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The government of Somaliland to seek ICJ intervention in its justifiably legal rights on sovereignty

Republic of Somaliland is steadfast in its quest for international recognition

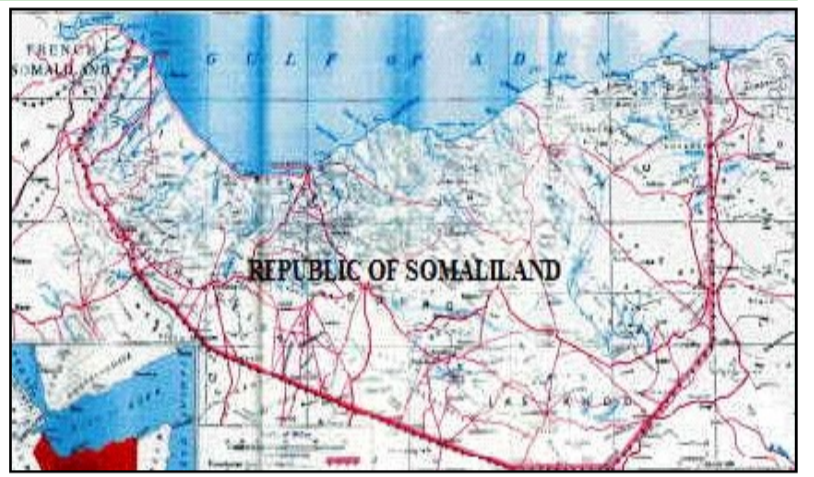


By M.A. Egge

The government of Somaliland is taking before the International Court of Justice a legal case related to the recognition of the Republic of Somaliland which the country has justifiably been in pursuit for quite a while.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Dr. Issa

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Direct access to sea a matter of "stability and national security": FM Taye-Atske Selassie

Ethiopia's newly appointed Foreign Minister, Taye-Atske Selassie, told state media that "direct access to the sea is a matter of our stability and national security," adding that Ethiopia's quest for seaports is "very legitimate."



The international community is well informed about Ethiopia's aspiration to access the sea following extensive diplomatic engagement in the subject, the report cited FM Taye as saying. Extensive diplomatic works to inform the reality

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President lauds sovereignty demos expressed by Somaliland Diaspora in UK in support of Somaliland-Ethiopia MoU



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic of Somaliland H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi, has sent a message of congratulations and support to the Somaliland community in the UK, who held a large rally in support of their country's nationalism and the

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Somaliland Asserts its Commitment to Peaceful Foreign Relations and Diplomacy



PRESS RELEASE

The Republic of Somaliland reaffirms its unwavering dedication to nurturing amicable ties with nations that share its unwavering commitment to peace and stability in the volatile Horn of Africa region.

Grounded in democratic principles and the rule of law, Somaliland places importance on diplomacy and dialogue as the bedrock of international relations. Central to Somaliland's foreign

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The government of Somaliland has called for consultation to find a solution to the crisis in the Red Sea



By M.A. Egge

The government of the Republic of Somaliland has called on Western governments to find a solution to the crisis in the Red Sea and the Gulf of

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Academy for Peace and Development
| January 2024 |



The government of Somaliland to seek ICJ intervention in its justifiably legal rights on sovereignty



Kayd Mohamud, made the revelations while in France hence underpinned the issues of concern in Somaliland's quest and its struggle for the nation to get the recognition and independence it deserves. Minister Issa Kayd said that the government has already retained

international lawyers which will defend the legal rights that the country has at a global stage such that Somaliland may gain its rightful place amongst the international community. The minister said that the retained international lawyers have finished their draft concerning the case and are to file it at ICJ.

On the MoU signed between Somaliland and Ethiopia, the minister said that it is of great benefit to the nation and people of Somaliland hence underscored that it will supplement on the legal action that Somaliland is undertaking while putting the nation's aspirations and political inclinations into perspective. He noted that Somaliland is steadfast in its quest for international recognition. Meanwhile, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somaliland Dr. Isse Kayd Mohamud, who has been on a business trip in France in the last few days, held various meetings with diverse officials of that country with whom he mostly discussed the relationship between Somaliland and France and how to strengthen. He similarly met Somaliland community living in France, whom the minister urged to take part in achieving the efforts of achieving the country's aspirations and quest for legal recognition.

President lauds sovereignty demos expressed by Somaliland Diaspora in UK in support of Somaliland-Ethiopia MoU



recent agreement between Somaliland and Ethiopia. , in which the Republic of Somaliland is receiving international recognition. The Head of State especially thanked the organizers and the people of Somaliland who came from different parts of the United Kingdom and dedicated their time to join forces in expressing their support for the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two Governments of the Republic of Somaliland and that of the Federal Government of Ethiopia. In welcoming the great support shown by the Somaliland

community in the UK, the president underlined that the "solidarity and unity of the people and the government will contribute greatly to the process of recognition that this nation has been going aspiring to for a long time". The rally where the Somaliland community in the UK supported the agreement between the Republic of Somaliland and Ethiopia was attended by international friends who actively campaign for the cause of Somaliland, including sitting members of the British Parliament led by MP Gavin Williamson.

The government of Somaliland has called for consultation to find a solution to the crisis in the Red Sea

Direct access to sea a matter of "stability and national security": FM Taye-Atske Selassie

have been carried out during the past six months. As a sovereign state, Ethiopia needs "solid economy that is supported by stable transactions", the reported cited FM Taye, adding that Ethiopia's quest for sea access is not against factual settings. "Ethiopia should not be holder of undue burdens and it should not be a victim of other countries' internal burden," the report further said. FM Taye also highlighted Ethiopia's readiness to engage in additional negotiations over its seaport aspiration, and on the Abbay Dam [#GERD]. "We had been in



negotiation with Egyptians for four rounds. Similarly, we are ready to resume the negotiation whenever they want." "Ethiopia has no history of

embracing foreign commands and dictations. But, it will negotiate in some cases for the benefit of all," FM Taye further said. Sources: Addis Standard

Aden by consulting with the governments in the area, which includes the Republic of Somaliland. The Minister of Information, Culture and National Guidance, who is the Spokesman of the Government Hon. Ali Hassan Mohamed (Ali Marehaan), said this in a message he broadcasted on his X (Twitter), which was written as follows:- "Western governments do not

provide solutions and do not consult people who know the situation. They also sometimes make the situation worse than it was before. "The tensions and crises in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden cannot be solved by rocket attacks aimed at random places. "Countries along the Red Sea, including the Republic of Somaliland, should be consulted if at all there is a sincere solution to the crisis in the Gulf and the Red Sea."

The international community issued a statement on the Somaliland elections

By M.A. Egge The United Kingdom, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden said they welcome the completion of Somaliland's election regulatory laws. A joint press release issued over the week by the countries of the international community that support Somaliland's democracy noted that the signing of the election

rules is an important step to strengthen the culture of democracy in Somaliland. "We see the signing of the electoral code as a reaffirmation of Somaliland's commitment to holding elections," said the press release. They also urged all the stakeholders of the elections to work together to ensure that free and fair elections are held in Somaliland on time.



Somaliland Asserts its Commitment to Peaceful Foreign Relations and Diplomacy

policy ethos is the promotion of good relations built on mutual respect and collaboration, not only among neighbors but also within the wider global community. Therefore, in adherence to this pledge, Somaliland stresses the imperative of sidestepping conflicts and proxy confrontations that imperil regional stability and progress. The Government of Somaliland unequivocally rejects coercion in its many forms, especially those, against its national interests or sacrosanct desire for full sovereign rights. Somaliland recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ethiopia, aimed at nurturing bilateral cooperation and reciprocal gains for both parties.

While Somaliland extends a hand of welcome to constructive engagement from the international community, it remains vigilant against any attempts by certain nations or organizations to exploit this agreement for their own national agendas. It is imperative to underscore that Somaliland views with profound apprehension any nation or organization seeking to inject themselves into this process, under the false pretense of upholding Somalia's false claims of sovereignty, to further their self-serving national interests. Such actions not only subvert the ethos of collaboration but also pose an existential and destabilizing threat to regional peace and we ask kindly, such parties to refrain from

perpetuating further, their malignant activities. As Somaliland charts its trajectory towards progress, it remains resolutely committed to upholding its obligations as a responsible nation, championing the principles of democracy, peace, stability, and mutual respect. Somaliland is a sovereign state committed to democratic governance, with an unyielding commitment to fostering peace, stability and prosperity in the region. And more importantly, SL has, with minimal international support or interference protected for 20+ years, the safety of the important Gulf of Aden maritime trade waterway, that connects the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea, against terrorism and piracy.

KULMIYE party executive meet in readiness for upcoming elections



By M.A. Egge

The Executive Committee of the KULMIYE party held a meeting over the week at the party's headquarters in the capital Hargeisa where the party officials focused on the preparations for the presidential elections and the political organizations whose bills have now been fully enacted into laws.

The Chairman of the Kulmiye Party, who is also the minister of interior hon. Mohamed Kahin Ahmed Kahin

said that the Kulmiye Party is ready to participate in the elections in accordance with the laws of the country.

He said, "The executive committee of the Kulmiye Party is confirming and supporting that the government formed by the Kulmiye Party hence is ready to enter the presidential election and that of the political organizations of the party as guided by the regulations".

He further said that the KULMIYE

party has been a leader in the country's elections since 2002 and that it was ready to do its obligations as a competing party in participating in the electioneering processes.

Similarly, the KULMIYE chair said that it was necessary for the political parties and organizations to declare that they comply with the results of the upcoming elections in the country. He suggested to the stakeholders of the elections that the electioneering processes should be in accordance with the rules of the elections in the upcoming elections in Somaliland later in the year.

He called upon the competing parties to duly accept the results of the elections hence averred that his party, KULMIYE, will always adhere to all the rules thereof and whatever the outcome may be.

Somaliland Civil Service Commission honours long service employees



By Goth Mohamed Goth

The Somaliland Civil Service Commission hosted this week an award ceremony to recognize and honor civil servants who have devoted decades of service to the nation. Esteemed officials, including ministers, CEOs, parliamentarians, directors general, and other government dignitaries, graced the event with their presence.

Commending the remarkable contributions of 13 civil servants, the

awardees were acknowledged for their outstanding work in extensive years of service, and various commendable achievements. Each recipient of the awards has tirelessly dedicated thirty years to serving the nation, playing pivotal roles in shaping the current government system.

The ceremony included the presentation of medals and a monetary reward for each individual, along with a detailed account of their

contributions and service history.

The Chairman of the Civil Service Commission also announced at the function that the President of the Republic of Somaliland would personally meet the awardees soon to express gratitude.

The meticulously organized event concluded on a joyous note, filled with emotions as attendees learned about the challenges the awardees faced and their unwavering work ethic throughout their service to the nation.

An East African Port Deal the World Should Applaud



Although many are skeptical of the newly announced deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland, it has the potential to benefit the entire region of the Horn of Africa, Egypt, and the Red Sea.

Many countries' skepticism of a recently announced deal that gives Ethiopia naval basing rights in exchange for recognizing Somaliland's independence is misguided. While the pact has stirred consternation, especially in Somalia (which claims Somaliland as part of its territory), it has the potential to benefit the entire Horn of Africa region, Egypt, and the security of the Red Sea.

With about 130 million people, Ethiopia is the world's most populous landlocked nation. Throughout its 2000-year history, it has struggled for access to the Red Sea—at times holding ports, at other times contending with the Ottoman Empire and European powers for control of the coast. After World War II, the Italian colony of Eritrea, with its two ports, was reincorporated into Ethiopia. However, the nation again lost direct sea access when Eritrea split and became independent in 1993. Since then, Ethiopia has depended on the tiny country of Djibouti as its single port with one road and railroad to move imports and exports. Besides Eritrea and Djibouti, Ethiopia also borders four other coastal polities: Sudan (currently engulfed in a civil conflict), Kenya (whose ports are too distant), Somalia, and Somaliland.

Somaliland is an Oklahoma-sized autonomous region of about 7 million people with over 500 miles of coast on the Red Sea. A former British colony, it gained independence in June 1960. It voluntarily joined with the former Italian Somaliland when that territory became independent in 1960, and the two formed the Somali Republic. The union was a disaster, as Somalia came under the rule of the brutal General Siad Barre, who tried to destroy the independence-minded Somalilanders, including inflicting thousands of deaths by bombing Hargeisa, its largest city.

In 1991, during the chaos that followed the Somali Civil War, Somaliland split from the federation. A decade later, Somalilanders voted in a referendum and overwhelmingly approved a constitution reaffirming Somaliland's independence. Since then, Somaliland has built an imperfect but tenacious democracy, a comparatively free society, and an open, free-market economy, while most citizens have remained adamant about protecting their independence. And they have done it on their own, with minimal international assistance.

Conversely, next door, Somalia has been an international burden for decades, absorbing billions of dollars of assistance—including \$500 million in security assistance from the United States—but achieving minimal progress with economic viability, democracy, governance, or even controlling its territory. It has hosted thousands of international troops under multiple peacekeeping missions to help it defeat al-Shabaab, an Al Qaeda-linked

extremist movement, with limited success. It has also failed to hold a single "one person-one vote" election, opting instead to select its leaders through non-transparent, corrupt conclaves of elites and elders.

However, what Somalia has that Somaliland doesn't have is international recognition, which accrued after the 1991 disintegration of the joint Somali Republic. This results in the bizarre situation of a "de facto" Somaliland that functions more effectively as a nation than does the "de jure" Somalia.

The reasons Somaliland hasn't gained international recognition are varied. The African Union (AU) and Somalia are major stumbling blocks. The AU fears that granting Somaliland legitimacy may fracture other member states with separatist movements, despite its 2005 fact-finding mission determining that Somaliland's recognition quest was "historically unique and self-justified." Meanwhile, a solid nationalist trend that includes irredentist claims on Somali-inhabited areas of East Africa prevails within elements of Somalia, making it impossible for Mogadishu to accept the reality of Somaliland's independence.

Even though Mogadishu has virtually no practical control over Somaliland, the United States defers to Mogadishu's sovereignty claims by maintaining a nonsensical "One Somalia" policy. This, despite parts of the U.S. Government—such as the Pentagon—being eager to engage closely with Somaliland. Even more absurdly, the United States's Ambassador to Somalia is, in effect, the Ambassador to Mogadishu airport—unable to circulate in the country or even the city. Meanwhile, many countries maintain consulates in Hargeisa and do regular business with Somaliland.

A Potentially Monumental MoU

The announcement of the Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal drew strong criticism from the AU and Somalia. At the same time, Egypt, the United States, the European Union, and the Arab League voiced support for Somalia's "sovereignty." In a bit of over-the-top drama, Somalia even threatened war with Ethiopia. Egypt, meanwhile, opposes Ethiopian initiatives because of its dispute with Ethiopia over the massive Blue Nile dam project.

While the proposed port deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland is still at the aspirational Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stage with many details to be defined, the general framework will benefit both. Ethiopia will lease a twelve-mile strip of Somaliland's coast for fifty years while Somaliland will gain formal diplomatic recognition from Ethiopia and a stake in Ethiopia's national air carrier. Somaliland has a modern port at Berbera, recently upgraded through a major investment by the UAE's DP World, but the location for Ethiopia's concession is still uncertain. In addition to a port for Ethiopian imports and exports, Ethiopia will establish a base—for a navy that hasn't floated a ship since

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An East African Port Deal the World Should Applaud

1991. While Ethiopian recognition of Somaliland is significant, it will also likely open the door to other countries to follow suit since several have stated discretely that while they could not be the first to offer recognition, they could be second.

If the project is realized, it would have far-reaching benefits. The return of a professional Ethiopian navy to the Red Sea would improve stability in a critically important waterway menaced by piracy and other disruptions. Even Egypt, bitterly opposed to the deal, would benefit economically if more shipping transits the Suez Canal. Adding another port and an efficient transit corridor would be a significant economic boost to the region and offer additional ways to bring relief supplies into countries that frequently suffer from humanitarian disasters.

The deal could also release some pressure building in East Africa ever since Abiy declared that sea access was an existential issue last year. Many believed his remarks were a prelude to war with Eritrea, a catastrophic scenario. Given that Ethiopia could secure strictly commercial maritime access through other means, Abiy appears to believe that a naval base is indispensable to his cherished ambition of being the leader who restored Ethiopia's status as an unassailable great African power. If the MoU with Somaliland fails, Abiy will likely continue his quest in a far more destabilizing way.

Possibilities of Choppy Water

There are complications, to be sure. Despite its great potential and high economic growth, Ethiopia faces a difficult financial situation thanks in part to the recent devastating war in Tigray and ongoing

insecurity in other regions. Addis Ababa must be creative in funding an expensive project like building a base and navy.

Furthermore, Mogadishu may stop cooperating with Ethiopia on countering al-Shabaab in response to what it views as Ethiopia's violations of its sovereignty (notwithstanding al-Shabaab's long control of chunks of Somalia about which Somalia's governing elites have often demonstrated a curious lack of focus). It may also try to stir clan trouble in areas of Ethiopia inhabited by ethnic Somalis or try to inflame an ongoing clan insurgency in Somaliland's east.

Nonetheless, provoking clan trouble elsewhere risks exacerbating Somalia's profound and often violent rivalries. The countries that provide the most funding for Somalia's armed forces and government would also disapprove of such a campaign. There would be more evidence that Mogadishu is not sufficiently serious about fighting al-Shabaab to merit strong international support.

Similarly, there is little reason to believe that the Somaliland-Ethiopia deal will empower al-Shabaab. The terror group rose to prominence as an anti-Ethiopian insurgency and has always fused irredentist and nationalist sentiment with radical Salafism. It is propagandizing about the deal and vowing to resist Ethiopia. Yet thousands of troops, including many Ethiopians, have been inside Somalia for well over a decade. It is unlikely that an agreement implemented far to the north of where most Somalis live would boost al-Shabaab recruitment more than that reality.

Regional powers opposed to Ethiopia, such as Egypt and, increasingly, Eritrea, may seize the opportunity to work with Somalia to undermine Ethiopia. However, while Eritrea may not cherish the prospect of an eventual Ethiopian navy operating in the neighborhood, the port deal would resolve Ethiopia's landlocked status and, therefore, remove a perennial source of friction in the Ethiopia-Eritrea relationship. Egypt is strongly motivated to oppose Ethiopia but still has the same problem that has stymied its efforts to stop Ethiopia's Blue Nile dam, namely its incapacity to do much about it.

Finally, a recently signed economic and military agreement between Somalia and Turkey has stirred hopes among Somali partisans that Turkey will confront Ethiopia on Somalia's behalf. However, there is little to fear that the agreement portends such a destabilizing development. In addition to Somalia's president acknowledging that the deal is unrelated to Ethiopia, Ankara has no reason to involve itself in the dispute, not least because of its strong military and economic ties with Ethiopia.

The Horn of Africa is an increasingly strategic region, yet the United States's ability to defend its interests there continues to wane. Washington is partly hampered by incorporating the fiction that Somaliland is functionally part of Somalia into its policies. It is time for a pragmatic American approach that correctly calculates U.S. interests, starting with working to ease the tensions around the proposed Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal. If cooler heads prevail, the port deal's economic and security benefits will be well worth applause.

known that most countries and international organizations support countries' efforts to resist separatism, both out of concerns for regional stability and self-interest. Statements of opposition have already come from the United States, EU, Türkiye, Djibouti, and China. For their parts, the EU, United States, and Türkiye have all invested in Somali state capacity, built up economic and physical infrastructure, and support the government's counterterrorism efforts against the al-Shabaab terrorist group. Moreover, there are already consequent developments in military cooperation between Türkiye and Somalia. China, meanwhile, has invested heavily in its Belt and Road Initiative partnership with Djibouti and may see a large loss of revenue — not to mention leverage over Ethiopian economic and political decisions — if Somaliland's port in Berbera proves truly competitive.

Three Paths for Somaliland

In this complex geopolitical context, there are essentially three paths forward for Hargeisa. First, Ethiopia could maintain recognition as a mere prospect, stringing Somaliland along while still gaining the economic advantage of access to the Berbera port and increasing economic integration with Somaliland. This would have the advantage of not running afoul of EU, U.S., and other diplomatic interests, even if it did still counter Chinese and Djiboutian economic goals. Given that the government in Hargeisa has been strapped for cash since its earliest days, even a stable economic partnership would be of greater benefit than the survival approach it has had as a de facto state for the last 33 years. Economic development is a pillar of Somaliland's strategy for its eventual realization of independence, so even this path forward would pay political dividends for the government.

If Ethiopia extends official recognition to Somaliland, a second and third path emerge. The second path could see Ethiopia becoming the only recognizing country and assuming a "patron state" position. Numerous examples of this relationship exist, including Türkiye, which is the only country that recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), while the Abkhazia and South Ossetia breakaway regions of Georgia are both considered Russian client states (with Russian, Venezuelan, Nicaraguan, Nauruan, and Syrian recognition). Patron states usually host or support their clients' economies and diplomatically stand in for their interests in international negotiations. Most of the TRNC's diplomatic efforts, for example, take place in Turkish foreign ministry offices.

A patronage arrangement likely offers the worst prospect for Ethiopia-Somalia relations, as well as international backing of Ethiopia. There are major international efforts to weaken the terrorist group al-Shabaab, which controls territory in south and central Somalia. If a new arrangement makes these efforts more difficult or otherwise increases threats to regional stability, it could lead to sharp international condemnation and resistance to Addis Ababa's economic and diplomatic investment in Hargeisa. Despite these complexities, this option is an upgrade to Somaliland's status, offering new prospects for economic development and important new diplomatic outlets.

The third path could involve Ethiopia's recognition setting off a cascade of other official acts of recognition, similar to what happened for Palestine, the Sahrawi Republic (also known as Western Sahara) — neither has de facto control of their claimed territories — and Kosovo. It is often the initial act of recognition that is most difficult and unlikely for self-determined governments to gain. The second act of

recognition is, by contrast, much easier to obtain, and subsequent acts get progressively easier. This chain reaction of recognition would likely happen after Somaliland implements further efforts to convince governments that it will be a stable state, bolster security and economic development, and has the legal justification for its statehood. Somaliland's independent security arrangements, currency, passports, elections, exports, and small but growing economy all help make this an easier case for would-be recognizers. But there are no guarantees in international politics.

Many countries also base relations with separatist movements on concerns for stability, and if Ethiopian patronage proves a net gain to regional stability, it could provide a strong impetus for further recognition and entrenchment of Somaliland's *de facto* independence. Kosovo's history may provide one example in the post-Cold-War era: its disciplined campaign for independence has gradually accumulated more and more recognition, with more than half of UN member states now granting diplomatic recognition. If Somaliland can align its interests with countries' foreign policy goals, it could secure recognition like Kosovo by cultivating strategic allies and dependency on international patrons that escalate to a consensus among great powers. This third path is clearly what Hargeisa is aiming for, but is probably the least likely outcome in this situation, given great powers' investments in Somalia, and the fact that such powerful states play such a prominent role in determining the diplomatic fates of breakaway states.

All three outcomes represent a net gain for Somaliland's continued survival as an independent entity, either as de facto state or prospective UN member. At a minimum, it is embedding itself as an economic corridor and gatekeeper to a powerful regional actor, which is itself a major shift. In the unlikely but best case for Hargeisa, this deal represents the first in a long series of diplomatic wins. Aside from increasingly coordinated Turkish-Somali relations, it is impossible to foresee how other countries will treat this development in the current context of shifting global norms around territorial integrity, but from any angle, it is a win for Somaliland's diplomatic efforts.

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Steven Ochoa is an MA student at Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations and the graduate Research Assistant in the Diplomacy Lab. His concentrations are International Security and Global Negotiation.

Joseph Huddleston is an associate professor in the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University. He has published widely on separatism, secession, and how self-determined governments develop and deploy diplomatic strategies, as well as writing policy research on conflict economies in Middle East contexts. He is a 2024–25 Tenured International Affairs Fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations.

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Somaliland's Deal with Ethiopia is a Win-Win, No Matter What Happens Next

The Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal offers insight into the unprecedented manner in which de facto states vie for de jure independence.

Melissa Myrtaj, Steven Ochoa, and R. Joseph Huddleston

In early January 2024, leaders in Somaliland, a small unrecognized *de facto* state in Somalia's northeast, announced the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with its western neighbor, Ethiopia. The main agreement in the MoU is that Ethiopia will be the first state to internationally recognize Somaliland in exchange for gaining access to 12 miles of Somaliland's coast for 50 years, including its port in Berbera.

The deal is a win-win for both parties. Landlocked Ethiopia lost the use of Eritrea's Red Sea ports in 1993 and has resorted to paying high annual fees to use neighboring Djibouti's ports. The new deal will circumvent this restriction and expand Addis Ababa's import/export prospects. For Somaliland, the deal represents an intertwining of diplomatic and economic prospects that brings stability and strengthens their presence on the international stage.

Although Somaliland's government is considered a secessionist movement by most of the international community, it is important to examine its relationship with Somalia in light of its colonial history. It had been a British territory up until June 26, 1960, when it very briefly gained independence — garnering the official recognition of 35 countries — and then five days later elected to unify with the rest of Somalia, which had been under Italian rule. Somaliland leadership quickly



regretted the unification and began resisting Somali efforts to centralize power in Mogadishu, eventually gaining de facto control of the territory and declaring independence in May 1991 after ten years of fighting that saw a little-known genocide against the Isaaq clan and the near-total destruction of the capital, Hargeisa.

Map showing de facto borders between Somalia, Somaliland, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. (Image: iStock)

International Ripples

Aside from the prospect of diplomatic recognition, other publicly known terms of the MoU are that Somaliland will gain access to Ethiopian intelligence resources and Ethiopia will gain permission to establish a military base and commercial

maritime zone. Somaliland's leadership sees an additional upside in a potential boost to Somaliland's global presence and increased friction in attempts by Mogadishu to reconquer the territory since doing so would now heavily hurt Ethiopian economic and military interests. This leads to another clear consequence, that the partnership drastically worsens Ethiopia's already rocky relations with Somalia, which immediately declared the agreement "null and void" and called on the African Union and UN Security Council to organize efforts to resist the deal's implementation.

Now, the question for Horn of Africa watchers and policymakers is to what extent political developments in the region will match the terms of the MoU. It is well-

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By Tibor Nagy

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situation of a "de facto" Somaliland that functions more effectively as a nation than does the "de jure" Somalia.

The reasons Somaliland hasn't gained international recognition are varied. The African Union (AU) and Somalia are major stumbling blocks. The AU fears that granting Somaliland legitimacy may fracture other member states with separatist movements, despite its 2005 fact-finding mission determining that Somaliland's recognition quest was "historically unique and self-justified." Meanwhile, a solid nationalist trend that includes irredentist claims on Somali-inhabited areas of East Africa prevails within elements of Somalia, making it impossible for Mogadishu to accept the reality of Somaliland's independence.

Even though Mogadishu has virtually no practical control over Somaliland, the United States defers to Mogadishu's sovereignty claims by maintaining a nonsensical "One Somalia" policy. This, despite parts of the U.S. Government—such as the Pentagon—being eager to engage closely with Somaliland. Even more absurdly, the United States's Ambassador to Somalia is, in effect, the Ambassador to Mogadishu airport—unable to circulate in the country or even the city. Meanwhile, many countries maintain consulates in Hargeisa and do regular business with Somaliland.

A Potentially Monumental MoU
The announcement of the Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal drew strong criticism from the AU and Somalia. At the same time, Egypt, the United States, the European Union, and the Arab League voiced support for Somalia's "sovereignty." In a bit of over-the-top drama, Somalia even threatened war with Ethiopia. Egypt, meanwhile, opposes Ethiopian initiatives because of its dispute with Ethiopia over the massive Blue Nile dam project.

While the proposed port deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland is still at the aspirational Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) stage with many details to be defined, the general framework will

To be continue next week

Ministry of Environment and DANIDA sign Five Year Plan



By Goth Mohamed Goth

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of the Republic of Somaliland had a technical meeting with a technical team from

DANIDA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the government of Denmark, assigned to a Pre-appraisal mission on Denmark's Environmental and Climate Change

Program in Somaliland for the coming five years.

Her Excellence, Minister Shukri, highlighted the environmental and climate challenges prevailing in Somaliland and the government's top priorities and plans for tackling climate change and environmental problems in Somaliland.

The technical team commended the Ministry for its great work on environmental protection in Somaliland and emphasized that Denmark will participate in and support Somaliland's initiatives on Climate adaptation and environmental conservation.

Somaliland Partakes at the Africa Youth Leadership Diplomatic Conference

By Goth Mohamed Goth

Acting Ambassador of the Republic of Somaliland to Addis Ababa, Deputy Ambassador Dr. Barkhad M. Kariye and the diplomats of the embassy, received and welcomed a delegation of young people from the Republic of Somaliland, who participated in the Africa Youth Leadership Diplomatic Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The young people representing the Republic of Somaliland exchanged information and analysis related to the meeting with the acting Ambassador and other diplomats based at the embassy. Dr. Barkhad M. Kariye thanked the youth for representing and conveying the national message at the forum.

Africa Youth Leadership Diplomatic Conference (AYLDC) is an educational youth diplomatic conference which follows some simulations of United Nations (UN) in which enthusiastic young people

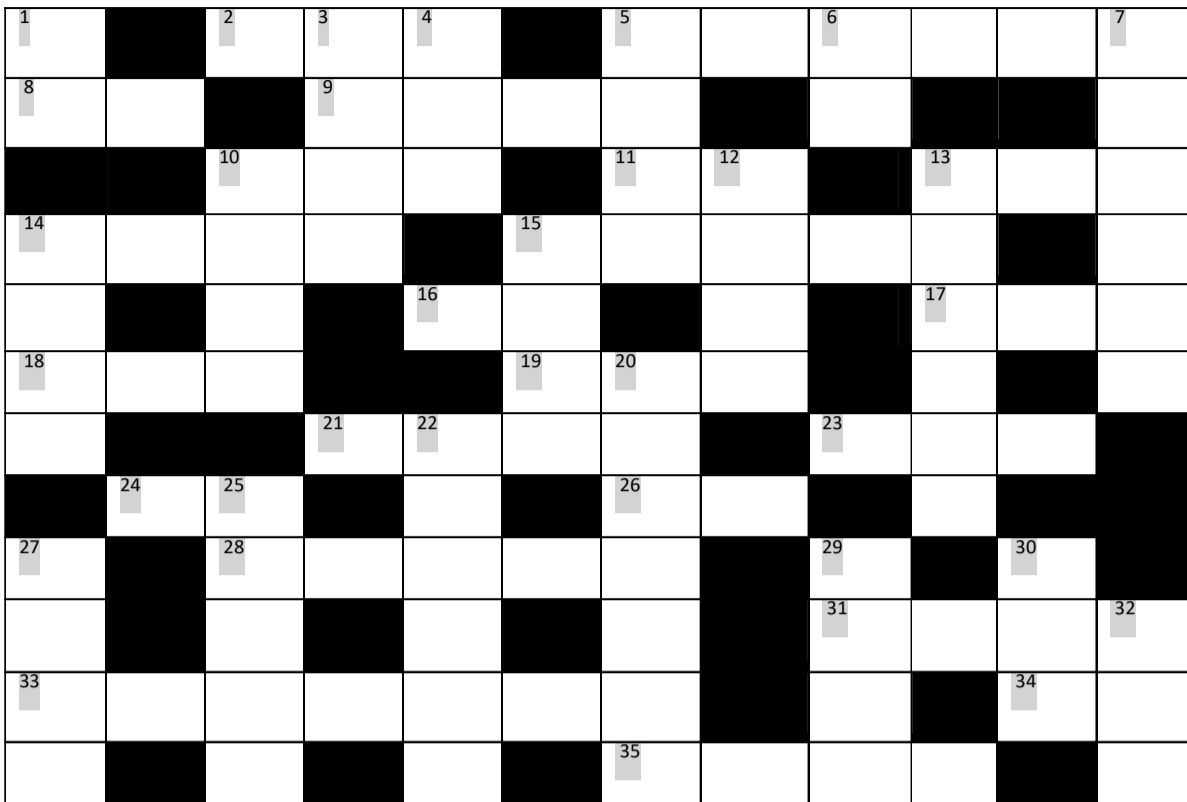


from all over the world gather to learn more about diplomacy, international relations and the UN. It is a great opportunity and exciting opportunity for young people to foster dialogue on creating change and promoting peace and youth participation worldwide, above all, coming up with solutions to contemporary global issues so as to make this world a better place and more

sustainable.

AYLDC provides a unique opportunity for youth to gain more knowledge on the role, structure and activities of the United Nations as well as promotes networking, gaining soft skills mainly leadership skills, negotiation/ diplomacy and knowledge on the economic, social and political security issues facing our world.

THT Puzzle



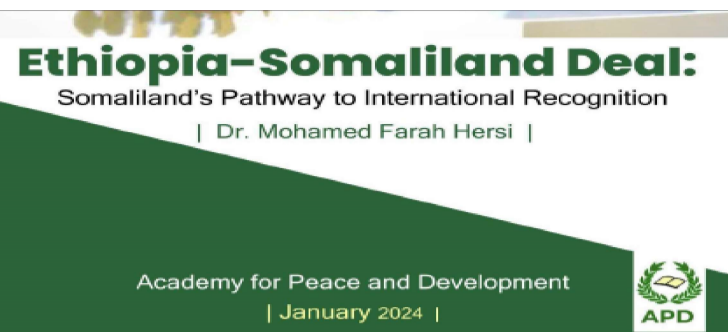
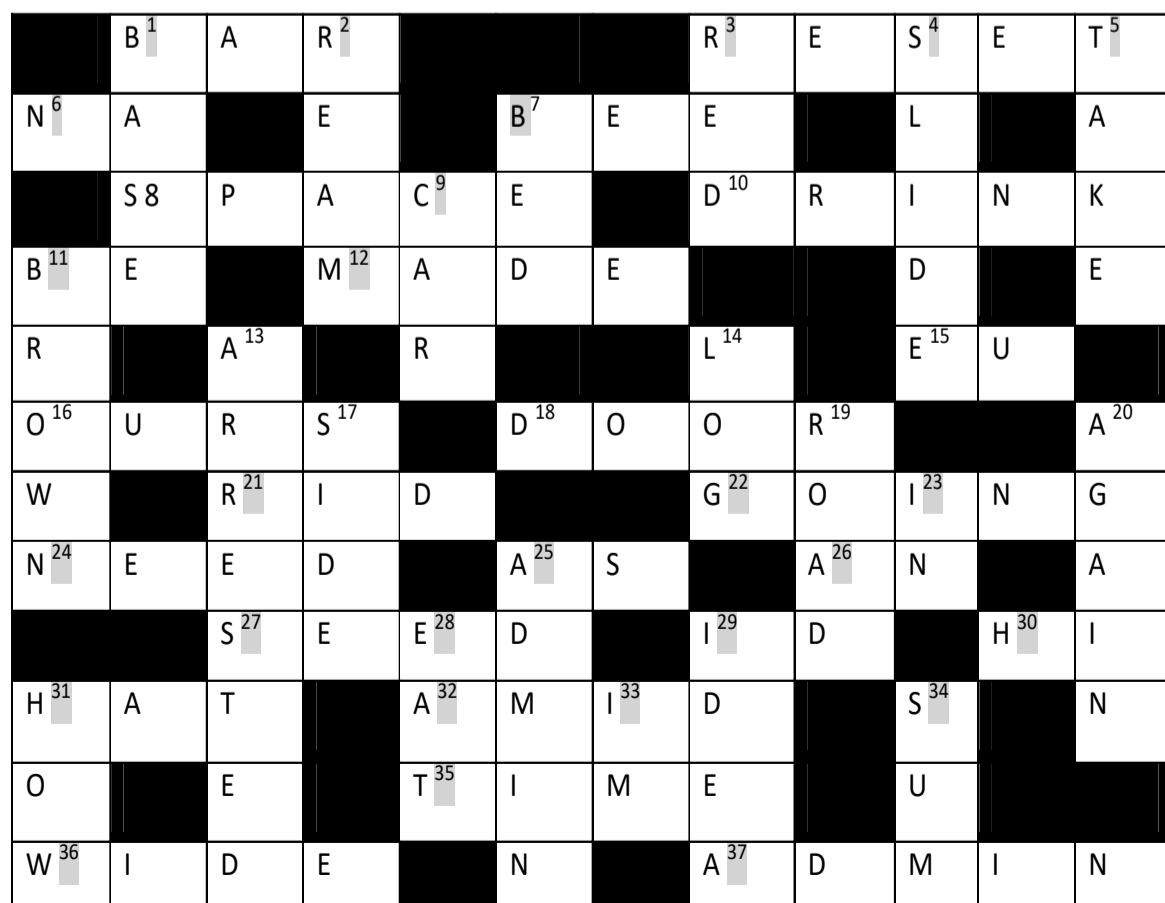
DOWN

- 1 Happening (preposition)
- 3 Oversee (correction)
- 4 Firearm
- 5 superstars
- 6 Myself
- 7 Called
- 10 Discomfort/ hurt
- 12 Lunation/ Light at night
- 13 Disturb
- 14 Roughly/ nearly
- 15 Bishop of Rome
- 20 English language
- 22 Pivots/ uses doors and windows.
- 25 Marine
- 27 Additional
- 29 Kernel/ planting
- 30 Complement
- 32 Teen-ager

ACROSS

- 2 Request/solicit
- 5 Conference
- 8 Not at all
- 9 Soil/ power
- 10 for stapler paper
- 11 REMAIN
- 13 Midair
- 14 Chair
- 15 Waterproof
- 16 Drive or move
- 17 Payment
- 18 Males
- 19 writing
- 21 Once
- 23 snows
- 24 Drive
- 26 Drive
- 28 Waterway
- 31 Finishes
- 33 Students or booklovers
- 34 command to do something
- 35 don't show

Previous Answer



(Part 07)

Although none of the countries publicly condemned the agreement except Egypt, they expressed commitment to Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

5.3 Egypt

In 2019, Egypt proposed a deal whereby it would establish a military base in Somaliland (EelSheikh town) in exchange for international recognition. Somaliland declined this offer for several reasons. First, allowing Egypt to establish a military base would constitute an act of war against Ethiopia, and Somaliland was concerned about the potential security and economic consequences of this deal. Second, Somaliland's security and economic cooperation with Ethiopia would be jeopardized, resulting in the loss of Ethiopia's diplomatic and practical support, which would be detrimental to Somaliland. Third, if relations between Somaliland and Ethiopia were to deteriorate, the UAE's interests in the region would be damaged. Egypt is nowhere near the economic or security partner to Somaliland that Ethiopia is, and Egypt has historically maintained a close alliance with Somalia and consistently supported Somalia's unity. At the same time, however, Egypt's geostrategic interests lie in the Red Sea region, which means it cannot ignore Somaliland. Given this context, Egypt has engaged in diplomatic engagement with Somaliland despite Somalia's consternation. Egypt's interests in Somaliland are thus threefold: to counter Ethiopia's regional influence, to secure access to the Nile by being close to Ethiopia's capital, and to control the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, which are essential for the security of the Suez Canal.

In light of its strategic interests, Egypt responded to the Ethio-Somaliland agreement by emphasizing the same need to respect for Somalia's territorial integrity voiced by Somalia's other allies. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry cautioned that any escalating actions or statements from neighboring countries could undermine stability in the Horn of Africa (Fayez, 2023). Due to the fact that Egypt's response was diplomatically restrained due to the lack of condemnation of the content and nature of the MoU, it appears that Egypt remains keen to maintain its diplomatic relations with Somaliland.

5.4 Djibouti

Over the past three decades, Djibouti has significantly benefited from Somaliland's lack of international recognition, positioning itself as the sole strategic power in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The absence of strategic rivalry has allowed Djibouti to capitalize on both Ethiopia's reliance its territory for access to the sea, and its strategic military and commercial importance to great powers such as the United States, China, and France as an African gateway to the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Ethiopia's heavy dependence on Djibouti for access to the sea is reflected in the fact that over 95% of Ethiopia's maritime trade is funneled through Djibouti, generating revenue of over one billion US dollars for the country (Bank, 2023).

The termination of the DP World's concession agreement by Djibouti in 2018 negatively impacted the relationship between the UAE and Djibouti. In light of Ethiopia's growing market and the UAE's strategic interests in the Horn of Africa, DP World then shifted attention to the Berbera Port, also securing an agreement with Ethiopia to use the port in the future. This strategic cooperation among Somaliland, the UAE, and Ethiopia has repositioned Somaliland's geostrategic rivalry with Djibouti, creating tensions over the future configuration of power dynamics in the Horn of Africa (Reuters, 2018).

Djibouti was caught off-guard by the announcement of the Ethio-Somaliland MoU, which has further strained the relationship between Somaliland and Djibouti. Nevertheless, Djibouti has not taken an official position on the matter, and has proposed to continue hosting talks between Somaliland and Somalia (Osman, 2024). Djibouti's stance is influenced by three primary factors: Ethiopia's access to the sea through Djibouti, which is crucial to the latter's economy and its desire to avoid antagonizing Ethiopia; Djibouti's role as the host country for Somaliland and Somalia talks, making it inclined to maintain neutrality; and Djibouti's position as the current chair of IGAD, which it does not want to lose (Osman, 2024). Given these factors, it is difficult to predict Djibouti's actions, but it is evident that it is not supportive of the deal and will use diplomatic resources to obstruct it. The MoU's economic threat to Djibouti, combined with its diplomatic threat to Somalia, make these two countries allies in opposition.

To be continue next week

Far from a benefactor, the Turkish government is exploiting Somalia's fragility

Though the government finally inked a 14-year concession to streamline revenue sharing and port development with Albayrak Group in October 2020, this largely reinforced the company's original concession obligations. In addition, the revised concession has so many ambiguities that it's not clear if the new 14-year deal is an extension of the previous 20-year lease, if it requires Albayrak Group co-management as part of technical knowledge transfer, or if the Albayrak Group's exclusive port financing rights provision prohibits using the port of Mogadishu as collateral to access international loans.

According to interviews with former employees, Favori LLC has allegedly repatriated its profits to Turkey in cash without making a transfer through the Somalia Central Bank, as required by Somalia's finance laws, which would be a violation of the anti-money laundering/combating the financing of terrorism act that was passed in 2016. This would also violate the Somalia government's compliance with its debt relief obligations with the World Bank and IMF, including revenue mobilization and accountability requirements to reduce corruption and enhance monetary and financial sector governance.

Qatar-Turkey axis and geopolitical influence

Beyond the economic issues, Turkey's involvement in Somalia has also entangled the African country in the broader regional geopolitical dispute between Turkey and Qatar on the one hand and Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE on the other for influence in the Horn of Africa. While this rivalry seems to be easing at present, as Turkey and Qatar are making efforts to mend relations with Gulf countries and their regional allies, it may flare up again in the future, with consequences for Somalia.

Turkey and Qatar are brothers in arms with joint ventures ranging from support for the Muslim Brotherhood to financing Islamists and proxy wars in fragile countries all over the Middle East. Their bond grew stronger during the 2017 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) crisis, which pushed them into a geopolitical and geoeconomic alliance. The GCC crisis also spilled over into Somalia, when the new government led by Mohammed Abdullahi (known as Farmaajo), whose election was financed by Qatar, confiscated \$9 million from an Emirati plane at Mogadishu airport. In retaliation, the UAE cut off support for the Somalia government, including military training, a devastating blow for the newly elected government and for a



fragile state still recovering from one of its worst famines.

Though Turkey steered clear of the bickering between the Gulf countries in Somalia at the time, it had earlier pursued a covert plan with Qatar, in 2011 during the post-Arab Spring era, to sway Somalia's foreign policy away from the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the African Union and align it with Egypt's then-President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood. This effort failed as Morsi was overthrown by the Egyptian military in 2013.

Since 2009, Qatar and Turkey have pressured Somalia's government to negotiate with al-Shabab, an al-Qaeda affiliated terrorist group based in Somalia. Turkey's National Intelligence Organization (MIT) has been involved in negotiating the release of an Italian journalist kidnaped by al-Shabab in May 2020 in Somalia. The relationship between Turkish intelligence and al-Shabab was revealed by the Nordic Monitoring Group in 2021, which reported that MIT sent \$600,000 to the group. This prompted Turkey's government to block the Nordic Monitoring Group and Somalia media outlets like Hiiraan Online from being accessed in Turkey. Both Qatar and Turkey have gone to great lengths to use their geopolitical influence to shape Somalia's foreign policy.

Turkey has also repeatedly tried to serve as an arbiter in Somalia-Somaliland talks, sending its ambassador Elgon Beker from Mogadishu to Somaliland in 2019. The ambassador's efforts were dead on arrival. Somaliland does not see Turkey as an impartial and fair arbiter, but rather as a dishonest broker since Ankara believes in the preservation of Somalia's territorial integrity based on the illegal union of 1960 between the two. Moreover, Somaliland is extremely wary of Turkey's military base in Mogadishu, as the Somaliland government believes Farmaajo, who openly denied the Hargeisa genocide committed by former Somali dictator Siad Barre in his

post-graduate thesis and has already waged an economic war against Somaliland, could use military forces trained by Turkey to invade Somaliland in an effort to bring about forceful reunification.

Turkey and militarization

To capitalize on Somalia's geostrategic position in the Indian Ocean, Turkey signed multiple military pacts with Somalia's Transitional Federal Government in 2009 and 2010 and continued to sign new agreements with Somalia's federal government in 2012 and 2015. These pacts covered areas ranging from military training to defense industry cooperation and are aimed at gaining a foothold in the Indian Ocean.

The Turkish government invested \$50 million to build the largest overseas Turkish military base with the goal of training 10,000 members of the Somali National Army (SNA), although Turkey officially refers to it as the largest embassy in the world. The Turkish "embassy" in Mogadishu, which is perhaps the only diplomatic compound where military training and exercises are held, sits on a vast, 400-hectare swath of prime beach-front real estate worth an estimated \$1.5 billion based on local property prices. It is almost twice the size of the U.S. military base in Djibouti. But Turkey did not pay for the land and there is no sign that the military pact contained any stipulation for lease payment to the Somali people. In comparison, France not only provides military protection to Djibouti in exchange for hosting its military base, but it also pays annual rent of \$70 million and offers budgetary support.

Training and indoctrination

Since its opening, the Turkish embassy in Somalia has graduated five battalions of SNA troops, 2,500 in total. As part of its training, the Somali troops are treated to a heavy dose of Turkish indoctrination that includes singing the Turkish national anthem with a background

To be continue next week

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