consolidate peace process and discuss future of northern Somalia. Attended by ten senior elders from each of the Isaaq, Gadabursi, 'Iise, Dhulbahante and Warsangeli clans and members of the SNM leadership.

**May 18th 1991** – Prompted by widespread pressure from Isaaq elders and the public, Somaliland's withdrawal from union with Somalia is announced at the Burco conference – despite opposition from most

SNM leaders. Chairman of the SNM – Abdirahman Ahmed Ali “Tuur” – is made interim president of the independent Republic of Somaliland for a two-year period. Council of 18 ministers and four vice-ministers appointed. Provisional National Charter drawn up.

**June – July 1991** – Two Somali-wide reconciliation conferences held in Djibouti but civil war ensues in southern Somalia.

**January – March 1992** – Fighting breaks out in Burco and Berbera as Somaliland government attempts to establish its authority and raise revenues.

**October 1992** – Sheikh peace conference of 40 elders and religious leaders brings an end to intense in-fighting between Habar Yunis and 'Iise Muse sub-clans over access to Berbera port revenues. Agreement that all “national assets” to be placed under government control.

**November 25th 1992** – 150 elders and 30 militia commanders pledge loyalty to Somaliland and undertake to maintain peace.

**January – May 1993** – More than 2,000 people attend Conference of Elders of the Communities of Somaliland at Borama. The 150 members of the *Guurti* – a council of elders, drawn from all clans – constitute the voting delegates. Somaliland Peace Charter drawn up to agree process of demobilisation and disarmament. Transitional National Charter establishes executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. President Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, formerly prime minister of Somaliland (1960) and Somalia (1967–9) selected – with 99 out of 150 votes – to lead a transitional civilian government for two years. Seats in Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament apportioned among clans according to *beel* system of proportional representation. As in all the conferences,

women play a prominent and crucial role but are not allocated any seats.

**August 19th – November 11th 1993** – Erigavo Grand Peace and Reconciliation Conference, the culmination of 15 smaller conferences, endorses peace agreement between Isaaq, Warsangeli and Dhulbahante clans and plan for regional administration in Sanaag region.

**October 1994** – Somaliland shilling introduced.

**November 1994** – Fighting breaks out in Hargeisa and spreads to Burco. Control of Hargeisa airport revenues and disputes over parliamentary representation among catalysts of the conflict.

**October 1996 – February 1997** – Series of peace initiatives to bring an end to two years of fighting between government and Garhajis – 'Idagalle and Habar Yunis – militias culminates in Hargeisa peace and reconciliation conference. Lasting five months, the conference had 300 voting delegates – half from parliament and half from clans – and more than 100 official observers. President Egal re-elected for five years. Political representation rebalanced, interim constitution adopted and roadmap to multi-party elections agreed. New Somaliland flag adopted.

**1998** – Disaffected Dhulbahante and Warsangeli leaders withdraw support for Somaliland and back creation of Puntland State in north-east Somalia.

**September 2000** – Transitional National Government of Somalia formed.

**May 31st 2001** – 98% of voters approve a new constitution for Somaliland in a referendum. The constitution affirms Somaliland's independence and sovereignty, and endorses the introduction of multi-party politics.

# 1. THE SPEAKERS

## **Hon. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi “Irro” MP**

### **Speaker of the House of Representatives**

During the colonial era the Somali territories were divided into five parts. Present-day Djibouti was a French colony, Northern Frontier District was part of Kenya, Ogadenia was under Ethiopian administration, Somalia was an Italian colony and the area which is now Somaliland was a British protectorate. On June 26th 1960, Somaliland was the first of these territories to become independent.

It may sound strange but our fathers and forefathers had an ambition to unite all Somalis. Five days after Somaliland gained independence the country united with Italian Somalia to form the Somali Republic. Somalilanders soon became disappointed with this arrangement. They saw most positions of power go to the south. Southerners dominated politics, the army, the police and government ministries.

Under Mohamed Siyad Barre, the military dictator who seized power in Mogadishu in 1969, only about 5% of parliament's investment projects were implemented in Hargeisa and Somaliland. If a Somalilander needed a passport they had to go to Mogadishu – which is 1,500km away. Anyone who wanted to go to university had to go to Mogadishu. Hargeisa became just a village.

In the early 1980s a group of Somalilanders, mostly from the diaspora, decided to create a military wing to fight against the regime of Siyad Barre. For the next ten years there was civil war. In 1991, at the same time as Siyad Barre was ousted from Mogadishu by the United Somali Congress (USC), the Somali National Movement (SNM) captured Hargeisa, Berbera and Burco and liberated the country from Somalia. Later that year the SNM organised a big conference in Burco which brought together all of the constituencies and clans. This Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples lasted for three months.

At the Burco conference, Somaliland was declared an independent sovereign state – the Republic of Somaliland. Abdirahman Ahmed Ali “Tuur”, chairman of the SNM, became president of an interim government. He was given a mandate for two years. From this period Somaliland has tried to build an administration. But, even more than this, we have tried to make peace.

Somaliland was not problem-free. There were little wars and disputes between constituencies and clans which were obstacles to peace. In 1993, another reconciliation conference was held in Borama. It was attended by elders from all the clans and lasted for almost four months. All disagreements were resolved internally. There was no assistance from the international community or any other part of former Somalia, and the conference was also almost entirely financed by communities in Somaliland. It was successful because it was a locally made peace.

The skeleton of the Somaliland state was created at the Borama conference. The Transitional National Charter – a sort of interim constitution – and the National Peace Charter were agreed, as well as a system of proportional representation. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal was chosen to lead a two-year transitional government. He had served as prime minister of Somaliland during the short-lived independence in 1960 and as the last civilian prime minister of the Somali Republic before Siyad Barre seized power. Egal was not from the SNM.

On May 31st 2001, we held a referendum on the new constitution and the sovereignty of Somaliland. Over 90% of the adult population gave their views and 97.9% voted in favour of independence for Somaliland. This was ten years before South Sudan held its referendum on independence. We believe that we have a more genuine right to be recognised because we were, however briefly, a sovereign state in 1960. Yet even Britain, which granted us sovereignty, does not recognise our independence.

The 2001 constitution states that Somaliland can have no more than three political parties. At the outset, we registered six political associations to compete in local elections in

2002. The three which received the highest number of votes qualified as political parties entitled to put forward candidates for parliamentary and presidential elections. The successful associations were the United People's Democratic Party (UDUB), the Justice and Development Party (UCID) and the Peace, Unity and Development Party (Kulmiye).

In 2003, we held a presidential election. It was won by Dahir Riyale Kahin, the UDUB candidate, who had been vice-president under Egal. The margin of victory was only 80 votes but, to the surprise of many outsiders, the result was accepted by the runner-up, Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" of Kulmiye. There was no fighting. We did not need to call on Kofi Annan.

In September 2005, UDUB won the largest number of seats in the first parliamentary election. But when parliament came together, Kulmiye and UCID formed a coalition. Kulmiye's 28 seats and UCID's 21 seats gave them a majority over UDUB's 33, enabling the opposition to secure the positions of Speaker of the House and his two deputies. This has remained the case. I am from UCID and my two deputies are from Kulmiye, which became the ruling party after winning the 2010 presidential election. When Deputy Speaker Bashe visited the Ethiopian parliament in 2007, they could not believe that we had Speakers from different parties. It is a sign of the maturity of our democracy – even though it is young – that the opposition can have a majority in parliament.

The international community has paid little attention to Somaliland, although there was more interest after the 2010 presidential election. We hope that now we will at least be able to get some development projects off the ground and enhance services to the public. Hargeisa has only one public hospital. It was my birthplace. Then the city had about 100,000 people and today it has one million inhabitants. Water is another serious problem in the country. Even in Hargeisa only about 30–40% of the population gets tap water.

Education is similar. We have 25,000–30,000 high school students graduating each year but fewer than 5,000

university places. This means that a large percentage of these young people are just time bombs in our houses. They can't get into higher education and they can't get employment. In our cities they can be recruited by any bad people who are around us. Many people even try to cross the sea to Yemen or, via North Africa, to Europe because they don't see any future here. Many of them die on the way.

Somaliland has tried its best. We have established security and a viable police force. The state collects revenue from its citizens. In 2011 the new government increased the budget by almost 50% to US\$90m. The tribal communities are now coming forward. International observers have judged our elections to be free and fair. There has been a peaceful transition of power from one president to another. We hope that the democratisation process will continue. Somaliland has fulfilled all the criteria of a sovereign state regarding territory, governance and administration. We expect at least the same treatment that has been given to South Sudan.

## **Hon. Dr Ali Yousuf Ahmed MP Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives**

Even before the Somali National Movement (SNM) captured Somaliland, the movement had a central committee. Members of the committee were primarily from the Isaaq clan in the early days. But people from other clans were later incorporated.

After announcing secession from Somalia in 1991, the SNM promised that it would hand over to a civilian government after two years. They fulfilled their promise. At the Borama conference in 1993, members of the SNM and civilians competed for the post of president. A civilian – Mohamed Egal – won. It was also decided that the Somaliland Parliament should be made up of two chambers: the House of Elders, or *Golaha Guurtida*, and the House of Representatives, or *Golaha Wakiilada*. Seats were apportioned on a clan basis. All the clan representatives were men.

In 1997, seat allocations to the different chambers were revised at the Hargeisa national conference. Despite this, most members of the House of Representatives remained the same until it became a directly elected chamber in October 2005 and members of the three parties – UDUB, Kulmiye and UCID – took their seats. The *Guurti* is still dominated by descendants of the original members.

New political organisations have formed ahead of the local council elections in November 2012. There are a number of criteria which have to be met for an organisation to be formally registered as an association to contest the local council election. They must have a central committee and a chairperson, deputy chair and secretariat. They must keep records of their meetings and the details of their founders and backers. They must have a constitution which does not contradict the Constitution of Somaliland.

Political organisations cannot be based on narrow regional, religious or clan affiliations. To ensure this condition is complied with, organisations must have offices and representatives in all of the regions of Somaliland. They have to be able to prove that they have at least 1,000 registered supporters in each region. Their files are inspected by the registration committee.

Nine organisations failed to fulfil the criteria. The five which were successful and became official political associations were Umadda, Dalsan, Rays, Wadani and Xaqsoor. These five associations and the three existing parties will compete in the local elections. From the contestants, the three which win the most seats will then become the official political parties, as specified in the constitution. They will have the right to contest the next parliamentary election and nominate candidates for the next presidential election.

If any of the current parties – UCID, UDUB and Kulmiye – fail at the local level, they will cease to be political parties. An MP from a party that no longer exists will be free to join another. This creates an interesting situation.

A number of MPs who belong to UCID or UDUB are joining new political associations. There is a lot of movement taking place.

Conflicts have occurred during this transition. There was one between my colleague Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi “Irro”, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the chairman of his party – UCID. The Speaker believed that it was his turn to lead the party and run as a presidential candidate next time as the chairman had stood twice and lost on both occasions. The chairman of UCID did not agree. As a result, the Speaker established his own political organisation –Wadani – and took members from UCID with him. Wadani will be a strong candidate. If it becomes a political party, the Speaker will have a chance to stand in the next presidential election in 2015.

Most of the people – maybe 80% – are in favour of opening up the political system in this way to allow new associations to form. When Kulmiye, the party I belong to, was campaigning for the presidential election we promised that we would open the political space for new associations to form. The president established a committee to visit all of the regions to ask people if this is what they wanted. It was, so we made an amendment allowing the opening-up of the political system every ten years. The president submitted an appropriate bill to parliament and we approved it.

It would be very expensive to open up the political system more often than once every ten years. We thought ten years was about right. That allows existing political parties to develop and new ones to form. Of course, it is possible that the current three political parties will secure the most votes in the local elections and will retain their status.

## **Hon. Bashe Mahammed Farah MP First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives**

The current moment is a critical point because nine political organisations have not fulfilled the criteria to become political associations. The organisations which have been dismissed have made submissions to the courts alleging that they were unfairly treated. They claim to have fulfilled the criteria yet were still not recognised by the registration committee. After the local elections we will have more complaints from the associations which fail to become one of the three political parties. But I am confident everything can be resolved peaceably. We are used to this sort of thing.

One of the reasons we allow these new political associations to form is that we are ambitious. When there were only the three existing political parties, people complained that it was not a real democracy. The House of Representatives felt that it had to amend this and open up the system to allow other contenders to become parties, although it is a time-consuming and complicated process. It is also very expensive. We will hold four elections in Somaliland within the next four years. After the local council vote we must hold elections in the House of Representatives, for the House of Elders and – in 2015 – for the presidency.

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) has complained that the system we now have results in a very long list of candidates for the local elections. For example, in Hargeisa alone we may have 225 candidates. In the 2010 presidential election, all of the candidates were assigned an emblem – a cow or a camel, for example. This was to help voters identify their candidate as there is a high level of illiteracy in the country. With the local council elections, however, it would be very difficult to do the same thing because there are so many candidates. So, instead, the NEC has opted to assign a number to each candidate.

It is an interesting time of change. Elections are important to us. Even though we are not recognised by the

international community, we are taking steps that many other countries in this part of the world have not been able to take.

## Electoral roll, 2001-12

**February 2001** – President Egal announces the formation of Somaliland's first political organisation – the United Democratic People's Party (UDUB). By the September 2001 deadline five more organisations are formed – the Alliance for Salvation and Democracy (ASAD), Champions for Peace and Prosperity (Hormood), the Unity Party (Kulmiye), Somaliland Alliance for Islamic Democracy (SAHAN) and the Justice and Welfare Party (UCID).

**December 18th 2001** – National Electoral Commission (NEC) created. Amid unrest and widespread discontent with President Egal's government, local elections are delayed for a year.

**May 3rd 2002** – President Egal dies. Vice-President Dahir Riyale Kahin succeeds him, as stipulated by the constitution.

**December 15th 2002** – The six political organisations contest local elections for 23 district councils. In order to gain registration as a political party, organisations have to win 20% of the vote in four of Somaliland's six regions – a requirement which fosters cross-clan alliances. More than 440,000 Somalilanders vote although there is no electoral register. UDUB (41% of votes, 102 of the contested seats), Kulmiye (19% of votes, 67 seats) and UCID (11% of votes, 45 seats) become the three recognised political parties. International election observers judge the polls to have been carried out in a transparent and free manner.

**April 14th 2003** – President Dahir Riyale Kahin (UDUB), Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" (Kulmiye) and Faisal Ali Farah "Waraabe" (UCID) compete in Somaliland's first popular presidential election. Dahir Riyale Kahin defeats Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" by 80 votes in a poll deemed "reasonably free and fair" by election observers. The result is contested in the Supreme Court.

**May 16th 2003** – Dahir Rayale Kahin is sworn in for a five year term as president. After mediation, Kulmiye concedes defeat.

**September 29th 2005** – 246 candidates, of whom only seven are women, contest parliamentary elections for the 82-member House of Representatives. Constituencies are demarcated according to a system used in Somaliland's post-independence election in 1960. Hargeisa region is allocated 20 seats, Awdal 13, Sahil 10, Togdheer 15, Sanaag 12, and Sool 9. A total of 670,320 votes are cast at 985 polling stations. More than 60% of votes come from Somaliland's three western regions (Woqooyi Galbeed/Hargeisa, Awdal and Sahil). UDUB wins 33 seats, Kulmiye 28 seats, and UCID 21 seats. International observers describe the elections as "reasonably free and fair".

**April – June 2008** – *Guurti* votes to extend President Riyale's term by one year. Local elections postponed indefinitely.

**October 2008** – One week after voter registration commences, public buildings in Hargeisa are the target of three suicide bombings which kill at least 25 people. Mogadishu-based Islamist group al-Shabaab is believed to have been responsible for the attacks.

**2009** – Political and constitutional crisis amid recriminations over widespread fraud in voter registration programme and failure of NEC to ready itself for 29th March or 27th September polling dates. On 30th September the deadlock is broken with signing of a memorandum of understanding by all political parties agreeing to appointment of a new NEC, a new election timetable and use of a "refined" voter list.

**June 26th 2010** – Kulmiye party candidate Ahmed Mohamed "Silanyo" is elected president having won 49.6% of the 538,246 votes cast. Incumbent Dahir Riyale Kahin polls 33.2% and UCID candidate Faisal Ali Farah "Waraabe" 17.2%. Somalilanders ignore a warning not to vote issued by al-Shabaab. Election is pronounced "a peaceful expression of popular will". During a peaceful transfer of power President Silanyo praises his predecessor for his services to the country.

**December 2011** – 15 political organisations register for assessment of their eligibility to contest forthcoming local council elections as political associations. The three associations which attract the most votes will be recognised as legitimate political parties.

**April 20th 2012** – Six political associations – Wadani, Umadda, Haqsoor, Dalsan, Rays and Nasiye (subsequently merged with Wadani) approved to compete against the three existing political parties in local elections.

**July 2012** – Defection of financier Jamal Ali Hussein from UDUB to UCID as its future presidential candidate.

**November 28th 2012** – Following the demise of UDUB – the party of former Presidents Egal and Riyale – local council elections contested by the two remaining political parties and five newly formed political associations. 2,368 candidates compete for 353 seats. Kulmiye (30.2% of votes), Wadani (20.2%), and UCID (13%) win – or retain – recognition as political parties.

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## 2. REPRESENTATION

### **Haroon Ahmed Yusuf** **Deputy Director, Social Research and** **Development Institute (SORADI)**

The interplay between our culture and the democratic system is very important. The system which formed over the years was the clan system. Fair distribution of power and resources between clans is very important. One of the factors that can sometimes lead to conflict is if certain clans are perceived as becoming too powerful.

From 1991 to 2001, the clan system was the basis of power-sharing in Somaliland. There were disagreements about how many people there were in each clan and how many representatives each should be allowed. Although we did not know the exact numbers in each clan, we knew, for example, that one was slightly bigger than another. It was on the basis of this clan representation that the members selected who would become president. The clan-based system helped to maintain stability and peace among the members.

We knew we needed to move from that system to another. We chose the democratic system as it is the fairest for maintaining clan relationships and representation. Democratic elections also work for us because they are based upon the idea of sharing resources within the country. Elections, like the previous clan-based representation, are very important for keeping stability.

In the context of Somaliland, most political candidates get approximately 70% of their votes from their sub-clan. The remaining 30% will come from other sub-clans. People accept voting as a fair way of selecting representatives. One of the problems we face is that good leaders are sometimes hidden within the clan system and poor leaders may be the ones who come forward.

In the 2002 local elections people voted for parties which had already selected their lists of candidates. This is called a closed list system. Voters found out that the candidates

put forward by the parties were not necessarily the type of representatives that they wanted. For the 2012 election there was a big demand to vote for individual candidates rather than for the lists made by parties. As a result of this popular demand, the system has been changed. The local elections will use an open list, with voting for individual candidates rather than parties. It will be a learning process – but it is what people wanted. I think that our people are slowly getting better at choosing the right leaders.

One problem regarding political representation is that MPs seldom go back to their constituencies and there is no mechanism which holds them accountable to constituents. There was a debate on television about this. People were asked what they thought about their parliamentarians. About 99% of the people said they were unhappy because their MPs never visit them. But MPs receive no financial support which would enable them to do this. When they do go back, constituents ask for money and they do not have sufficient funds to be able to support everyone.

There are no differences between the political parties or individual politicians in terms of ideology. All three parties have international recognition for Somaliland as a priority. They are all pro-Somaliland, pro-free market, pro-democracy. They are all the same. The only group that is different in any way is UCID because they came up with the idea of having a welfare system. That is just a dream. Most people know that they cannot make a welfare system function in this country. Free schools and free health care – it is impossible here. There aren't the resources.

People are also suspicious of political ideology because they had a bad experience of it with Siyad Barre's "scientific socialism". Although he had some good ideas, people think of everything from that era as bad. You could say that the ideology of Somaliland is the clan system. People continue to look to the clan to help with their basic needs like schooling and health care. If MPs could actually deliver development, it would be something good for the people.

Despite the absence of ideology, people from the same clan vote for different parties. This reflects the presence of clan coalitions and the sub-clan system. For example, UDUB, founded by former president Egal, was created through a coalition between sections of 'Iise Muse of the Habar Awal, Habar Yunis, Gadabursi and a number of other sub-clans. But when the party was compiling its list of candidates it could not satisfy everybody from Habar Yunis or everybody from 'Iise Muse. So some people from those groups joined UCID or Kulmiye.

Having three political parties helps cross-clan coalitions. If you are ambitious and do not get an opportunity in one party, you might move to another party and take some of your clan and sub-clan supporters with you. That is how different configurations and different associations are formed. The interplay within the House of Representatives is therefore not only between parties but also between sub-clans. That is why it is unique. We have a multi-party system but within that there is another system at play. Our clans may fight but they also know how to negotiate and this has shaped the democratic system we have.

Our people are really interested in this system of elections. I think that everyone understands that it is the only way to maintain a fair representative system of governance that people can rely upon. Fair representation and access to justice for everybody is crucial to stability. Elections help people to have trust in the nation and the future of their country.

Sometimes people get fed up because we cannot afford to hold elections every year. Elections are very expensive but they are the only way and it is a price worth paying. The 2012 local government elections will cost roughly US\$18m. The international community will cover up to 75% of the funding required.

The Registration and Approval Committee did not immediately declare the reasons why some newly formed political organisations failed in their bid to become political associations contesting the local elections. I think

### Distribution of seats by clan and party – 2005 parliamentary elections

Clan	UDUB	Kulmiye	UCID	Total seats
Sa'ad Muse	2	5	2	9
'Iise Muse	3	1	3	7
Habar Yunis	8	1	8	17
'Idagalle	0	0	2	2
Habar Ja'lo	5	9	2	16
Arab	2	3	0	5
Ayub	0	1	0	1
Gadabursi	7	3	3	13
'Iise	1	0	0	1
Warsengeli	2	2	0	4
Dhulbahante	2	3	1	6
Hawiye/Fiqishini	1	0	0	1
<b>Total seats</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>82</b>

### Clan distribution in Parliament

Clan	Pre-2005 Parliament	2005 Parliament
Isaaq	48	57
Gadabursi	11	13
Dhulbahante	9	6
Warsengeli	5	4
'Iise	5	1
Hawiye/ Fiqishni	1	1
Minorities	4	0

Source: Haroon Ahmed Yusuf in Mark Bradbury, *Becoming Somaliland*, Progressio/James Currey, 2008

the most common cause of failure among the nine organisations which were not registered and approved was the failure to have at least 1,000 supporters from each of the regions. This measure is in place to ensure that parties are operating on a truly national level and represent lots of different clans – but in practice that is very difficult to organise. One political organisation was rejected on the grounds of being a religious organisation. Narrow religious or clan support is considered to be divisive.

A new provision within Law 14 – which regulates political associations and parties – was introduced in 2011. It raised the registration fee for aspiring political associations to US\$25,000. This was done to discourage people from forming parties solely on clan allegiances or a narrow support base among, for example, a group of businessmen. US\$25,000 is a serious amount of money. When registration required a relatively small amount of money, every group or every sub-sub-clan was able to form a party. Since the cost has been increased sub-clans and sub-sub-clans have had to collaborate in order to pay the money together.

Another amendment to Law 14 stipulates that you now have to disclose your name if you put money forward and start a political organisation. There were originally only seven articles to Law 14 and now there are more than 30. A lot of the new provisions are based on our experience. We have learnt from the clan system and from the process of opening up the democratic space.

The three-party system which is operative in Somaliland has its origins in the history of our country. In the 1960s every sub-group formed its own political party. This was very divisive and created a lot of problems. There were more than 70 parties and it was chaos. Some people criticise restricting the number to three but we believe this system is working for us here. The alternative would be to face a chaotic situation in which everyone split only along clan and sub-clan lines.

Due to our history we have a lot of people in the diaspora – in the United Kingdom, America, Scandinavia and elsewhere. Many new ideas come from the diaspora. Approximately half of our politicians are returnees and this has re-energised politics.

The issue of a quota for women has been around for a long time. Women played a crucial role in reconstructing the country, in the peace-building process and in bringing the clans closer together. In the 2010 presidential election Kulmiye promised that they would give women a 25% quota in all political institutions. When Kulmiye came to

power, they started to act on this promise – but only in a limited way. For example, three positions out of about 26 were given to women in the first cabinet of the new government. The government also kept its promise to start negotiations on the establishment of a quota more widely. They set up a committee to look at the issue and to discuss the quota system with all of the Somaliland communities.

I work closely with the national women's network, Nagaad. It held regional caucuses of women activists who met with the president, who promised he would recommend a quota to parliament. I know the women were a little disappointed because the chair of the parliamentary committee was not very welcoming to the idea. They will not get the 20-30% quota they want but I hope they will receive 7-8%. I think the feeling amongst women activists is that even if parliament approved a quota of 7%, they would accept it. It would be a start, at least.

Of course the *Guurti* has previously debated a quota and it has always been put aside on a technicality. Many men are unhappy with the idea of a quota. But the president and his wife are committed to this issue. Discussing it in parliament is a sign that we are slowly moving forward.

### **Adam Haji Ali Ahmed** **Chair, Somaliland Non-state Actors** **Forum (SONSAF)**

The multi-party democratic system is central to the maintenance of peace and stability in Somaliland. We are in a very sensitive region. Somalia is dealing with piracy and a lot of our neighbouring countries have dictatorial systems with little respect for human rights or freedom of expression.

There is a big problem with the shortage of jobs for young people. Lots of them are leaving Somaliland and trying to reach Europe. A multi-party system helps to maintain hope that things will change for the better. If the same

people stay in power, people lose hope and are more likely to take the law into their own hands. We only narrowly survived the 2010 presidential election because it was delayed numerous times by the previous president.

Ideally, we would like people to elect women without needing to have a quota. But this will require a change in attitudes. In the meantime, in legal terms there are two ways in which the issue could be addressed.

The number of MPs from each region is supposed to be based on the number of people living in that region. The problem is that we do not have an accurate count of the number of people living in each region. The regional representation we are currently using is based on surveys conducted in 1961. These were the numbers used in the 2005 parliamentary elections. The time has come to debate the law regulating representation in the House of Representatives and to review the law on electoral procedures. One strategy would therefore be to put the quota for women in with amendments to the law regulating the representation from the regions.

The second option is to address Law 20. This deals with local and presidential elections. At the moment almost all of the candidates for the political associations in the local council elections are men. We could introduce a provision within Law 20 which says that 30–40% of the candidates for each political association have to be women.

For the time being, changing Law 20 is the option I support. This is easy to implement and it would serve as a checkpoint while efforts are made to secure a more lasting solution. It would not actually be a quota ensuring how many female parliamentarians were ultimately selected. But it would at least ensure that there are female candidates and open the door. This is the plan we are supporting at SONSAF.

Nagaad, the national women's network, has been working on the legal side of this issue for a while and has been lobbying parliamentarians. One of the issues that people will eventually have to take into consideration is the fact

that a substantial part of the costs for all elections in Somaliland is covered by the international community. They will not be happy if there is no quota for women. If this issue is not resolved, they could reduce their funding for elections and the government.

## **Abdirahman Yusuf Duale “Boobe” Minister of Information**

The Somali National Movement (SNM) functioned democratically. There were always a number of candidates for the position of chairman at SNM congresses. This was democracy in practice. The process was participatory. The moving force was the people. The SNM was funded – and therefore owned – by the people.

If you go into town you do not have a policeman or a soldier standing on every corner to look after the security and stability. The people are responsible for this. If you go to the centre of Hargeisa you see all the money-changers. When there is the call for prayer they run to the mosque. No one takes their money – it stays right there, in the middle of town. So you see the role of the people in the liberation movement.

Elections are vital for us. One of the major purposes of holding elections is to ensure that people feel they are being heard, that they are getting their say in how they want to be governed. It is very important that elections take place regularly. This enables people to talk about their future and development issues – the performance of their sanitation systems, garbage collection and policing.

The major problem is that things are not completely in our hands due to the financial aspect of holding elections. Unless there is some change in our economy, we will not be able to hold the elections by ourselves and own the entire process. We would prefer to pay the whole cost and have the independence that comes with that. As a result, nobody could tell us when we can and cannot hold elections. We have to do things to minimise such dependency.

Women have been largely excluded from politics. One of the reasons relates to the clan system. Usually a woman is not seen as belonging to a clan. This is because in a way she belongs to two clans – she has her own clan and also the clan of her husband. This means that women play a different role to men in the clan system. Financial factors have also excluded women from politics. It is expensive to campaign and women do not have the same access to cash or donations as men. The majority of voters are women. But it may take some time even for female voters to opt for a female candidate.

## **Nafisa Yusuf Mohamed** **Director, Nagaad Network**

Nagaad is a nationwide women's network consisting of 46 member organisations. An approximate translation of the term "Nagaad" is "after hardship and difficulties, we have come to rest in peace". The organisation was established following the Grand National Peace Conference in Hargeisa in 1996-97. All political and traditional leaders participated in that conference – but women were not represented. Nagaad's main office is in Hargeisa, but we have sub-offices in Burco and Erigavo and representation in all six regions of the country. For the last five years we have been working to secure a quota for women in parliament. It is a very sensitive issue.

We regularly go to parliament to see whether they are discussing the issue when they are meant to be. When women activists sit behind the MPs in parliament, they have to discuss the matter. At a recent meeting of 20 MPs, three told us they would vote in favour of introducing the quota for women. Eight were strongly opposed. The remainder were in the middle. Often we talk to MPs privately and they are positive and sympathetic – but what they say and do in parliament is different.

Some men say they will not accept a quota for religious reasons. The problem is they often confuse culture and religion. If women knew more about religion they would

be able to disagree – but most women do not know enough about our religion, and men want to keep it that way.

Sometimes men also bring up the issue of clans and say that a woman has no clan of her own. But we say women make up more than 50% of the clan population – so more than half of the population is discriminated against. We want to see everything that goes on but at the moment we only have one eye. It is not fair but we are still trying to change things. Another undeniable fact is that women tend to vote for male candidates.

The quota issue has potential implications for donor money. The international community supports the government and elections but our system is discriminatory. If they look at this, maybe they will change their image of Somaliland. We have peace, we have a constitution, we have a working parliament. Women are very proud of all this but somehow we are still denied representation.

## **Siham Rayale** **PhD candidate, School of Oriental and African Studies, London**

A vast amount has been written about women in Somaliland – from the pre-colonial period onwards. An important part of women's history is how they have always mobilised communities. The central role of women is alluded to by Amina Mohamoud Warsame in the title of her excellent work *Queens Without Crowns*.\*

During the peace-building and disarmament process in the 1990s, women organised mass protests against outbreaks of violence, they organised the collection of weapons in villages and cities, and they used the fact that they belong to more than one clan to bring groups together. Their support of the peace conferences was critical – they fed everyone, decorated the space and helped to keep the participants talking. But in terms of political representation, women were sidelined.

\* Amina Mohamoud Warsame, *Queens Without Crowns*, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, 2002.

Some women campaigned for formal political inclusion. As early as 1993, at the Borama conference, women tried to secure representation in the new Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament. I don't think they had an exact number in mind. They were simply saying that there should be formal recognition of women's contribution to winning the war – including their fund-raising efforts on behalf of the Somali National Movement – as well as their contribution towards establishing peace. The campaign was not successful, and since then female activists have said: "If clan politics is not going to work for us, then we need a quota".

When some sort of effective administration was established under President Egal, women campaigners thought, "at least with Egal we will get somewhere". When he was prime minister of Somalia before the 1969 *coup d'état*, he had supported women's rights and promoted women's education. He had also been married to Edna Adan, who was herself extremely well educated and articulate, and who had pursued a successful career at the World Health Organisation.

Egal did appoint a female minister of state in the presidency. This was well received – but at the same time it was a bit disappointing that more wasn't done. Perhaps too much was expected of Egal. After all, his government was a transitional administration.

President Riyale appointed two female ministers – Edna Adan, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, and one other. Although that was progress, the goal of campaigners was to secure much greater female representation in senior roles throughout the institutions of government – for example, as director-generals of ministries. There were women well qualified for many of these roles.

Many women I have interviewed believe that things took a turn for the worse after 2005, especially when the date for the second presidential election kept getting pushed back. There was a threat of a political crisis. The issue of female representation was shelved – but women's skills in

conflict resolution were again called upon to the full. Since 2005, the emphasis has been on development and building political institutions.

In terms of formal representation in formal politics, it is very difficult for Somalilanders in general to understand the need for a quota. Islamic and Somali culture equalises the status of men and women. That does not mean that people see men and women as the same or having the same roles. A lot of men ask: "Women have a role. Why do they want to be exceptional?" Many women say, "A woman can't represent us. Clan politics is a man's role. Our role is to raise a family, look after the household, raise and educate children, and to support our husband."

There are, of course, men as well as women who are supportive of women's participation in politics. But there is a feeling that if women want to participate then they should go electioneering in the same way as men and be on an equal footing. A quota is widely regarded as putting men and women on an unequal footing. This is inherently conflictual. A lot of male politicians see a quota as a way to divide men and women.

Quotas raise difficult issues regarding representation. Do women become a clan of their own? Are women a constituency of their own? If so, what do we call this? What do we call a separate reserved space for women alone? For clans, there are reserved spaces and checks and balances within the constitution and electoral laws. For example, if a minister is from one clan the vice-minister and director-general will be from other clans. But this kind of balancing arrangement is based on clan – and we know that clan does not work for women.

A prominent female activist who has campaigned for a quota said to me: "We want men to know that the right arm can't survive without the left arm. Men can't survive without women. We're not saying that our path into politics should be exceptional and separate us from the wider political process. What we are saying is that we want to contribute to that process, and our ability to do

so is not being recognised – we are not given the space. That is what a quota is supposed to do.” A common response to this is: “If you get a quota then the minority clans and groups will need a quota.” The discussion is evolving but in society in general – among men and women alike, politicians and non-politicians – acceptance of the idea of a gender quota isn’t quite there yet.

Many of the women I have interviewed – literate, illiterate, those who participate in civil society activism and those who don’t, old and young – have indicated that members of the *Guurti* are far more supportive of a quota than MPs, although back in December 2007 they overwhelmingly rejected a reserved seats bill as being unconstitutional. The chairman of the *Guurti* himself said to me: “We support women’s participation and we want to see women continue to be part of the political process and to populate the political institutions in Somaliland and to electioneer – as long as they satisfy the standards of modesty that have been laid down by Islam and the standards of etiquette that guide how men and women should behave in public. If they satisfy that, we absolutely support women’s participation in these institutions.”

Of course, the *Guurti*’s members are selected, not elected. They have no need to oppose women campaigning for a quota. Interestingly, it was women who first suggested the idea of institutionalising the elders as an Upper House – at the Borama conference in 1993. As long as the *Guurti* remains selected, women will not be able to join it. There is one female member at present but that is a special arrangement. The real threat posed by a quota is to men in parliament and at local council level.

There have been other difficulties for those campaigning for a quota. One is the failure to mass-mobilise. To say that there is a widespread women’s movement in Somaliland geared to promoting the quota isn’t true. Nagaad and other organisations haven’t really reached out to rural and illiterate women – who are a majority. Some of them point to the leaders of women’s organisations and say: “You don’t speak for us. You don’t know the

hardships we face. You have a good income from a donor organisation and you can parlay with men on an equal footing. But men have power over us, both financial and physical. We don’t have the same freedom of mobility and freedom of expression that you have. So you don’t speak for us.”

Grassroots mobilisation will be hard. Many women simply don’t care about the issue. They don’t see themselves ever benefiting from it in practical ways. If I elect a female politician, they ask, how is she going to make my life any better than if I elect a male politician? Another constraint has been the failure to secure sufficient influential male allies, including religious leaders.

I have asked many young women: “Do you see yourselves as the next generation of political leaders?” Those who are interested in politics mostly reply: “Before we get there, we’ll have to start with the local council. It’s a way for me to help my community, it’s a way for me to participate in my society and it’s a way for me to do something for my people.” A female MP suggested to me that this would be the easiest way for women initially and it would counter the charge of lacking experience.

If you become an MP, you have to move to the capital. That can be very difficult for a woman and may involve leaving her children. With local council politics, she can stay where she is. She can carry on with her day-to-day role in the family while also being an active and visible representative in her community. If she achieves a lot, that will be noticed. Men can get into parliament through clan politics, but for some women the key will be to show what they’ve accomplished.

Of course, not all women want to be politicians or to participate in formal politics. But a lot of women are gaining a greater and more sophisticated political consciousness, and women account for 60% or more of the votes cast in elections. In other words, a majority of the votes for most MPs come from women.



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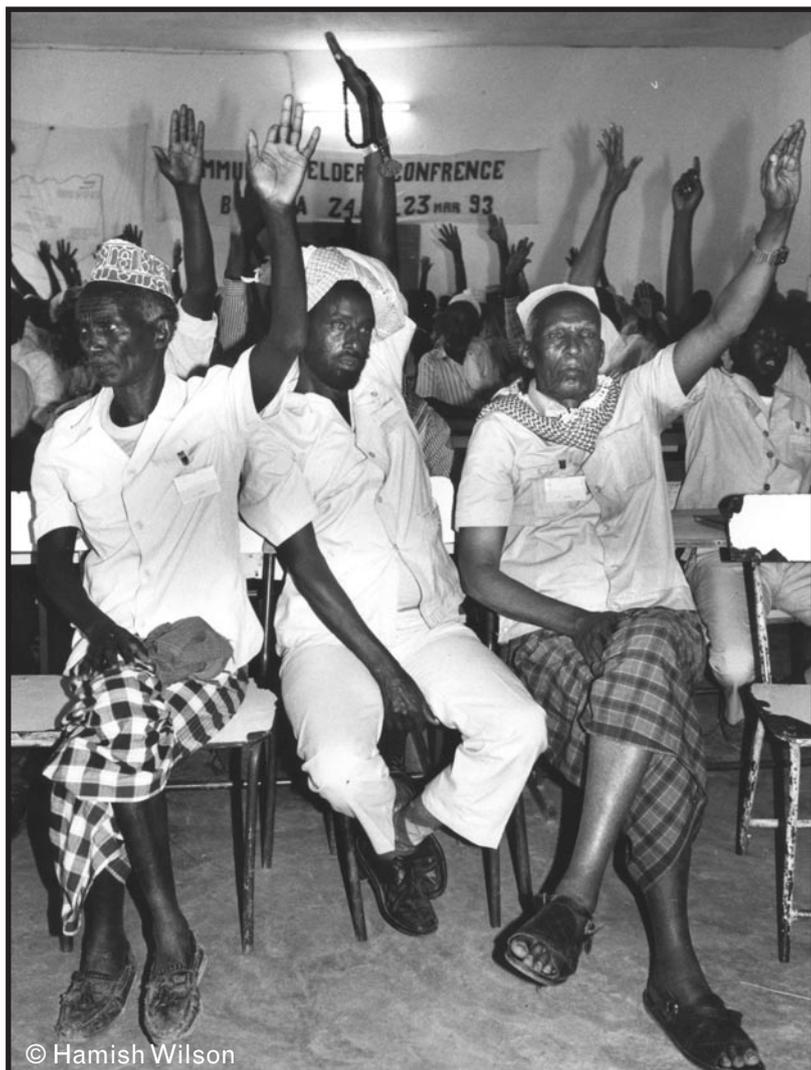
## Borama Conference 1993

**Top left:** An attempt is made by Omar Arteh Ghalib – seen here remonstrating with members of the *Guurti* secretariat – and a small group of his supporters to have the vote for a new president and vice-president cancelled at the last minute. The cause of his ire was the realisation that the mood in the hall was overwhelmingly in support of Mohamed Ibrahim Egal rather than himself and Abdirahman Ahmed Ali “Tuur”. Daud Mahamed Gheli (left) is imploring him to obey the wishes of the *Guurti* and participate in the election.

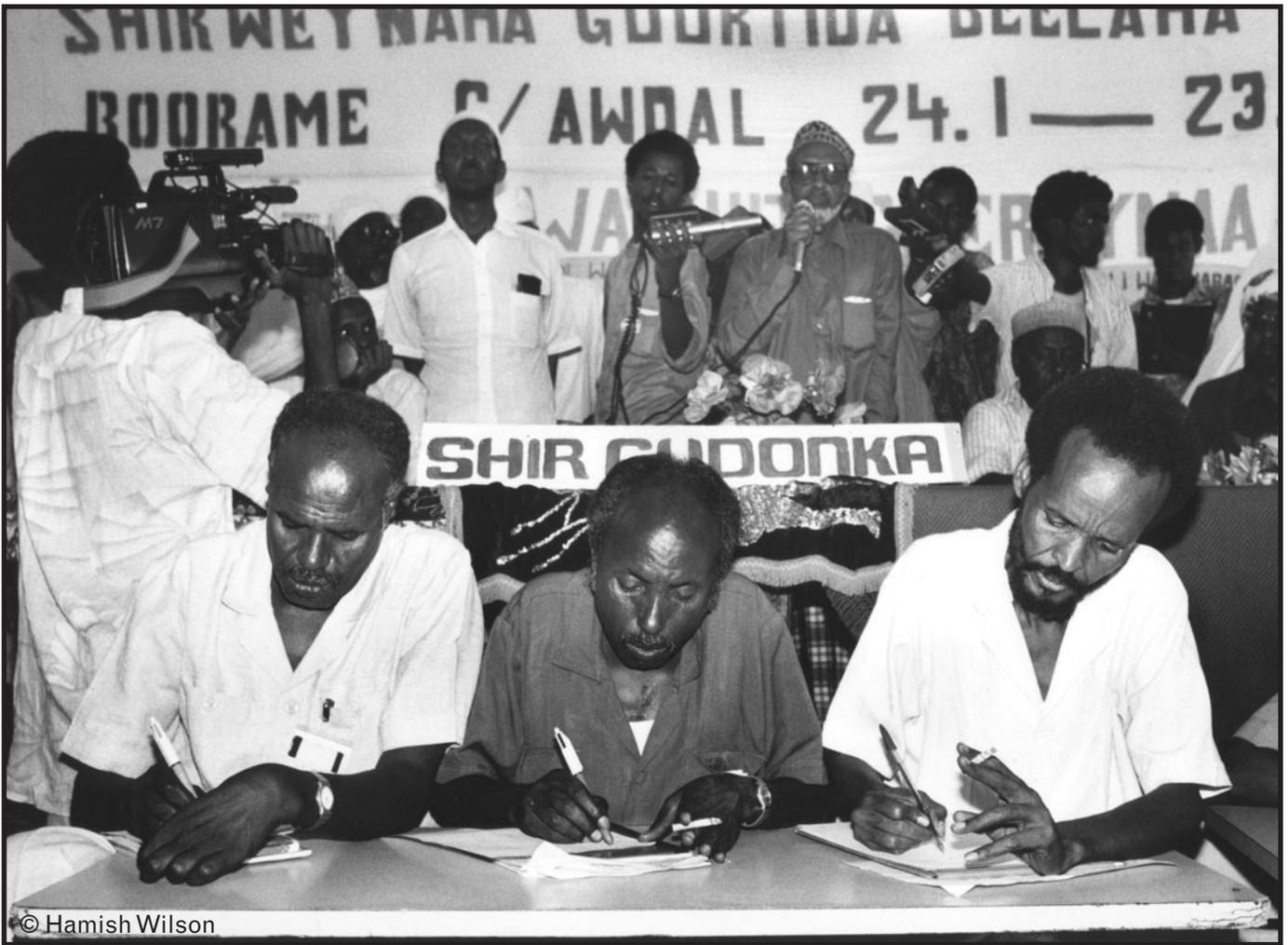
**Bottom left:** Representatives voting for the offices of president and vice-president.

**Top right:** The chairman of the *Guurti* announces the election results. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal is elected president by a substantial majority and Abdirahman Aw Ali Farah is declared vice-president.

**Bottom right:** The outgoing president, Abdirahman Ahmed Ali “Tuur”, leaves the hall alongside newly elected President Egal. “Tuur” is being congratulated by an elder on his decision to accept the outcome of the election and stand down peacefully after several days intense debate and negotiation.



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Society is changing faster than the debate. I think education will prove to be the biggest force for change. More and more young women are becoming educated – alongside men – and going on to higher education institutions. Educated women are the darlings of many of the non-governmental organisations which want to set up offices in Somaliland. Far more women have also taken on greater economic roles within the household – some by choice, some not by choice.

The issue now is – how can anyone prevent women from participating in formal politics? People have traditionally cited their lack of experience, their lack of education, their lack of clout in clan politics and religious justifications. However, all these constraints are diminishing – some of them rapidly. There is also an international project to promote women’s rights and Somaliland needs foreign donors and investors.

## **Hon. Omar Ahmed Sulaman MP**

On the issue of women, in 2007 we tried to pass a bill to introduce amendments to both the House of Elders – the *Guurti* – and the House of Representatives. The bill would have introduced a quota for the number of female MPs, as well as meaning that members of the *Guurti* would be elected. The *Guurti* did not like the bill. They were threatened by it. Without even reading it they just rejected it. They said that the law regarding the quota for women was bad too. If the bill had become law it would have affected all elections in Somaliland.

In some ways, women are more nationalist than men. It is the women who actually vote. If the voting takes place in the morning the men may or may not vote. In the afternoon they never go. Although it is the women who vote, in parliament it is the men who are in control. I am in favour of introducing a quota for the number of women in parliament. A lot of men are against this. They give lots of excuses for this but what they are actually worried about is losing their seats. Since it is the women who cast the most votes, they think that women will vote for the female candidates. People try to make

all sorts of excuses, often citing religion. But it is not all about religion.

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## 3. PARLIAMENT

### – THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

#### **Hon. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi “Irro” MP** **Speaker of the House of Representatives**

Under the constitution, parliament sits for three sessions, each of which lasts for eight to nine weeks. We can have additional sessions if anything is left unresolved.

Parliament uses a committee system. There are eight committees. In addition to the standing committee, there are the economic and finance committee, the constitution and judiciary committee, the environment committee, the defence and security committee, social affairs committee, the foreign affairs committee and the public accounts committee. The committees usually meet only when the House of Representatives is sitting – although the standing committee also meets when we are not in session.

The standing committee is the largest, with 17 members. The majority of the committees have nine members. Each committee consists of representatives from all three political parties, although the proportions are not the same in each committee. There are close relations between committees and ministries. For example, the budget committee deals with the Ministry of Finance.

Selection of committee members is made by the Speaker and the two Deputy Speakers. The backgrounds and level of education of potential committee members are taken into consideration. A lawyer may be best suited to join the judiciary committee and an economist might go to the public finance committee. Committee selection can be a controversial task. Once the committee has been formed, the members then select their own chairman and vice-chairman and these can change over time.

We are trying to make a parliament which has teeth, a parliament which is able to debate anything that comes

before it. We can reject nominations which come from government and even those which come from the president. In some instances, this has caused disputes between parliament and the executive.

For example, the constitution gives the president the power to nominate a commissioner and three committee members for the National Electoral Commission (NEC). On one occasion, the defence and security committee advised that the House of Representatives should not accept a particular nomination. This was very controversial and President Riyale was furious. The nominee was put forward again and rejected for a second time. The president had to change the nomination.

In 2007, the House of Representatives made an amendment to the budget. We deducted some money from the presidency and added it to public sector services like health and education. The president twice tried to revoke the amendment but we stood firm. Whilst the president has the authority to sign the budget decree, only the members of the House of Representatives have the authority to accept and enact the budget. The dispute arose because as parliamentarians we were saying that once the budget has been passed by parliament, you cannot send it back with changes. We have a strong parliament which can – and does – question and challenge the executive.

#### **Abdirahman Yusuf Duale “Boobe”** **Minister of Information**

The House of Representatives has the experience of the democratic process within the Somali National Movement (SNM) to draw on. After we started in 1981, if the chairman lost the vote he would have to come to the podium and congratulate his opponent. He would have to pledge in front of the party of delegates that he would work with his replacement and fulfil the principles of the SNM. He was also required to remain within the movement. So we have this long-standing democratic tradition.

When the discussions and debate become heated in parliament, you think that the next thing that will happen is that they will start fist-fighting. But we have a tradition that the Speaker bangs on the table and the MPs then have to go and talk outside. They go out peacefully and sit next each other chewing *qaad* or talking. The next morning they come back again – and so on until the issue is resolved. Whilst the conversation inside parliament is only open to MPs, conversations that happen outside the parliament building are open to outsiders. This really opens things up.

Usually we say that the meeting in Hargeisa is going smoothly. If you say the meeting is going badly the citizens of Hargeisa, when they read the papers, will go to the venue and they say, “You want to insult our town? You have to finish the meeting as soon as possible and it has to be successful. Otherwise, you leave this place and go to any other place. We don’t want any insult for our town.” That is how people participate. In Somaliland, people are aware and the venue is very important for us. This isn’t true in all Somali areas.

Although clan is very important, members of the House of Representatives do not only vote on the basis of clan allegiances. They vote on an issue-by-issue basis. It depends on their individual views and principles. If an amendment to the law has been proposed, they see how important it is to the people.

Sometimes clan support may be an issue, if MPs are electing the Speaker or someone for a position on a subcommittee. But it is not always like that. You get a little bit of nationalism, a little bit of clanism, a little bit of democracy, a little bit of Islamism, a bit of everything – like any parliament.

## **Hon. Dr Ali Yousuf Ahmed MP Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives**

The majority of legislation is initiated by the president’s Council of Ministers but MPs also bring motions. Bills go from the endorser to the relevant subcommittee. The

subcommittee carries out a consultation and solicits opinions on the proposed legislation. It then reports back to parliament and the motion is debated by MPs. The bill is either approved or suggestions are made for amendments. That is how bills are passed.

We have lawyers who act as advisers to parliament. They are able to say if a bill is unconstitutional. With very technical bills we may also have to consult other people – professors at one of the universities or people from the Academy of Peace and Development.

When a piece of legislation is approved by parliament, it goes to the president for signature. Sometimes the president returns the legislation if he does not agree with it. If this happens, a two-thirds majority is required for parliament to enact the legislation without his approval. If we get two-thirds, the president has to sign it. If he does not sign it within 21 days, it automatically becomes law. It is difficult – but not impossible – to imagine a two-thirds majority opposing the president at the moment as Kulmiye has 33 of the 82 members in the House.

The standard of education among parliamentarians varies. Not all members have sufficient education to be able to work on some of the more technical legislation. Some people have higher education, some do not have degrees. The minimum required to stand for parliament is secondary education.

The amount of legislation passed and how long it takes depends on the bill. Some areas of law are very complex and take a long time. Some are simple and only take one or two weeks. On average, we pass four or five of the longer bills per session. The Central Bank Act, the Commercial Banking Act and the Islamic Banking Act were all with us for a long time.

When it comes to voting, the issue under discussion is more important than party affiliation. Every MP is free to vote in accordance with what he considers to be in the best interests of the country. MPs can deviate from the party line if that is what they feel is best. This happens

very regularly among all parties. Of course, there is some legislation where we vote as a party – but that is because this is democracy.

One of the problems about the lack of resources is that our MPs do not receive daily expenses. We have to spend our own money if we go to our constituencies. Then our constituents say, “We have chosen you and put you into the parliament and what have you done?” And the answer is, “nothing – because we are working on a national level”. We have passed so many bills which will have an impact at the national level but which they do not regard as important. They want to see tangible things. We say here, “the Americans have reached the moon but we have yet to reach our constituents”.

In Somaliland we do not allow government ministers to be MPs. We think they should be accountable to parliament. If an MP is made a minister he has to step down and the person who was the runner-up in the parliamentary elections from that constituency takes his seat. In contrast to ministers, the Speaker and Deputy Speakers remain MPs.

When the election of the Speaker took place in September 2005 there was a big conference in the House of Representatives – and a big fight. The ruling party – UDUB – walked out of parliament. So the Speaker and two deputies were elected without the presence of the ruling party. UDUB MPs did not accept that we had made the decisions without them. But the *Guurti* said that if the ruling party left parliament and the coalition had 49 seats, then the coalition had the right to elect the leadership of the House of Representatives. From then on, until the new government was elected in 2010, there was friction between the House of Representatives and the government. It was very difficult for the government to pass laws because we always used to challenge them.

## Hon. Omar Ahmed Sulaman MP

When we were elected in the first parliamentary election in 2005 we found that the ruling party was just clinging to power. Previously no one dared to challenge the president. But when we arrived, we started to challenge him. In the opposition we were talking about corruption and about building schools and hospitals. People in the government did not respond positively. For them it was about the power rather than about the project. If you have power you have to be careful how you use it.

Ignoring parliament worked for some years for the previous government. The president extended his term and elections were postponed indefinitely. But then we started to discuss impeaching the president for lack of accountability and treason. UDUB needed a simple majority to defeat us – 42 MPs. The government spent a lot of money buying flash cars for people and things like that in an effort to appease MPs. Then, in September 2009, they brought in the police to shut down parliament while the impeachment was being debated. MPs were shot at.

A few days later we tried to re-enter parliament. There were police everywhere. We were beaten, but we all held hands and marched in together. The Speaker of the House of Representatives is a very brave man and he challenged the police. Many protestors on the streets were beaten and two of them were shot dead.

Traditional leaders saw that the situation might get out of hand. They went to the president and started to talk to him. They said: “If you go beyond this area the whole thing would get out of hand. These are representatives of the people. They have the full mandate of the people and today the people are supporting them. You are isolated. You are the only institution – you and your ministers – which is going in a different direction. So you carry the responsibility. If anything goes wrong, everybody is witnessing this historical moment and you are responsible.” Finally, the case was resolved. We have paid a lot for our democracy.

The most prominent figures in my party in parliament at the moment – Kulmiye – are the ones who oppose the government. They are very open in saying what the problems are, particularly when it relates to the constitution. They are often the ones who speak on television and who appear in the newspapers publicly criticising the government. The funny thing is that people from the opposition are not as vocal about criticising the government. They have become more concerned with themselves. You do not find this system very often.

We are trying to promote democracy and leave a positive legacy. We promote the passing of bills and want to make laws for this country. Without law and order the country will not survive. No matter what we have or who will help us, this is what we will do – we are wholly committed. I believe that our parliament can work if it gets the proper financial support. We have built a democracy from scratch and achieved a lot. But now we need help.

Many of our problems really stem from the fact that there are no resources in the country. The government really needs resources. In Mogadishu, the United Nations is paying out millions of dollars. The UN pays the army, they pay the police, and they pay the president in Somalia. In Somaliland, though, the international donors are just watching us.

## **Hon. Abdirahman Talyanle MP**

If you want to understand Somaliland, you have to go to the very beginning. We suffered for more than 20 years under the rule of Siyad Barre. No one, whether they are from Kulmiye or any other party, wants to go back to tyranny. There are no permanent parties under our political system. At the moment, we are all just political associations. Only three political parties will emerge from the local elections.

If Kulmiye gets 50% or above in this election, it does not mean that its members will blindly follow the leadership of President Silanyo. How the MPs vote depends on the

issue before them. The previous president – President Riyale – went as far as to close parliament. He said, “I have been elected president and you know nothing.” He controlled and corrupted everything, even the judiciary. He tried to corrupt the legislature. That was when the bombshell happened – the attempt to close parliament in 2009. But members of his own party were amongst those who helped to defeat the president.

## **Hon. Bashe Mahammed Farah MP First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives**

We are pursuing a democratic process and some things have to develop along the way. I think that in the case of the staff of parliament – the secretariat and different departments – we have to educate them and make them more knowledgeable of the duties that they are doing. The MPs will change every few years but these people are the permanent staff.

In the past, the people who performed these roles were not graduates. Now we take only the best graduates. We held a competition to find the best students. Out of 300 graduates we selected only eight. Some of them are secondary school leavers who are computer-literate, others attended the local university. They have degrees in different disciplines, but primarily in law. We have sent some of them for further education. The first two have graduated with master’s degrees – one from Addis Ababa and another from Pretoria. We are building our local staff.

Every subcommittee has one qualified secretary. We also have staff qualified to do budget and financial work. But we have to train more. In the future, I believe we should ensure that all staff have some specialisation. The level of education for MPs should also increase. In Somaliland we have lots of universities and there are now so many graduates from these universities.

Another issue is the age of MPs. In the past, to become an MP you had to be at least 35 years old. Now we have

reduced that minimum age to 25 years old. There is no upper limit. In theory, an MP could stay in their position forever but that has not happened. It will only happen if they are liked and they are chosen.

I do not want to compete again. I will give people from the younger generation a chance. I have already been in the House of Representatives for seven years. A lot of people – even people who are much younger than me – say they do not want to stand next time around. The process of competing in the elections is strenuous. You have to travel a lot and it is difficult to please everybody. It also involves a big financial commitment.

Under the previous government, President Riyale helped those people he favoured to become MPs through the use of government money. But that does not happen anymore. When Kulmiye came to power we pledged to increase by 100% the salaries of all civil servants, politicians and members of the army and police. MPs now get a relatively good salary – US\$1,200 per month. The money for our salaries comes from our national budget. We do not get assistance from other countries like the Transitional Federal Government does in Mogadishu.

## **Adam Haji Ali Ahmed** **Chair, Somaliland Non-state Actors** **Forum (SONSAF)**

The House of Representatives began its work following the Borama congress in 1993. Between 1993 and 2001, there was a clan-based, unelected parliament in place. Since 2005, members have been elected to the House of Representatives.

When Riyale was president, it was very tough to pass any legislation. Although the executive was UDUB, parliament was controlled by the opposition parties – Kulmiye and UCID. Parliament is now much stronger and is able to engage in a high level of debate. Substantial laws have been passed in a range of different sectors, including criminal law, banking, piracy and security.

Amendments have also been made to existing laws where necessary. I consider this to be a real sign of success.

The involvement of civil society cannot be underestimated. Members of civil society regularly communicate with members of the legislature. A significant proportion of the motions which are passed by the subcommittees have their origins in input from the public. This is important in terms of establishing the independence of our institutions. Significant progress has also been made in relation to the independence between the different branches of state in Somaliland.

Nevertheless, the political structures in the country are not strong enough. Parliament is not really functioning as well as it should. As parliamentarians may not be re-elected, it is important that the permanent staff build some institutional memory. The lack of ideology also has a negative impact. Instead of creating the legacy of a political party, MPs are constantly moving between different parties. They do not operate according to the ideology of Kulmiye, or UCID, but as individuals. There is a lack of strategy in the political parties which means they are unable to exhibit any continuity. All of this is new for us – but we have to try and improve.

A number of other institutions are not functioning properly as units. For example, the judiciary does not have enough well-trained staff. Other institutions are growing and implementing lots of good projects but they also need support. SONSAF has established a good working relationship with the House of Representatives. We sit with them in parliament and ask them lots of difficult questions.

It is wrong that there is no ordered, written record of the proceedings of parliament. If the House votes against a particular bill or issue, we should know how many people were against it. We should be able to sit down and analyse this information so we can work on it in the future. There may be an instance in which I support the dissenting opinion. It would be good to have a record of the vote and to know how many people voted for and against a

particular bill. This is something we can learn from. At the moment we are not able to access this type of information. This is a real shortcoming.

One of the reasons we feel that the *Guurti* has to change is that currently people can just nominate themselves as traditional leaders. If we are going to revisit the mandate of the *Guurti*, we have to start with how it will be organised. At SONSAF, we think there should be a Chiefs Act. Under this legislation, a leader would get a licence from the Minister of the Interior, who would approve their appointment as a chief. There is currently no law regulating this. If there is a new *Suldaan* every year it will damage our traditional system and way of life.

## – THE HOUSE OF ELDERS, OR *GUURTI*

### **Abdirahman Yusuf Duale “Boobe” Minister of Information**

The idea for the *Guurti* came out of the fourth Somali National Movement (SNM) congress in 1984. We had to decide what kind of system of governance we wanted. We looked for some pre-existing tradition that we could use in the administrative system. People agreed that the traditional leaders should play an important role. At the sixth congress in March 1990, in Baligubadle, the *Guurti* was institutionalised under Article 4 of the SNM constitution.

Somaliland was declared a republic in Burco on May 18th 1991. There was a transition period of two years which expired in May 1993. At this point the seventh SNM congress was due to be held. However, due to divisions within the central committee of the SNM, this did not happen. Instead, the elders’ conference was held in Borama. They took over the mandate of the central committee of the SNM and the congress of the SNM. At the Borama conference Mohamed Ibrahim Egal was elected as president. The members of the *Guurti* and the House of Representatives were also elected.

We need to reassess the mandate and membership of the *Guurti*. When it was first set up in 1990, its role was primarily one of mediation. Local councils of elders also played a crucial part in local administration and peace-keeping in the aftermath of the war. What we have now is an old group of inexperienced people with a central role in legislation. We need people who can talk about foreign policy and economics and legislation. The requirements of the role have become more sophisticated.

The main challenge for reforming the *Guurti* is to decide how its members should be selected – whether it should be by election or nomination. If members of the *Guurti* are to be elected then there is no point in having two chambers. We would just end up with two elected bodies made up of people representing the same political parties.

The *Guurti* should be completely impartial and should not be arranged along political lines. The minority communities, civil society and experts in certain fields should have representation in the upper house. Otherwise only those capable of getting votes – the big clans – will fill the places. These changes should not be particularly controversial because most of the current members have inherited their positions. They are not the original members of the *Guurti*.

### **Hon. Omar Ahmed Sulaman MP**

For the first two or three years under Egal, after 1993, the *Guurti* was good for the purpose of mediation. Their job description in the constitution is very clear. The problem is that they are now performing a different role. In many ways, they are more powerful than MPs because if we send a bill to them they can just reject it. We call the *Guurti* the “hump” because sometimes when we send them legislation it just stops there.

Most of the members of the *Guurti* have no formal education. If someone dies, someone else from his family takes his place. No more than 10% are literate. Bills are read to the members of the *Guurti*. Of course in our society people are used to listening to things and learning

things off by heart. Despite that, if a very complicated bill is put in front of them they sometimes say, “It’s too big, we cannot read it! Send it back to the boys!” The “boys” – that is how they often refer to MPs.

It is good that we have a *Guurti* but they should not involve themselves in politics. Institutionalising the elders compromises their neutrality. Politics is for the House of Representatives. We have higher educational levels. There are a good number of educated people in the parliament who can assess what is in front of them. Some are teachers and doctors. I would say that at least 30% of us have spent significant amounts of time outside the country.

## **Haroon Ahmed Yusuf** **Deputy Director, Social Research and** **Development Institute (SORADI)**

The *Guurti* has been an important learning process but it will change. Most of the current people in the *Guurti* have been there for the last 20 years. It has actually become an inherited appointment where, although many of the original members are no longer alive, their children received their positions.

At SONSAF, we started to address the issue of the *Guurti* last year. The question now is what to do with it. We are trying to learn from systems used elsewhere – like the House of Lords in the UK and the Chiefs Act in Botswana. If we elect members, the *Guurti* will become just another House of Representatives. It needs to continue with its distinct mediation function, but it requires modernisation. For example, I think members should come from all of the regions. There should also be space for the minorities to be represented. We could make a share for each clan or sub-clan. It could be either region- or clan-based. Once we agree on the next way to elect or select them it will change.

Our customary leaders have multiplied because people see the position as a source of income. In the past, the chief of the clan was never paid. They may have been

given animals to help them to support their family. Nowadays, many see the position of chief as a business opportunity. They allocate names to themselves and then get members of their sub-clan to support them. In turn, these people are being used for political purposes.

## 4. NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Dr Saad Ali Shire** **Minister of National Planning and Development**

When I joined the ministry in 2010 I asked, “Do we have a plan as the Ministry of Planning? And they said “No, we have the RDP programme”.” That is the United Nations’ “Reconstruction and Development Programme” based on a Somali-wide assessment carried out by the World Bank in 2005–6. Chapter Four was meant to outline the development programme for Somaliland. But it completely lacked ownership and alignment with our priorities. So I put together an outline for our own plan and brought together a team of half a dozen experts from the ministry to work on it. We’re all economists by training and all came from the diaspora. The bulk of the work was done by four people.

We drew up standard outlines for each sector – agriculture, livestock, industry, energy and so on. Then we went to all the ministries and ran through each section with them. They provided us with the information which we edited and then added bits here and there. Then we produced a matrix of projects for each sector.

I think we have done well as a government – at least, compared to previous governments. We have done quite a bit to improve the airports. Hargeisa airport is transformed compared to what it was like just two years ago. The Berbera airport terminal is much better now and we are maintaining the runway as well. The health sector has also improved significantly with support from donors. There aren’t big, flashy projects under way but ones with effects that are certainly visible. We are undertaking similar initiatives in education. Many of the ministers are working very hard to make a difference.

Of course people always expect more, but our means are limited. The budget for 2011 was US\$90m – equivalent to about 8% of GDP. This had no capital investment

component. It is the running cost of the government – the cost of trying to maintain peace and stability and encourage development. We’re in a very unstable region.

There is one area where we have not delivered at all – that is in reducing unemployment. This is a big problem. We are sitting on a primed mine. But government doesn’t have the money to create jobs and we haven’t been able to attract international investment because of the political situation in the region and the fact that Somaliland is not recognised.

Our people invest mainly in property and not so much in industry and agriculture. It’s partly a cultural thing. Our society is a trading society. But the productive sector creates more employment than the property sector. If you build a house, it might take one month and you employ 20 people. Once it’s finished, that’s it. If you build a small factory you might have 20 people employed on a permanent basis. But that’s not happening. Know-how and financing have also been in short supply. There are no banks. I may have a brilliant idea but if there are no banks backing me up I can’t finance the project.

Things are very slowly changing. There has been investment in a Coca-Cola bottling plant in Hargeisa and various livestock facilities. We hope to reach an agreement which would see the old cement factory near Berbera revitalised. That could be a US\$70m project. But at the moment we have fewer than 20 industrial establishments which employ more than 20 people in the country. We don’t have a single industrial estate. If you want to set up a small factory you have to buy the land and source the power, water and communications yourself. That’s very costly.

We urgently need to solve the energy problem. The total generating capacity in Hargeisa is about five or six megawatts, all from small generators. You cannot have industry when the cost of energy is US\$1.20 a unit. Take the Berbera cement factory, for example. It’s an incredible opportunity. It’s only 10km from the port. All the raw materials are within 16km, which is exceptional, and it

used to produce top-quality cement. But in order to be competitive with Oman or Yemen, the factory needs to run on coal or a renewable source of energy and produce at least 1,000 tonnes of cement a day. Diesel or oil generators are too expensive – 60% of the cost of cement is the energy costs.

Somaliland should seek to exploit renewable energy. We have plenty of sun, plenty of wind. Instead, 99% of the population uses charcoal as a source of energy. We reckon that to meet demand in Hargeisa alone we would have to cut down a million trees per year – yet we are not planting even one tree.

Water is another big problem. We need to build boreholes in all strategic locations and also reservoirs to harvest rainwater. Hargeisa's water system was built in the 1970s for a population of 150,000–180,000. Now it's nearly one million. Water is therefore scarce and very expensive – a cubic metre costs US\$7. The smaller the amount, the more expensive it gets. If you are a poor person you just cannot afford that. Even if you are a grade A graduate in government, earning about US\$130 a month, how can you pay for your rent, water and electricity? My electricity bill alone for the last two months was US\$185.

This brings me on to another issue – the environment. We need to do something, and quickly. We don't have any nurseries for reforestation nor do we have pasture management programmes in place. During the colonial era, there was a seasonal reserves system which was a really good way to manage livestock – but that no longer exists. Nowadays people enclose as much land as they can for mainly speculative reasons – not for productive purposes – thereby restricting the available area for grazing and even for seasonal passage for transiting livestock. This causes over-grazing and massive erosion of ever-shrinking common land.

Development in the regions is another priority. About 40% of the population is concentrated in towns and a large percentage of that is in Hargeisa. If investment is

## Somaliland National Development Plan 2012-16

Somaliland's National Development Plan, published in December 2011, details expenditure of US\$1,190.3m over a five-year period. The plan comprises five pillars – economy, infrastructure, governance, social and environment. Infrastructure (41%) and social (25%) are the sectors earmarked for the highest expenditure. Road-building is the single largest item in the plan, accounting for almost a quarter of the total.

The plan amounts to 113% of Somaliland's estimated nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$1,050m per annum. International donors have been asked to provide US\$980m, more than 80% of the required financing. Government, private investors and the diaspora are expected to deliver the balance.

The mainstays of Somaliland's economy are livestock and remittances from the diaspora. Livestock generates about 65% of GDP – 2.7m head of livestock and 4.8m hides and skins were exported in 2010. Up to US\$400m per annum is remitted to the country by Somalilanders living and working abroad.

The government budget has increased from c. US\$27m in 2005 to c. US\$106m in 2012. Security absorbs almost 50% of expenditure. In total, government staff and administration costs account for more than three-quarters of expenditure. Capital or development spending is minimal. Customs duties account for more than 50% of government revenue. As Somaliland is not recognised as a sovereign state, the government does not have access to loans from international financial institutions.

not spread, everyone will come to Hargeisa and there are already no jobs or infrastructure to support the existing population. The roads, sanitation, water infrastructure and electricity cannot cope.

If I had the money the first thing I would do would be to build a road connecting Erigavo, in the east, with the rest of the country. The Erigavo area is rich in agriculture, in livestock, in minerals – but it is totally cut off. All the people from Erigavo come to Hargeisa. That shouldn't be happening. We also need roads to the Ethiopia border, roads to Borama and roads in Hargeisa

itself. It's a problem for business and for everyone. Infrastructure is really important and is grossly ignored by international donors.

If we could engage with donor organisations on our own terms, the first thing we would seek to change is attitude. The mindset and priorities are completely wrong. There should be meaningful funding for countries in our situation and it should focus on real development.

I used to think that the UN and international aid organisations were staffed by idealistic people – people who just believed in helping others with little regard to their remuneration. The real picture is totally different. These are professional people doing a job who are out there to make a living. It's just another job. That lack of idealism and commitment in an environment where ownership and accountability are not very common is a problem at the present time.

Most organisations don't follow the agreed principles of aid effectiveness – which start with ownership. We should own our projects here in Somaliland. Instead, projects are mainly conceived, developed and implemented by donors and their partners in accordance with their own priorities – which do not necessarily match our priorities and meet our needs.

Let's take the example of vaccination. We need children to be vaccinated. It is a moral imperative. Vaccination needs clinics, trained staff and vaccine. In this country we produce no vaccines – not for livestock, not for people. International aid organisations say that we need to have sophisticated equipment and meet high standards to produce vaccines. They say we don't have them, so vaccines must be imported from certified sources. That sounds fine. But vaccines are produced in Ethiopia and in Kenya, so why can't we do the same? Our priority is to acquire the capacity to produce vaccines here, while aid agencies' priority is to supply them.

It's the same with investing in productive sectors so that children will have enough food to eat. Feeding a starving

child is, of course, good. But you can't do that all the time – year after year after year. It is not good for the child, or for the family, or for the nation. The international community is more interested in feeding the malnourished child. But what we need is the capacity to produce more food in the country, to enable the family to feed itself.

Water is another example. We experience frequent droughts here. We have been asking the UN and other international organisations to help us dig more boreholes and build reservoirs so we can harvest rainwater. The response to our request has mainly been silence. Of course, when drought comes, people lose their livestock, and starvation sets in, these organisations will be coming in streams – to feed the people affected, give them tents and provide emergency medical supplies. Here, too, our priority is to prevent crisis while aid agencies would rather respond by trying to mitigate the effects of crisis.

There is continuous conflict and overlap among donors and implementing agencies. Donors often allocate funds for certain activities – child health care, for example. They attract a lot of different organisations which apply to the same fund or competing funds without proper co-ordination, resulting sometimes in wasteful duplication.

One of the main problems with aid at the present time is the long route it takes – the number of hands and accounts it goes through and the high administrative cost that this entails. We estimate that for every dollar donated no more than 20 cents are actually spent on the ground. The total aid figure for Somaliland in 2009, excluding humanitarian aid, was US\$83 million – about double the government's revenue for the year. That is a huge amount by our standards, but you do not see its trail on the ground. Where has the money gone? I don't see training centres, technical schools, universities, roads, bridges, wells, reservoirs, dams, industrial parks, agricultural equipment, and hospitals built. A good deal has been spent to cover administrative, financial, logistics and

security costs. The rest has been spent mainly on consumables and so-called capacity building projects in the form of one to three day seminars and workshops.

I tell missions from international organisations when they come to see me, “we have been building capacity for the last twenty years, when are we going to have capacity built?” On any day, you can see four or five workshops running in the main hotels in Hargeisa. I don’t think that’s right. The principle of training and skilling people is right. But this isn’t the way to go about it. People should be trained towards achieving qualifications – diplomas, certificates, degrees – in proper training institutions. One to two day seminars cannot be a substitute. Besides, the same people tend to go to all the workshops.

So much time and money is wasted on trips, missions and meetings. It is very frustrating, to tell you the truth. Sometimes you just wonder if these meetings are worth the time. The most precious thing I have is time and sometimes I feel that it is being wasted.

To ensure aid effectiveness, all that donor agencies need to do is follow the declarations and agenda on aid effectiveness they themselves have set. We need to have ownership, alignment with the priorities of the people, transparency, mutual accountability and harmonisation or co-ordination. That’s all.

I hope that things might change a bit when the Danish-British Somaliland Development Fund comes on stream. This will provide US\$52m towards the realisation of the national development plan over a four year period. Bilateral assistance would be the best option for us. This would allow the government to put the money to best use. The trust fund is the next best option. The government can access the fund directly by submitting priority projects from the national development plan. This is much better than the current aid system where someone else decides for us the what, where and when of projects.

We have recently received a delegation from TIKA, the Turkish International Development and Co-operation

Agency. Of course, the Ottoman Empire had a presence on the Somaliland coastline for some time in the past. We took the delegation around to see some of the buildings, ports and water systems they built in the nineteenth century, most of them still functioning. They said that they would like to help us and wanted to know about our priority needs. So we put together a programme for a total amount of US\$45million. It consisted of projects from all five pillars of our development plan – economy, infrastructure, governance, social, and environment. They said that next time they come back, they were going to do things – not for another endless discussion about our needs. This is a completely different approach from that of traditional aid agencies.

The Turkish government is reported to have already spent close to US\$365m on Somalia. I understand this has the personal blessing of Prime Minister Erdogan and his deputy. In addition to the humanitarian relief during the famine in 2011, Turkey is rebuilding the airport, parliament, hospitals, schools, markets, and drilling wells in Mogadishu. Turkish Airlines was the first international airline to start flights to Mogadishu again and the country was the first to reopen a fully functioning embassy there. I think that is great. It is that sort of aid that makes the most difference.

There are many people interested in Somaliland. The primary reason for this is its strategic location. Sometimes this is a curse, sometimes a blessing. The port in Berbera is certainly a prized asset – or will be eventually. Everyone is interested in it: the Chinese, Americans, Arabs, French, Germans, and Ethiopians. But that interest has yet to be translated into real investment.

Developing Berbera port to its potential is a complex task. For the time being the main intention is to turn it into a container terminal for the region. An industrial zone, an oil depot and a ship repair yard are other possibilities. Talk of an oil or gas pipeline from Ethiopia often appears in the newspapers. Of course we don’t only have Berbera. We are in a position to develop other ports and economic

assets. The oil and gas sector has potential, we can do more to develop the livestock industry and agriculture, and we have 850km of coastline which contributes only a small fraction to our total GDP currently.

Given that there isn't much external assistance for development in Somaliland at the moment, we need to look inwards and use our own resources for development. We need to tax our people more and get them to pay their dues. The government collects less than 10% of GDP in the form of taxes at present. It doesn't seem too tall an order for us to collect US\$200m–300m a year, or about 20% of GDP. Then we will be able to finance more roads, wells, schools and hospitals ourselves.

I met a Chinese woman yesterday who said, “You guys are rich. You have goats”. She said that her father was a general when she was a child, and even though her family held good positions in government, she remembered that some of her relatives had to eat tree bark to survive. It was that bad. But in just 20–30 years China has transformed and her family has gone from eating leaves to living high. She said that in her home town, the population was about 250,000 not long ago. Today it is seven million and every company in the top 500 in the world has an office or a plant in it. We can do the same thing.

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## 5. POSTSCRIPT: Reflections of an International (Election) Observer

**Dr Michael Walls**

**Director of Research, Development Planning Unit,  
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February 13th 2013**

Somaliland or, more accurately, Somalilanders have achieved a remarkable amount in the past twenty years. In fact, those achievements are so significant, and hold such potential to help all of us – Somali and non-Somali – to understand what is possible elsewhere in the Somali Horn and even more widely. It is worth taking a hard and objective look at what has happened.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency in some quarters to romanticise Somaliland's achievements – which has the rather counter-intuitive effect of obscuring both their nature and importance. For example, in mid-2011 the UK's *Daily Mail*<sup>1</sup> eagerly picked up on a paper by a Stanford PhD candidate<sup>2</sup> to support an argument that Somaliland is “proof” that aid does not work – a theme that was also pushed in *The Economist*<sup>3</sup>. The line ran that huge sums of aid have been committed to successive efforts in southern Somalia to form and support a government, with little obvious success; whereas Somaliland has received no external support but has been successful in establishing peace, then a government, and – in the past decade – a viable multi-party democracy. This proposition is echoed by some Somali commentators who suggest that Somalis will succeed only when they are left alone.

There is a germ of truth in there, but it is not a particularly helpful argument. The reality is that Somali society has long been heavily oriented towards trade. Linkages with many “external” communities – whether economic, political, religious or personal – are long-standing, deep and vital. That is as true for Somaliland as it is for Puntland, Mogadishu or any of the other Somali areas.

So, what has happened over the past two decades in Somaliland? Focusing particularly on the political realm, we need to start a little further back. The Somali National Movement (SNM) was one of the first movements established in the early 1980s to resist the increasingly dictatorial regime of General Mohamed Siyad Barre. Right from the start, the SNM built a notable degree of democracy into its governance structure.

The SNM were criticised at the time, and since, for their domination by the Isaaq clan family. That sentiment still permeates Somaliland politics. Again, all is not quite what it seems.

The SNM, in fact, preferred to form alliances with non-Isaaq clans, or to allow membership of non-Isaaq individuals in a personal capacity rather than as representatives of their clans. However, that did not stop the two largest non-Isaaq clans in Somaliland from taking a lead in the early formation of Somaliland. In 1993, one of the most important peace conferences took place in Borama, the principal town in territory of the non-Isaaq Gadabursi clan. When Isaaq clans have fought amongst themselves, it has fallen to the likes of the Gadabursi and, to the east, the Dhulbahante, to step in and broker peace.

Herein also lie the roots of what remains one of Somaliland's greatest political challenges. While it was at the outset a project of a broad group of clans, the Isaaq clans have always held a numerical dominance. When several of the Isaaq clans have found some way of working together, the others have become marginalised – and enthusiasm for the Somaliland project has waned. In 2013, there is a relatively strong alliance of Isaaq clans at the heart of power, and many outside those groups are feeling increasingly disgruntled with their status.

Returning briefly to the theme we started with, the periodic intervention of non-Isaaq clans epitomises a way in which “outsiders” have in fact been critical to Somaliland's stability. In much the same way as it was the involvement of two clans who were not part of the fractious core that allowed Somaliland to establish its

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1. Ian Birrell, “Somaliland: The former British colony that shows Africa doesn't need our millions to flourish”, Daily Mail website, July 23rd 2011.  
2. Nicholas Eubank, “Taxation, Political Accountability, and Foreign Aid: Lessons from Somaliland”, unpublished paper, March 26th 2011.  
3. Baobab blog, “Aid and Somaliland: Mo money mo problems”, The Economist website, June 24th 2011.

relatively plural political system, both Somali and non-Somali outsiders have played important roles over the years in helping to mediate conflicts and support peace initiatives. The difference between political processes in Somaliland and Somalia lies in the nature and scale of external intervention. Somaliland has succeeded because the political process has been led by those in the country – but also because there have been timely interventions from people outside the immediate crises and conflicts that have arisen from time to time.

Narrowing the focus to the past few years, until the presidential elections in 2010 Somaliland politics were dominated by the governing party established by late President Egal. It drew support from a range of clans and – significantly – Egal himself was never part of the SNM struggle. When he died in 2002, Egal’s Gadabursi vice-president, Dahir Riyale Kahin, assumed the presidency in a peaceful transfer of power. President Dahir Riyale then won an election in his own right a year later – albeit by a wafer-thin majority. Many of those associated with the long SNM struggle were heavily involved with the losing party, Kulmiye, and it was to their credit that – after some tense negotiations – they conceded defeat.

In 2010, the balance of power shifted when the Kulmiye candidate, and past chairman of the SNM, Ahmed Mohamed “Silanyo”, won the presidential election. He has managed to keep together a coalition strongly centred on his own Habar Ja’lo clan – one of the Isaaq clan family – and a number of other key Isaaq partners. The local council elections which took place on November 28th 2012 consolidated this power shift. UDUB collapsed as a political entity before the election – leaving the way open for Kulmiye to win many councils that it had not held before.

One of the consequences of the power shift has been an increase in opposition to Somaliland’s continued independence in the east and, to a lesser extent, the western areas of the country. However, Xaqsoor, the

political association that drew the strongest support from the non-Isaaq clans in the east, and from a smaller non-Isaaq clan in the west, failed to achieve the number of votes it had been hoping for because polling could not proceed in some of their stronghold towns. Much of the protest after the election, some of which turned violent as police cracked down heavily on demonstrators, was about the failure of some of the clan groups who had been at the heart of the formation of Somaliland in 1991 to achieve electoral success.

The local elections demonstrated the importance of some sort of new voter register in the future. This time around, the register used in the 2010 presidential election was abandoned. The process of counting and registering voters in the lead up to that election had proven extremely divisive. It was, after all, the first time there had been a concerted effort to count voters by region in many decades, and the results of that count effectively determined relative clan populations – and therefore voting weights. As a result, there was no appetite after the 2010 poll for updating or improving the register.

In 2012, the primary insurance against multiple voting remained the inking of fingers – much the same as in the 2002 council elections. However, by popular demand an open list was employed in 2012, whereas in 2002 parties operated closed lists of candidates – voters simply selected the party of their choice. For most Somalilanders, it certainly felt more democratic to be voting for specific candidates; but this had the unintended consequence of significantly increasing the incentive for each candidate to throw resources into their campaign. Many spent huge sums of money. On election day, funds were spent on hiring trucks to shift voters to polling stations, buying bleach to remove ink from fingers and other election “expenses”. Not all of this activity was fraudulent, by any means. For some, trucks were required to bring isolated nomadic groups to polling stations. But there is no doubt that many people voted more than once, and finger-cleansing with bleach was openly practised and common.

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Women continue to comprise the majority of voters, yet it remains extremely hard for women to enter formal politics. Perhaps a quota is the only way to achieve this, and that possibility remains a work in progress. The *Guurti* still lacks a formal selection process. At the moment, new members are selected by the family of those who die or are otherwise unable to continue to serve – hardly a transparent or accountable system. The constitution says new members should be elected, but offers no detail on how that might happen.

None of this renders Somaliland's remarkable successes any less impressive. Peaceful elections, the smooth transition in 2010 of power from a losing incumbent president to his successor – these are huge milestones in any new multi-party democracy which have been successfully negotiated. But some of the fault lines that have existed for many decades continue to influence political processes today. So far, these are probably the kinds of conflict that are inevitable as a political entity struggles to define itself, both to the full breadth of those who live within its claimed borders and to the outside world.

Past experience offers some cogent pointers to future challenges. Clan is not everything in Somaliland – but it remains critically important. Sometimes its role is positive, sometimes divisive. Alliances also shift, so the fact that the current government draws support from a number of key clan groups does not mean that will continue to be the case in the future. A way needs to be found to give non-Isaaq clans a real engagement in the political scene, and in the development process more generally. Clan must be seen as part of the answer, and there is plenty to build on.

Most importantly, if Somaliland is to consolidate recent achievements, its leaders will need to continue to develop their relationships with neighbouring clans and countries – and with the wider world – to expand trade and investment, to build infrastructure, and to start to reduce astonishingly low rates of employment and

high dependence on remittances. Aid certainly has a role to play, but not in a manner that dominates local processes. If Somaliland's success shows us anything, it is the importance of external links – but also the importance of real local “ownership” of political and development processes.



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**Between extremes**  
China and Africa

China has re-cast Africa's position in the global economy. Africa's natural resources and China's 'Go Out' strategy have underpinned a rapid surge in Chinese investment and two-way trade. The array of Chinese enterprises active in Africa, and their financing, defies simple categorisation. China's adherence to principles of 'non-interference' and 'mutual benefit' is increasingly tested as ties multiply and expectations rise. These notes argue that African governments should collaborate more keenly in exploiting relationships with China – and other trading partners – to improve economic diversification and competitiveness.

- 'China in Africa' a product of globalisation, not colonisation
- Chinese finance to Africa multifaceted, aid a modest proportion
- Discourse of 'win-win' relationship between China and Africa misleading
- China's policy of political non-interference ambiguous, and evolving
- Marked imbalance of power, but onus on African policymakers to direct Chinese advances

**Going global**  
Sino-African ties proliferated during the 2000s. Popular depictions of the relationship are polarised. China's presence in Africa is typically cast as an unyielding blessing or neoliberalist curse. During a seven nation tour of Africa in August 2012, the American secretary of state Hillary Clinton implied that China's interest in Africa is motivated solely by a desire to profit from its natural resources. Bargaining with countries not rich in oil and metals – from Malawi to Senegal – undermine allegations of an exclusively resource agenda. Politically charged pronouncements, the sporadic depictions, disregard the diversity of interaction between multinationals, Chinese enterprises and African countries.

The acceleration of Chinese economic engagement with Africa is striking. Foreign direct investment increased three-fold between 2003 and 2011, from US\$491m to US\$14.7 billion. In 2012, China pledged US\$20 billion of loans to Africa over three years for infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing. If the funds are committed, China will become Africa's principal financial backer. China is already Africa's leading bilateral trade partner. Trade grew from US\$10.6 billion in 2000 to US\$166 billion in 2011.

The association of the Communist Party of China (CPC) with Africa has a long history. During the Cold War, strategic alliance was forged with liberation movements and newly independent African states in an effort to counter American and Soviet influence – and diplomatically isolate Taiwan. The 1,868km TAZARA railway was the most conspicuous manifestation of Chinese assistance in this era – and, at US\$500m, the most costly in the 1980s and 1990s. China's foreign policy objectives were gradually realigned to underpin ambitions for domestic economic growth.

Globalisation has entailed a diminution of central control over Chinese concerns operating overseas. State-owned and private enterprises compete with each other for mining and construction contracts. Subsidies all outbid by the state-owned China National Petroleum Company is sold on international markets to the highest bidder. Provincial administrations and private companies attracted by the margins attainable in Africa have forged their own presence in resource extraction, infrastructure construction and consumer

Year	China exports to Africa	Africa exports to China
2000	~10	~5
2003	~20	~10
2006	~40	~20
2009	~80	~40
2011	~160	~80

Source: China Statistical Yearbook  
Africa reports to China

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**A PARLIAMENT WITH TEETH**  
By Samuel Sitta, Willibrod Slaa & John Cheyo  
With an Introduction by Mark Ashurst

Africa Research Institute

Briefing Note 1201 April 2012

**Diehards and democracy**  
Elites, inequality and institutions in African elections

Multi-party elections are a salient feature of Africa's rapidly evolving political landscape. International support for elections is prioritised above all other strategies for consolidating democracy. The legacies of political reform are diverse, and variable. Technology, natural resource endowments, rising inequality, volatile food and fuel costs, and entrenched elites are influencing elections in ways few anticipated. These notes examine some essential traits of recent African elections, and consider their implications for future contests.

- Elections viewed as democratic benchmark, hegemonies adapt
- Political competition invigorated, old elites recycled
- Fewer civil wars and coups, more electoral violence
- Economic growth attended by inadequate job creation and popular discontent
- Electoral management improved, electoral disputes common
- Extensions to presidential term limits rebuffed, constitutions remain vulnerable

**Democratic Africa**  
Africa is undergoing rapid political transition. Governments and politicians are confronted by volatile demands for greater transparency and accountability. The proliferation of mobile telecommunications has intensified scrutiny. Hegemonic – old and new – have adapted to fundamental changes in external relations and political unity.

African leaders confronted the uncertainties of the post-Cold War era with pragmatism and resilience. In the late 1980s and 1990s, economic liberalisation imposed by the World Bank and IMF coincided with dwindling external patronage. As governments looked to internal constituencies to underwrite their legitimacy, political reform ensued. In 2012, only four countries in Africa lack multi-party constitutions: Eritrea, Swaziland, Libya and Somalia.

Multi-party elections are widely regarded as the benchmark for expressing the democratic credentials of African governments. In 1980, these African countries were labelled electoral democracies by 2011 the number had risen to 18 and 15 countries held presidential, legislative and/or local government elections during the year. Twenty-three countries have polls scheduled for 2012. Popular participation in elections is usually enthusiastic. In South Africa, voter turnout has exceeded 70% in all parliamentary contests since 1994. International donors intent on improving 'governance' in Africa are closely involved in the funding, planning and monitoring of elections. Polls are costly. The 2011 election in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) cost over US\$20m, of which 7% was donor-funded. Support underpinned by a belief that democracy will improve the accountability of governments – and development. But multi-party elections have produced diverse political outcomes and myriad unintended consequences, not all of which are progressive.

**Electoral management**  
Substantial external funding for elections has recent political competition in Africa. Many multi-party elections involve the recycling of protagonists. In Nigeria, former military ruler Major General Muhammadu Buhari ran for the presidency in 2003, 2007 and 2011. Four potential candidates for the 2013 presidential elections in Kenya – Raila Odingo, Uhuru Kenyatta, William Ruto, and Kalonzo Musyoka – were co-founders of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) which ruled unopposed for 39 years after independence. In most countries, new faces remain a rarity among those competing for the highest office.

**Voting and tactics**  
Political liberalisation has motivated opposition. Since 1991, 51 ruling parties or heads of state have been voted from

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# AFTER BORAMA

## Consensus, representation and parliament in Somaliland

On the eve of local elections in November 2012, Africa Research Institute interviewed ten prominent Somalilanders, including the three Speakers of the House of Representatives, two government ministers, MPs, civil society activists and representatives of women's organisations. The conversations presented in *After Borama: Consensus, representation and parliament in Somaliland* focus on the way in which political stability has been maintained since the landmark Borama conference in 1993 – and on approaches that need to be adapted in the future. Collectively, they are a timely assessment of democratic politics, the role of institutions and national development priorities in Somaliland.

The Conference of Elders of the Communities of Somaliland in Borama established the institutional foundations of an independent state. More than 2,000 people attended the gathering. The 150-member *Guurti* – a council of elders drawn from all clans – constituted the voting delegates. In the course of four months, consensus was reached about disarmament and demobilisation following the overthrow of President Mohamed Siyad Barre's government, inclusive political representation and the creation of institutions – the bedrock of two decades of relative peace and stability.

The personal accounts set out in these pages offer important insights into the experiences of Somalilanders in negotiating peace and building inclusive democratic institutions. In Section 1, the Speakers of the Somaliland Parliament recall the evolution of democratic politics, citing a longstanding history of participatory dispute resolution between clans, the conduct of the Somali National Movement, and adoption of a new constitution by referendum in 2001. Section 2 explores the important function elections fulfil in establishing equitable representation for Somalilanders – and maintaining stability. The emotive debate about the role of women in formal politics is also discussed.

Section 3 focuses on the functioning of parliament. Particular attention is given to the House of Elders – its relationship with the executive and the House of Representatives, and its participation in lawmaking. In Section 4, Somaliland's Minister for National Planning and Development reflects on his experiences of dealing with international donor organisations, and sets out clear priorities for job creation, revenue generation and infrastructure development. A thoughtful and constructive postscript is contributed by the co-ordinator of the international election observation missions in 2005, 2011 and 2012.

The political and economic achievements outlined in *After Borama*, the latest publication in Africa Research Institute's Policy Voices series, should be widely acknowledged and lauded – but not romanticised. For two decades, Somaliland has ploughed its own furrow – through success and setback.

Abdirahman  
Mohamed  
Abdillahi "Irro"

Adam Haji Ali  
Ahmed

Ali Yousuf Ahmed

Abdirahman Yusuf  
Duale "Boobe"

Bashe Mohammed  
Farah

Nafisa Yusuf  
Mohamed

Siham Rayale

Saad Ali Shire

Omar Ahmed  
Sulaman

Abdirahman  
Mohamed Talyanle

Michael Walls



Africa Research Institute

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