

# The Horn Tribune

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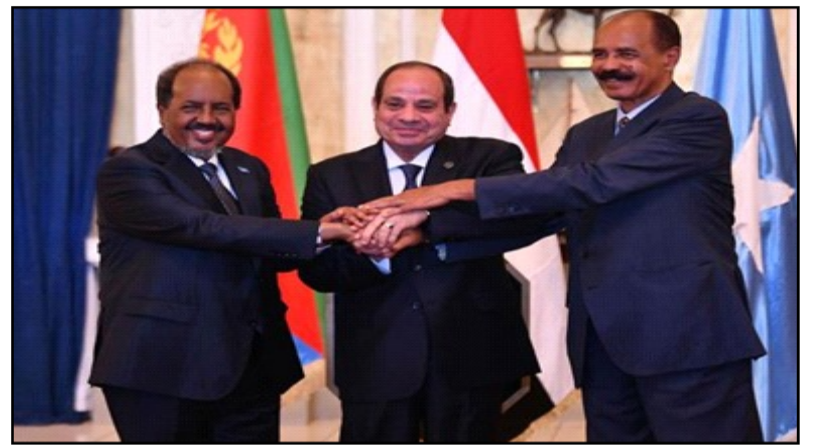
## Somaliland President vows to uphold MoU with Ethiopia, accuses Somalia's President of 'campaign against' Ethiopia

Somaliland will not back down from implementing the Memorandum of Understanding it signed with Ethiopia, despite any opposition or pressure from external parties" says Pres Bihi



**H**.E. Muse Bihi Abdi, the President of Somaliland, asserted that Somaliland will not back down from implementing the Memorandum of Understanding it signed with Ethiopia, despite any opposition or pressure from external parties. In an interview with the BBC, the president stated, "Nothing has

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## PM Abiy affirms Ethiopia's 'unwavering interest' in Red Sea access, pledges peaceful pursuit



**P**rime Minister Abiy Ahmed, in his parliamentary address today, asserted that Ethiopia has an "unwavering interest" in gaining access to the Red Sea and aims to pursue this objective through "peaceful means."

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## WADDANI demonstrates its clout of supporters in public arenas across the country



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## President addresses thousands of supporters in Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera as he seeks re-election



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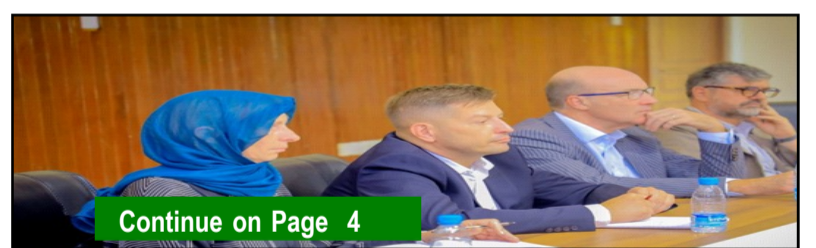
## Government urged IC to recognize that Somalia is instigating the conflict in the Buhodle region to obstruct the elections



**T**he Republic of Somaliland has accused the Federal Government of Somalia of backing SSC-Khatumo militias in a violent clash near Buhodle the attack is an attempt to destabilize Somaliland ahead of its November

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## International elections observers have jetted into the country



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## "We will make an informed view of the [MoU] based on Somaliland's long-term interest" – Mohamed A. Omar, Somaliland opposition leader



**O**ur vision is to establish a Somaliland, assured of its place in the world as a sovereign, peaceful, prosperous, and democratic nation  
*The signing of a Memorandum of*

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## Somaliland National Electoral Commission Conducts Training for Regional and District Staff



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## National Electoral Commission of Somaliland Hosts UK Delegation



**T**he National Electoral Commission (NEC) of the Republic of Somaliland welcomed a delegation led by Mr.

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## Somaliland elections: what's at stake for independence, stability and shifting power dynamics in the Horn of Africa



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Recognition in the Making: Somaliland's Transformation under Muse Bihi

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## Somaliland President vows to uphold MoU with Ethiopia, accuses Somalia's President of 'campaign against' Ethiopia



changed; it remains as it was." Bihi, who leads the self-declared independent state, continued, "Everyone is waiting for when the operational document will be finalized."

Bihi accused Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud of mounting opposition to the agreement, stating, "Hassan Sheikh has launched a campaign against Ethiopia." He emphasized that the deal was struck between Somaliland and Ethiopia, not with Somalia's federal government.

"We have been two separate independent countries, two governments, for 34 years. Everyone knows this," Bihi said, reiterating Somaliland's claim to sovereignty. The Somaliland president pointed to escalating regional tensions following the agreement, claiming "a war was planned" and that Egypt's involvement has complicated matters. He specifically referenced the recent military cooperation agreement between Somalia and Egypt, characterizing it as an attempt to "suppress the Somaliland

people's desire for independence." The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland, signed in early January 2024, aims to grant Ethiopia sea access in exchange for recognition of Somaliland. Ten months after its signing, the MoU is still awaiting implementation.

In February, Somaliland announced that it was "on course without any wavering, and remains seized" of the MoU's implementation, appointing a technical team, a group of international legal experts, and a high-level advisory group to guide the process.

In September, Somaliland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Essa Kayd, informed international diplomatic missions in Hargeisa that the MoU between Somaliland and Ethiopia "is finalized, and a formal legal agreement is imminent." However, Ethiopia has largely remained quiet about any practical progress on the MoU.

Somaliland has opposed the MoU from the start, escalating tensions between Ethiopia and Somalia.

Somalia has strengthened its ties with Ethiopia's rivals, particularly Egypt and Eritrea, forming what observers describe as an "axis against Ethiopia" to pressure Ethiopia to reconsider its position on the MoU signed with Somaliland. Addressing the implementation timeline, Bihi attributed delays to standard diplomatic processes rather than external pressure, noting that "international agreements often take years to implement."

Bihi dismissed Somalia's criticism of the Ethiopia agreement, pointing to existing Ethiopian-Somali ties. "There are many Somalis in Ethiopia, and they even hold positions within the government. So why is Somalia accusing us of signing an agreement with Ethiopia?" he said.

The president further alleged that Egypt is exploiting Somalia in its dispute with Ethiopia over the Nile River. "It's not right for them to drag Somalia into this regional conflict, considering they have their own problems," Bihi stated, suggesting that Egypt's military agreement with Somalia extends beyond the Nile dispute to target Somaliland directly. "The idea is to use Egypt by signing a security agreement with them and then using them against Somaliland," Bihi claimed, adding that "Egypt has its own problems and won't benefit from this situation."

Bihi, who is seeking re-election in November 2024, expressed willingness to engage in dialogue with Somalia, provided there is recognition of Somaliland's claimed independence. "If President Hassan recognizes that we are two separate governments and is interested in dialogue with us, that would be good," he said. **AS**

## Government urged IC to recognize that Somalia is instigating the conflict in the Buhodle region to obstruct the elections



13 elections.

Somaliland accused the Somali government in Mogadishu, along with militia groups from eastern Sool, had collaborated with Al-Shabaab-linked fighters in an assault on the town of Qorilugud and nearby areas, which led to several casualties.

A statement yesterday Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued read as follows;

The Government of the Republic of Somaliland unequivocally condemns the brutal assault carried out yesterday by the Mogadishu regime, in collaboration with militias from the eastern Sool region and Al-Shabaab-affiliated terrorists in Buhodle, targeting innocent citizens in Qorilugud town and its surrounding areas. This deliberate act of violence is a blatant attempt by the failed Mogadishu administration to undermine Somaliland's upcoming democratic elections on November 13, 2024.

In a significant development, Abdiqani Sulub, the 2nd in Command at the Al-Shabaab camp in Buhodle, was killed in this conflict, further confirming Al-Shabaab's involvement. The international community must be made aware of this. These actions constitute a grave violation of Somaliland's sovereignty and an assault on its

peace and stability. The Mogadishu regime's deployment of aggression and terror tactics against Somaliland's citizens reveals their utter desperation and lack of respect for human life. This attack is a direct threat not only to Somaliland's democratic process but to the stability of the entire Horn of Africa.

The Republic of Somaliland calls upon the international community to forcefully condemn this aggression by the failed Halane regime. We urge all our partners to take a resolute stance against this blatant act of destabilization and support Somaliland's right to conduct its elections free from foreign interference and violence.

Somaliland remains firm in its commitment to protect its citizens, uphold democratic values, and preserve our sovereignty against these unwarranted attacks. We will not be intimidated, nor will we allow our democratic path to be obstructed by such acts of aggression.

The Government of Somaliland calls on its allies and the broader international community to stand with us in condemning this attack, upholding international law, and supporting the will of the Somaliland people to pursue peace, stability, and democracy.

territorial integrity," and responded by expelling Ethiopia's ambassador from Somalia, recalling its ambassador from Ethiopia, and announcing Ethiopia's exclusion from the AU-led forces set to replace the African Union Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

Somalia has also signed a military cooperation agreement with Egypt, resulting in Egypt sending military personnel and arms shipments to Somalia.

Recently, a summit in Asmara brought together Somalia, Egypt, and Eritrea, where the three countries agreed on measures to enhance Somalia's capacity "to protect its land and sea borders." Addressing parliament, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed stated that Ethiopia has exercised patience

toward Somalia, allowing it time to "rethink and prioritize" its national interests, adding that Ethiopia will "wait patiently."

The Prime Minister also addressed concerns that Ethiopia's Red Sea ambitions could lead to conflict, saying, "There are some who think war will break out," but clarified, "We won't wage war with anyone; we don't have an interest in war."

Regarding potential external threats, Abiy dismissed fears of an invasion, asserting, "No one can invade Ethiopia by force," and added that the country has "enough resources to defend itself."

"We have human resources, we are patriots, and while we don't provoke others, we won't back down if provoked," the PM stated. **AS**

## PM Abiy affirms Ethiopia's 'unwavering interest' in Red Sea access, pledges peaceful pursuit

PM Abiy told legislators on Thursday, "We do not seek it through war or force," and stated that Ethiopia deserves access to the Red Sea "by any law, by any country's experience."

"Ethiopia has an unwavering national interest. The world should hear that Ethiopia needs access to the Red Sea through peaceful means," the PM said.

He emphasized that Ethiopia would not be "shy" about pursuing this goal, adding, "If we don't achieve it, our children will," describing the ambition as "true and logical."

The Prime Minister also addressed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Ethiopia signed with Somaliland earlier this year, which aims to grant Ethiopia sea access in exchange for recognizing Somaliland. He noted that attempts were made to portray the agreement



as though "Ethiopia entered an agreement with Somaliland to take a region of Somalia."

Abiy explained that Ethiopia initially proposed a 99-year lease with Somaliland but later agreed to a 50-year term, following Somaliland's preference. "How can a 50-year lease be stealing land?" he questioned. "Some even suggested hundreds of years, viewing it as a long-term investment, but we agreed to 50 years."

Referring to Ethiopia's close ties with Somalia, Abiy stated, "Ethiopia has the second-largest Somali population after Somalia. They are our brothers, and we have no agenda against Somalia."

The diplomatic relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia has deteriorated following Ethiopia's recent MoU with Somaliland, an area Somalia considers part of its territory.

Somalia criticized the MoU, stating it "violates its sovereignty and

**“We will make an informed view of the [MoU] based on Somaliland’s long-term interest” – Mohamed A. Omar, Somaliland opposition leader**



*Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somaliland, has attracted considerable attention in the Horn of Africa. Inked at the start of 2024, the MoU seeks to grant Ethiopia access to the Red Sea in return for the recognition of Somaliland. Somalia’s President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has strongly criticized the agreement, accusing Ethiopia of violating Somalia’s “sovereignty and territorial integrity.” Ethiopia, however, maintains that it has a right to secure access to the sea Somalia strengthened its ties with Ethiopia’s rivals, particularly Egypt and Eritrea forming what spectators describe ‘Axis against Ethiopia’. The move aims to pressure Ethiopia to reconsider its position over the MoU signed with Somaliland. Amid these heightened regional tensions, Somaliland’s President Muse Bihi Abdi announced that his administration is advancing with the MoU, asserting that “a formal legal agreement is imminent.” Yet, the approaching presidential and legislative elections on 13 November, 2024, present a challenge to the incumbent President Abdi and his party, the Kulmiye Peace, Unity, and Development Party, which currently holds 30 out of 82 parliamentary seats. The primary challenger in the election is the Somaliland National Party, commonly known as Waddani. Founded in 2012, Waddani presently occupies 31 seats in parliament, holding a one-seat advantage over Kulmiye. Ahead of the November election, senior leaders from Waddani visited Addis Ababa recently, drawing attention to the party’s stance on the MoU. In light of this, Addis Standard conducted an email interview with Mohamed Abdillahi Omar, a prominent Waddani leader and former Somaliland Foreign Minister. He discussed various issues, including the rising regional tensions since the MoU’s signing and Waddani’s position on the agreement should the party win the upcoming election. Excerpts from the interview follow*

AS: A delegation from the Somaliland National Party, including yourself, recently visited Addis Abeba. What was the purpose of these visits, and what were the outcomes?  
 Omar: I came to Addis Abeba to consolidate the existing cooperation we have with Ethiopia and to strengthen the relationship between the two brotherly countries—Somaliland and Ethiopia—at a time when there is a growing regional security challenge. I also came here to assure the Ethiopian government that our Waddani party is committed to deepening relations with Ethiopia if we win the upcoming elections on 13 November, 2024.  
 AS: If your party is elected in the upcoming election, what would be your position regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Somaliland signed with Ethiopia in January 2024?  
 Omar: Our party welcomes any partnership that mutually benefits our two neighboring people and cultivates trust between the two states. Unfortunately, the current Somaliland administration has not shared the details of the MoU with the opposition nor the parliament, yet we are the majority in the parliament. Once those details are brought to our attention, we will make an informed view based on the Somaliland’s long-term national interest and the principles of good neighborhood relations. Our party is confident that Ethiopia is genuine in its relationship with Somaliland, and we look forward to further cooperation in many areas, including trade, security, and energy  
 AS: What is your party’s policy toward advancing Somaliland’s long-standing quest for independence and international recognition?  
 Somaliland has the right to reach an agreement with any country.”  
 Omar: Our vision is to establish a Somaliland, assured of its place in the world as a sovereign, peaceful, prosperous, and democratic nation. With internal cohesion and perseverance, we will strive to achieve international recognition. Self-determination is an inalienable

right of the people of Somaliland and a key overarching goal of our foreign policy. If we win next month’s election, we will prioritize our quest for recognition and our commitment to sustaining peace.  
 AS: How do you assess the reaction of the Federal Government of Somalia to the signing of the MoU between Ethiopia and Somaliland  
 Omar: As always, Somaliland has the right to reach an agreement with any country. We have in the past signed bilateral agreements with other nations. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a case in point. The guiding principles are that the treaty serves the interest of the people of Somaliland and that it has to be approved by the parliament once the government of the day makes the case.  
 Somalia has got a lot to focus on now including its internal problems such as lawlessness and eliminating terrorist groups that are causing chaos and mayhem.  
 AS: Tensions are rising in the region following the signing of the MoU. How do you assess this situation?  
 Omar: Ethiopia’s pursuit of port access is a legitimate interest and our Berbera port is precisely built for that purpose. It is meant to be a regional commercial hub. We welcome Ethiopia’s use of our port. Under our leadership these ties will grow further.  
 AS: Tensions in the Horn of Africa have escalated following Egypt’s recent deployment of troops and military equipment to Somalia. How do you evaluate this development in terms of the escalating tensions within Somalia and the Horn of Africa?  
 Ethiopia’s pursuit of port access is a legitimate interest.”  
 Omar: We express our concerns over the recent maneuvers by actors within and outside the Horn of Africa whose actions may undermine efforts to ensure peace and security in the region. We call on these actors to cease their actions and urge the international community to recognize the risks posed by such activities.  
 AS: Somalia, Egypt, and Eritrea recently held a tripartite meeting in Asmara. Do you think this tripartite alliance further complicates the already tense situation in the region?  
 Omar: Our party finds the recent militarization of regional politics a risk strategy that aggravates the already fragile peace that has been painstakingly established over the years. The introduction of new foreign military forces into the neighboring Somalia, under any pretext, risks destabilization of the region and undermines peace efforts while escalating tensions that could have far-reaching and catastrophic consequences. AS

**National Electoral Commission of Somaliland Hosts UK Delegation**



Chris, the Director of Development at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), and Mr. Ilyas Malek, the Head of the UK Office in Somaliland. The delegation included several other officials. Following a bilateral briefing, the NEC conducted a site visit to their operational warehouses. These warehouses are fully stocked with

all the necessary materials for the upcoming elections in Somaliland. The NEC expressed their gratitude to the UK government for their financial support towards the 2024 elections, highlighting the importance of this assistance in ensuring a smooth and transparent electoral process. **ST**

**WADDANI demonstrates its clout of supporters in public arenas across the country**

By M.A. Egge  
 The main opposition party WADDANI made its mark across the country by having thousands converge in arenas as it had its field day in campaigning and soliciting for votes in both presidential and political parties/organizations elections. Led by its flag-bearer and presidential candidate Mr. Abdirahman Abdillahi Mohamed Irro, orange flags and placards blaring horns amid music that sang support for the party were heard all over. Chants and ululations with interjected poetry was the order of the day, typical in Somaliland multi-party election campaigns in every major town or village. He participated in the election campaign while addressing thousands of his supporters in Borama, Gebiley and Berbera town squares. Abdirahman Irro said that the people of Borama are ready for a political change in the country and criticized the administration of the day for perpetrating suppression and intimidation, polarizing the communities through social divisions and termed its seven year rule at the helm as a period of stagnation. Dozens of speakers at different podiums touted WADDANI as the voice and reason for change that they hoped would raise the standard of living of the populaces. Charged, eloquent and voluble meetings could be palpated all through the towns.



In Burao the WADDANI Chairman Mr. Hirsi Ali Hassan led his party’s campaigns and pledged that they would prioritize defense of the nation and gaining recognition status for the nation if they are voted in. With large masses gathering in Erigavo, Oodweyne, Aynaba and the rest of the urban centers. WADDANI and UCID flag-bearing candidates, Abdirahman Irro and Feisal Ali respectively, are challenging the incumbent President Musa Bihi Abdi of KULMIYE for the top-most executive seat in the nation. The elections scheduled to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 are for both the presidential and political party organizations. The Constitution requires that the top three political organizations become the official political parties in the nation for a period of three years. Similarly, currently existing three official political parties, KULMIYE, WADDANI and UCID are being challenged by seven other political organizations, with Hilaac trying its hand in it. Both elections are to be held simultaneously on the same day.

# President addresses thousands of supporters in Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera as he seeks re-election



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic of Somaliland who is the presidential candidate of the KULMIYE party defending his seat H.E. Musa Bihi Abdi on Monday made a whirlwind tour and addressed three main political rallies in Hargeisa, Burao and Berbera.

It was the ruling party's field day in soliciting and canvassing for votes across the country.

Thousands of enthusiastic supporters and potential voters came out in large numbers in showing their zealousness as they chanted slogans and sang Kulmiye party songs in deafening sounds with ear-piercing ululations ranting the air in all the three venues

The huge masses of supporters adorned Kulmiye robes and flags, waving placards with words in support of the party and singing in frenzy tones.

Such was the crowds at Hargeisa Freedom Gardens, Burao Square and also at Berbera 18<sup>th</sup> MaySquare.

The Head of State thanked the members of the public for showing their support and coming out large in numbers. He noted that the Kulmiye traditional supporters were known to be quite zealous in support for their party.

The head of the KULMIYE party campaign in Marodi-jeh region, Mr. Mustafe Qodax also thanked the supporters of the KULMIYE party and called on them to show their real support on the day of voting by voting in large numbers.

The president who then flew to Burao, profoundly thanked the masses who hilariously welcomed him, as he addressed the gathering. Amongst speakers at Burao were officials such as the campaign chairman of the KULMIYE party in Togdheer region, Mohamed Yusuf Abdirahman (Muraad), the governor of Togdeer region, Jama Abdullahi Bin, MP Abdinasir Yusuf Qodax and Minister of Information Hon. Ali Hassan Mohamed (Ali Marehaan). The Ministry of Animal Husbandry,

Hon. Said Sulub Mohamed, the Minister of the Interior and the Chairman of the KULMIYE Party, Hon. Mohamed Kahin Ahmed, also thanked the fans for their great support for the KULMIYE Party, and also called on them to similarly show their support on polling day by voting in large numbers.

Similar scenarios were at the 18th May Square in Berbera with supporters of the KULMIYE party dressed in the KULMIYE party logo, led by the leaders of the government and the party in charge of Berbera district, members of the cabinet, parliamentarians, politicians, traditional leaders and other contemporary leaders where they welcomed the President Muse Bihi. Some of the officials of the campaign committee of the KULMIYE party in the Sahel region, members of the House of Representatives, ministers, Berbera port chiefs, chiefs and other leaders who spoke there, thanked the Berbera community for their enthusiasm and support.

They called on them to make sure of that they do actually vote on the day of polling; and not to lose the opportunity to do so at all.

The President thanked Berbera

residents for the great support shown by the party supporters that deeply touching and humbling.

He highlighted the monumental steps the city had made as for as development was concerned, be they the ultra modern port and harbour, the oil storages, the livestock export facilities, the processing zone and the entire modernized infrastructure and their expansions.

The President is defending his seat against the challenging opposition WADDANI and UCID flag-bearing candidates, Abdirahman Irro and Feisal Ali respectively who are gunning for the top-most executive seat in the nation.

The elections scheduled to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 are for both the presidential and political party organizations.

The Constitution requires that the top three political organizations become the official political parties in the nation for a period of three years.

The currently existing three official political parties thus, KULMIYE, WADDANI and UCID are being challenged by seven other political organizations.

Both elections are to be held simultaneously on the same day.

## International elections observers have jetted into the country

By M.A. Egge

The first lot of international election observers has arrived in the country. Making the revelation was Mr. Tim Cole, Chief of the International Observers upon arrival as he addressed the media.

He noted that he was in a group of five who just landed as they expected 20 more in the week. He said that the twenty short term observers would criss-cross the country as they made their observations.

The group is expected to hold numerous talks with the

stakeholders starting from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) who invited them for the sole purpose of observing the elections, to all other concerned parties, including women groups.

International observers are mostly strictly independent even from their own sponsors and operate alongside an international outlined guideline.

They make their observations during pre-election time, the election itself and post-elections hence report on both preliminary and comprehensive basis.

This is a maiden trip to Somaliland

## Somaliland National Electoral Commission Conducts Training for Regional and District Staff

The National Electoral Commission (NEC) of the Republic of Somaliland has initiated a crucial training program for its regional and district staff on Wednesday. This training, held across various regions of Somaliland, is one of the most significant activities in the election process. The training covers essential topics such as:


1. Election Results Management Procedures
2. Election Complaints Management Procedures
3. Regulations for the Iris Biometrics Voter Verification System (IBVVS)

### Background on IBVVS in Somaliland:

The Republic of Somaliland has been at the forefront of adopting advanced technology to ensure transparent and fair elections. In 2017, Somaliland became the first country to use Iris Recognition Technology in its presidential election. This pioneering step was further enhanced with the

introduction of the Iris Biometrics Voter Verification System (IBVVS), supported by Taiwan. The IBVVS, compatible with Iris Recognition Technology, marks a milestone in global election history.

Taiwan's support for Somaliland's electoral process underscores the shared values of democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. The introduction of IBVVS aims to advance transparency, accountability, fairness, and trust in Somaliland's elections. This collaboration highlights Somaliland's commitment to strengthening its democratic institutions and gaining international recognition.

The current training program is a testament to Somaliland's dedication to maintaining the integrity of its electoral process. In this training, the NEC aims to ensure that the upcoming elections will be conducted smoothly and efficiently. 



## INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVATION 2024 Somaliland Elections

International observers of Somaliland's presidential and parties elections arrive in Hargeisa

28 October 2024

Ahead of Somaliland's presidential and parties elections due on 13 November 2024, the first members of a team of international election observers have arrived in Hargeisa. The international election observation mission (IEOM) has been invited by Somaliland's National Electoral Commission (NEC). The IEOM will conduct its observation activities in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, emphasising the strict impartiality of the mission.

The IEOM is led by Tim Cole, former UK ambassador and he is accompanied by four election experts composing the Core Team. The first part of the assessment includes assessing the legal and electoral framework, campaign and electoral preparations, including access by political parties to locations for campaigning, the equality of access to the media and the participation of various stakeholders in the electoral process. Once short-term observers arrive, the mission will then move on to observing polling day itself, including counting and tallying of ballots, through to declaration of results.

The short-term observers will assemble on 9 November 2024, departing Somaliland 16 November. The Core Team will remain to observe the post-elections period. The IEOM will publish its final report in the first half of 2025.

Says Tim Cole, chief observer on the IEOM:

"This mission is truly international in its scope, with many members observing in Somaliland for the first time. In a milestone year for elections in Africa and internationally, we hope to be able to observe in Somaliland as fully and widely as possible, and look forward to commencing our mission."

For further information or to arrange an interview with a member of the core team, please contact Conrad Hesse (IEOM media analyst) at [conrad@somaliland2024.com](mailto:conrad@somaliland2024.com).

by Tim Cole. It is his first visit. It is a year that sees international observers most busy and work the widest across the breadth of the earth.

Indeed, 2024 is the year that has

gone into history as one witnessing the most number of elections to be held globally.

Somaliland joins the almost 4.3 billion people going to polls this year in more than 50 states holding their elections.

# Recognition in the Making: Somaliland's Transformation under Muse Bihi

President Muse & Ethiopian PM signed a historic deal on January 1, 2024. The deal, though not ratified, will allow sea access for Ethiopia, and in return, Somaliland is supposed to gain recognition.



Nestled in the Horn of Africa is a country called Somaliland. You might have heard of Somalia, which is shaping itself through a torrid and terrorised journey. However, Somaliland is strategically located, peaceful, constitutionally sovereign, and boasts accolades of democratic success. The country of Somaliland shares its border with Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Somalia. It also has access to the Red Sea, as it shares a parallel sea border with Yemen. It achieved its independence in 1991, and ever since, it has stood as an unrecognised country.

### The History Case:

Somaliland fought a war against the dictatorial regime of Siad Barre of Somalia through a movement known as the Somali National Movement (SNM). Apparently, the incumbent President of Somaliland, Muse Bihi Abdi, played a cardinal role in the success of the movement. His reputation for being uncompromising and committed to Somaliland's independence was rooted in these earlier years with the SNM, where he played a vital role in defending the broader fight for Somaliland's autonomy.

It is a coincidence that political scientist Samuel P. Huntington wrote "The Journal of Democracy" in 1991, the same year Somaliland gained its independence. It is praiseworthy to note that the Cold War ended in the same year, and it is also the year when Johnny Carson retired from "The Tonight Show". Understanding Somaliland has become more essential than ever as it heads into a crucial election this November, the results of which will shape the path of growth and the future of the Horn of Africa.

### The Democratic Case:

Since independence, Somaliland has experienced one constitutional referendum, three presidential elections, two parliamentary elections, and three municipal elections. It has seen a surge in democratic growth. The leaders chosen through presidential elections are of enigmatic quality and stand as beacons of democratic progress.

Somaliland has had three Presidents who have resuscitated it from the ashes. Like a phoenix rising in pride and glory, the country's democratic aspirations have brought it forward. Democracy is sui generis, and aspirations are key features of Somaliland. Imagine yourself living in a tough neighbourhood with a sense of alienation, and yet you survive, prosper, and spread peace. With little support and minimal foreign aid, the country has seen a phenomenal rise, not only economically but also as a credible regional power.

### The International Relations Case:

A careful investigation reveals that Somaliland's neighbouring countries are experiencing deep humanitarian crises. In Somalia, countless bombings under Al-Shabab have shaken the conscience of global leaders and caused thousands of deaths. South Sudan is split between two warring regimes, and the constant war over the Darfur region has brought confrontation back to the area. Ethiopia and Eritrea's standoff has caused countless deaths. The Houthi rebellion in Yemen has shattered the dreams of the Arab Spring. Post-Husni Mubarak regime, Egypt faces its own challenges, with the GERD dam standing as a point of contention between Egypt and Ethiopia. Amidst such heightened tensions and solemn concerns, Somaliland faces its own challenge of recognition but remains defiant, with able leadership and a legitimate democracy.

### The MoU Case:

The recent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Somaliland and Ethiopia has been a point of contention. President Muse Bihi Abdi of Somaliland and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed signed a historic deal on January 1, 2024. The deal, though not ratified, will allow sea access for Ethiopia, and in return, Somaliland is supposed to gain recognition from Ethiopia, marking a bold step towards

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# Somaliland elections: what's at stake for independence, stability and shifting power dynamics in the Horn of Africa



Somaliland is due to hold a presidential election on 13 November 2024.

The results of the election will be important for two main reasons. First, what the leadership outcome will mean for Somaliland's democratic credentials. Second, it will have implications for Somaliland's push for recognition as an independent state.

Thirty-three years ago, Somaliland declared its unilateral withdrawal from the Somali Union. It is an independent state in reality but unrecognised in law. Like other unrecognised states such as Taiwan, it doesn't fly a flag at the United Nations in New York. It also suffers from a lack of access to global financing, and humanitarian and development aid, most of which must come via Mogadishu.

Somaliland's determination to achieve recognition was evident in January 2024 when it signed an agreement with neighbouring Ethiopia. Under this deal, Ethiopia would get access to the sea via a 19km strip of coastline, possibly near the port of Berbera (though three sites have been identified), and Addis Ababa would recognise Somaliland's statehood. The agreement, which has yet to be ratified, was met with a storm of protests, including from Somalia. Not about breaking news. Not about unfounded opinions.

Somaliland is run by the ruling party, Kulmiye, which is led by Muse Bihi Abdi, Somaliland's president since 2017. The party has been in power since 2010. The main opposition party is Waddani (also spelled Wadani), led by Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi (or Ciro/Iro). I have carried out a decade of research and fieldwork in Somaliland. In my view, this election carries weight in terms of Somaliland's democratic health, as well as its prospects for peace and stability – within its borders and in the region.

Somaliland's democracy, like all democracies, relies on giving politicians and parties the chance to win elections. It is the voters who will decide who gets to run Somaliland next, and they face a clear choice between Kulmiye and Waddani.

Political landscape  
Somaliland's 2024 presidential

election will be a test of its democratic institutions and a critical moment in its quest for independence.

Kulmiye can point to milestones on the road to Somaliland's recognition. It was in power when Somaliland and Taiwan (Republic of China) recognised one another and swapped diplomats.

The party can also claim success for a strategy to get support from western states for Somaliland's formal recognition. This includes the staffing and funding of Somaliland's overseas missions in London, Washington DC and Dubai, among others. These act as non-accredited embassies for the country.

Their work resulted in a non-official visit to Washington, DC by Bihi in 2022. The same year, a UK parliamentary delegation visited Hargeisa.

Somaliland and Ethiopia also reached their agreement in January 2024. This is the closest Somaliland has come to gaining official recognition from another state.

Like the ruling party, the opposition party Waddani fully supports the agreement with Ethiopia. It sees recognition from Somaliland's huge neighbour – which also happens to host the headquarters of the African Union – as a first step to gaining official recognition.

However, based on my recent interviews with a Waddani official, the party is likely to adopt a broader approach if it wins the upcoming election. Instead of focusing solely on western states like the US and the UK, Waddani plans to approach African and global south states, such as Senegal and Kenya, for support. This potential shift reflects an understanding that both regional and global dynamics are changing. Waddani's broader diplomatic strategy is reinforced by its recent coalition with KAAH (the Somali acronym for Alliance for Equity and Development). KAAH is a young political association rather than a formal political party. Somaliland has a constitutional limit of three official parties.

KAAH was formed, in part, by experienced politicians. In building a coalition, Waddani and KAAH hope to displace Somaliland's current third party, the Justice and Welfare Party.

KAAH's support is partially based in Somaliland's eastern region, which has experienced violent upheavals in recent years. This coalition promises to better incorporate the eastern regions and clans into the government should Waddani win.

Regardless of the outcome of the election, one issue unites Somaliland's political parties: the push for independence.

### Regional implications

A peaceful election would reinforce Somaliland's claim as a stable, democratic entity.

Mogadishu should not expect any winds of change to blow from Hargeisa if Waddani wins. Three generations and counting have been raised in a de-facto independent Somaliland and they remember the violent dissolution from the Somali Union. This included the bombing of Hargeisa, the destruction of Berbera port and the displacement of thousands of people. Somalilanders largely support independence.

Neither Waddani nor Kulmiye will be wishy-washy on this issue. And there will be forward movement on the Ethiopia-Somaliland agreement. This is likely to lead to increased tensions in the Horn region. As it is, Ethiopia and Somaliland are disturbed by the prospect of a resurgent Somalia supported by Egypt with arms and troops.

There won't be a shooting war – Mogadishu still has far too many problems with al-Shabaab, clan infighting and a lack of resources and training. But history shows that states take extreme measures if they feel existentially threatened.

Mogadishu's stance is to retake Somaliland at all costs. And it has much of the world's tacit support for its "one Somalia" policy. That makes Somaliland a textbook case of an existentially threatened state.

### Risks that lie ahead

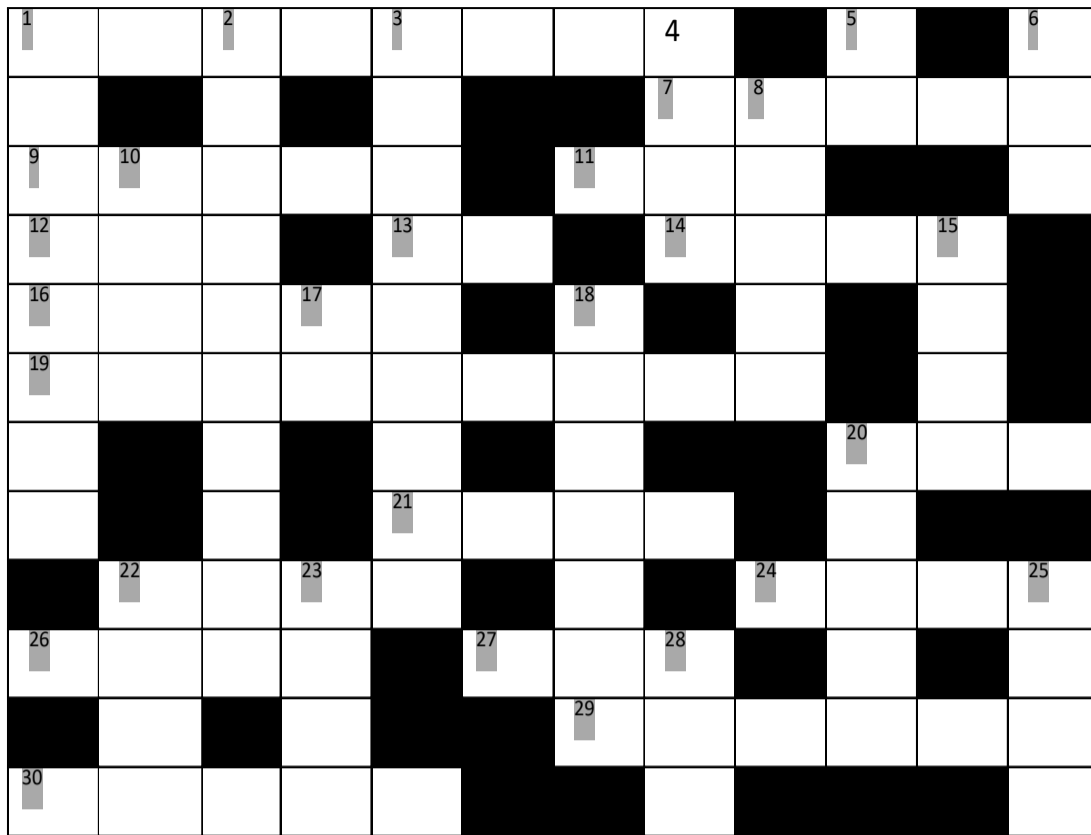
There are some risks of instability regardless of who wins the election. The Isaaq clan controls much of the political and economic landscape. This may intensify tensions, especially if minority clans feel sidelined. Waddani's promise of inclusivity may appeal to marginalised groups, but clan-based grievances have grown over the past decade.

There's also the risk of unrest among Isaaq loyalists if power shifts too much. And allegations of electoral fraud or voter suppression could fuel protests.

After 2022's violent postponement due to election disputes, maintaining peace will require transparency, clan reconciliation and careful oversight to prevent renewed conflict.

Despite these risks, Somaliland is again (better late than never) going to the polls. Regardless of who wins, this is good news for Somaliland and its ongoing push for independence recognition.

# THT Puzzle



**ACROSS**

- 1 State
- 7 Big
- 9 Sprit
- 11 math in counting
- 12 Opposite of IN
- 13 Toward
- 14 name
- 16 Urea
- 19 Video recording
- 20 Usage
- 21 Land-living
- 22 Numerous
- 24 Clean
- 26 Unquestionable
- 27 sick
- 29 Closed
- 30 event

**DOWN**

- 1 Source
- 2 Specific
- 3 Butterfly (beautiful insect)
- 4 In-group/ Tribe
- 5 Or else
- 6 Remaining
- 10 Uncontaminated
- 15 Newscast
- 17 Not at all
- 18 Indicators
- 20 Common
- 22 Necessity
- 23 Nearby
- 25 Finishes

## Previous Answer

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

## Recognition in the Making: Somaliland's Transformation under Muse Bihi

international recognition. The sea access is to be through the port of Berbera, which is strategically located in the Gulf of Aden. This MoU has created tensions and ambiguity within Somalia and Djibouti in relation to Ethiopia and Somaliland. Somalia still considers Somaliland as a part of its territorial region and views the sea access to Ethiopia as a threat to its territorial sovereignty. Djibouti, which relies on Ethiopian trade passing through its ports, also sees the deal as a challenge. Somaliland, however, has faced these challenges confidently and refuses to step back. President Muse Bihi Abdi has also faced opposition from Turkey and Egypt. These two countries, with reasonable diplomatic connections to Somalia, are ensuring that the deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland is put on hold indefinitely. Despite serious opposition from neighbouring countries, President Muse Bihi, who leads an unrecognised country, has withstood the test of time and big powers. This highlights the legitimacy and trust the leader holds, as well as the enormous support from his own citizens. Muse Bihi Abdi's resolve is crystal clear as he embarks on this election: recognition for Somaliland in exchange for the MoU with Ethiopia.

The Commitment Case: One might ask, from where does this enigma of unrecognised power arise? The answer lies in the history of Muse Bihi Abdi and his contribution to the Somali National Movement (SNM), which ensured Somaliland's independence from Somalia in 1991. Muse Bihi's legacy in the SNM was shaped by his steadfast leadership against the Siad Barre regime. His background as a former military officer gave him the tactical expertise needed to contribute effectively to the SNM's guerrilla activities, which were critical in liberating Somaliland. The SNM's decentralised military structure, supported by local clan-based forces, contributed to its success. Despite limited resources and international support, the SNM maintained its effectiveness through deep connections with the Issaq clan, from which Bihi hails. The unwavering grit, undeterred commitment, resolute conscience, sustained efforts, and ruthless patriotism helped Muse Bihi give everything to the SNM. The values of the past help him face today's adversaries. His association with the SNM's military efforts shaped his later political career, particularly when he became President of Somaliland in 2017. His victory in the 2017 election was astounding, with over 55% of the vote cast for Muse Bihi Abdi. However, the electoral challenges

in 2024 will undoubtedly be much more competitive. With opposition parties gaining ground by citing 'change', the election is heading towards a tough contest. Nevertheless, his efforts to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somaliland deserve appreciation and have attracted significant attention from foreign media.

The Development Case: Moving forward, Somaliland's regional development has also reached its pinnacle. With no extensive trade pacts, relying entirely on its own natural resources, not depending on any funds from international banks, and with a true call for development, Somaliland has charted its own destiny. Since 2017, under President Muse Bihi Abdi's leadership, Somaliland has made remarkable progress, transforming its economic and social landscape. The modernisation of Berbera Port, a critical hub for regional trade, is a key achievement, positioning Somaliland as a competitive player in the Horn of Africa. Additionally, the healthcare sector has seen a significant boost, with a 168% increase in the healthcare budget, leading to improved services, including widespread vaccinations and expanded medical facilities. Employment initiatives have reduced unemployment and increased labour force participation. Education reforms under Vision 2030 have prioritised technological integration and vocational training, empowering youth with essential skills. Somaliland's water security has been enhanced by projects like the Hargeisa Urban Water Supply Upgrading Project, ensuring clean water access for thousands of households. These milestones, alongside improvements in infrastructure and governance, underscore the administration's commitment to elevating Somaliland on the regional stage. Despite challenges with international recognition, the nation's progress signals a bright future.

The Recognition Case: The process Somaliland must go through to achieve recognition at the United Nations is itself a challenge. After submitting an application for recognition, the UN Security Council (UNSC) must recommend admission by a vote of at least 9 of its 15 members, with none of the five permanent members using their veto power. A bigger challenge is that Somalia is set to be one of the non-permanent members of the Security Council. Furthermore, the General Assembly (UNGA) must consider

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# Electoral Ethics Committee Continue its Disciplinary Measures

By M.A. Egge

The Ethics, Arbitration and Supervision Committee of the Electoral Commission continue their disciplinary measures as it has once again meted its punishment for erring political parties, public and party officials who have been flouting the laid down regulations and indulging in acts contrary to the code of conduct for organizations and parties as per cue.

The latest hammer comes down on the Presidency Director General Mr. Mohamed Abdi Bile who have been found guilty of blocking other political parties and organizations from accessing the public City Square and ironically allowed only the ruling party KULMIYE to conduct its campaigns.

This goes against the Presidential Decree that directed the state to avail all public gathering spots such as the arenas, gardens, squares etc to be available for the competing parties in the elections.

The committee thus fined the DG 20m SL/ShS for the misdemeanour on Tuesday.

They also fourthwith suspended

the ruling KULMIYE party and the main opposition one, WADDANI, from conducting campaigns during the nights.

This comes after the Sunday ruling by the committee that KULMIYE, WADDANI and KAAH were fined 100m, 50m and 50m respectively for various reasons. So, too, were the Minister of Youth and Sports Abdirisaaq Farah Muse, Sec General of Kulmiye Party Faisal Abdirahman Madar, Chairman Kulmiye party campaign committee in Maaroodi Jeeh region Mustafe Kodah and Mohamed Abib Ismaan Siikawi who is a member of the Hargeisa local council.

While 10m SL/ShS was imposed on the minister, the rest of the KULMIYE officials were fined 5m SL/ShS each.

The Disciplinary Committee at the same warned once again that political parties and organizations should desist from holding campaigns in El-Afweyn; following a decision they had reached on earlier in the campaigns as they totally suspended political activities in the area in the initial ruling.



## SOLJA conducts Election handling courses for 40



## Recognition in the Making: Somaliland's Transformation under Muse Bihi

the recommendation and vote on admission by a two-thirds majority of the entire UNGA.

If recognised through the MoU with Ethiopia, Somaliland could defend its legitimacy before the African Union and the United Nations. The Montevideo Convention outlines four key criteria for statehood: a permanent population, a defined territory, an effective government, and the ability to engage in foreign relations. By all these measures, Somaliland qualifies as a state. Somaliland meets all the necessary criteria and is one step away from defending its recognition case with the African Union and the UN.

Although recognition is a central issue in the upcoming election, considering the daunting task ahead, a strong mandate is necessary to achieve recognition beyond regional tensions. The achievements of the Muse Bihi government provide the solid foundation needed for his re-election.

The Challenges Case:

With hostile neighbours, overpowering international powers,

a churning economy sustained by remittances, refugee crises, armed conflicts at the borders, secessionist tendencies within the territory, and a deeply entrenched clan system, Somaliland faces several challenges. The powers within the Presidential Office have sustained democracy, economy, security, international relations, and intra-clan peace for all these crucial years. The last bomb blast in Somaliland occurred in 2008, in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. Meanwhile, Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, faces bombings and threats on a weekly basis. The sustained peace in Somaliland is due to the credibility and legitimacy that the leadership holds.

The Future Case:

President Muse Bihi's party manifesto promises six pillars of reform, encompassing a wide range of initiatives. However, the outcome of the upcoming election will be crucial for Somaliland's future. The sustained development of Berbera Port must remain a key focus, as it is the centerpiece of Somaliland's pride. Improving relations with major

powers and continuing the fight for recognition must be constant goals. A case for recognition at the International Court of Justice post-MoU could even help resolve many of the regional conflicts in the Horn of Africa. These relentless efforts require conscious and capable leadership. With President Muse Bihi and his commitment to democracy, all the unrealised dreams will become a reality.

The re-election of President Muse Bihi Abdi is crucial for maintaining Somaliland's trajectory of stability, economic progress, and its quest for international recognition. Under his leadership, Somaliland has seen remarkable achievements in governance, infrastructure, and democratic consolidation, making him a trusted figure in navigating the region's complex geopolitical landscape. Amidst a volatile region with humanitarian crises in neighbouring states, Somaliland remains a peaceful and democratic entity, a testament to Bihi's leadership. His re-election would ensure continuity in Somaliland's progress towards recognition, allowing him to complete the critical diplomatic efforts he has initiated.

By M.A. Egge

The Somaliland Journalists Association, SOLJA, in collaboration with the National Electoral Commission and the Ministry of Information, Culture and National Guidance Mr. Mustafa Abdi Issa, launched a crash proficiency training programme whose session is intended to equip 40 journalists, drawn from both the public and private media, with cautionary skills of reporting on elections and associated political matters.

The purpose of the training is basically concerned with media conduct in handling political sensitive issues that pertains to elections campaigns hence is geared towards maintaining sobriety and sanity and not report on anything politicians bicker about that could potentially be explosive.

The training was opened by the Director General of the Ministry of Information, Culture and National Guidance Mr. Mustafa Abdi Issa.

He advised the participants to absorb the lessons and put them into good and applicable use as the nation goes for elections. SOLJA chairman Shafi Mohamed Ibrahim and journalist Sahra Eidle Noor echoed his words and urged the journalists to report on the elections in a fair and balanced way and to totally avoid anything that could cause social conflict.

Solja chair divulged that they intended to train up to 120 scribes while saying that the 40 already undergoing the course was the first batch.