

# The Horn Tribune

Vol III/ Issue 1534

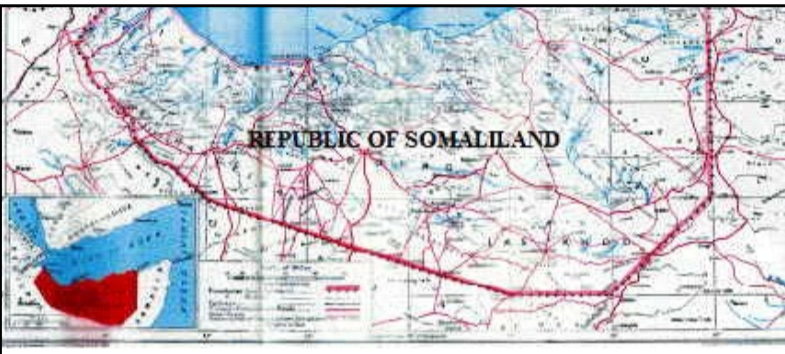
Sunday 21 January 2024

Rajab 09/ 1445 AH

An Independent Weekly Newspaper of Dawan Media Group, Tel: 0634414181/0634424590/0634615145

## The leaders of Somalia have openly endorsed the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, encouraging them to execute terrorist attacks in the Republic of Somaliland” Council of Ministers- Statement

The official signing of the agreement will be subject to approval from the respective legislative councils



The 123rd session of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Somaliland was held under the chairmanship of H.E. President Muse Bihi Abdi and in presence of Vice President Abdirahman Abdilahi Ismail (Saili'i). The session focused on the issues concerning the Horn of Africa region

Continue on Page 2



### Ethio-Somaliland MoU Met with Optimism by Somalilanders: Residents of Hargeisa



The Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU has been met with optimism and belief in its potential for closer cooperation and mutual prosperity, according to residents of Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, who attended the Second-Generation Ethiopians welcoming

Continue on Page 2

### MP Guruje calls for concerted defense of integral national sovereignty



Continue on Page 2

### Somali region president, ruling party head hail Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU



Continue on Page 3

### Somaliland rejects Arab League statement over maritime deal with Ethiopia



In a statement released over the week, Somaliland expressed its rejection of the statement made by the #Arab\_League during an extraordinary meeting on January 17, 2024, regarding the Memorandum of Understanding

Continue on Page 2

### Somalia & Ethiopia mediation to be headed by former Nigeria President



Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has been appointed by the African Union to head mediation talks between Somalia and Ethiopia

Continue on Page 3

### Ethiopia “categorically rejects” Arab League statement over maritime deal with Somaliland



Ethiopia said it “categorically rejects” the statement issued by the Arab League following an extraordinary meeting on 17 January 2024 concerning the MoU recently signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

Continue on Page 3

### Central Bank of Somaliland DG meets Ethiopian and Djibouti counterparts

The Director General of Central Bank of Somaliland Mr. Mohamed Qassim Hussein has been on an official visit to



Continue on Page 4

### Hargeisa Police Nab Drug Peddler with 21 Stones of Bhang



Police in Hargeisa have arrested a drug peddler with narcotics. The suspect was apprehended carrying 21 stones of bhang. Police swooped on the

peddler during an operation to weed out the crime.

Police officers from Adam Shine

Continue on Page 4

### UK MP queries his Premier on Somaliland recognition



By M.A. Egge

In a session of the UK Parliament on Tuesday 16 January UK Member of Parliament Alexander Stafford sought from British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak a question related to the recognition of the

Continue on Page 3

## Inside

In-depth: Navigating new waters: How Ethiopia's recent sea access deal with Somaliland redefines geopolitics in the Horn and beyond



Continue on page 4



## The leaders of Somalia have openly endorsed the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, encouraging them to execute terrorist attacks in the Republic of Somaliland” Council of Ministers- Statement



and particularly latest developments in Somaliland and Somalia.

It is historically known that the Republic of Somaliland, a former protectorate of the British Empire from 1884 to 1960, gained independence on June 26, 1960, as the 17th independent country in Africa. At the time of independence, Somaliland had international borders, a recognized government, constitution, and parliament, similar to other countries that achieved independence.

The illegal union between Somaliland and Somalia on July 1, 1960, was born out of the desire for the unification of the five Somali territories in the Horn of Africa. However, Somaliland immediately rejected the union process and instead proposed the Act of Union to bring the two sides together. Unfortunately, the Somaliland Act was rejected, and the Somalia Act was voted for, leading to the majority of Somaliland people rejecting the referendum on the 1961 constitution.

Since then, the people of Somaliland have endured significant violence and widespread genocide. In 1988, 50,000 civilians were killed, and huge damage and destruction was inflicted on the infrastructure in both urban and rural areas while one million people fled to neighboring countries as refugees as testified by the UN report in 2001 and acknowledged by Somalia leaders.

Following the collapse of Somalia, the people of Somaliland, led by cultural leaders, intellectuals, politicians, and scholars, decided to reclaim their independence on May 18, 1991. Since then, Somaliland has not been part of any of the governments formed by Somalia over the past 33 years. The constitution created by Somalia only applies to their five regional administrations and governments. The independence of Somaliland was reaffirmed at the Burao conference in 1991 and through a referendum that saw 97% of the population vote in favor of the constitution on May 31, 2001. This restoration of independence aligns with the 1963 African Union Charter, which states that colonial borders should not be changed. The Fact-Finding Commission sent by the African Union to Somaliland in 2005 confirmed this and recommended

recognizing the Republic of Somaliland.

Somaliland has fulfilled all the requirements of an independent country according to the Montevideo Convention of 1933. It adheres to the four principles of government building outlined in the convention. Today, during the Council of Ministers' session, several key points were addressed:

1. The Republic of Somaliland, with its territorial and maritime independence, has the authority to enter into agreements in accordance with its Constitution Article 12, Paragraph 3, and Laws. Notably, it has already established agreements with international organizations and countries, including Somalia.

2. In alignment with the Constitution of Somaliland, specifically Article 10, paragraph 4, the Republic of Somaliland is committed to promoting consensus and reconciliation as an alternative to the longstanding conflicts among the countries in the Horn of Africa.

3. The practice of approving and leasing naval bases is not uncommon among the countries in the Horn of Africa, including Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia.

4. In line with the Memorandum of Understanding signed on January 1, 2024, between the governments of the Republic of Somaliland and the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, both parties have reached an agreement for the lease of a military base from Somaliland to Ethiopia. This agreement carries great significance as it includes Ethiopia's recognition of the Republic of Somaliland.

It is worth noting that the naval base in question is being leased to Ethiopia, not sold, for a specified period of time. The official signing of the agreement will be subject to approval from the respective legislative councils.

5. The Republic of Somaliland has achieved commendable success in stabilizing security within its borders. Moreover, it has played an active role in enhancing the overall security of neighboring countries and the entire region.

6. The Somaliland government is appealing to nations across the globe to acknowledge the Republic of Somaliland, emphasizing its potential for bringing strategic and security benefits not only to the region but also to the entire world, with a specific emphasis on Africa and the Horn region.

7. The Republic of Somaliland requests the support of the international community to bolster the security and stability of the region. It emphasizes that any decline in security measures could have far-reaching consequences for

the ongoing peace process. Furthermore, the Republic of Somaliland urges the international community to exert pressure on the Somalia government to halt the conflict it is currently perpetuating in the Horn of Africa.

8. The government of Somaliland brings to the attention of the international community that the government of Somalia has intentionally reneged on all agreements made with Somaliland. These agreements encompassed cooperation on security matters and the commitment to avoid spreading divisive and hateful rhetoric. The government of Somaliland urges the international community to ensure that these agreements including air space control, along with other witnessed agreements, are upheld in an impartial and equitable manner.

9. The leaders of Somalia have openly endorsed the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, encouraging them to execute terrorist attacks in the Republic of Somaliland. They have spread various unfounded allegations, such as the claim that the presence of an Ethiopian naval base in Somaliland would result in our people forsaking Islam. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Ethiopia already maintains a base in Somalia and other Muslim countries.

10. During these ongoing disputes, Somalia asserts its right to engage in the maritime agreement, as they have already done so. They do not oppose the agreement itself but object to allowing the Republic of Somaliland to participate in it. However, the resilient Somaliland government staunchly rejects this decision, showcasing their unwavering dedication to fulfilling the aspirations of their people.

11. We strongly urge the Somali government to cease the dissemination of misleading information to the Somali people and to halt their involvement in inciting violence and supporting extremist organizations.

12. The Republic of Somaliland stands resolute in its decision to refrain from entering into any negotiations concerning its nationality and sovereignty over its land and sea. It remains dedicated to safeguarding its territorial integrity and asserting its rightful control over its land and maritime boundaries.

13. The government of the Republic of Somaliland sincerely recognizes and commends its vigilant citizens for their unwavering dedication to safeguarding the nation. Additionally, the government urges the people to exercise caution and remain vigilant against statements made by the government of Somalia and those who pose a threat to the Republic of Somaliland.

## Ethio-Somaliland MoU Met with Optimism by Somalilanders: Residents of Hargeisa



ceremony at Friendship Park yesterday.

Recall that residents of both Somaliland and Ethiopia have been expressing their delights over the signing of the MoU by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Muse Bihi Abdi on January 1, 2024 in different ways.

A former university student in Ethiopia, Mustefa Ali Ese, told ENA that he returned to the country with a renewed joy after witnessing the historic agreement.

"I am from Hargessa and I am participating in this event (the second-generation Ethiopians welcoming ceremony) after the signing of the Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU; and I hope we will continue to visit each other," he said.

Mustefa emphasized the importance of people-to-people relationship and creation of networks between Ethiopians and Somalilanders.

Underscoring the long-standing historical and commercial connections between Ethiopia and

Somaliland, he pointed out that strengthening people-to-people and economic ties is crucial.

Muhamed Askar Ibrahim echoed the sentiments of his compatriot praising the MoU as a positive development for both economies.

"This is very important because the two people are brothers and the relationship between them can be strengthened through trade."

His comments highlighted the shared cultural and familial bonds between Ethiopians and Somalilanders.

According to him, the MoU has been met with optimism and a belief in its potential for closer cooperation and mutual prosperity.

"We are glad, all Somalilanders are glad. And both sides need to cooperate to realize the Memorandum of Understanding," Muhamed noted.

There is of course some negativity from some corners, he said, adding that this is expected and surmountable.

Source: ENA

## Somaliland rejects Arab League statement over maritime deal with Ethiopia



(MoU) recently signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

The statement from Somaliland asserts, "The Republic of Somaliland views the statement issued by the League of Arab States as hostile, unfair to its sovereign rights, and a blatant interference in its internal affairs." It further states, "Somaliland is an independent, sovereign republic that does not recognize the alleged Somali sovereignty over its land, air, and sea. It possesses the right, as guaranteed by the Constitution and all international laws, to enter into agreements with friendly and brotherly countries."

Continuing, the statement declares,

"The Republic of Somaliland explicitly informs the Arab League and the entire world that the independence of the Republic of Somaliland is an irreversible decision. The people of the Republic of Somaliland are prepared to persist in their struggle to achieve the just fate of their cause, regardless of the cost and duration." Earlier today, Ethiopia also rejected the statement issued by the Arab League. The State Minister of the Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Ministry, Ambassador Mesganu Arega, posted on X that the Arab League's statement constitutes "an attempt to interfere with the internal affairs and sovereignty of Ethiopia."



## Ethiopia “categorically rejects” Arab League statement over maritime deal with Somaliland



State minister of the Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Ministry, ambassador Mesganu Arega posten on X that the Arab League’s statement is “an attempt to interfere with the internal affairs & sovereignty of Ethiopia”. The state minister dismissed the League’s statement stating that “Ethiopia enjoys excellent bilateral relations with many of the Arab states but the League is serving the interests of few.”

Furthermore, Ambassador Meles Alem (PhD), spokesperson of the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs told Addis Standard that the Arab League’s statement is “unacceptable” and that Ethiopia “categorically rejects” it. “Africans have the capability to solve their own problems,” Ambassador Meles stated.

“By the same token the statement by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sami Shoukri, portraying Ethiopia as a destabilizer is irresponsible. It is hell

bent on escalating the situation,” the spokesperson conveyed, adding that “the Arab League and Egypt are two sides of the same coin.”

The Arab League Ministerial Council which convened via video conference on Wednesday on the request of Somalia concluded the meeting by issuing a resolution supporting Somalia and rejecting any action that undermines or violates its sovereignty.

Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Arab League chief, described the Ethiopia-Somalia MoU as “a blatant attack against Arab, African and international principles, and a clear violation of international law”. The league accused Ethiopia of destabilizing security and stability in the region, and threatening regional peace and security.

The Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry during the meeting called on respecting Somalia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,

and reportedly warned against “Ethiopia’s unilateral policies that violate international law and principles of good neighborliness.” He asserted Arab readiness to provide Somalia with the necessary support at the official and popular levels.

Following the meeting, Khalifa Shaheen Almarar, Minister of State of the UAE affirmed in a statement that his country’s support for Somalia’s sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, and reiterated the country’s support for the Federal Republic of Somalia’s government.

The minister called for de-escalation, dialogue and diplomacy and emphasized the importance of exploring ways to coordinate with IGAD and the African Union to ensure stability in the Horn of Africa. The signing of the MoU on 01 January 2024, granting Ethiopia access to the sea in return for international recognition for Somaliland, escalated tensions between Somalia and Ethiopia, with Somalia deterring an Ethiopian airplane from landing in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland on Wednesday.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) under the chairmanship of Djibouti’s president, Ismail Omar Guelleh, is set to discuss the matter today in Kampala, albeit, Ethiopia declining attendance citing overlapping schedule. AS

## Somali region president, ruling party head hail Ethiopia-Somaliland MoU



President of the Somali region in Ethiopia, Mustafe Mohamed said the MoU recently signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland is set to strengthen development and neighborliness between the two signatories.

“The deal which Ethiopia made to acquire a military base and commercial maritime services based on the principle of give and take, brings good neighborliness and mends our country’s brokenness without harming others,” he said in a presser on Friday.

He emphasized the MoU’s particular significance to the pastoralists of the Somali region in diversifying markets for their

livestock, ENA reported. Similarly, the regional head of the ruling Prosperity Party, Engineer Mohamed Shale, said the Ethiopia-Somaliland deal realizes Ethiopia’s longstanding national interest of accessing the sea.

He highlighted the importance of the MoU to ease economic pressures in Ethiopia by lowering port service costs, and stressed that the deal was made in a way that “did not violate the rights of our neighbors, and based on the principle of mutual benefit.”

The party official said the primary beneficiaries of the MoU are the people of Somali region, and called on them to work with members and officials of the party to clear any confusion around the MoU.

## Somalia & Ethiopia mediation to be headed by former Nigeria President

amid the latter’s geopolitical gambit To prevent further escalation of tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia, the African Union’s Peace and Security Council (PSC) has taken action and asked former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to lead negotiations and ease the growing conflict.

The strained relations between the two neighboring countries began when the secessionist region of Somaliland signed an agreement with Ethiopia on January 1. This agreement granted Ethiopia control over a maritime port and a military base on the Red Sea, sparking tensions in the region.

While appointing Obasanjo as the mediator, the PSC has also called for other countries to refrain from interfering in the situation. In addition, the Intergovernmental



Authority on Development (IGAD) held an extraordinary summit in Kampala, Uganda, on Thursday to address the matter.

Obasanjo faces a daunting challenge as he mediates between the two countries involved in a complex geopolitical gambit. ‘Ethiopia must reverse agreement with Somaliland’

In turn, Somalia has made it clear that it won’t engage in talks with Ethiopia before Addis Ababa

Continue on page 4

## UK MP queries his Premier on Somaliland recognition

Republic of Somaliland. The Conservative Party MP asked the Prime Minister whether the British would join in recognizing the Republic of Somaliland as an independent country following the recently signed MoU agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia, something which is important for security and development in the Horn of Africa, while Ethiopia recognizes Somaliland.

In his response the UK Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, said, “The British Foreign Office is constantly working to make Africa part of its policy in having stability and prosperity. We will continue to talk



to anyone who confirms the plan.” The Republic of Somaliland and the United Kingdom have a long history of cooperation, as the UK was the country that granted independence to Somaliland on June 26, 1960.

In the 33 years that Somaliland re-established its independence from Somalia, Britain has been the main sponsor of Somaliland’s development and the democratic system.

## MP Guruje calls for concerted defense of integral national sovereignty

By M.A. Egge MP Ahmed Nur Guruje, a member of Somaliland’s House of Representatives has called on the government, political parties and organizations and the members of public at large to concertedly defend the integral sovereignty of the nation against propaganda onslaught from the Mogadishu politicians.

He pointed out the Somalia politicians are virulently trying to undermine the existence and sovereignty of the Republic of

Somaliland in a well orchestrated campaign by their government and politicians.

MP Ahmed Nur Guruje said that the union of Somaliland and Somalia in the 1960s was based on good will but not on rules and laws which have since be obsolete following the re-establishment of the nationhood of Somaliland.

The MP called on the President of Somalia Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, to give up his untenable animosity

and enmity towards the Somaliland community and strive for the inevitable good neighbourliness instead.

He said that the prominent politicians who are in spirited campaigns against the existence of Somaliland include politician Abdirahman Abdishakur whose politics he said is based on hatred, Ali Mohamed Gedi, Mohamed Hussein Roble, Abdi Qasin Salad, Yusuf Garad etc all of them are now engaged volubly and eloquently in



everything against the independence of Somaliland. The politicians in Mogadishu focus on harming Somaliland became more evident after the historic agreement reached by Somaliland and Ethiopia in which the two countries cooperate in development and economy. In conclusion, MP Ahmed Noor

Guruje asked the Government and the people of Somaliland to counter the sheepish anti-Somaliland campaigns that has no iota of justification.

He lamented that the opposition fraternity are conspicuously absent from the efforts of countering this Mogadishu onslaught in defense of the country’s nationhood.



# In-depth: Navigating new waters: How Ethiopia's recent sea access deal with Somaliland redefines geopolitics in the Horn and beyond



By Abdi Biyemssa @ABiyemssa  
**Addis Abeba** – In the shifting geopolitics of the Horn of Africa, tensions have escalated and signs of potential conflict have emerged since Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed declared interests in the Red Sea in October 2023. Initially, this perceived policy shift by the Ethiopian government sparked widespread anticipation of escalating tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Alarming reports surfaced of intensified troop movements and increased aircraft activity near the border, suggesting potential renewed clashes between the two countries. Yet, amidst this foreboding atmosphere, a surprising alliance was born at the dawn of 2024. Ethiopia and Somaliland have inked a “historic” Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), sending shockwaves not only through the

Horn of Africa but reverberating globally. After the nonbinding agreement was signed, Ethiopia asserted that the MoU would facilitate “securing access to the sea and broadening its reach to seaports.” Furthermore, Redwan Hussien, the National Security Advisor to Prime Minister Abiy, revealed that the MoU will also “facilitate the establishment of a leased military base.” While acknowledging PM Abiy’s “request for seaport access for Ethiopia’s naval forces,” Somaliland President Muse Bihi expressed in an official statement that “Somaliland endured a long quest for official recognition from Ethiopia.” Federico Donelli, an Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Trieste, Italy, and a scholar specializing in the Red Sea region, emphasized that the

recent nonbinding agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland, accompanied by strong statements from both nations, has significantly influenced regional politics. He likened its impact to that of a lightning bolt. The assistant professor explained that such a strategic move by Ethiopia and Somaliland has injected an additional layer of complexity into the already tense regional dynamics by escalating tensions between Somalia and both Ethiopia and Somaliland. A day after the MoU announcement, Somalia’s Cabinet under Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre issued a statement condemning Ethiopia’s decision to sign the deal, calling it an infringement on Somalia’s territorial integrity. After an emergency meeting on 02 January, 2024, Somalia’s federal government officially declared the MoU “null and void” and initiated the recall of its ambassador to Ethiopia for consultations. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud also reasserted the country’s position on the inviolability of its territory before the Parliament, emphasizing Somalia’s perception of the deal as an encroachment on its territorial integrity, given its consideration of Somaliland as an integral part of its territory. In a statement issued on 03 January, Ethiopia provided clarification that the MoU “includes provisions for the

Continue on page 5

## Somalia & Ethiopia mediation to be headed by former Nigeria President

reverses its agreement with Somaliland, according to *Africa News*. “The sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia have been violated by Ethiopia when it signed an illegal agreement with the northern region [the administration of Somaliland] of Somalia. That is why there is no room for mediation unless Ethiopia reverses its illegal agreement and reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia,” stated the Somali Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Before that, on Wednesday, Somalia denied entry to an Ethiopian flight carrying Ethiopian government representatives en route to Somaliland. The PSC has issued a statement emphasizing the importance of Ethiopia and Somalia adhering to the fundamental principles of the African Union (AU) and international law in their bilateral and international relations. It is important to note that the AU regards Somaliland as a part of Somalia. Somalia ‘ready for a war’ over Somaliland “Prepare for the defense of our homeland,” Somali President

Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said, while a senior presidential advisor explained, “We are pursuing all diplomatic options and I think Ethiopia will come to its senses, but we are ready for a war if Abiy [Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed] wants a war.” A memorandum of understanding between Somaliland and Ethiopia, a landlocked country seeking maritime access, was signed on January 1st. The agreement allegedly gave Ethiopia access to build a port in Somaliland, which the breakaway region of Somaliland would bring it legitimacy as it remains unrecognized internationally, as it was reported that Ethiopia would recognize Somaliland’s independence as per the agreement. Somalia, which also does not recognize Somaliland as an independent state but as part of Somalia, declared the agreement void after Mogadishu declared that the deal “caught Somalia by surprise.” Here’s what you need to know Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in the early 1990s amid Somalia’s

prolonged civil war. Over three decades later, Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, has actively sought international recognition within the borders of the former British protectorate. Formal recognition by Ethiopia could offer Somaliland its most significant opportunity yet to address its longstanding international isolation. Ethiopia lost access to its Red Sea ports in the early 1990s when Eritrean forces controlling Ethiopia’s northern coastal region declared independence from the country. Ethiopia, heavily dependent on Djibouti for international trade, sought to diversify its options to mitigate vulnerability, expressing interest in acquiring access to ports along East Africa’s seaboard since October. On that note, Ethiopia’s assertion of rights and signaling its interest in Red Sea ports has raised concerns among its neighbors. In a televised address, Ethiopian prime minister Abiy Ahmed stated that Ethiopia should have a say in using the Red Sea ports of its coastal neighbors, drawing parallels to countries downstream along the Nile River negotiating the use of the river, where Ethiopia has built a dam to generate power.

## Hargeisa Police Nab Drug Peddler with 21 Stones of Bhang



police station received information about the suspect ferrying the illicit consignment and mounted the interception. The notorious drug peddler was whisked to police cells awaiting arraignment in court. The law enforcement agency sent a stern warning to drug peddlers

and alcohol importers to desist from their illicit business. Somaliland police thanked members of the public for sharing information with them. The police warned criminals against engaging in such tendencies for they would not find a safe have in the country. By: Guled Abdi Mahir

## Central Bank of Somaliland DG meets Ethiopian and Djibouti counterparts



Ethiopia and Djibouti. He led a delegation of financiers to meet with his Ethiopian counterpart Mr. Mamo Mihretu. During their meeting in Addis Ababa the bankers discussed bilateral cooperation of the financial institutions to spur economic development. He also paid a courtesy call to Somaliland embassy in Ethiopia. He was received by the deputy ambassador Mr. Barkhad Mohamed Kaariye.

On his Djibouti tour he was received by the Chairman of Central Bank of Djibouti Mr. Ahmed Osman and the director general of the bank Mr. Hassan Musa. They discussed issues related to development of financial institutions of both countries. DG Mohamed Qaasim similarly visited Somaliland envoy in Djibouti Mr. Abdifatah Saeed to discuss the agenda of his work visit. By: Guled Abdi Mahir



# In-depth: Navigating new waters: How Ethiopia's recent sea access deal with Somaliland redefines geopolitics in the Horn and beyond

Ethiopian government to conduct an in-depth assessment towards taking a position regarding the efforts of Somaliland to gain recognition." However, this had little effect on easing escalating regional tensions. To help defuse rising tensions, the US State Department has urged diplomatic dialogue to de-escalate tensions.

If the MoU materializes, it would secure Ethiopia's strategic position at the Bab el-Mandeb strait, a crucial maritime chokepoint."

*Rashid Abdi (PhD), a political and security analyst*

Likewise, African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat has urged Ethiopia and Somalia "to refrain from any action that may unintentionally deteriorate relations."

The European Union (EU), Arab League, and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have also voiced concerns and advocated calm and restraint among all parties.

From landlocked to open seas Ethiopia's pursuit of sea access had not been officially declared a matter of public policy until the recent disclosure, although the question of sea access has been a subject of substantial academic and policy deliberation, particularly after Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia in 1991, resulting in Ethiopia becoming a landlocked country.

The topic gained further momentum after the conclusion of the Eritrean-Ethiopian War, spanning from May 1998 to June 2000, leading to the cessation of Ethiopia's use of Massawa and Assab ports. However, it drew heightened attention following Prime Minister Abiy's controversial address to the parliament in October 2023, signifying a notable shift in the nation's narrative regarding this issue.

During the speech, the Prime Minister emphasized to Members of Parliament that a country with a population exceeding 120 million cannot afford to be landlocked. He highlighted the critical importance of sea access for Ethiopia's economic development and national security.

For these reasons, Andrew Korybko (PhD), an American political analyst based in Moscow with a focus on the Horn of Africa, considers the recent MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland a strategic diplomatic achievement since it addresses Ethiopia's predicament of being landlocked in a peaceful and pragmatic manner that benefits both parties involved.

Korybko highlights that foreign nations control over the maritime logistics crucial to Ethiopia's economic and political stability poses a significant security concern for the nation. "Given Somaliland's strategic location along some of the world's most vital shipping routes, the MoU provides Ethiopia with strategically advantageous access to maritime avenues," he stated.

Despite the initial agreement, the deal that Ethiopia made seven years ago to secure a 19% ownership stake in the Berbera Port fell through (Photo: Social Media)

Following the onset of the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1998, Ethiopia turned to utilizing the ports of Djibouti as a viable alternative. Presently, nearly 95% of

Ethiopia's import-export cargo passes through Djibouti's ports.

In recent years, Ethiopian officials have stressed the need for an alternative to Djibouti's main seaport, emphasizing that one of Africa's fastest-growing economies requires diversified options.

Ethiopia's annual foreign trade has steadily increased over the past decade, with current estimates indicating around 15 million tons of solid cargo and four billion metric tons of petroleum products. The annual import-export volume is also projected to double in the next decade.

Ethiopia has also advocated for safeguarding itself against the growing threat from Somali pirates along the Red Sea, which endangers its commercial shipping activities and necessitates a permanent naval base along the coastline.

Rashid Abdi (PhD), a political and security analyst focusing on the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, emphasizes that if the MoU materializes, it would secure Ethiopia's strategic position at the Bab el-Mandeb strait, a crucial maritime chokepoint.

The Bab al-Mandeb Strait, a vital maritime passageway for approximately 12% of worldwide commerce, stands as a geopolitical pivot of the highest significance. From a strategic perspective, Abdi argues that its importance surpasses that of Somalia, a consideration of paramount importance to Addis Abeba.

Located at the southern entrance of the Red Sea and proximate to Egypt's Suez Canal, the Bab al-Mandab Strait is evolving into a vital chokepoint for global maritime trade, serving as a crucial link between the Horn of Africa and the Middle East. Against this backdrop, Egypt has actively pursued the preservation of its strategic dominance over the Red Sea by exerting influence over the strait. This strategic objective is driven by the dual imperatives of safeguarding Egypt's national security and fostering its trade interests.

Experts emphasize that Egypt's dependence on the Nile and the Suez Canal, acknowledged as two indispensable lifelines for the country, is intricately linked with the Bab al-Mandab strait and the unfolding geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa. They contend that the strategic positioning of Somaliland's coastline by Ethiopia is thereby underscored, reinforcing its significance for one of the oldest and most populous nations in East Africa.

However, other analysts hold a different view.

Donelli, the assistant Professor at the University of Trieste in Italy, suggests that internal factors within Ethiopia have influenced the recent establishment of the MoU with Somaliland. He points to ongoing conflicts and developments in the country, such as Ethiopia's default on Eurobond payments and escalating inflation.

"The Prime Minister seeks to divert public attention by focusing on a matter of importance, such as access to the Red Sea," he asserts. However, Donelli maintains that "There is a slim chance that the MoU will lead to subsequent agreements or the formal

recognition of Somaliland."

Somaliland's uphill battle for international recognition

Currently, Somalia is the sole nation acknowledged by the IGAD, the African Union, the Arab League, and the United Nations, whereas Somaliland lacks recognition from the international community, including supranational institutions, international organizations, and sovereign states.

Eyasu Hailemichael, an expert on Horn of Africa affairs contends that for the effective implementation of the MoU, it is imperative for Somaliland to receive recognition from both regional and international actors.

However, Eyasu expounds that the recognition of a de facto state in international law is contentious and hinges on the unique conditions and stances of the international entities concerned. "The standards for statehood, acknowledgment, and the standing of de facto states within the realm of international law constitute a developing and intricate domain."

Eyasu further notes that the acknowledgment and handling of de facto states are not uniform; they differ from one instance to another. Their status may also evolve over time in response to the changing landscape of political forces and diplomatic endeavors.

"The situation of Somaliland exemplifies this dynamic political characteristic," he states.

Since 1991, Somaliland has functioned as a fully operational de facto state, with its own territory and government. The region has sought recognition, anchoring its hopes on democratic credentials demonstrated through parliamentary elections held since 2005.

Recent data also indicates that the country has a population of around four million people. However, despite these achievements, Somaliland still lacks the international recognition necessary for full participation in the global community.

Korybko underscores the fact that Somaliland has demonstrated its autonomy in all aspects, as such, rightfully merits formal recognition as a sovereign entity within the global community. "The significance of Ethiopia being the initial nation to recognize Somaliland is considerable, given Ethiopia's historical position as the center of Pan-African and the site of the African Union," he argues.

Wali Adem, a researcher and independent legal practitioner, also asserts that Somaliland possesses a democratic constitution that was adopted in 2001 through a national referendum. He explains the nation is characterized by constitutionally separated branches of government, a defined territory, and a permanent population.

"Moreover, Somaliland has the capacity to engage in legal relations with other international entities," he argues.

According to Adem, the sovereignty of Somaliland and its territorial integrity are vested in the Somaliland parliament, which consists of two houses: the House of Elders (upper house) and the House of Representatives (lower chamber).

He underlines, these houses legally represent the people, and upon their joint ratification of the MoU, the agreement will become enforceable throughout the territory of Somaliland.

To make his point, Adem recalls a similar event that took place seven years ago when Somaliland entered into an agreement with DP World of Dubai for the development of the Berbera port.

In 2016, DP World entered into negotiations with Somaliland to pursue an investment in the port of Berbera, serving as Somaliland's primary maritime gateway. In the course of these deliberations, Ethiopia became a signatory to the agreement by acquiring a 19% ownership stake in the Berbera Port, while DP World and Somaliland retained ownership percentages of 51% and 30%, respectively.

Hargeisa serves as the capital and largest city of the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland, a de facto sovereign state in the Horn of Africa that is still regarded internationally as part of Somalia (Photo: AP)

"DP World signed the agreement with the Somaliland government after it was ratified by the parliament, while the veto of the Somalia federal government did not have any effect," Adem indicates.

Nevertheless, in 2022, the Somaliland government officially declared the annulment of the agreement. This decision was prompted by what it asserted as Ethiopia's failure to adhere to the stipulated conditions within the agreement.

Geopolitical tremors While the MoU has sparked renewed discussions on Somaliland's recognition at both regional and international levels, scholars argue that, in contrast to previous developments involving DP World's engagement with the Port of Berbera, Ethiopia's recent action is likely to have more significant consequences.

Negera Gudeta, a scholar specializing in peace and conflict studies and a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University, views the MoU as a significant opportunity for Somaliland in its ongoing quest for international recognition.

However, he acknowledges that the initiative has also led to dissatisfaction and apprehension, with Somalia perceiving Ethiopia's action as a violation of its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Following the MoU signing, tensions have risen between Somalia and both Ethiopia and Somaliland as President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of Somalia issued a stern cautionary statement opposing the letter of intent and expressed the intention to safeguard Somalia through all viable means.

He has additionally been soliciting support from allies.

Recently, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud embarked on a journey to Eritrea for security discussions with the objective of fortifying bilateral relations and addressing regional and international concerns.

Furthermore, he received an invitation from Egypt, ostensibly as a demonstration of support.

Third parties may seek to maneuver Somalia into a conflict with Ethiopia regarding Somaliland."

*Andrew Korybko (PhD), an American political analyst based in Moscow*

Experts suggest that the recent letter of intent between Ethiopia and Somaliland represents a setback for the already unstable administration in Somalia.

"The Somali President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and his cabinet have emerged in a diminished capacity," Donelli remarked.

Analysts also observe that both the general public and the political leadership in Somalia are deeply troubled, viewing the MoU as an act of treachery.

In his recent address, the President of Somalia urged Somali civilians to stand united against potential incursions and cautioned Ethiopia against escalating the situation into armed conflict.

Some scholars express hope that Somalia will confine its response to diplomatic channels and settle for a "cold peace" instead of initiating a military conflict. However, Korybko warns that third parties may seek to maneuver Somalia into a conflict with Ethiopia regarding Somaliland, aiming to deplete Somali resources in a battle against Ethiopia.

This tactic could be part of a larger strategy of establishing dominance through a divide-and-conquer approach in proxy warfare, according to Korybko. "Somalia must therefore exercise restraint in spite of the high emotions involved right now in order to avoid falling for this trap," he emphasizes.

On the other hand, Rashid Abdi, the political analyst, emphasizes that the recently signed MoU not only has the capacity to elicit a response from Somalia but may also unsettle the region's geopolitical balance. He articulates that the potential for Ethiopia to emerge as a naval force in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden will undoubtedly raise concerns among Eritrean and Egyptian officials.

Other experts also note that the MoU is anticipated to exacerbate regional tensions since the deal ostensibly aligns with Ethiopia's objective to identify an additional passage to the Red Sea, independent of Djibouti.

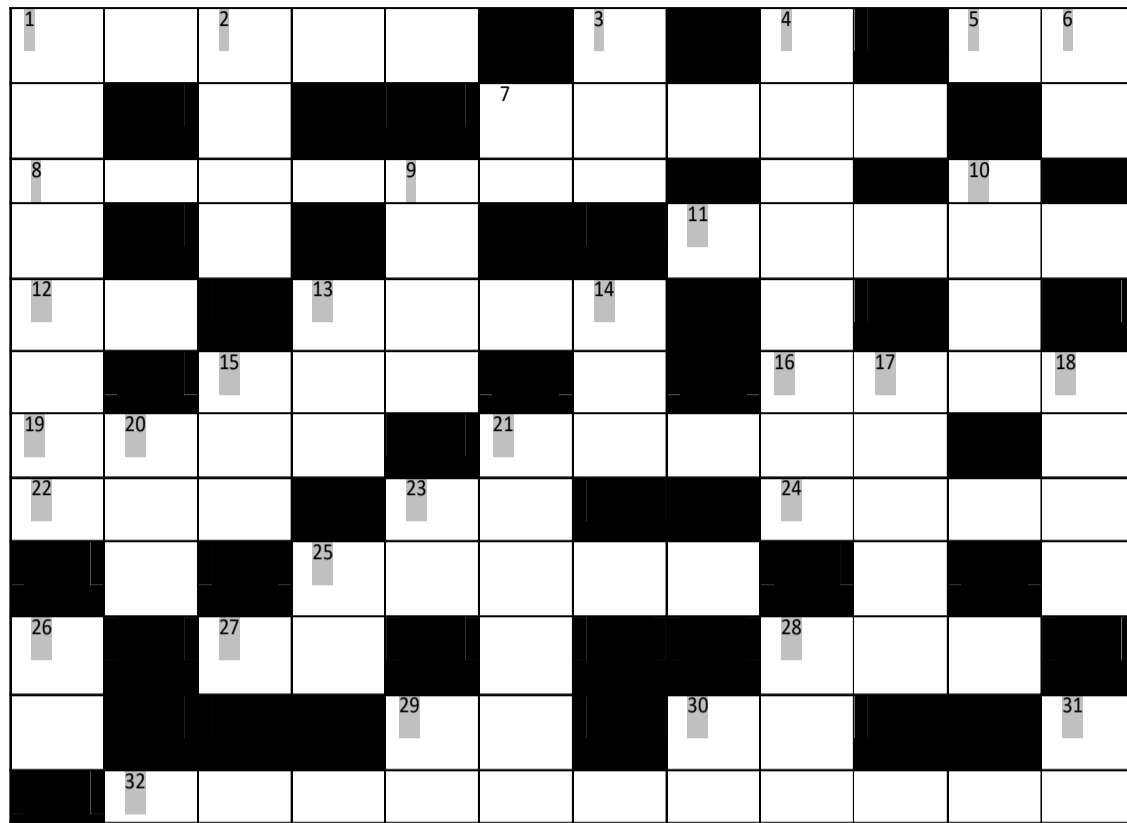
"Ethiopia's redirection of its maritime transit is poised to exert a considerable effect on nations such as Djibouti," argues Donelli.

Concurring with Abdi and Donelli's viewpoint, Eyasu further explains the looming possibility of a proxy conflict in the region. He notes the potential involvement of Middle Eastern nations, such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, and Turkey, which may seek to assert their political influence, vie for ideological supremacy, and strive for a regional balance of power.

Eyasu suggests that Ethiopia should engage in proactive efforts to mitigate diplomatic tensions through various institutions. "Ethiopia should work in shuttle diplomacy to deter the political instability that can bring back the geo-political competition wisely," he advises.

However, Abdi believes that the reparative actions necessary to repair the ensuing diplomatic rift will require a considerable degree of skilled and strategic diplomacy from Addis Abeba. **AS**

# THT Puzzle



**ACROSS**

- 1 March
- 5 Go
- 7 Would
- 8 Guarded
- 11 Rings
- 12 AU
- 13 Game
- 15 Our
- 16 Test
- 19 Town
- 21 Green
- 22 Sun
- 23 Or
- 24 Desk
- 25 Drone
- 27 Go
- 28 Gym
- 29 UN
- 30 GO
- 32 Grandmother

**DOWN**

- 1 Migrants
- 2 Read
- 3 God
- 4 Insisted
- 6 On
- 7 We
- 9 Dear
- 13 Gun
- 14 Ear
- 15 Own
- 17 Enemy
- 18 Take
- 20 Out
- 21 Ground
- 23 Or
- 25 Do
- 26 We
- 28 Got
- 29 UN
- 30 Go
- 31 Or

## Previous Answer

S <sup>1</sup>	O			N <sup>2</sup>		A <sup>3</sup>	F	F <sup>4</sup>	O	R <sup>5</sup>	D
T		A <sup>6</sup>	W <sup>7</sup>	A	I	T		A		E	
A <sup>8</sup>	S		E			E <sup>9</sup>	S	C	A	P	E
B		R <sup>10</sup>	E	A	M			E		E	
L <sup>11</sup>	O	O	K			S <sup>12</sup>			B <sup>13</sup>	A	D <sup>14</sup>
E		O		S <sup>15</sup>	T <sup>16</sup>	A	T <sup>17</sup>	E <sup>18</sup>		T <sup>19</sup>	O
	S <sup>20</sup>	T	A <sup>21</sup>	T	E	M	E	N	T <sup>22</sup>		G
G <sup>23</sup>	O		S <sup>24</sup>	E	A		E <sup>25</sup>	D	I	T	
	O <sup>26</sup>	N <sup>27</sup>		P			N		M		T <sup>28</sup>
S <sup>29</sup>	N	A	P	S		F <sup>30</sup>	A	R <sup>31</sup>	E		R
A		M			W <sup>32</sup>	A	G	E	S		E
W <sup>33</sup>	R	E	C	K		R <sup>34</sup>	E	D		B <sup>35</sup>	E

# Somaliland Tax System and administration

(Part 37)

18	BADHAN	-	3,200,000,000	3,200,000,000	0.00
19	DHAHAR	-	2,292,000,000	2,292,000,000	0.00
20	LAAS-QORAY	-	2,292,000,000	2,292,000,000	0.00
21	CEEL-AFWAYN	1,133,000,000	3,393,388,000	2,260,388,000	199.50
22	GAR,ADAG	1,047,000,000	2,819,400,000	1,772,400,000	169.28
23	LAASCAANOOD	15,519,222,000	18,941,599,000	3,422,377,000	22.05
24	TALEEX	-	2,292,000,000	2,292,000,000	0.00
25	XUDUN	-	2,292,000,000	2,292,000,000	0.00
26	CAYNABO	3,247,000,000	4,547,675,916	1,300,675,916	40.06
27	BERBERA	105,776,836,278	117,179,194,873	11,402,358,595	10.78
28	SHEEKH	4,584,940,000	7,036,062,500	2,451,122,500	53.46
29	XAGAL	388,200,000	398,200,000	10,000,000	2.58
30	BULA-XAAR	775,000,000	-	(775,000,000)	-100.00
31	SH. XASSAN GEELE	574,000,000	-	(574,000,000)	-100.00
32	QORYAALE	-	761,900,000	761,900,000	0.00
33	BALI-MATAAN	-	300,000,000	300,000,000	0.00
34	LAAS-CIDLE	-	200,000,000	200,000,000	0.00
35	AGABAR	-	240,000,000	240,000,000	0.00
36	SABAWANAAG	-	1,527,910,000	1,527,910,000	0.00
37	LAAS-GEEL	-	532,635,000	532,635,000	0.00
38	DAARASALAAM	-	1,064,700,000	1,064,700,000	0.00
39	XAAJI SAALAX	-	382,000,000	382,000,000	0.00
40	Dacarta	-	408,575,000		0.00
41	HARA-SHEEKH	-	300,000,000	300,000,000	0.00
42	CADAADLEY	700,000,000	700,000,000	-	0.00
	<b>GRANT TOTAL</b>	<b>368,002,568,138</b>	<b>528,878,259,786</b>	<b>160,875,691,648</b>	<b>43.72</b>

Table 14: Somaliland Local Governments Budget 2022 by Grade (SISH)

Grade	Miisaaniyadda 2021	Miisaaniyadda 2022	Faraqa	Korodhka
Grade A	317,800,382,722	431,150,755,558	113,350,372,836	36%
Grade B	20,553,293,416	36,157,946,812	15,604,653,396	76%
Grade C	15,224,188,138	40,978,542,416	25,754,354,278	169%
Grade D	13,589,513,424	20,591,015,000	7,001,501,576	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>368,002,568,138</b>	<b>528,878,259,786</b>	<b>160,875,691,648</b>	<b>44%</b>

Figure 20: Comparison of Local Governments Budget 2021 and 2022 by Grade (SISH)

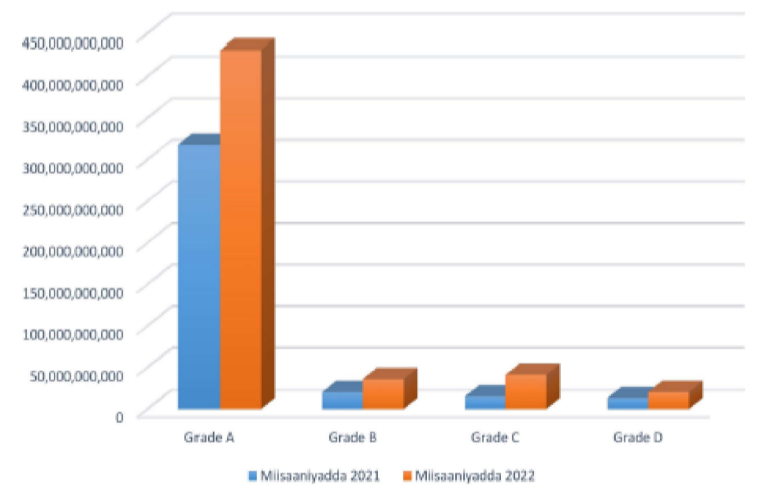
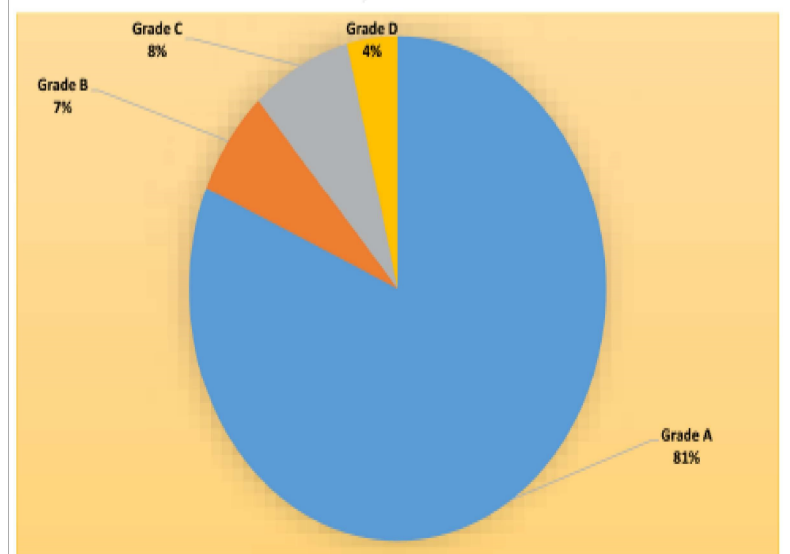


Figure 21: Ratio of Local Governments Budget 2022



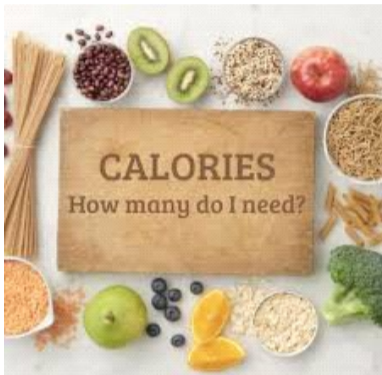
To be continue next week



Compiled by: Yusuf Omar Hindi

# Could cutting calories help slow brain aging?

- As we get older, our brain naturally ages, and the ability to perform certain tasks like memory and learning declines.
- Previous research shows that living a healthy lifestyle that includes eating right can help slow brain aging.
- Researchers from the Buck Institute for Research on Aging have found that restricting the amount of food a person eats may also help protect the brain from aging.
- The research identified a specific gene that is enhanced through calorie restriction, aiding processes necessary for healthy brain aging.



As we get older, our body — including our brain — naturally begins to age. Certain tasks that the brain performs, such as memory and learning, begin to decline.

According to the National Institute on Aging, previous research shows that living a healthy lifestyle that includes physical activity, stress management, fostering social connections, and eating right, can help slow brain aging.

Now researchers from the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in Novato, CA, have found that restricting the amount of food a person eats may also help protect the brain from aging, via models of both fruit flies and human cells.

The research — recently published in the journal *Nature Communications* — identified a specific gene that is enhanced through calorie restriction, aiding processes necessary for healthy brain aging. How calorie restriction affects brain aging

According to Dr. Lisa Ellerby, professor at the Buck Institute for Research on Aging, adjunct professor of gerontology at the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, and co-senior author of this study, the team decided to study the impact of calorie restriction on brain aging because dietary restriction is a significant intervention for the aging process and the brain is a particularly vulnerable organ during aging.

**“Therefore, understanding factors that are modulated by dietary restriction and are protective in the brain is a significant research direction in the field,”** Dr. Ellerby told *Medical News Today*. **“Plus, many people are doing various forms of caloric restriction, in particular, intermittent fasting. This was a beginning step in understanding how those efforts might impact brain aging.”**

For example, a review of research published in February 2021 reported that dietary restriction may

help protect the brain against neuroinflammation and neurodegeneration. “Age-related disease is arguably the greatest biomedical challenge in the 21st century,” Dr. Ellerby said. Identifying the gene affected by calorie restriction

For this study, Dr. Ellerby and her team used both fruit fly models and human cells to examine how calorie restriction might affect how the brain ages.

The team used a fruit fly model of 160 different fly strains with different genetic backgrounds. Flies were either raised on a normal diet or a diet that was only 10% of its normal nutrition.

From there, researchers identified five genes that had specific variants that significantly impacted longevity under dietary restriction.

One of those is the “mustard” gene in fruit flies that correlates to the oxidation resistance 1 (OXR1) gene in humans and rodents.

Previous research shows that a depletion of OXR1 gene products is a shared feature of neurodegenerative conditions like Parkinson’s disease and diabetic retinopathy, while studies in mice show that overexpression of OXR1 may be protective against amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).

The role of protein ‘recycling’ in aging

Additionally, scientists found the OXR1 gene affects the retromer, which sorts proteins and decides which can be reused by the body and which cannot.

“Recycling is important in our daily life,” Dr. Ellerby explained. “A cell does a similar process — it needs to recycle damaged components. The retromer is a cellular complex known to recycle proteins and lipids.”

**“It was surprising [that] a protein known as OXR1 [expressed by the OXR1 gene] is involved in the retromer function,”** she continued. **“In past research, this protein was thought to be involved in responding to oxidative stress or detoxification.”**

Dr. Ellerby said she and her colleagues believe these findings may be used in the future to help identify potential therapeutic targets to potentially slow aging and age-related neurodegenerative diseases.

“Finding factors that make the brain resilient or prevent the aging process will be important to slowing aging,” she continued. “It is possible that simple changes in our diet can increase the levels of OXR1 in the brain and this would be protective.” “We boosted OXR1 in the flies via genetic manipulation,” Dr. Ellerby added. “We are planning to identify small molecules that increase the expression of OXR1 to design a therapeutic for the aging brain.”

Further studies should assess link between diet and brain aging. *MNT* also spoke with Dr. Clifford Segil, a neurologist at Providence Saint John’s Health Center in Santa Monica, CA, about this study.

After reading this research, Dr. Segil commented that it remains challenging to elucidate which findings can translate into providing neurologists with something to advise their patients to do to promote healthy eating.

**“Dietary restriction was noted to have clear mechanisms of action with enhanced metabolism and fat burning with age and dietary restriction in the brain is something that should be pursued in more complicated organisms than fruit flies and yeast, though the research has to start in these simple organisms,”** he explained.

“Dietary and caloric restriction, I believe, are worthy of further studies to determine if our excessive cultural caloric intake provides us with more harm than benefits. A healthy diet decreases the [chances] of having a stroke or cerebrovascular disease also,” added Dr. Segil. He further pointed out that, with the current trend of injectable medications being used on a widespread basis for weight loss, large numbers of people are going to be effectively diet-restricted.

“This cohort may be an excellent group to use as data in future research to determine what dietary restriction can do to help avoid neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s or Parkinson’s disease,” he added.

“I would like a bench [of] scientists to take the results from this study and use it in more complicated organisms than fruit flies and yeasts. I would like to see this group of scientists collaborate with another group of scientists who could use human patients using injectable weight loss medications — GLP-1 agents — to design a study with human clinical data,” said Dr. Segil.

# Migraine medication study looks at which drugs work the best



- More than 1 billion people globally have at least one migraine headache each year.
- Medications are used to treat symptoms and lessen migraine episodes, but all therapies do not work for everyone.
- Researchers from the University of Bergen in Norway have identified which therapies they feel tend to work best in preventing migraine.

More than 1 billion people around the world have at least one migraine headache each year.

There is currently no cure for migraine. Medications can be used to help treat symptoms and lessen the number of migraine headaches.

However, not all therapies work for every person, so medications prescribed for people with migraine are individualized based on the type of headaches they have as well as other factors.

Previous research has shown that taking too much medicine can worsen migraine.

To help shed some more light on which migraine medications work the best, researchers from the University of Bergen in Norway recently published a study on which therapies they feel tend to work best in preventing migraine.

## Comparing migraine medications



According to Dr. Marte-Helene Bjørk, a professor in the Department of Clinical Medicine at the University of Bergen in Norway, a consultant neurologist at Haukeland University Hospital, the vice director of the NorHEAD Norwegian Research Center for headache, and lead author of this study, the researchers wanted to conduct a study looking at which medicines best prevent migraine.

She noted that these medicines are rarely compared against each other. “Usually, such medicines are compared against placebo drugs,” Bjørk told *Medical News Today*. “Therefore, it is hard to know which one works best in real life. Also, migraine preventive drugs are usually tested on a selected group of people not necessarily representative of the population that ends up using the drug.”