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Supreme Constitutional Court validates the Somaliland 2024 presidential and political party elections, approves the preliminary declared results



WADDANI, KAAH and KULMIYE become the only mandated official political parties to operate in the country for a decade to come

The court was thus obligated to validate and approve the NEC declaration of the election results hence pave the way for the inauguration

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The evaluation and analysis of the elections held in Somaliland on 13 Nov 2024



A meeting to discuss the elections held in Somaliland on 13 Nov 2024, which have drawn the attention of the international community and the region to Somaliland, has been concluded in Borama, the capital

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The Annual Forum of Somaliland Taxes was held in Burao city



The Minister of Finance of the Republic of Somaliland Dr. Saad Ali Shire together with the Director General of the Ministry of Finance, the Mayor of Burao District, the Deputy Governor of Togdher Region, the Executive Secretary of Local Government and other officials opened a well-organized event in Burao.

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Dahabshiil Group has played a major role the 8th Heritage Forum held in Djibouti



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Somaliland police arrest suspect in deadly Hargeisa stabbing



Somaliland police have arrested a 24-year-old man accused of stabbing a 37-year-old to death in a brutal midday attack in the Mohamud Haybe neighbourhood of Hargeisa on Thursday.

The suspect, identified as

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Supreme Constitutional Court validates the Somaliland 2024 presidential and political party elections, approves the preliminary declared results



By M.A. Egge

The Supreme Constitutional Court of the Republic of Somaliland has approved the official results of the 2024 Somaliland presidential and vice-presidential elections and the political parties' election held on the 13th November 2024 on Wednesday that was officially preliminarily declared and announced by the National Electoral Commission (NEC).

The presidential elections saw a repeat scenario of the 2017 race which this time had the Waddani flagbearer Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Iirro defeat the incumbent president of Kulmiye party and Feisal Ali of Ucid.

It also on Saturday moved in a similar resort to ratify the political parties and organizations elections which was also held on the same day.

The constitution demands that political organizations compete each decade to have the mandated three official political parties have operational mandate for the ten-year period.

Seven political organizations joined the fray to challenge the WADDANI, KULMIYE and UCID political parties for the mandate.

The preliminary results now ratified by the Supreme Court has the UCID party loose its stature as a political and has been replaced by the new entrant KAAH which has triumphed as the first runner up.

WADDANI and KULMIYE have both successfully defended their mandates with WADDANI getting the top spot and Kulmiye becoming the second runner-up.

WADDANI garnered 34.29%, KAAH 20.85% and Kulmiye got 17.14%. Others are Horseed 12.40%, Hilaac 9.44%, Barwaaqo 2.67%, Ucid 1.60%, Talowadaag 0.96%, Rejo 0.33% and Shacabka with 0.32%.

In other words, KAAH graduates from being a political organization to an official political party.

As per constitution, upon declaring the results the (NEC) has a window of period to forward the provisional results to the apex court, who in turn have a stipulated time frame to wait for any complaints arising thereof, if any, to dispense with.

Given the fact that no elections complaints were lodged during the legal time frame to facilitate any appeals, the court was thus obligated to validate and approve the NEC declaration of the election results hence pave way for the inauguration of the triumphant Presidential election winner, President-elect Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Iirro.

The Chief Justice who is also the President of the Constitutional Court, Hon. Adan Haji Ali, declared the official results of the presidential and vice-presidential elections in an approval that had the entire Supreme Court bench of all judges sitting in session for the approval.

They noted that the approval of the official results of the said elections of national organizations and parties, within the legal period allowed by law, was to end on Saturday, the 30th of the month; but since the period of lodging complaints had lapsed, they had no otherwise but inclined to approve the results as obligated.

A circular from the court read; "The Supreme Constitutional Court has approved the provisional results of the presidential and vice-presidential elections by the Electoral Commission as follows:

Waddani Party received 407,409 votes, equivalent to 63.92%.
Kulmiye Party received 225,519 votes, equivalent to 35.34%.
Ucid Party received 4699 votes, equivalent to 0.74%.

"The Supreme Constitutional Court

also approved the presidential election results as having been won by Mr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilaahi Cigaal, while the vice-presidential election was won by Mr. Mohamed Ali Abdi Mohamud, both candidates from the Waddani Party. "The announcement of the official election results was witnessed by the following Judicial Commissions:

1. Adam Haji Ali Ahmed: - Chairman
 2. Mohamed Omar Gelle: - Member
 3. Abdikadir Ahmed Mahmoud: - Member
 4. Ahmed Diiriye Qalib: - Member
 5. Mohamed Farah Saeed: - Member
 6. Abdirahman Hussein Aynaan: - Member
 7. Ali-shu'ayb Sh. Ibrahim Nur: - Member
 8. Yahya Ali Idris: - Member
 9. Abdilaahi Abdi Adam: - Member
 10. Abdirahman Hassan Nuur: - Member
- Clerk: Sahra Ismail Abdilahi".

Despite the legal procedures as per the constitutional obligations, the incumbent President H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi had already congratulated his successor for his triumphant win and called on the populaces to abide by the results and support the new administration.

Similarly, hundreds of congratulations have been heaped upon the incoming Presidents by foreign heads of state, ambassadors, diplomats, eminent personalities from within the country and abroad and the citizenry alike.



The evaluation and analysis of the elections held in Somaliland on 13 Nov 2024

of Awdal region.

The meeting, which reviewed the elections organized by the Somaliland National Electoral Commission (NEC), was held today at the Safari Hotel in Borama.

According to a brief report issued by the Somaliland Electoral Committee (NEC), the meeting's purpose was to review and evaluate the Presidential and National Party elections held on November 13, 2024.

The meeting was focused on analyzing the election process, the challenges encountered, the lessons learned, and suggestions on how to develop the future elections process for the Regional Councils and Representatives of the Republic of Somaliland.

Conclusion Among the important points discussed at the meeting were:

1. Election Process: An assessment of how the election procedures and plans were implemented.
- 2 Challenges faced: An analysis of the challenges that have occurred and recommendations on how to prevent them in the future.

3. Lessons learned: Insights and experiences gained from previous elections, which can guide the activities of the upcoming elections.

4 Future development: Re commendations on strengthening electoral planning and processes for effective and modern elections. The chairman of the Somaliland Electoral Commission (NEC), Muse Hassan Yusuf, pointed out the importance of evaluating the elections held in Somaliland on 13 Nov 2024, saying that the recommendations from the meeting will contribute to the development of democracy in the Republic of Somaliland.

The conclusion of the meeting showed how the National Electoral Committee (NEC) of the Republic of Somaliland is committed to continuing the review and evaluation process, which earns the trust of the community, with the Somaliland Elections as a good example in the Horn of Africa region, at the same time showing the maturity of democracy and the process that has attracted the attention of the world.

The Annual Forum of Somaliland Taxes was held in Burao city

This annual forum aims to give businessmen {Taxpayer} and the Heads of the Ministry an opportunity to exchange any questions and suggestions that both parties have, and was attended by 84 members including hotel owners and managers, local factories, telecommunications companies, electricity providers, Burao Water Agency and other similar entities whose sales are subject to sales tax. This forum which is held once a year as we mentioned above members of businessmen/women from various business sectors, it's the fourth time, and it is the first time that it is held outside of Hargeisa City. Each year, a specific theme is chosen depending on the topic that is considered worthy of focus, and this forum's theme was "Raising Community Awareness of Goods & Services Tax", during the event, they exchanged ideas and suggestions, on the other hand, the participants shared their questions with the Heads of the Ministry.

The Tax Forum of 2024 which was sponsored by the World Bank is part of the program of expansion and advance of GST {Goods & Services Tax}, this type of tax which is indirect-tax is since the seller transfers to the buyer or customer. According to the Somaliland Inland Revenue Act Law No. 72/2016 this tax is applicable to the following categories:

· Sales made by hotels/ restaurants such as; sales of food, beverages, lodging services, various

events and parties.

- √ Communication services.
- √ Electricity/lighting services.
- √ Domestically manufactured products.
- √ Sales of water.
- √ Sales made by televisions {Example: Receivers for rent}.
- √ Sales of transport tickets {air and land}.
- √ And the other similar areas.

In conclusion, the Goods and Services Tax is not new, but what is new is only by modernizing the way it is carried out, and at the same time it is intended to be expanded so that it can be fully implemented across the country.

Somaliland Ministry of Finance based on the Financial Management Act of Regulation No. 75/2018, applying the Principles of the Public Finance Management Reform Program, and at the same time taking advantage of modern technology, in 2021 it began to install EFDs {Fiscal Electronic Devices} GST machines in hotels to obtain a secure and reliable tax return. The first phase was started in the capital city of Hargeisa with around 300 hotels fully implemented, and the next phase was passed to the cities of Berbera, Borama, Tog-Wajale and Burao. Domestic tax revenue is 25% of the Government's revenue, while the other 75% comes from Customs, and the goal is to strengthen or increase domestic revenue to reduce over-dependence on customs revenue.

Somaliland police arrest suspect in deadly Hargeisa stabbing



“The Somaliland Police have detained suspect Mohamed Bashe Farah, who is accused of fatally stabbing Khadar Hashi Ismail earlier today”, read a statement from the police.
 “The suspect engaged seven-knife strikes, which tragically led to the victim’s death.”
 The police assured the public that the investigation would be thorough and that the suspect would promptly be presented to the judicial system. In the statement, the Police Commander extended condolences to the victim’s family. “We pray for patience and strength for the family during this difficult time,” the statement said.

Mohamed Bashe Farah, is alleged to have stabbed Khadar Hashi Ismail over a half dozen times, resulting in his death at the scene. Witnesses described the chaotic aftermath as crowds gathered, shocked by the nature of the crime.

Police swiftly responded to the incident, apprehending the suspect as a crowd of onlookers gathered at the site of the attack. Police have launched a full investigation to determine the motive behind the killing.

Press Release: Concerns Over Representation at Djibouti Somali Heritage Conference

Conference, claiming to represent the Waddani Party. This has raised serious concerns within our organization and among the people of Somaliland.
 President-elect Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Iirro won the trust of the Somaliland public with a historic 65% of the vote a record-breaking achievement that demonstrates the overwhelming confidence placed in him by the people. As he prepares to assume office, there is an expectation for his administration to stand firm on matters of sovereignty and to deliver more than any previous administration.
 The Djibouti Somali Heritage Conference is closely linked to the idea of “Somaliweyn,” a concept that fundamentally contradicts Somaliland’s sovereignty. SL-SAG is

deeply concerned about Dr. Mohamed Hassan’s participation in this event. If he attended with the approval of President-elect Iirro or the Waddani leadership, this decision risks sending the wrong message at a critical moment in Somaliland’s journey.
 The new administration must make it clear that Somaliland’s sovereignty is not negotiable. Dialogue with Somalia should only happen on the basis of mutual recognition as two independent states. Somaliland does not have territorial disputes or animosity with Somalia, but any engagement that fails to respect our independence is a waste of time.
 As SL-SAG, we urge President-elect Iirro to prioritize the mandate given to him by the people. Somalilanders expect him to address and reverse

the agreements made under the previous administration that compromised our national interests. It is vital that any representative of the Waddani Party or the government firmly reject actions or forums that undermine Somaliland’s independence.
 We call on the President-elect and his administration to take a principled stand, ensuring clarity and consistency in Somaliland’s policies and actions. The people of Somaliland deserve leadership that reflects their aspirations and defends their sovereignty at all costs.
 By Abdirasaaq Adami Somaliland Strategic Advisory Group (SL-SAG) About SL-SAG The Somaliland Strategic Advisory Group (SL-SAG) is focused on promoting the statehood and sovereignty of the Republic of Somaliland.

NEC officials meet all presidential contenders



By M.A. Egge
 Officials of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of the Republic of Somaliland led by Chairman Mr. Musa Hassan Yusuf, visited over the week H.E. President Musa Bihi Abdi at the Presidency, and also visited the newly elected President Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Iirro at his home.
 The National Electoral Commission of Somaliland and the president-elect exchanged views on the important work of the recent

presidential elections held on November 13 in the country, which they conducted in a transparent, free and fair manner.
 The members of the National Electoral Commission wished the president-elect and his deputy well in their endeavours and onerous duties bestowed upon them through the people’s mandate and prayed for them.
 Prior to meeting him they had paid a courtesy call to the outgoing head of state H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi and later

on they made a similar visit to four-times presidential contender Feisal Ali Hussein.
 The President-elect commended them for implementing elections in the country that brought prestige and honor to the Republic of Somaliland. The President-elect was flanked by the two Waddani Party officials responsible for working with the National Electoral Commission, namely the Secretary-General of the Waddani Party, Khadar Hussein, and veteran politician Ismail Adan Osman.

Dahabshiil Group has played a major role the 8th Heritage Forum held in Djibouti



Dahabshiil Group has played a major role in co-sponsoring the 8th Heritage Forum this year in Djibouti. Dahabshiil Group companies, including East Africa Bank, Dahabshil Bank International, Somtel, DahabPlus, Dahabshiil – Real Estate, and Dahabshiil, have

played a major role in the 8th Heritage Forum held in Djibouti, with this year’s focus on Strengthening Economic Ties for Regional Stability
 Dahabshiil Group has played a major role in economic and trade development in the Horn of Africa for over 50 years.

All Eyes on Somaliland: The Tiny African State That’s Key to Israel’s War on Houthi Terror

How did the unrecognized state of Somaliland become the focus of clashes between Somalia and Ethiopia, as well as Turkey and Greece? And what does Egypt want with it?



On the night of July 19, a drone swooped down over Tel Aviv’s beaches, killing Evgeny Freder in his sleep not far from the U.S. embassy building. Israel’s defense establishment was caught with its pants down – nobody thought that a small, slow, lugubrious aircraft, launched over 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) away, from Yemen, would be able to evade Israel’s advanced air defense systems, fly around Tel Aviv, kill one person, wound 10 others and cause panic.
 The attack demonstrated the operational capabilities of Yemen’s Houthis who, ever since the Arab Spring, have become a well-financed and well-armed proxy for Iran in its conflicts with Saudi Arabia and Israel. It also forced Israel’s defense establishment – which until then had left the U.S. and Britain to come up with a military response to the Houthis – to realize that Israel must find its own solutions to defeat the Yemeni threat.
 Israel also realized it will not be able to send its fighter jets on long, expensive raids on Yemen every time a \$20,000 Houthi drone explodes inside the country – especially given that the Houthis are believed to have one of the world’s largest stockpiles of drones. Therefore, Israel has had to seek out more efficient alternatives.

In the late 19th century, Britain and Italy gained control on the Somali sphere, setting up British Somaliland – which corresponds to modern-day Somaliland – as a protectorate.
 One such alternative involves a small, remote state, bereft of international recognition, that over the last year has become the arena for an explosive regional struggle, rife with geopolitical interests. That place is Somaliland – a territory ruled by the Muslim Issa clan, that seceded from the mother-state of Somalia in 1991 and declared independence without international guarantees. Ever since then it has been trying to gain recognition from countries while fortifying itself against regional threats, primarily Somalia, which seeks to regain control of the territory.
 International law recognizes Somaliland only as an autonomous district within Somalia, and until 2024 not a single country recognized it as an independent country, with the exception of Taiwan, itself an unrecognized state.
 This has significant economic implications. Somaliland cannot take part in international trade, nor can it get financial aid from organizations such as the World
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H.E. Abdirahman Irro: 'Consensus-driven' leader who offers new hope for Somaliland



The 69-year-old president-elect of the breakaway region of Somaliland will officially assume office on 13 December, with a reputation as a unifier and pragmatist.

The opposition leader of the breakaway region of Somaliland, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi – more popularly known as Irro – beat incumbent Muse Abdi Bihi with 64% of the vote in the 13 November polls. His victory puts the opposition party Wadani in power after 14 years of Kulmiye rule.

Born in Hargeisa in the then-British Somaliland, Irro served as speaker of the House of Representatives from November 2005 to August 2017 when he contested for the presidency and lost to Bihi in November that year. Known for his measured and inclusive leadership style, Irro's tenure as Speaker showcased his ability to build consensus and navigate complex political landscapes, says Khaalid Foodhadhi, a journalist and founder of Hargeisa-based digital *KF Media TV*.

For many Somalilanders, it is Irro's long career as a diplomat that resonates with Somaliland's search for recognition from the international community and strengthened ties with the West. In a stint that started in 1981 before Somaliland broke away from Somalia, he served in the foreign service of the Somali Democratic Republic – first as a consular in Moscow and then as acting ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1991.

Finnish citizenship

Irro relocated to Finland in 1996 to join his family and became a Finnish citizen. Finland, which does not recognize Somaliland, has not congratulated him. However, Suldaan Said Ahmed, the Nordic country's first lawmaker of Somali origin, noted Irro's victory, saying his election exemplified democracy in Somaliland.

"I hope for a peaceful transfer of

power and look forward to working with you, Mr. President-elect, in promoting peace and dialogue," Ahmed, the Finnish Foreign Ministry's Special Envoy on Peace Mediation in the Horn of Africa, posted on X.

Irro's victory signals a potential shift in Somaliland's political direction, reflecting the public's desire for change and reform. His leadership, according to Foodhadhi, could rejuvenate domestic and international confidence in the country's democratic processes, further solidifying its status as a beacon of stability in the Horn of Africa.

Political analyst Moustafa Ahmad tells *The Africa Report* there's a window of hope in the air, citing Wadani party's push for change rather than continuity in many of the policy issues in the country. Irro is [seen as] more conciliatory and diplomatic in his conduct of politics and opts to make decisions based on consensus. That's a stark difference from Bihi's style of governance, which is described by many as very centralized and pursued a zero-sum game in his domestic politics," Ahmad says.

The elections, delayed for two years, had caused widespread frustration, protests, and political gridlock.

"Successfully concluding the vote, particularly with an opposition landslide, demonstrates Somaliland's resilience and commitment to democratic processes – a rarity in the region," says Khadar Mariano, development and policy analyst and CEO of consultancy firm Adans Consulting Group. "This is a moment of pride for Somalilanders, reinforcing their aspirations for continued stability and progress."

New president, old problems

Irro inherits a government with significant challenges. The political deadlock, especially over the delayed election, has triggered an unprecedented level of social polarization. There are tensions and

an inter-clan conflict in regions like Sool in the eastern part of Somaliland. There's also the issue of economy and high unemployment rate especially among the youth.

Irro and his Wadani party won the election with a promise to bring the much-needed reforms. He is now expected to lead with a focus on dialogue, inclusivity, and reform, likely striking a balance between traditional governance values and modern aspirations, according to Foodhadhi.

"The new administration will need to address the public's high expectations for accountability and reform after years of perceived stagnation," he tells *The Africa Report*.

As a seasoned diplomat, says Mariano, Irro is expected to be a consensus-driven leader who values unity and collaboration. "His track record suggests he will focus on bridging divides and creating an inclusive government that reflects Somaliland's diverse interests."

Mariano says the new administration must tackle the issues head-on, restoring public trust and addressing the socioeconomic needs of the population. "The real test lies in their ability to deliver on promises while navigating these complex problems."

Considerable sympathy in Washington

Somaliland's controversial MoU with Ethiopia over sea access increased tension in the Horn of Africa, creating a fresh feud between Ethiopia and Somalia. However, the quest for global recognition is the dominant agenda in Irro's foreign relations checklist. He has been vocal about advancing Somaliland's quest for international recognition.

"Irro has a new and strong mandate to strengthen relations with the US and Western countries as well as capitalize relations with the UAE. A lot is at stake in this matter, and Irro's decisions and approaches to this complicated set of issues will be very consequential for Somaliland," says Ahmad.

Donald Trump's election victory in the US has reignited hope of recognition in Somaliland.

"There is considerable sympathy in Washington for Somaliland, probably more with Republicans than Democrats," says former US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Tibor Nagy. "If you make a list of everything Somaliland is doing right, there is a mirror image of what Somalia (Mogadishu) is doing wrong," he tells *The Africa Report*.

"The recent elections may be the most dramatic example: one-person-one-vote well run; problem free; and the opposition won and will result in a peaceful turnover of power," he adds.

All Eyes on Somaliland: The Tiny African State That's Key to Israel's War on Houthi Terror



Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and has to function as an autarkic economy. For that reason, one field that is thriving in the territory is maritime piracy.

The demand for Somaliland's independence harks back to the colonial age in Africa. In the late 19th century, Britain and Italy gained control on the Somali sphere, setting up British Somaliland – which corresponds to modern-day Somaliland – as a protectorate. In WWII, British forces occupied Italian Somaliland, then part of Mussolini's fascist Italy, uniting the two territories into one state that operated as a political unit within the British empire. In 1960, united Somaliland gained independence and the republic of Somalia was established. The collapse of the country's central government in 1991 and the raging civil war led to the secession of the territory of Somaliland from the mother-state. Unlike Somalia, which has been plagued for decades by murderous civil wars and was ruled for part of this period by Islamic militias, primarily Al-Shabaab, Somaliland, with its 6.2 million inhabitants, has managed to consolidate a functioning democratic regime, including fair and free elections and stable democratic institutions, without bloodshed. The anarchy typical of Mogadishu, the capitol of Somalia, stands in sharp contrast to the peacefulness of Hargeisa, the capitol of Somaliland.

It may be said that Israel and Somaliland are similar in two essential ways: They are both small, vulnerable democracies, situated in areas rife with authoritarian regimes and murderous wars. Also, both are suffering from sovereignty issues vis-à-vis the international community, and both have enemies that seek to destroy them.

Ethiopia's move

On October 17, the pro-Qatari news website Middle East Monitor reported that Israel secretly approached Somaliland, situated across the Gulf of Aden from the Yemeni city of Aden, with a proposal that would serve both parties: Israel will set up a military base in Somaliland that will allow it to attack and deter Houthi targets, in return for formal recognition of the country

and financial investments in it.

According to the report, which relies on diplomatic sources, the United Arab Emirates is mediating between the two countries, and has not only convinced Somaliland to allow the construction of the military base, but will also finance it. The UAE, a signatory to the 2020 Abraham Accords with Israel, has a clear vested interest in such a deal, as the Houthis have become a security threat for it, too, and Israeli military forces in Somaliland will certainly help it fight them.

In recent years, Somaliland allowed the UAE to use the port of Berbera and its airport as a base for its military activity in Yemen, in return for a \$440 million UAE investment in Berbera port, according to foreign media. The UAE mediation follows its military cooperation with Israel, the two having reportedly established a joint military-intelligence base on the Socotra archipelago, one of the world's remotest, most ecologically diverse islands, situated in the Gulf of Aden near Yemen.

Thanks to its military presence and its soft power engines, Turkey has become a key player in East Africa – particularly in the Horn of Africa. Eytan Cohen Yanarocak

There are numerous advantages for Israel in recognizing Somaliland as an independent state," points out Ahmet Vefa Rende, a researcher at the Middle East Institute at Turkey's Sakarya University, who first reported the contacts between Israel and Somaliland.

"These include enhancing its national security, countering regional threats, creating new economic opportunities, improving diplomatic relations and supporting democratic governance in the region. In a region where many powers are competing for a share due to its strategic location and resources, Israel is expected to enter the race through local partner Somaliland, which is excluded by many countries."

For local regional powers, the location of Somaliland in the Horn of Africa lends it strategic importance along with economic appeal. It is situated at the entrance to the Bab al-Mandeb straits, **Continue on page 5**

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through which a third of the world's maritime cargo is shipped, and its long coastline along the bay provides it with diverse maritime accessibility – to East Africa, the Middle East, the Arabian Sea and from there to the Indian Ocean.

The most important element in this maritime tapestry is the Red Sea sphere, which over the last year has become a focal point for international tension due to Houthi attacks on Red Sea shipping routes that affect the entire global trade. Last December, several firms had to halt shipping near the Red Sea. Maersk was the first, after the Houthis attacked two of its ships. It was followed by China's OOCL, Germany's Hapag-Lloyd, France's CMA CGM and Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), the world's biggest shipping firm.

On December 14, 2023, the Houthis announced the blocking of the Bab al-Mandeb straits, and exactly one month later they fired a missile from the Yemeni port of Hudeidah at an American ship. The missile was shot down. The firing of the Houthi missile came after American forces attacked the port to enable the resumption of regular maritime traffic. The Houthis continued their terrorist activities along with their efforts to hit targets in Israel using drones and ballistic missiles.

On July 18, the U.S. and Britain staged a joint attack on Hudeidah's international airport, and two days later the Israeli Air Force carried out an attack on the port of Hudeidah, coordinated with the Americans and Saudi Arabia. All this has unfolded against the backdrop of Israeli concern about Iran's attempts to gain a foothold in the Red Sea arena. These attempts have taken the form of increased Houthi terrorist activities as well as the presence of Iranian warships and intelligence ships.

The main contenders

Despite tensions with the Houthis, Israel is merely a secondary player in the teeming arena of interests around Somaliland. The three main players in the conflict are Somalia, Ethiopia and Turkey, with Egypt, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and neighboring Djibouti also keeping their hands in the pot. Up above hover the world's two superpowers, the United States and China. The great fear is that the crisis that

developed between Somalia and Ethiopia over the future of Somaliland will ignite into a bloody conflict that pulls in additional countries. This could happen in light of the ongoing war between Israel and Iran with its Houthi proxy in Yemen, the presence of murderous Islamist militias in the Horn of Africa and the bloody history of Somalia and Ethiopia. The two countries have a history of territorial conflicts, including two wars in the late 20th century.



The move that gave rise to the current crisis between them took place on the first day of 2024. Ethiopia, which borders Somalia and has no maritime access, signed a historic agreement with Somaliland that will give it access to the Gulf of Aden through the port of Berbera, in return for eventual Ethiopian recognition of Somaliland's independence. To Somaliland, Ethiopia's recognition is an important step that could help other countries in Africa and beyond follow suit.

For Ethiopia, which views itself as a regional power in Africa but is suffering from economic frailty and widespread poverty, sea access is an important key to financial growth and greater geopolitical power. With over 130 million inhabitants, this is the world's most populous country with no sea access.

The agreement allows Ethiopia to lease a military naval base at the port of Berbera and to trade from it. AFP reported that Somaliland agreed to lease 20 kilometers (12 miles) of its coastline to Ethiopia for 50 years, and to allow Ethiopia to establish a naval base and a commercial port there.

This step was also made possible by the UAE, which had been

developing the port of Berbera in recent years for its own interests, and encourages maritime trade there. The agreement also serves the economic interests of Somaliland, which is expected to reap dividends – from tariff revenues to commercial cooperation – through the port activity of a large country like Ethiopia.

The agreement provoked a sharp response from Somalia, with the government declaring it illegal and a threat to regional stability. The Ethiopian ambassador to Somalia was summoned for a reprimand and the Somali ambassador was recalled from Addis Ababa. "The Somali government recognizes Ethiopia's actions as a blatant violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia," a statement from the Somali government said, vowing to defend its territory "by all legal means."

Meanwhile, Somalia rushed to

strengthen its relations with Turkey, which has over the last two decades become an important ally, in order to increase Ankara's influence in Africa, particularly in the Red Sea region. Somalia signed a security and naval cooperation agreement with Turkey, giving Turkey control of Somalia's territorial water – including offshore from Somaliland – in return for revenues from resources extracted there by Turkey, primarily crude oil and natural gas reserves.

Turkey began increasing its influence in the Horn of Africa region after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to Somalia in 2011, when he promised to provide financial aid to the civil war-scarred country and restart basic education and health services. Turkey then extended its influence in Somalia on several levels, with infrastructure and research projects; oil and gas explorations off the Somalian shore; mediation between Somalia and its neighbors as well as dissident forces inside the country; and the most important aspect – a military cooperation that led to the construction of a Turkish military base in Mogadishu in 2017. It is Turkey's largest overseas base, intended for training Somali

soldiers. Turkey also seized on the slowdown in Chinese investments in Africa to increase its economic influence in the region, as did the UAE and Egypt.

Meanwhile, Turkey has been using its clout to try to hammer out a compromise between Somalia and Ethiopia over the Somaliland crisis, thanks to its good relations with Ethiopia. Somalia, for its part, does not wish to become dependent on Erdogan's whims, and in order to reduce its dependency on Turkey it also signed a security agreement with Egypt this year, under which the Egyptians have committed to send soldiers and military equipment to Somalia if tensions rise. Despite the warming of ties between Egypt and Turkey in recent years, Cairo views Turkey's increasing hold south of Egypt with concern, and is attempting to increase its own clout in the Horn of Africa.

Turkish beltway

Now, Turkey is interested in a tie-breaking move with security ramifications for the entire region, including Israel. In September, Bloomberg reported that Erdogan's emissaries conducted talks with Somalia about setting up a long-range missile launching test site on Somali territory. Somalia's location on the Eastern edge of Africa will allow Turkey to conduct maritime tests on the ballistic missile it has developed, which has a range of 565 kilometers (351 miles), and is known as Tayfun (in Turkish) or Typhoon. In addition, Turkey is reportedly looking into conducting tests on launching rockets to space from Somali territory. The Turkish government has been promoting a space program for years, as part of Erdogan's wish to increase his country's power and prestige and to join the club of world powers.

The missile program is causing concern among Turkey's neighbors, due to Erdogan's goal of doubling the current range of its missiles. "As of today, the range of our missiles is 565 kilometers. This is not enough. We will increase it to 1,000 kilometers," Erdogan said in 2023, after Turkey's secret missile program came to light.

With the successful testing of the Typhoon missile in May 2023, it has since gone into production. The assessment is that Turkey is interested in conducting tests in Somalia in order to achieve a 1,000-kilometer launching capability far from the eyes of its neighbors. Erdogan, known for his belligerent statements, caused real concern in Greece when he threatened Athens in 2022. "Now we are starting to build our rockets. Of course, this production scares the Greeks. When you say 'Tayfun,' the Greek gets scared and say, 'It will hit Athens.' Well, of course it will," Erdogan is quoted as saying at an event near the Black Sea two years

ago.

Tension between Turkey and Greece has been ongoing for 200 years, including four violent clashes between the two countries between the late 19th century and 1922. In addition, Turkey is still in control of Northern Cyprus, a territory it occupied during the civil war in the island in 1974 after the then-leader of Cyprus, archbishop Makarios III, announced his desire for a political union with Greece.

But what does Turkey need a missile with a range of 1,000 kilometers for? "Turkey is a regional power and is in a rivalry with Iran," says Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak, an expert on Turkey at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University and at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. "As long as their missiles are of the current range, they can only threaten Greece."

How about Israel? A 1,000km ballistic missile from Turkey puts us right within range.

"True, though there is no official statement against us of the type that Erdogan directed at Greece."

Erdogan may yet threaten us with rockets if we don't pull out of Gaza. "We have not reached that stage yet. But in the case of Erdogan, there is serious potential for threats on his part."

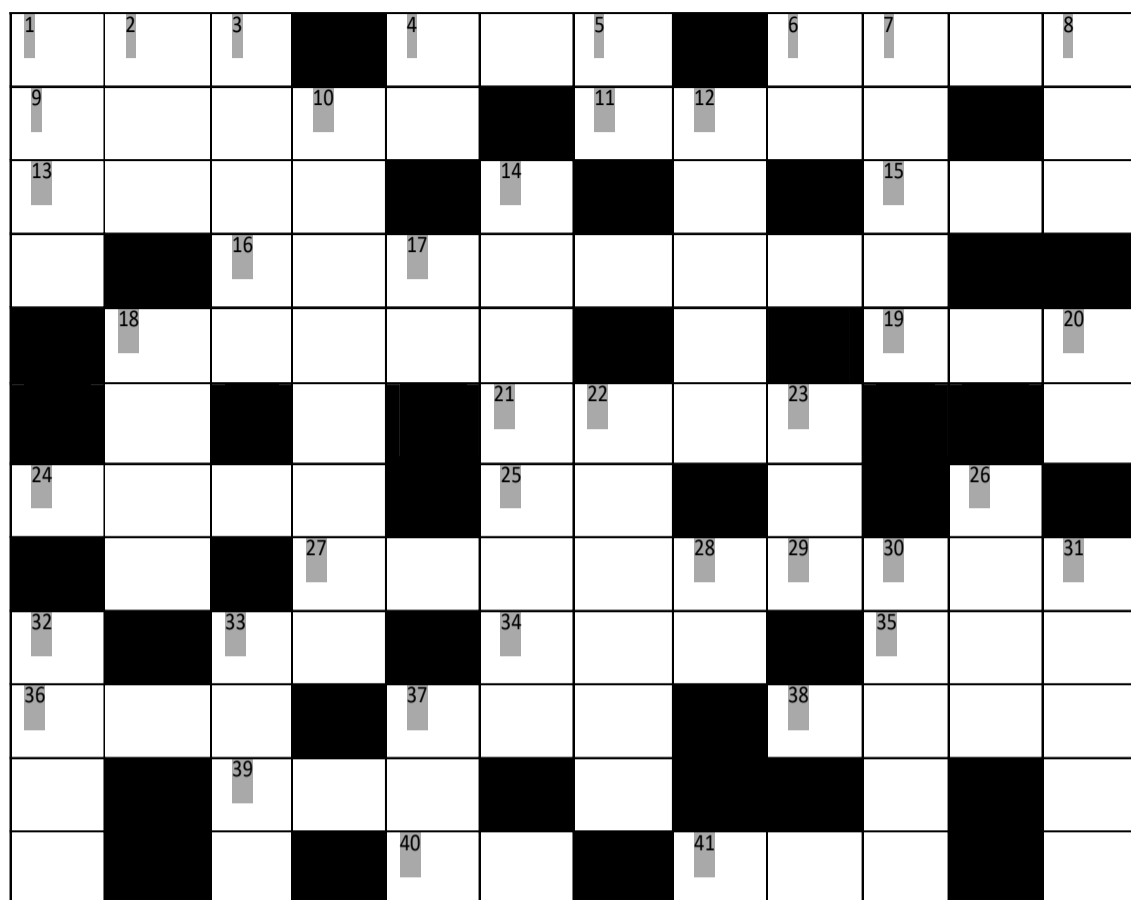
Cohen Yanarocak maintains that Turkey's strategy in Africa has paid off. "Thanks to its military presence and its soft power engines, Turkey has become a key player in East Africa – particularly in the Horn of Africa," he points out. "Turkey's ability to initiate a change in policy by East African countries is a pinnacle of Turkish influence in the region."

He says that the most important ingredient in Turkey's success story is respect. "Unlike the superpowers that approached African countries with a colonial, ethnocentric attitude, Turkey shows respect to Africans, who have similar religious and cultural codes – especially Muslim African countries. The Africans feel it."

Meanwhile, the escalating crisis around Somaliland may be solved by the smallest, weakest country in the region – Djibouti, trapped between Somaliland, Ethiopia, Eritrea and the Red Sea, with a population of about one million. Despite its small size, the country is home to several foreign ports, naval bases and airforce bases, primarily American, Chinese and French, thanks to its strategic location. In an effort to end the crisis, Djibouti offered Ethiopia one of its own sea ports, that could serve as an alternative to Somaliland.

Source: [Ha'aretz Newspaper](#)

THT Puzzle



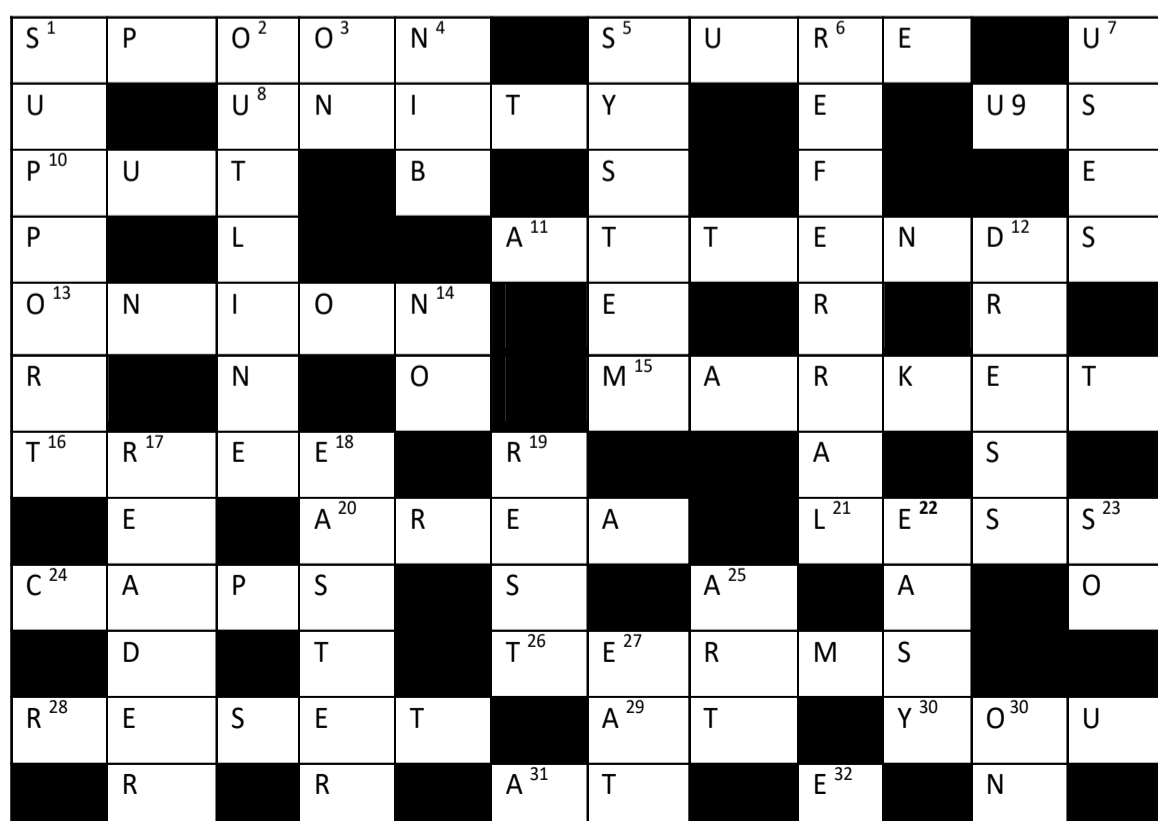
DOWN

- 1 nursing
- 2 Exist
- 3 Changed
- 4 U'S
- 5 European Union
- 6 Be present
- 7 Concepts
- 8 Unhappy
- 10 Tries
- 12 Enhanced
- 14 Detachment
- 17 Computer model
- 18 Trade
- 20 Myself
- 22 Whole
- 26 Forever
- 28 Want ad
- 30 Italia
- 31 Opponent
- 32 Produced
- 33 Proposal
- 37 Hen

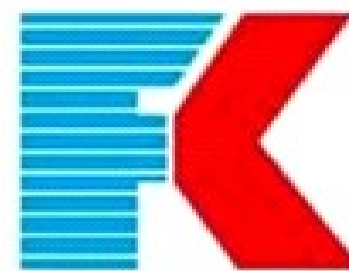
ACROSS

- 1 vehicle
- 4 Usage/ utilize
- 6 Tenders
- 9 Districts
- 11 Utilized
- 13 Have a rest
- 15 Ending
- 16 Name of a Neighboring country to Somaliland
- 18 Footsteps
- 19 Somalia opposition short form (Somali National Movement)
- 21 Tenure
- 24 Smack for construction
- 25 the form of an indefinite article
- 27 Uncertain
- 33 Remains
- 34 security intelligent short form
- 35 Decade
- 36 Relief
- 37 Herself
- 38 Nursing
- 39 Eyeball
- 40 Negative
- 41 Somewhat

Previous Answer



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The Illusion of Somali Unity- Prof Nassir H. Kahin



The recent discussions surrounding the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland have reignited outdated fantasies of Somali unity, exposing once again the deep chasm between political illusions and on-the-ground realities. While Mogadishu clings to the rhetoric of sovereignty and unity, Somaliland continues to thrive as a de facto independent state, deserving of recognition and respect for its achievements in democracy, governance, and stability. It is time to put aside the illusion of Somali unity and acknowledge the legitimacy of Somaliland's independence. Somaliland's independence is not a modern invention but a reclamation of the sovereignty it was granted by British colonial authorities in 1960. After voluntarily uniting with Somalia in pursuit of a pan-Somali dream, Somaliland was subjected to decades of systemic oppression, culminating in the genocidal violence of the 1980s under the regime of Siad Barre. Tens of thousands of Somalilanders were slaughtered, their towns bombed into rubble, and their rights trampled under the weight of southern domination. The scars of that brutal era are still fresh, but they also serve as a foundation for Somaliland's decision to reclaim its independence in 1991. For 34 years, Somaliland has functioned as an independent state in all but name, demonstrating time and again that it is not only viable but exemplary. Somalia descends further into chaos, Somaliland has emerged as a beacon of democracy in the Horn of Africa. The recent elections on November 13, 2024, reaffirmed this commitment to democratic principles. Opposition parties secured presidential and parliamentary victories in an election process hailed by international observers as free, fair, and transparent. Ambassadors, high-ranking officials, and election monitors from around the globe commended Somaliland for its professionalism and integrity, providing yet another testament to its democratic credentials. This starkly contrasts Somalia,

which remains a failed state dependent on international military and financial support to maintain even the illusion of governance. Outside Mogadishu, Somalia is a fragmented mosaic of clan militias, al-Shabaab insurgents, and autonomous regions that openly defy federal authority. The very idea of Somali unity collapses under the weight of these realities. How can a state that cannot govern its own territory hope to unify with a region that has thrived independently for decades? The MOU between Somaliland and Ethiopia reflects the shifting geopolitical realities of the Horn of Africa. Ethiopia, landlocked and reliant on neighboring states for access to the sea, has long sought alternative maritime outlets. For Somaliland, the partnership with Ethiopia is an opportunity to strengthen its economy, enhance security, and edge closer to international recognition. The agreement, quietly supported by the United States and the United Kingdom, acknowledges Somaliland's strategic importance along the Red Sea and its potential as a stabilizing force in the region. Opposition to Somaliland's recognition comes primarily from actors like Djibouti, Egypt, and Turkey, whose motivations are rooted in self-interest rather than a genuine concern for Somali unity. Djibouti fears losing its monopoly on Ethiopia's trade, while Egypt and Turkey see Somaliland's independence as a threat to their strategic leverage over Ethiopia. Eritrea and other authoritarian regimes in the region view Somaliland's democratic success as a dangerous precedent that could undermine their despotic rule. Somaliland's achievements, however, cannot be ignored. Unlike its neighbors, Somaliland has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to democracy, security, and governance. While Somalia struggles under a United Nations trusteeship that has spanned more than three decades, Somaliland has charted its own course, building institutions, holding elections, and fostering a sense of national unity that Mogadishu can only dream of.

The African Union must recognize Somaliland's independence as a matter of principle and pragmatism. Somaliland meets all the criteria for statehood under international law, including defined borders, a functioning government, and a permanent population. Its recognition would not only validate the will of its people but also serve as a powerful signal that democracy and self-determination are valued in Africa. Recognizing Somaliland would promote regional stability, offering a counterbalance to the chaos in Somalia and strengthening ties between the Horn of Africa and the

Red Sea. It would also unlock economic opportunities, attracting international investment and fostering development in a region with immense untapped potential. Somaliland's partnership with Ethiopia, anchored by the MOU, is a step toward realizing this vision. The argument for Somali unity is not only baseless but also dangerous. It perpetuates a cycle of denial and distraction that prevents real progress in the Horn of Africa. Somaliland's independence is not a threat but an opportunity—a chance to build a more stable, prosperous, and democratic region. It is time for the world, and

particularly the African Union, to abandon the illusion of Somali unity and embrace the reality of Somaliland's sovereignty. Somaliland's people have earned their independence through resilience, sacrifice, and an unwavering commitment to their values. The international community must now honor that achievement by recognizing Somaliland for what it is: a sovereign, independent state. The illusion of Somali unity has persisted for too long. The time for Somaliland's recognition is now.

Let Somaliland elections usher in new foreign policy- Dr Mohamed A. Omer

By pushing for international recognition, Somaliland has been carving out a space for itself in the region and in the international system. After 33 years of peaceful state building, the role Somaliland plays in regional geopolitics cannot be downplayed anymore. Somaliland's political system is democratic in a neighbourhood of authoritarian states and the country has remained largely peaceful. Several foreign nations have representative offices in its capital, Hargeisa, while Somaliland itself maintains liaison offices in 20 countries on five continents. From its role in counter terrorism to its strategic positioning as regional logistics hub, Somaliland cannot be wished away as a key partner in Horn of Africa. Achieving recognition has been a foreign policy priority for Somaliland. All previous administrations have made efforts to raise awareness about its situation internationally. However, Somaliland's lack of international recognition makes it fragile and susceptible to being drawn into regional disputes as it seeks allies, bilateral ties and eventual recognition. This has been the case with the Gulf states, where it has sided with the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In part as a result of this fragility and desire to secure more allies and improve bilateral ties, Somaliland now finds itself in the middle of multiple disputes among other states, including Ethiopia and Egypt, China and Taiwan and on the Red Sea. The presidential elections in November this year will give the country an opportunity to chart a new path in its foreign policy should a new administration takes over the power. Somaliland will need to adjust to these global and regional dynamics to forge strong international relationships, enhance its diplomatic initiatives, and develop a resilient strategy that aligns with both its domestic ambitions and the broader global context. The current international landscape is increasingly influenced by the rise of regional blocs and alliances, which provide new platforms and opportunities for advocacy and collaboration. For Somaliland, engaging with these blocs offer a strategic avenue to amplify its voice and advocate for its interests. By aligning with regional groups that



share similar political, economic or security goals, Somaliland can enhance its diplomatic reach and leverage collective bargaining power to its advantage. Should the opposition Waddani party unseat Kulmiye from power, we will adopt a progressive foreign policy that will forge balanced political, economic and security partnership with like minded states in the region and beyond. Waddani looks to adopt progressive politics which will aim to improve the living

conditions of our people through social, economic and political reforms based on shared vision. The reality is that Somaliland is a self governing state with a democratically elected government that has been in place since reasserting its independence in 1991. Engagement with regional economic organisations like the East African Community presents significant opportunities for Somaliland and can facilitate economic benefits including access to larger markets, shared infrastructure projects, and increased foreign investment. The commitment to innovative and forward-thinking strategies will undoubtedly be key in navigating the future of Somaliland's international relations. -The writer is former Somaliland foreign affairs minister and vice chair of Waddani Party

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