



Guul iyo Gobanimo



Somaliland celebrates 32nd anniversary of regaining its sovereignty

Somaliland is celebrating its 32nd anniversary this week. This anniversary dates back to the 18th May 1991 when Somaliland regained its independence. Somaliland first secured independence on 26th June 1960 from Britain, but unfortunately made the historic error of relinquishing that independence five days later when it went into a merger with Somalia on 1st July 1960 to form Somali Republic. 18th May has rectified that error.

18th May is a day for the people of Somaliland to remember the hard struggle they went through which finally led to the re-birth of Somaliland nation and the establishment of State institutions. It is a day to remember all the people who lost their lives so that the next generations can live in dignity and freedom. The freedom and the security we enjoy today came at high price and the sacrifice offered by Somaliland heroes. This day, its purpose is not only a day to remember the heroes, but we are also praying for them. It is also a day for the people of Somaliland to reflect on the challenges and opportunities they face.

On this day, the people of Somaliland organise various events across the country and in the diaspora. The nation's capital, Hargeisa, will be lit up. Somaliland president Muse Bihi Abdi appointed a national committee to coordinate this anniversary, which includes the Minister on Internal Affairs, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Information, Mayor & Governor of Hargeisa and other members. According to some Somaliland Government officials, the celebration of this 18th May will be celebrated more than the previous years. Speaking to the media, the Minister of Internal Affairs stated: "*We should all celebrate this anniversary together as a nation and also share the significance of this day. To make the event great and peaceful working with the security forces is important.*"

At the place where the national committee was launching the 32nd anniversary celebration, the Minister of Foreign Affairs also sent this special message to the Somaliland Diaspora "*The commemoration of this 32nd anniversary will be stronger than the previous ones. It is an anniversary that we strengthen our unity and togetherness. The theme or motto of this year's celebration is **Unity, Peace and Triumph**. We look forward to celebrate in a happy atmosphere, but as a society we must be vigilant during the celebration time and we must all work with the security agencies*".

This year, as the Mayor of Hargeisa mentioned many places in the city of Hargeisa have been prepared to celebrate the 32nd anniversary. This means the commemoration of this year will be more extensive than was the case in the previous years.

This day is not only a celebration, but it is an opportunity to make people aware the value of peace and stability. It is really unfortunate that this 18th of May coincided with the on-going conflict in Sool. It is an event that aims to convey messages of peace to find a solution to the conflict that has claimed the lives of some Somaliland people on both sides.

In this brief article, I do not intend to present all of its historical past or how it has reached its current position as a nation. You may want to refer, for this, to my article on the 30th anniversary:

<https://www.horndiplomat.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Somaliland-30th-anniversary-2021-pdf-new.pdf>

Some of the key achievements

Although Somaliland has been seeking recognition for thirty-two years, it is clear that it has not achieved this, but it is on course. When you look at it from another side, there are many things that Somaliland has achieved. Amongst these are the maintenance of peace, security and stability, the peaceful transfer of power from one president to the next dating back to 1993 when HE late **Abdirahman Ahmed Ali** transferred power following a conference in the city of Borama to the elected HR late Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal.

During the two-year period presidential term of Abdirahman Ahmed Ali the country was in a difficult situation and this president will be remembered for the opportunity he gave to organise the Borama conference in-order to strengthen the statehood of Somaliland.



He will also be remembered for laying the foundation for the creation of Somaliland Institutions such as the first Somaliland cabinet etc.

During his presidency, HE Late **Ibrahim Haji Egal** restored peace and stability in to the country. He succeeded in disarming the fighters of the struggle who were later unified as a national army. Disarmament was a big achievement for Somaliland which led to move towards other social development.

Strengthened Somaliland institutions are one of the things to remember during his time. What also needs to be mentioned is that Egal was the president who introduced a new Somaliland currency in 1994 (Somaliland shilling). The main legacy



achieved by President Egal was the draft of the Somaliland constitution, which was the key to the development of Somaliland's democracy.

The third president of Somaliland HE **Dahir Riyale Kaahin** made a significant contribution to the process and progress of Somaliland democracy. He succeeded in organizing local election, parliamentary election and two presidential elections with 'one man one vote' systems.



According to the report the brenthurstfoundation, "*Somaliland's commitments to improving democratic norms and standards and its regular change of leaders at the polls have made it a regional democratic superpower. Its progress should shame much richer African countries where incumbents are rolling back democratic progress, since this threatens their power and financial privilege*".

When Freedom House compared Somaliland with other countries in the region, you can understand that Somaliland has achieved a lot in terms of democracy despite the absence of international recognition. **Somaliland** scored 42%, while the following countries scored:

Ethiopia (22), Djibouti (24) and Somalia (7), Uganda (34), Rwanda (21), Burundi (14), Egypt (18), Sudan (17), South Sudan (2) and Eritrea (2). According to Freedom House, Kenya is the only country in the region has reached the level of 48%, which shows that Kenya is partly free.

HE **Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud (Silanyo)**, the fourth president of Somaliland, was the first president who dared to promote Somaliland forces by giving them the ranks they deserved. I really believe that this issue was a big contribution to the army and Somaliland as a nation as well. The introduction of Somaliland's ranking system has increased its discipline and other benefits like salaries etc.

President Silanyo managed to increase Somaliland's budget from just £47 million to over three hundred and fifty million dollars. The government's achievements



also include holding a local election in 2012 and 2017 presidential election. Launching and starting road construction projects, such as the one between Burao and Erigavo, was also President Silanyo's legacy. One of the main achievements of Silanyo's government was its agreement with DP world, which is a major investor in the country.

HE **Muse Abdi Bihi**, the incumbent president succeeded in holding combined elections 31st May 2021 which was the election contested by candidates from Parliament and local districts. It was fair and free as reported by the international observers who attended. In this election where most of the seats were won by the two opposition parties Waddani and Ucid, the results were accepted by the ruling party (Kulmiye). The creation of the Somaliland youth service is one of the major achievements would also go down as President Bihi's legacy. Thousands of young people have gained access to gain experience and work through this service. Furthermore, the completion of construction of Berbera port (DP world), Corridor, Hargeisa Bypass and Erigavo road are among other major projects that the Muse Bihi managed to complete.

The president's trip to the United resulted in the creation of relations based on partnership, which is expected to lead great outcomes in the interest of both countries.



The diplomatic relationship between Somaliland and Taiwan is one of the achievements of this government. Both countries hope that the relationship will be beneficial for the citizens of both countries.

Resilience in Somaliland and the celebration of 32 Anniversary

Somaliland has reached its 32nd anniversary this year as the people of Somaliland have shown their resilience to overcome difficult situations. Despite the fact that Somaliland has not received any recognition from the rest of the world, the people of Somaliland have managed to create a functioning government system which has gone through different stages, each of which had its own challenges.

In the last year and the beginning of this year the people of Somaliland faced with multiple crises. The country went through major economic and social challenges including droughts, the burning of the Waaheen Market which is still under construction. Although the Covid Pandemic is not the same as before in Somaliland, it has had an impact on the lives of the Somaliland people. While most of the people have financial adversity, the people are still resilient and trying to help each other as a single society. Somaliland's people being resilient have led us to a step forward towards tangible achievements whilst we are still waiting for the international community to recognize us as a country.

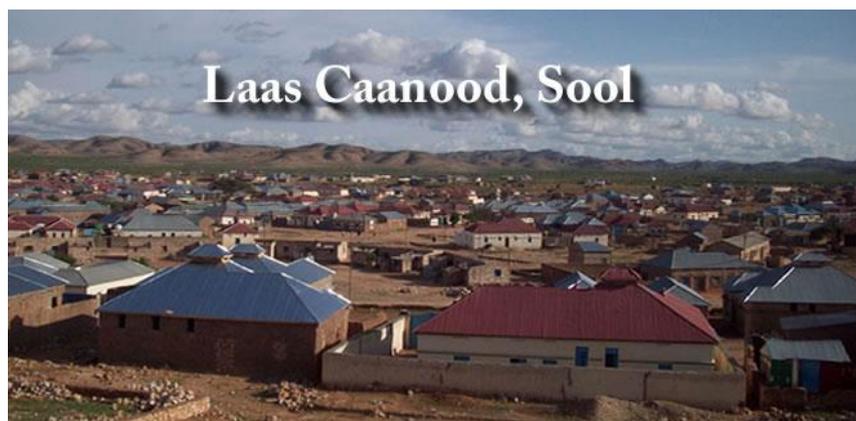


The conflict in Sool region and the celebration of 18th May:

It is unfortunate that Somaliland's 32nd anniversary this year coincides with the ongoing conflict and war in Lasanod. First of all, I am sharing my personal feelings that my heart goes out to all those who have died in Lasanod since the war started. My deepest condolence goes to the victims and their families. Human lives are precious, and I hope that peace is given a chance. The war in Lasanod and its area is not a fight between the people of Sool region and Somaliland forces. It is certain that the Lasanod conflict has put us in a situation where we are under attack. It is a war planned by external forces and goes beyond the people of Sool. I believe the main agenda behind this conflict is to destroy the existence and the progress that Somaliland has been building step by step for the last 32 years. It is also a war where its aim is to damage Somaliland's reputation and the legacy of our future generation. The region where Somaliland is located is unstable, especially neighbouring countries in the horn of Africa.

Somaliland Government is not accepting to give a chance those whose commitment and intention is to weaken or destroy Somaliland. President Muse Bihi's annual address *"Somaliland forces are defending the territorial integrity of Somaliland, which is non-negotiable."*

The traditional leaders (Garaadada) of Sool need to understand and realise that Sool and other eastern regions are part of Somaliland. What is really sad, and a negative phenomenon is that traditional leaders from the Sool region have so far refused to negotiate to end the war and the hostility. On the other hand, it is important to mention that the president and the Somaliland Government has called several times for unconditional talks between the two sides. We all have to be aware of the fact that it is not in anyone's interest for the conflict and war to continue. We all want a peaceful Sool where people live with dignity and a good life, and we all need to work together to get there.



With this anniversary, it is worth mentioning that MP. Amina Elmi has joined the Somaliland Parliament as a member this year. It is a huge victory for Somaliland in general and the Somaliland women in particular who have no voice in the Somaliland Parliament. The current members of the Parliament were elected in 2021 on the basis of one man one vote.

Conclusion

Somaliland as a nation is still going through difficult times. One of the tough issues is the Lasanod conflict, a war to weaken Somaliland's existence with external involvement. The majority of young people in Somaliland are currently unemployed and do not have enough opportunities to change their lives. There is also the fact that the cost of living in Somaliland is a burden for many of the poor people who are vulnerable to the world's rising prices. The conflict between the Government and the opposition is one of the issues that Somaliland needs to resolve in the near future. However, despite these challenges, Somaliland has a bright future ahead. All stakeholders in Somaliland need to work together to strengthen the unity of the people. The difficult circumstances that Somaliland is currently facing can only be overcome through unity and togetherness.

Finally, to all the people of Somaliland, I wish you a happy anniversary. Let's keep our peace and stability together. It is vital for us to maintain the law and order as Somaliland is located in a region where the security and stability is weak. I hope for the Sool region to become a stable area and live in peace with the rest of Somaliland.



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