

# The Horn Tribune

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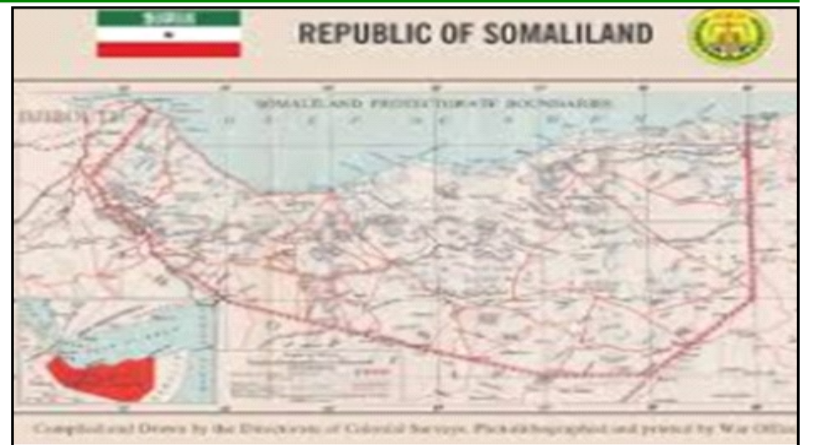
## Somaliland is an important entity entitled to the Red Sea, says the President

*It has jurisdiction over the Gulf of Aden which is the entrance to the Red Sea, he underpins, and has the right of opinion over its security issues*



By M.A. Egge  
The President of the Republic of Somaliland H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro has over the week told and reminded the international community that the Republic of Somaliland is one of the most important entities who are entitled to the Red Sea, and has to be consulted on related issues

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### President names task force committee for the reformation and modernization of respective security arms of the country



By M.A. Egge  
The President of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro who has time and again underscored his steadfastness in reforming and modernizing all arms of the security

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### Somaliland-Taiwan-United States: the opportunities and challenges ahead



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### Somaliland Expresses Hope for US to Work with It on Democracy and Economy



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### President Signed the 2025 budget after the House of Representatives approves



By M.A. Egge  
The President H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi (Irro) signed 2025 budget after the House of Representatives of the Republic of Somaliland has approved by a majority vote. The approval of the Budget was

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### Africa is expected to play a significant role in Somaliland's pursuit for recognition



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### Opinion: Somaliland's oil find could reset the regional balance – here's how



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### President Irro's Diplomatic Breakthrough: Somaliland's Bold Path to International Recognition



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### Central Bank intent on local currency stabilization



By M.A. Egge  
The new Governor of the Central Bank of the Republic of Somaliland, Mr. Abdinasir Ahmed Hirsi, said that the first step they are taking is to stabilize the Somaliland Shilling, which has experienced a significant decline in recent years.

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### Information DG inspects the headquarters of Dawan Newspapers



The Director General of the Ministry of Information, Culture and National Guidance, Mr. Abdisalan Mahmoud Duale (Ilka'ase), on Saturday toured the Dawan Newspapers Group

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Driven to succeed: Disabled young Somaliland woman shows the community her potential

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## Somaliland is an important entity entitled to the Red Sea, says the President



security, communication and combating crime, and cooperating with the world is imperative". He said that the nation would further strengthen the prowess of the Somaliland Coast Guard, so that they can play a significant role in regional and international efforts to ensure security in the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea." The Head of State indicated that as a government, Somaliland welcomed the ceasefire agreement in Gaza, which he observed that it would be a respite for the Red Sea tensions that has adversely affected imports.

The sentiments above were expressed by the President in a speech he gave the Somaliland Coastguards at their headquarters on Tuesday. He praised the Somaliland Coast Guard for their selfless service to their nation, and indicated that as a government, they are committed to their development and improvement. He said, "I acknowledge the selfless work you have done for the nation, as a government we are committed to improving your training, knowledge and equipment as much as possible."

concerning its regional security matters. He underscored the fact that the Somaliland government has the right to express its opinion at the table on any discussions concerning the Red Sea security issues. He stated, "To the Red Sea countries, the warmongering states and the world powers that are interested, we remind you that Somaliland is one of the most important entities who are entitled the Red Sea". He added, "It has jurisdiction over the Gulf of Aden, which is the

entrance to the Red Sea, hence the lack of recognition of Somaliland as an entity concerned in the security issues thereof would be in futility". The President said that Somaliland is a responsible government and is ready to play its role in enhancing security in the Red Sea. He said, "We are a responsible government that is ready to play its role and work with other stakeholders to enhance security in the Red Sea". He further said, "Today, the world is interconnected, and the seas are interconnected too, so ensuring the security of the sea, strengthening its

### President names task force committee for the reformation and modernization of respective security arms of the country



personnel in the country has named a high-profile task force to address the matter. According to a Presidential Decree released on Saturday dated 25th January 2025 Ref. No. XM/G/083-049/012025, the Head of State formed the Committee for the Reform and Modernization of Various Forces and named an 8-man team that is led by the defence minister hence comprising of 6 cabinet ministers and 2 presidential advisors. The directive read as follows: - To: All the Officials mentioned below Note: All Commanders of the Various Somaliland Forces Ref: Appointment of Committee for the Reformation and Modernization of Various Security Arms of the nation As you are aware, the Government

of the Republic of Somaliland is engaged in the reform, acceleration, modernization and development of the activities of the various Armed Forces of the Republic of Somaliland. Therefore, starting from today's date, I have appointed you to be the Reform & Modernization Committee of the Various Armed Forces of the Republic of Somaliland. The following are the members of the Reform & Modernization Committee:

1. The Minister of Defence – Chairman
2. The Minister of Interior and Security – Committee/Deputy Chairman.
3. Minister of the Presidency – Secretary
4. Minister of Finance and Economic Development – Member

5. Minister of Justice – Member
6. Minister of Fisheries & Marine Resources – Member
7. National Security Advisor to the President – Member
8. Senior Advisor to the President on Economic Affairs – Member

I therefore expect you to fulfil this important responsibility with great competence and diligence, and to complete this task in a short period of time, using the skills and expertise required for this task. I order the commanders of the various respective armed forces in the country to give this committee full support in carrying out the task I have assigned to them. END. Signed: Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Iirro. President of the Republic of Somaliland.

## Central Bank intent on local currency stabilization



The Governor also noted that they are looking for a lasting solution to the spiraling inflation that has affected various sectors of Somaliland society, adding that they will collaborate with the Ministry of Financial Development and institutions that handle the provision of financial services. The Governor said this over the week while taking over from the former Governor of the Central Bank of Somaliland over the week. He said, "We promise that the first task we will undertake is to stabilize the devaluation of our shilling, and

we will seek a solution, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, and the national financial institutions operating in the country," On the other hand, the governor warned against taking advantage of the poor, and stated that they will take action against anyone who indulges in it. He said, "We will take legal action against anyone who tries to take advantage of the exchange rate and put the poor in trouble, and we will continue the ongoing banking reforms."

## President Signed the 2025 budget after the House of Representatives approves



approved by 44 members and rejected by one member. Earlier last week, the Minister of Finance, Hon Abdilahi, requested that the parliament approve the budget estimate. The Minister of Finance Development of the Republic of Somaliland, Hon. Abdillahi Hassan Adan, presented the 2025 budget proposal to the House of Representatives. The Minister asked the House of Representatives to approve the 2025 budget to pay the salaries of the military and civil servants. He cautioned that if the finance bill is not expedited swiftly, it would hamper the overall functioning of the country and stall state services. The National Budget proposal consists of a total of almost four trillion, precisely 3,894,462,279,363 SL Shs. He said, "We are strengthening

revenue-generating institutions, and we will seek new sources of revenue, and to expand the tax revenue base in the eastern parts of the country". He urged them, "I request you to approve the budget for 2025 as there are many outstanding needs such as the payment of salaries of the security forces, employees, councils and various expenses of government institutions, which we ought to pay on by 25th of this month". The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Yasin Haji Mohamud Hiir Fartoon, informed the members that the budget estimate would be transferred to the Economic, Finance and Trade Committee of the House of Representatives, adding that time is short and it was necessary for the House to fulfill its constitutional duty as soon as possible.

# President Irro's Diplomatic Breakthrough: Somaliland's Bold Path to International Recognition

By Prof. Nassir Hussein Kahin, Hargeisa, Somaliland.

In a landslide election that marked a historic moment for Somaliland, Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi "Irro" rose to power as the country's new President, promising to deliver the recognition efforts with due credit championed by his predecessor, former President Muse Bihi Abdi, that Somaliland has sought since its secession from Somalia in 1991. Bolstered by widespread support at home and a carefully curated diplomatic team led by his newly appointed Foreign Affairs Minister, Abdirahman Dahir Aden, President Irro is setting Somaliland on a bold and decisive path toward international legitimacy.

Faced with complex geopolitical rivalries and regional challenges, Irro's administration has approached the question of recognition with unprecedented vigor, implementing a multifaceted strategy designed to secure Somaliland's place on the global stage.

A Unified Leadership for Somaliland's Aspirations President Irro, a seasoned statesman and a unifying figure for Somalilanders, has wasted no time in recalibrating the nation's foreign policy. His administration's approach is marked by pragmatism and bold initiatives, underscored by his Foreign Affairs Minister and the appointments of seasoned diplomats with deep ties across Africa, the Gulf, and the West. In his inaugural speech, Irro pledged to "leave no stone unturned" in securing recognition, emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation, global alliances, and demonstrating Somaliland's undeniable value as a stabilizing force in the Horn of Africa.

At the same time, Irro has prioritized peace and development in the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaag, which have long been a focal point of Mogadishu's destabilizing strategies supported by China and Egypt to undermine Somaliland's sovereignty. As part of his campaign pledge, Irro has appointed top peace envoys to mediate with local clans, promote reconciliation, and deliver government services to these regions. His administration has also appointed federal ministers



representing the eastern regions of Somaliland to ensure that Sool and Sanaag are fully integrated into Somaliland's governance, laying the groundwork for lasting peace and prosperity.

"We are a nation that has proved itself—through peace, democracy, and governance. Now is the time for the world to recognize Somaliland for what it is: a sovereign state contributing to regional and global stability," President Irro declared.

Reinforcing the Somaliland-Ethiopia Strategic Alliance Central to President Irro's strategy is the MoU signed with Ethiopia in 2024, granting Addis Ababa long-term access to the Berbera Port for military and commercial use. Recognizing Ethiopia's growing reliance on Somaliland as a vital trade route, Irro has worked to deepen this alliance.

His administration is finalizing key infrastructure projects, such as the Berbera Corridor, while ensuring Ethiopia remains fully invested in Somaliland's stability. Irro has also positioned Somaliland as a neutral mediator in the Ethiopia-Egypt GERD dispute, preventing tensions from spilling over into the Somaliland-Ethiopia partnership.

By demonstrating to Addis Ababa that Somaliland is its most stable and reliable maritime partner, President Irro has ensured that Ethiopia's support for Somaliland's sovereignty becomes an indispensable part of Addis Ababa's long-term geopolitical strategy.

Somalia's recent collaboration with Ethiopia to secure Red Sea access has presented a direct challenge to Somaliland's control

of its coastline. President Irro's response has been firm and strategic.

Under his leadership, Somaliland is strengthening its maritime security infrastructure, working with global partners such as the U.S., NATO, and regional allies like the U.A.E., to ensure that its waters remain secure and its sovereignty respected. His administration has also launched a robust diplomatic campaign to highlight Somalia's internal instability and demonstrate why Somaliland is the region's most reliable partner for trade and governance.

On the domestic front, Irro has worked tirelessly to counter Mogadishu's influence in Sool and Sanaag. His peace envoys have focused on grassroots reconciliation efforts, building trust with local communities, and addressing grievances that have been exploited by the Mogadishu regime. This approach is designed not only to strengthen Somaliland's internal cohesion but also to present a united front to the international community.

"We are the gateway to stability in the Horn of Africa," the Foreign Affairs Minister recently stated. "Somalia's chaotic ambitions cannot undermine the stability and progress that Somaliland represents."

Navigating the Ankara Agreement and Regional Rivalries

The Ankara Agreement between Turkey, Ethiopia, and Somalia presented Somaliland with a significant challenge, given Turkey's opposition to Somaliland's independence. President Irro's approach to this alliance has been both measured and innovative.

Irro has sought to compartmentalize Ethiopia's relationship with Turkey and Somalia, ensuring that Ethiopia's deepening ties with Ankara do not jeopardize its reliance on Somaliland. Meanwhile, the administration has opened discreet channels with Turkey, inviting Turkish businesses to invest in neutral sectors such as energy and agriculture, signaling Somaliland's openness to economic collaboration despite political disagreements. Similarly, President Irro has made diplomatic overtures to Egypt, offering trade privileges at Berbera Port to offset Cairo's concerns about Somaliland's partnership with Ethiopia. By balancing these rivalries, Irro is proving that Somaliland can be a pragmatic and constructive player in regional politics.

Defying Chinese Pressure Through Stronger Ties with Taiwan

China's opposition to Somaliland's strong relationship with Taiwan remains a significant obstacle. However, President Irro has doubled down on his country's commitment to Taiwan, framing the partnership as a shared commitment to democracy and mutual economic benefit.

Under Irro's leadership, Somaliland has broadened its alliances to counterbalance Chinese pressure. The administration has deepened ties with the U.S., EU, Japan, and India, presenting Somaliland as a reliable democratic ally in the Horn of Africa.

Winning Hearts in the International Community Perhaps the most transformative

aspect of President Irro's strategy is his administration's proactive international outreach. In recent months, Somaliland has hosted high-level delegations from the U.S. Congress, the European Parliament, and various African nations. The administration has also ramped up efforts to engage the Somaliland diaspora in lobbying Western governments to support recognition.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry has prioritized showcasing Somaliland's democratic success story, its respect for human rights, and its role as a regional stabilizer. By presenting Somaliland as a beacon of democracy and a bulwark against extremism in the Horn of Africa, President Irro is reshaping how the world views the unrecognized state.

A Future of Recognition on the Horizon

Under President Irro's leadership, Somaliland is closer than ever to achieving its goal of international recognition. His administration's pragmatic and forward-thinking approach to diplomacy has positioned Somaliland as a vital partner in one of the world's most strategically significant regions. And now, a new and historic opportunity has emerged. The United States has signaled its acknowledgment of Somaliland's democracy, stability, and strategic importance by announcing plans to establish a diplomatic office in Hargeisa. This landmark decision marks the first concrete step by a major power toward formal recognition. President Irro's administration is already preparing to leverage this development to further Somaliland's case on the international stage. Simultaneously, the President's top peace envoys are working tirelessly to bring peace and prosperity to the eastern regions of Sool and Sanaag, ensuring the unity and strength of Somaliland as a nation.

Though challenges remain—Somalia's opposition, regional rivalries, and global geopolitical pressures—Iirro's administration has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to overcoming them. With U.S. backing and growing support from other nations, Somaliland's long-awaited recognition may finally be within reach.

# Somaliland-Taiwan-United States: the opportunities and challenges ahead

**Michele Maresca**

Somaliland is an un-recognised State which possess the 4 Montevideo criteria for Statehood: a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) a government; and (d) the capacity to enter into agreements with other States.

In essence, the Horn of Africa State possesses both the internal and external independence for Statehood, giving that it exercises its sovereign authority over a specific territory (**internal independence**) in accordance with the powers established in a Constitution which is not dependent on other States' sources of law (**external independence**).

Since the existence of a State is not to be based on a legal recognition from the international community, but rather on the effective capacity to act as a sovereign entity according to the Montevideo criteria for Statehood, we could take into account several evidences of Somaliland's sovereign status. First of all, **many States, including the UK, the US, Djibouti, Kenya and Ethiopia, recognise Somaliland's passports**, thus demonstrating their understanding of the situation on the ground. Even though they are yet to recognise Somaliland as a sovereign State, the very fact of accepting this reality stands as a proof of a non-monolithic policy towards Hargeisa.

Moreover, **several States decided to establish a representative office in Somaliland**, notably the following ones: United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, France, Norway, Belgium, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, South Sudan and Taiwan. In this way, they set the stage for improving and strengthening bilateral yet unofficial ties with Somaliland.

**Somaliland-Taiwan relations: an alliance based on common values and understanding**

A brilliant example of a growing partnership based on common values, understandings and purposes is the one between Somaliland and Taiwan, two countries struggling for recognition in a very complex environment.

Like the African nation, Taiwan also perceives the threat of a neighbouring state, in this case



a modern-day superpower, the People's Republic of China. The stage for a closer relationship was set during Bihi's administration, when the then-President of Somaliland refused China's offer to advance unofficial relations at the expense of Taiwan.

This happened, in 2020, when Somaliland and Taiwan were set to open representative offices in the other's territory. The PRC's reaction, consisting on trying to torpedo the deal by offering economic aid and the opening of a Chinese Mission to Somaliland, was met with a firm stance by Muse Bihi.

The then-President of Somaliland refused to comply with the Chinese government's expectations due to not being treated as an equal. It sparked contrasts with the Taiwanese counterpart' attitude, marked instead by the willingness to engage with Somaliland on equal terms.

In the last 4 years, Somaliland and Taiwan strengthened their relationship through several high-level meetings and bilateral MoUs or agreements.

An area of common interest is given by fisheries, with the two countries having a meeting in 2023 with the aim of exploring the potential for support, knowledge sharing and initiatives designed to maximise the socio-economic benefits of marine resources while maintaining long-term viability.

Recently, Taiwan co-sponsored, covering the 70% of the total cost, the Taiwan Road construction project connecting the Egal International Airport to the capital Hargeisa.

Taipei also pledged \$22 million

for the construction of the "Taiwan Medical Center" inside the main Hargeisa Group Hospital.

As Mr. Ibrahim Dama (the Director of the Research and Market Analysis Department at the Ministry of Investment of Somaliland) told me, this is just *"the beginning of a valuable relationship" that can expand into "other critical sectors, including education, technology and agriculture"*.

Abdullahi Irro, the current Somaliland President, met with Taiwan Deputy Foreign Minister Francois Wu at the sidelines of his presidential inauguration in December. During the meeting, **Irro underscored that "Taiwan is a key partner"** to collaborate with in many fields, including telecom, education and public health.

By pointing out that the ongoing "projects had helped raise the living standards of the people of Somaliland", he gave us the key to understand how the relationship between the two countries may unfold.

Waddani Party, to which Irro does belong to, regards advanced water managements systems, cybersecurity, public health and renewable energy development as some of the most pressing issues to deal with in the next months and years.

Taiwan holds the capacity to strengthen its ties with Somaliland by providing it with the necessary expertise to allow it advancing its interests in many areas.

Amongst them is energy, with Taipei keen on engaging with the Somaliland's energy industry. In this context, there is an important window of opportunity for closer relations in a sensitive topic for

both parties.

Somaliland already signed a mineral resources agreement with Taiwan Energy and Mineral Resources Cooperation Agreement for the exploration and drilling of energy and mineral resources. In 2023, CPC and the United Kingdom-based Genel Energy PLC decided to establish a partnership to explore oil in Somaliland with the former taking a 49-percent working interest in the African country's SL10B/13 oil exploration block.

**The US' strategy in the Horn of Africa amid the competition with China**

Moustafa Ahmad, a researcher who is currently investigating China and Taiwan engagement in the Horn of Africa, stressed the potential role the US could play out within this scenario. He told me that although US interest in Somaliland is primarily security and strategic, nonetheless mineral resources could be explored.

The incoming Trump administration, which is expected to consider recognising Somaliland due to its strong democratic commitments and strategic location in the Gulf of Aden, could in fact place importance to the energy and mineral resources sector.

This is just one of the several areas where the parties can deepen their partnership, since both Somaliland and Taiwan use strategic interests, economic and democratic factors to leverage their relations with Washington, Ahmad said.

An important indication of that is Mohammed Hagi's appointment as "Advisor to the President for Foreign Affairs and International

Cooperation". Hagi, the first Ambassador of the Republic of Somaliland to Taiwan, played a significant role in advancing and strengthening bilateral ties between the countries.

Taiwan quickly congratulated him while underscoring the country's willingness to "continue working together to further solidify Taiwan-Somaliland mutually beneficial causes and cooperation".

When it comes to the US, closer relations between Hargeisa and Taipei fit well into its strategy to compete with China. As Moustafa said, it wouldn't be surprising to hear that promoting ties with Taiwan has been on the agenda of Irro's first meeting with the United States Ambassador to Somalia.

According to Politico, Trump is set to appoint the former "US Special Envoy to the Sahel and Great Lakes regions", Peter Pham, as the top "US State Department official overseeing African affairs". He is a vocal supporter of Somaliland, having repeatedly advocated for its recognition as a stepping stone to enhanced stability in the Horn.

This expected appointment would further signal the United States' willingness to look at Somaliland relations through the lens of mutual benefit. This can lay the foundations for a significant shift from the "One Somalia policy" to a proactive approach towards Somaliland.

Aware of the opportunities and challenges ahead, the United States, Taiwan and Somaliland should act with foresight by focusing on what is needed to counter authoritarian-derived threats through political, economic and security initiatives to carry out in the present and future times.

**About the Author**

**Michael Maresca: Born in 1998, I obtained a Master's Degree in Law at the Federico II University of Naples and a Master's Degree in "Derecho Internacional y Relaciones Exteriores e Internacionales" at the Instituto Europeo Campus Stellae. The idea of telling, informing and investigating international political events is what drives me to dedicate myself with passion and enormous interest to these issues. In addition, I carry out analysis, in Spanish, for the Think Tank Geopol21.**

## Africa is expected to play a significant role in Somaliland's pursuit for recognition



*Sharmake Ali is a seasoned political analyst specializing in East African affairs, with a particular focus on Somaliland. For over a decade, Sharmake has been a tireless activist in the United Kingdom, passionately advocating for Somaliland's international recognition.*

*With a Bachelor's degree in International Relations and a Master's in Public Policy from prestigious British Universities, Sharmake combines academic expertise with practical, on the ground knowledge to provide insightful analysis on the region's geopolitics. Through his contributions to mainstream media, he has worked to educate global audiences on Somaliland's compelling legal, political, and moral case for recognition.*

**The Reporter's Sisay Sahlu spoke to Sharmake Ali for a deeper look at Ethiopia's rekindled diplomatic relations with Somalia and the outlook for Somaliland's aspiration for recognition.**

**How does the Ethiopia-Somaliland agreement align with or contradict Ethiopia's relationship with Somalia? Can we characterize the recent agreement between the two as a diplomatic win for Somalia?**

Ethiopia has maintained a consistent position, affirming that its MoU with Somaliland does not infringe on Somalia's sovereignty or territorial integrity, as Somaliland presents a politically unique and compelling case for recognition based on the borders inherited when it gained independence from the British on June 26, 1960. Therefore, while the agreement between Ethiopia and Somalia is a positive step and may reduce regional tensions by satisfying Somalia's lust for symbolic gestures, it ultimately demonstrates a diplomatic coup for Ethiopia over Somalia.

**How should Somaliland navigate its relationship with Ethiopia in light of its agreements with Somalia?**

Somaliland should continue to

maintain the position held by successive administrations, based on the principle of fostering good neighbourly diplomatic relations to ensure regional stability and promote shared prosperity. However, like any sovereign state, Somaliland will remain committed to prioritizing its own interests, seeking partners ready to support its aspirations and contribute to its development.

**How do you view the recent agreements between Ethiopia and Somalia, and Ethiopia and Somaliland, in terms of regional stability?**

Somaliland and Ethiopia have coexisted for thousands of years, a history that unsurprisingly, has not always been peaceful. However, over the past 34 years, the two nations have forged strong ties, demonstrating a level of diplomatic maturity that recognizes regional security, stability, and prosperity are deeply reliant on these close relations.

**How might this agreement affect Somaliland's aspirations for recognition?**

While Somaliland values its historic ties with Ethiopia and would welcome it as the first country to extend recognition, it remains clear that Somaliland's options for achieving international recognition extend beyond Ethiopia alone, as Somaliland's unique case for recognition is legally sound, morally just, and politically advantageous.

**What challenges might arise from Ethiopia's dual engagements with Somaliland and Somalia?**

Ethiopia maintaining its dual-track policy presents a strategic opportunity to foster regional stability and cooperation, particularly at a time when global powers are preparing to recalibrate their positions. For instance, there is growing anticipation that a Trump administration may abandon the ineffective 'One Somalia' policy, stressing the importance for Ethiopia to maintain its approach.

**Are there opportunities for trilateral cooperation, or will these agreements deepen**

divisions?

There will come a time for the possibility of trilateral cooperation when Somaliland is recognized and Somalia desists from its false claims and irredentist ambitions, however, until that time comes, Somaliland will maintain its resolve, leaving little room for any meaningful trilateral cooperation.

**Rumors say the new President of Somaliland is not interested in the MoU with Ethiopia. Is the MoU between Somaliland and Ethiopia still intact? If not, why? If it is active, what is going on?**

These rumours are incorrect as the President of Somaliland has repeatedly emphasised that a decision will only be made once his administration has had an opportunity to examine the MoU. All the signals from the President and his team demonstrate a commitment to working with Ethiopia to achieve win-win solutions for both nations. Additionally, it is worth noting that the new administration has been in office for just one month, with the transition process still ongoing.

**How do the new President of Somaliland and his officials see the diplomatic relationship with Ethiopia? Have they established contact with Ethiopian officials for a common agenda?**

What is evident is that the President regards Ethiopia as one of Somaliland's closest allies and his administration is committed to deepening bilateral relations between the two states. His administration will seek to strengthen these ties with the hope and expectation of achieving formal recognition in the near future. The President and his team have been working closely with Ethiopian officials, both in the lead-up to taking office and in the month since.

**What are the Somaliland government's plans for achieving international recognition?**

The new administration is yet to unveil a clear plan for achieving international recognition, as stated by the Foreign Minister in his confirmation speech to Parliament. However, it is reasonable to anticipate a strategy that leverages Somaliland's strong legal case, strategic geographic position, commitment to democratic values and abundant natural resources to push its case globally. Africa is expected to play a significant role in this administration's pursuit for recognition, with early signs suggesting a focus on building new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships across the continent. Given the President's background as a career diplomat, I anticipate a strong and well-coordinated diplomatic core acting as the engine for this effort.

## Driven to succeed: Disabled young Somaliland woman shows the community her potential



Yasmin Ibrahim Ali, 27, is celebrating financial independence after topping her college class – despite having had only two years of formal education – and getting a job in the same college in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

All that – and she is disabled due to a bout of childhood polio that left her without use of her legs.

Yasmin came first among 1,200 studying courses in information technology and languages in 2023-24 at Iqra Institute in Hargeisa. This impressive achievement led to her being offered the job of head of student admissions at the institute.

Yasmin explained that the job had brought significant positive changes to her life, allowing her to support her elderly mother on her \$130 monthly salary.

“As a young woman with disability, working has been empowering. I no longer have to ask for help, I can manage things by myself. It has also allowed me to integrate more fully into society, collaborate with others, and improve my work capacity,” she told Radio Ergo.

Yasmin has been determined to break negative stereotypes about people with disabilities. She is a strong advocate for their potential and has launched a campaign encouraging others to pursue careers and education.

Her ambitions go beyond her current role and this year she plans to continue her education studying IT to university level. She aims to develop her skills further and to become a businesswoman, showing her community what she and others like her can achieve.

“There is no one with a disability who has been recognised as a businesswoman or as part of the business sector. I want to be the first to break that barrier,” she shared.

Her journey has been fraught with obstacles and remains so. She uses a wheelchair but as most buildings lack disabled access or lifts, she has to climb up the stairs dragging herself up with her hands. Mobility during the rainy season when everywhere becomes muddy is even more difficult.

She bought her wheelchair for \$1,500 on credit and has been able to pay off \$500.

At the age of three, Yasmin fell seriously ill. Living in remote rural Sabawanag, her family sought treatment from local healers that provided no relief. Medical doctors later confirmed the condition was polio and had progressed beyond the point of effective treatment.

Growing up in a nomadic family, she did not go to school. However, in 2005 her family moved to Hargeisa to live with other relatives, giving Yasmin the opportunity to access better resources. She began pursuing education independently at home. The first time she ever attended a formal educational centre was when she enrolled at Iqra Institute in 2023.

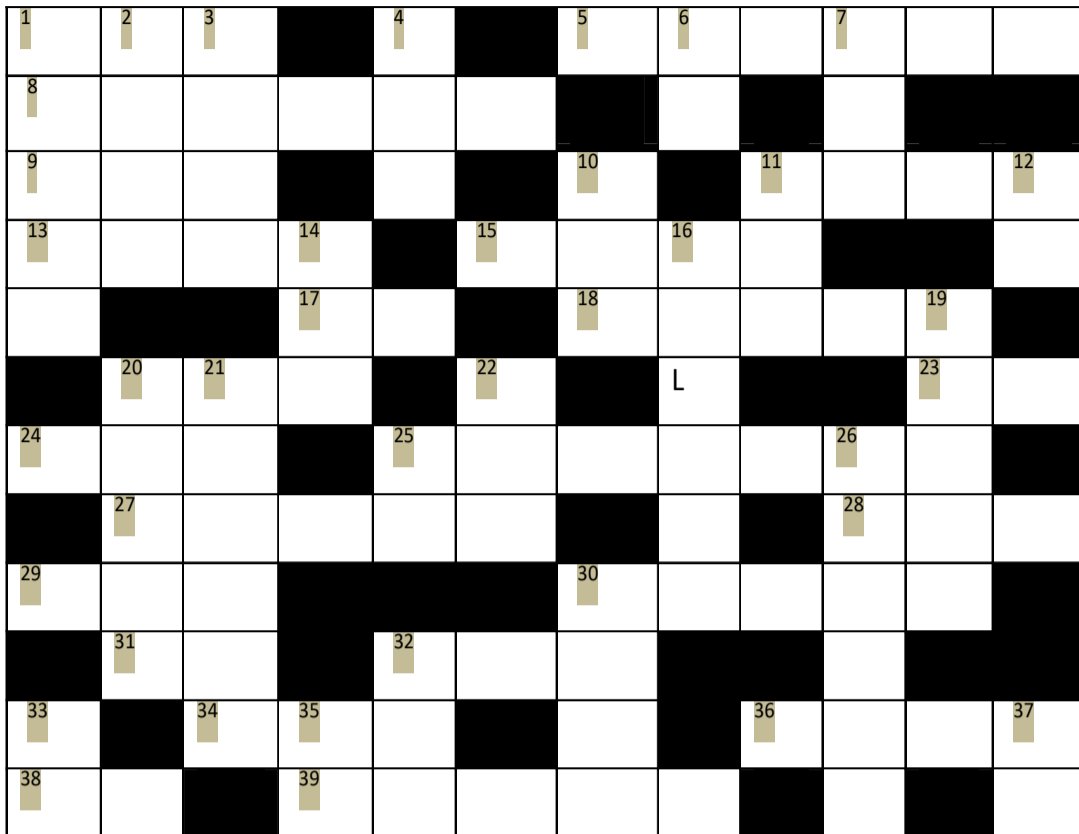
Looking to the future, Yasmin says she plans to expand her educational and professional horizons. Her goals include not only furthering her own education, but also helping others with disability to gain access to similar opportunities.

She dreams of seeing more job opportunities and workspaces created specifically for people with disabilities, run by and for them.

Yasmin is currently writing a book about her life, struggles, and triumphs that she hopes to publish soon to inspire others and raise awareness about the potential of individuals with disabilities.

# THT Puzzle

By: Abdilahi Said



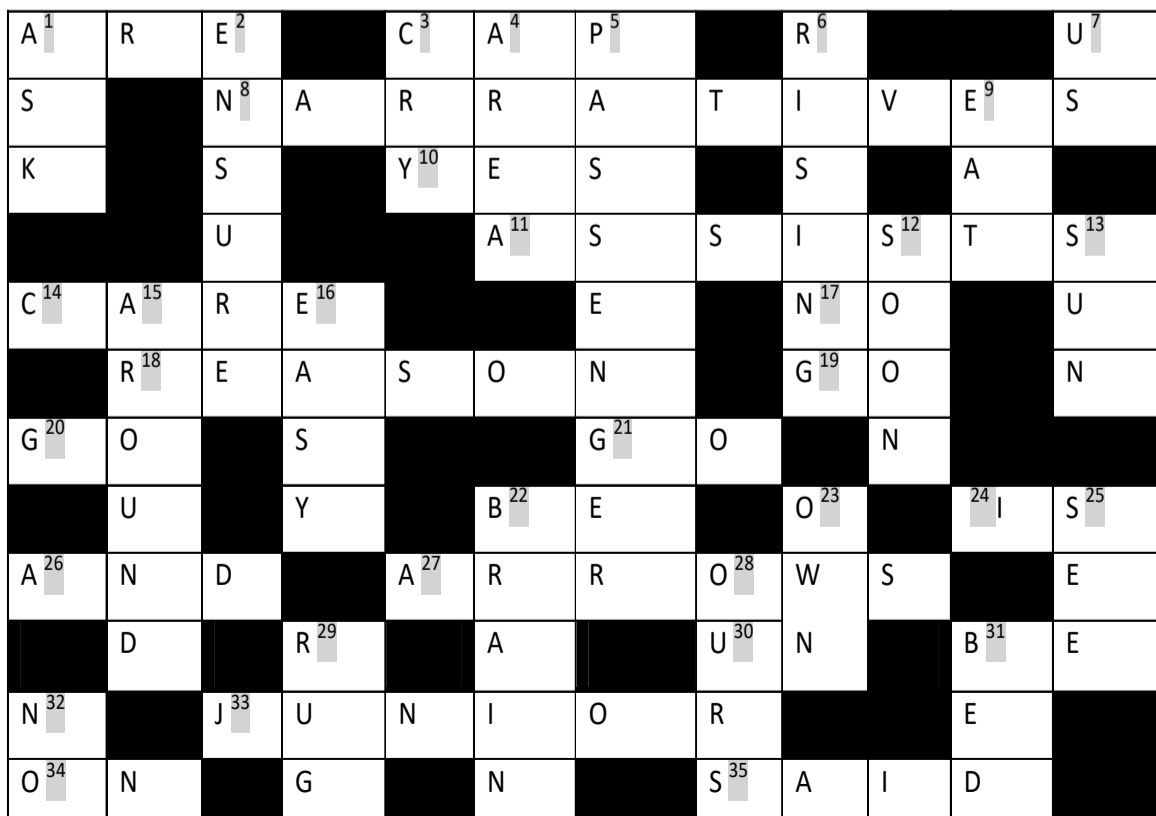
**DOWN**

- 1 a system of words, letters
- 2 spoken
- 3 Techniques
- 4 Egg on
- 5 Myself
- 7 Utilize
- 10 wetness
- 11 ocean
- 12 Toward
- 14 endings
- 16 load again
- 19 edges
- 20 Audial
- 21 Beverage
- 22 Take flight
- 25 On
- 26 Allow
- 30 Proposal
- 32 Single
- 33 Travel

**ACROSS**

- 1 Bully
- 5 Quantity
- 8 Orangish
- 9 Day time
- 11 Chair
- 13 Moreover
- 15 Now
- 17 Negative
- 18 Crying
- 20 Add together
- 23 ID card
- 24 Ourselves
- 25 Authorized
- 27 Filthy
- 28 Grid
- 29 Stick pin
- 30 Brainstorms
- 31 Okay
- 32 Older
- 34 Sunlight
- 36 Reduce speed
- 38 Atop
- 39 Corrective

## Previous Answer



### Information DG inspects the headquarters of Dawan Newspapers



(DMG) premises for an inspection tour. The Director General, who was accompanied by the Director of the Human Resources Department, Jama Awil Nuuh, was welcomed by the Chairman of Dawan, Mohamed Ahmed Jama, and other officials

and employees of DMG. He visited and personally inspected the various departments of the newspaper. The Director General then held a welcoming and introductory meeting with the heads of Dawan Newspapers Group and the heads of departments.

### Somaliland Expresses Hope for US to Work with It on Democracy and Economy



By M.A. Egge  
The President of the Republic of Somaliland, His Excellency Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro has expressed hope that the new president sworn in to lead the United States, Donald Trump, would work with Somaliland on issues that are of priority to the sovereignty of the nation. He also said that he expects the new US President to align the cooperation and interests shared by the Republic of Somaliland and the US government, which prioritize peace and the development of democracy. The Head of State said this in his congratulatory message to the

new US President Donald Trump. On the other hand, he noted that he would strengthen the traditional relations between the two countries. He wished that his American counterpart would lead his country to prosperity during his term in office. Meanwhile, the United States is making efforts to have Washington open a diplomatic office in the capital of the Republic of Somaliland, Hargeisa. On the 15th of this month, the Senate and Congressional committees requested the US government to open a diplomatic office in Somaliland.

## Opinion: Somaliland's oil find could reset the regional balance – here's how

Professor Michael Walls (UCL Development Planning Unit) explores in *The Conversation* what the recent oil discovery in Somaliland will mean for its claims of independence from Somalia, and the economic and political implications it has for the region as a whole.

The presence of oil in Somaliland has been confirmed by a recent exploration. The discovery has raised the stakes in Somaliland's claim for independence from Somalia as it holds the potential for a new stream of revenue for the semi-autonomous state. But the oil exploration is deepening the rift with Somalia, which claims sovereignty over the region. Michael Walls answers five key questions.

What is Somaliland's hydrocarbon potential?

In 2020, Norwegian seismic survey company, TGS, estimated that the Somali basin as a whole likely holds offshore reserves of about 30 billion barrels, with additional onshore reserves, although land estimates are considerably less consistent. Assessments generally include Somaliland and would place Somalia reserves at about the same level as Kazakhstan, which would give the area the 18th or 19th largest reserve globally, as assessed in 2016.

Geological conditions seem to support the view that there are likely to be commercially viable deposits in the region. Whether they prove close to estimates remains unknown at this stage.

There is also evidence of offshore (undersea) reserves in the region, as well as onshore (beneath the land) in the Somali region of the neighbouring Ethiopia. Bordering Somalia, and located next to Oromia Regional State, the Somali Regional State (also Ogaden) is Ethiopia's second largest federal region.

Why has it taken so long to make an oil find?

This find is being billed as the first discovery in Somaliland but in fact there have been several instances of oil seepage. An oil seep occurs when geological or unrelated human activity results in oil "seeping" into the ocean or onto land. In such cases, the physical appearance of oil occurs unexpectedly rather than as a result of deliberate exploration. It is unsurprisingly taken as evidence of a substantial reserve that is close to the surface, but doesn't always indicate the presence of commercially viable quantities or accessibility.

Genel Energy, the UK oil exploration firm on whose concession this discovery occurred, has held rights to explore in Somaliland since 2012. So the find isn't quite the sudden and unexpected bonus that's been implied by some reports.

Progress has been slow because

Somaliland's lack of international sovereign recognition creates an uncertain context for significant investment. Somalia still claims sovereignty over Somaliland even though the region has operated as a fully if informally independent state since 1991.

This creates a vacuum. The Somali federal authorities cannot enter into meaningful agreements over exploration or extraction in Somaliland. Somaliland is limited by investment risk. And Somalia's threats and complaints emphasise that risk.

This has not stopped Somaliland from entering into agreements, but it has slowed activities taking place under them.

In addition, there have been disputes within Somaliland over how the proceeds of hydrocarbon exploitation would be shared.

One of the areas with significant potential is the Nugaal Valley, which stretches across the border of eastern Somaliland into Puntland. Genel Energy was already exploring in that zone a decade ago. It withdrew for a time in 2013, citing security concerns. In the same time period, Africa Oil secured rights from the Puntland administration that overlapped with those issued by Somaliland to explore in the Nugaal Valley. A 2014 UN report expressed concern that hydrocarbon exploration in the Nugaal Valley risked fuelling violent conflict. Africa Oil ceased active operation in the area a year later.

The most recent find is in a different area of Somaliland: Salahey in the Maroodi Jeex region, which is less politically volatile. This makes it more likely that Genel Energy will be able to advance its work.

What challenges lie ahead?

The uncertainty created by a lack of international recognition makes it difficult to mobilise sufficient investment. And there is little doubt that Somalia will continue to remain hostile to both exploration and extraction.

Similarly, local sensitivities around the sharing of financial rewards will need to be managed with care and deep local engagement.

Some commentaries have suggested that the newly discovered oil could be abundant. But the reserves could also prove limited and may present technical challenges in extraction. It is therefore possible that extractive plans will operate at the margin of financial feasibility.

The latest find was the result of an accidental release of oil during drilling for water rather than from deliberate exploration. This may be evidence of a significant and easily accessed reserve, but seepages and strikes like this have happened in the past in Somaliland. A more extensive geo-seismic surveying will be needed before the full extent of the reserve is confirmed.

What would be the political implications of oil wealth in Somaliland?

I had previously studied the place of oil in Somalia and its breakaway states. Somali society is kinship-based. Specific groups identify with particular geographic areas. This means that the political implications vary sharply depending on the location of any oil discovery.

Previous experience of exploration in the Nugaal Valley showed how socially and politically volatile the exercise could be.

The area of the latest find, around Salaxley, is likely to prove less volatile. Unlike the Nugaal Valley, Salaxley has not customarily been subject to the same inter-clan and political disputes. But there will still need to be significant negotiation over sharing of the proceeds of exploration. The government will be keen to ensure that the windfall advantages those in power. Local clan groups will be keen to ensure there is a clear benefit accruing to their communities. Other clans will equally want a say in how increased wealth benefits Somaliland as a whole.

Depending on how negotiations conclude, there is potential for this clan-based process to mitigate the "resource curse" effect. In other words, the system of inter-group negotiation that underpins Somali society might provide some protection from the narrow economic impact of oil wealth that has been felt elsewhere. However, that is by no means certain and the process of negotiation itself has the potential to fuel violence, just as the UN worried in 2014.

Either way, the Somaliland economy remains tiny. Any influx of significant new wealth, even on a fairly modest scale, will create new social, economic and therefore political tensions.

What are the implications for regional dynamics?

The regional impact will depend on the extent of the discovery. Somalia has consistently objected to hydrocarbon exploration in Somaliland as all concessions have been granted under Somaliland legislation. It would object even more strongly to commercial extraction.

Ethiopia's interest is likely to be more equivocal. Salaxley is close to the Ethiopian border, and not far from active hydrocarbon exploration concessions in Ethiopia's Somali region. If the Somaliland reserves prove to be extensive after a technical appraisal, it would suggest that those in the adjacent Ogaden Basin are also significant. In this case Somaliland and Ethiopia would hold a mutual interest in ensuring sufficient regional security to enable extraction.

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## President hosts both public and private media for maiden open meeting at the Presidency



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic of Somaliland, His Excellency Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro, honored the media fraternity, both the independent and state-owned press in the country, and hosted them for an unprecedented maiden open meeting.

This is the first time in the country's history that such a meeting, which is other than a presser, has been called by seating a Head of State.

The honorable occasion that the President hosted for the media fraternity was attended by the Vice President, H.E. Mohamed Ali Aw Abdi, several members of the cabinet, and some of the commanders of the various armed forces in the country.

The purpose of the meeting was for the President to hold an open meeting with the country's press, and to strengthen the atmosphere of cooperation between the government and the press.

The members of the various

press organizations in the country who spoke thanked the President for inviting the country's press to the meeting.

They praised the President for the cooperation and close relationship that he and his government have with the press and journalists.

The Minister of Information, Culture and National Guidance of the Hon. Ahmed Yasin Sheikh Ali Ayaanle, hailed the country's media for protecting nationalism and social cohesion, calling on them to continue their efforts and support every step the government takes towards development.

The Head of State testified to the efforts of journalists in nation-building and the establishment of a government that is led by the people, and pledged to work with the press.

The President instructed members of his government to provide journalists with all the information they are entitled to.

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