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The New Colonial Shadow? Growing Concerns Over Turkey's Influence in Somaliland's Politics

From university scholarships to political influence: Questions emerge over Ankara's expanding footprint in Somalia and Somaliland

M.A. Egge.

Concerns are growing among some Somaliland commentators and political observers over what they describe as Turkey's expanding influence in Somali affairs, including attempts to cultivate political influence among Somalilanders educated in Turkish universities.

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"The President's and Government's Policy is to promote and uphold the Book of Allah" Minister Batuun Declares



Mohamoud Walaaleye

The Minister of Information, Culture and National Guidance, Hon. Barkhad Batuun, has announced plans to

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Somaliland Moves to Modernise Credit System as Central Bank and IFC Conclude Major CIS/STCR Workshop



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Somaliland Ambassador Meets Pro-Somaliland Swedish MPs in Stockholm, Pushes for Recognition and Hargeisa Consular Mission

Mohamoud Walaaleye

Somaliland's Ambassador to Sweden, Sakariye Hassan Wacays, held high-level talks at the Swedish Parliament in Stockholm with Swedish lawmakers supporting Somaliland's quest for international



recognition. The meeting brought together senior members of the Pro-Somaliland Parliamentary Group, including its Chairman Magnus Oskarsson and Vice-Chairman Markus Wiechel, who represent the Sweden Democrats

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WADDANI Chairman Engages Hargeisa's Intellectuals in Push to Expand Party Membership



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From Hard Work to Triumph: University of Hargeisa Law Graduate Celebrates Success



Mohamoud Walaaleye

A female graduate of the Faculty of Law at the University of Hargeisa has celebrated her graduation as a major personal achievement, describing the milestone as the reward for years of hard work, dedication and sacrifice. Speaking during the university's graduation ceremony, the law graduate congratulated students from across the university's faculties, extending a special message to her fellow law graduates.

"I am graduating from the Faculty of Law. All praise is due to Allah. I congratulate all the students graduating from the different faculties, especially my fellow law students. We have succeeded, and

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Taiwan Funds Red Sea Maritime Security Project in Somaliland

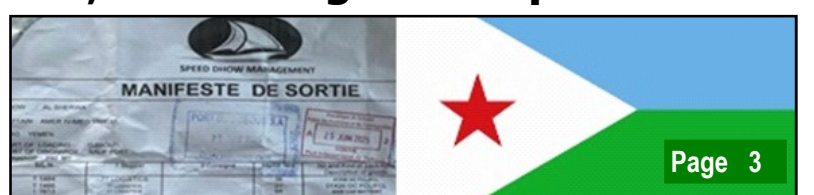
By M.A. Egge

Taiwan has funded the Red Sea Fusion Centre; a project aimed at safeguarding freedom of navigation and strengthening maritime security in

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The New Colonial Shadow?..

Journalist Journalist Ahmed Agel, in a post published on Facebook yesterday, recounted what he described as a meeting in Hargeisa between Turkish government officials and young Somalilanders who had graduated from universities in Turkey.

According to Agel, the central question posed to the graduates was striking:

“Why have you failed to influence Somaliland’s politics and economy, unlike those in Mogadishu and elsewhere who play a prominent role?”

He said the Turkish officials contrasted the Somaliland graduates with young people who had studied in countries including Malaysia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia, arguing that graduates from those countries had become much more influential in Somaliland’s political and economic affairs.

The remarks, as presented by Ahmed Agel, raise a broader question: Is Ankara seeking to build a network of political and economic influence through Somaliland’s educated elite?

A wider Turkish footprint

The concerns go beyond university graduates.

In an interview earlier, Somalian MP Professor Abdi Ismail Samatar claimed that some Somali students who graduated from Turkish universities had subsequently been placed on salaries and tasked with sharing important information. Samatar also argued that Turkey has gained substantial influence over Somalia’s economic and strategic sectors, claiming that Turkish interests have expanded into areas including the port, airport, oil, banking, fishing, construction and healthcare sectors in Mogadishu.

He portrayed Turkey’s growing role not simply as an economic partnership but as part of a broader effort to influence the political direction of Somalia.

According to his argument, Turkish involvement has increasingly extended into the political and



security spheres, including relationships with different political actors and armed groups. From soft power to political leverage?

Turkey’s influence in Somalia has developed over more than a decade through humanitarian assistance, education, infrastructure projects, business investment, military cooperation and diplomatic engagement.

That combination of aid, education, commerce and security cooperation has given Ankara an unusually broad presence in Somalia affairs.

For critics such as Agel and Samatar, however, the concern is that what begins as soft power can eventually become political leverage.

The question they raise is particularly sensitive in Somaliland, where the government has spent decades security to maintain its separate political identity and pursue international recognition.

If foreign governments are actively encouraging educated young people to become more politically engaged, critics argue, the issue is not simply about education or employment—it could become a question of who ultimately shapes Somaliland’s political choices.

The Puntland incident

Ahmed Agel also pointed to the recent killing of suspected pirates along the Puntland coast as another indication of what he sees as Turkey’s expanding role in Somalia’s security affairs.

He described the killing of 11 pirates as evidence that Turkey could increasingly become involved in security agendas and conflicts

affecting Somalia actors.

From there, he issued a much broader warning: that Somaliland should not assume it would remain outside the reach of Turkey’s expanding regional ambitions.

“Do not be surprised if they attack Somaliland as well,” he wrote, arguing that Turkey is already involved with armed groups operating in different parts of the Horn region.

A warning about the future

The strongest language in Agel’s post came at the end, where he accused Turkey of behaving like “a new colonial power hiding behind the name of Islam.”

He argued that Somalia’s media had been praising Turkey since 2015 and warned that the consequences of that relationship would eventually become apparent. The rhetoric reflects a growing debate over Turkey’s role in the Horn of Africa: Is Ankara a strategic partner investing in Somalia and supporting its development, or is it building a sphere of influence that could eventually constrain the political independence of local actors?

For Somaliland, the question is particularly consequential.

As Somaliland seeks international recognition and attempts to deepen relationships with a range of global powers, the growing influence of Turkey presents a complicated strategic challenge.

The debate is therefore no longer simply about Turkey’s presence in Somalia. It is increasingly about how far that influence reaches—and whether Somaliland will remain able to determine its own political and economic direction without external pressure.

Somaliland Ambassador.....

(SD) and Christian Democrats (KD). The discussions focused on strengthening diplomatic cooperation between Somaliland and Sweden, with particular emphasis on advancing international recognition of Somaliland, expanding bilateral economic ties, and establishing a

international engagement with Hargeisa.

Vice-Chairman Markus Wiechel also called for stronger Swedish backing for Somaliland, highlighting the importance of **formal recognition, bilateral economic assistance and expanded security cooperation.**



Swedish consular mission in Hargeisa.

Chairman Magnus Oskarsson underscored the strategic importance of recognizing Somaliland, saying his personal visits to the country had given him first-hand insight into the situation on the ground.

Oskarsson argued that Somaliland has demonstrated the institutional capacity and governance standards required for full statehood, reinforcing his support for greater

Wiechel further stressed the need to build durable political and trade relations between Sweden and Somaliland, describing closer cooperation as important to both sides’ long-term interests.

The Stockholm meeting comes as Somaliland continues to intensify its diplomatic engagement with European lawmakers and governments, seeking broader international support for its recognition campaign and deeper bilateral partnerships.

From Hard Work to Triumph: University of Hargeisa Law Graduate Celebrates Success

we have demonstrated the fruits of our hard work,” she said.

She expressed particular gratitude to her parents, saying their support had been instrumental in helping her reach the milestone.

“I would like to thank my mother and father. Without them, I would not have achieved this success today,” she said.

The graduate also thanked the university’s lecturers and staff for their guidance and support throughout her academic journey.

“I would like to extend my special thanks to all the staff and lecturers. We truly appreciate your efforts,” she added.

Her remarks highlighted the wider significance of graduation as a moment not only to celebrate academic achievement, but also to recognize the families, educators and institutions that support students throughout their educational journeys.

The ceremony marked the culmination of years of perseverance for the young law graduate and the beginning of a new chapter as she prepares to pursue her professional ambitions in the legal field.

Meanwhile, the President of the University of Hargeisa, Dr. Mohamed Ahmed Sulub, said 1,452 students are graduating as part of



the university’s 23rd graduating class. Of the graduates, 862 are women and 590 are men.

Dr. Sulub said the university currently has more than 8,000 students enrolled and has placed a strong emphasis on research and community service.

He also highlighted the university’s growing scientific and laboratory capacity, noting that laboratories have been introduced that can conduct important tests, including DNA testing, which previously required samples to be sent abroad. The graduation ceremony therefore represented not only the successful completion of university studies for thousands of students, but also the University of Hargeisa’s continuing efforts to strengthen higher education, research and professional development in Somaliland.

“The President’s and Government’s Policy is to promote and uphold the.....

replace the long-running Qur’anic Tafsir program broadcast by the National Media with a new, more modern and extended interpretation of the Holy Qur’an.

Minister Batuun said the move forms part of the government’s broader efforts to modernize and strengthen National Media programming, particularly programs dedicated to religion, education and public awareness.

“As a government, the President’s policy and that of the government is to promote and uphold the Book of Allah,” Minister Batuun said.



The announcement was made in the presence of Sheikh Mohamed Sheikh Omar Dirir, who has for many years presented the Quranic Tafsir program on Somaliland’s National Media.

Reflecting on the government’s

renewed focus on religious programming, Minister Batuun described the commitment as a source of pride, saying:

“It is an honor that today both the radio and the government are committed to promoting and upholding the Book of Allah.”

The planned replacement of the Tafsir program marks a new phase in Somaliland’s National Media programming, with the government signaling an intention to provide more contemporary and longer-form religious content to the public.

Djibouti Emerges as Key Houthi Logistics and Smuggling Hub in Red Sea, an Investigation Report Reveals

Djibouti has emerged as a key Houthi logistics and smuggling hub, with alleged networks exploiting its ports, trade routes and Bab el-Mandeb location to move cargo toward Yemen

Djibouti has emerged as a significant logistical node in the Houthi movement's expanding smuggling network across the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea, according to a new Century International investigation that traces how the Yemeni group has increasingly exploited the country's strategic location, busy ports and commercial trade links.

The report, *From Spoke to Hub: The Houthis in Africa*, says the Houthis began shifting more of their logistics toward Djibouti from around 2022, as maritime interdiction efforts intensified in the Gulf of Aden and the group increasingly sought commercially sourced components and raw materials for weapons production.

Djibouti's location at the mouth of the Bab el-Mandeb, combined with its role as a major regional center for container transshipment and dhow traffic, makes it particularly attractive to clandestine networks. The investigation says the volume and complexity of maritime traffic can make suspicious shipments harder to identify, while vessels entering the Red Sea face fewer opportunities for interception.

From Trade Hub to Houthi Logistics Base

The relationship between Yemen and Djibouti predates the current Houthi network. According to the report, Yemeni businessmen with links to former President Ali Abdullah Saleh established businesses and even a bank in Djibouti as the country developed into a regional trade and financial center during the 2000s. During the early years of Yemen's war, businessmen associated with Saleh allegedly used Djibouti to facilitate trade and financial transfers. The report says those activities helped demonstrate the country's potential as a bridge between Yemen and international commercial networks.

After the Houthis killed Saleh in 2017 and many of his associates left Sana'a, the group reportedly moved to develop its own infrastructure in Djibouti.

Around 2022, according to the investigation, the Houthis sent a former Yemeni customs official to establish and oversee a smuggling operation. The operative allegedly created shell companies that received goods arriving by container ships and cargo vessels before breaking down the shipments and transferring them by dhow to Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

Djiboutian authorities detained the operative in early 2024 and transferred him to Yemeni authorities, where he disclosed details of the network, the report says. But the arrest apparently did not end the operation. A second operative is alleged to have subsequently taken over the network.

The 77 Logistics Connection

The investigation points to local commercial companies as another component of the alleged logistics chain.

Multiple shipments intercepted by Yemeni forces reportedly contained cargo that had been imported into Djibouti by 77 Logistics. The report says the company's parent entity is reportedly owned by Youssouf Omar Guelleh, brother of Djiboutian President Ismail Omar Guelleh. The ownership allegation is attributed to shipping records and intelligence claims cited by the researchers, rather than presented as an established finding by the report itself.

One of the most significant cases involved the dhow *Al-Sherwa*, seized in 2025 by Yemen's National Resistance Forces.

Yemeni officials said the vessel was carrying approximately 750 tons of military hardware, including Iranian missiles and missile components, drone engines, radar equipment and communications systems. The seizure was described by the Yemeni side as the largest arms interdiction since the beginning of the Yemen war.

According to testimony attributed to the vessel's captain, the *Al-Sherwa* had made approximately 12 voyages from Djibouti to the Houthi-controlled port of Salif since early 2024. The vessel's recovered manifest reportedly showed a role for 77 Logistics in facilitating some of the cargo.

Chemicals and Electronic Components

The investigation describes the *Al-Sherwa* shipment as part of a broader flow rather than an isolated case.

Between 2023 and 2025, two Djibouti-based companies that researchers linked to Houthi networks through interdiction records imported an estimated 7,500 to 8,500 tons of ammonium nitrate and other chemicals into Djibouti using commercial transportation, according to the report.

The materials were subsequently moved toward Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen using commercial shipping, dhows and smaller vessels. The shipments reportedly also included millions of electronic detonators used in Houthi

improvised explosive devices and drones.

The report is careful, however, about the extent to which Djiboutian officials or institutions were knowingly involved.

Western officials and regional sources told the researchers that some Djiboutian port and other officials were likely involved in the smuggling but characterized their motivation as essentially commercial rather than ideological. Djiboutian authorities rejected allegations of complicity and said they were investigating the shipments and Houthi networks operating in the country.

That distinction is important. The investigation documents alleged use of Djibouti's commercial infrastructure by Houthi-linked networks, but it does not establish that the Djiboutian government as a whole supports the Houthi movement.

A Strategic Commercial Advantage

Djibouti's commercial importance grew as Houthi attacks disrupted shipping through the Red Sea.

Between 2023 and 2025, major shipping companies increasingly used Djibouti as a transshipment point, unloading containers there for onward movement on smaller vessels rather than sending large commercial ships through the increasingly dangerous Red Sea route.

The report cites data showing that Djibouti's share of transshipment activity rose from 19 percent in early December 2023 to 60 percent in April 2024. Lloyd's List Intelligence also recorded a 59 percent increase in vessel calls at Djibouti during the first half of 2024, with preliminary cargo volumes rising by roughly 77 percent.

The commercial windfall was acknowledged by Djibouti Ports and Free Zone officials. Its head told Bloomberg that Djibouti was "doing good business because of the bad luck of others."

That surge in legitimate maritime activity, however, also created conditions that could benefit illicit networks.

For the Houthis, the same infrastructure that made Djibouti an attractive commercial transshipment center could provide cover for moving sensitive cargo into Yemen.

Djibouti's Other Role: An Afar Recruitment Gateway

Djibouti also appears in the report in connection with an earlier Houthi effort to cultivate Afar recruits.

The Afar community stretches across Djibouti, Eritrea and Ethiopia and has longstanding social and

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Somaliland Moves to Modernise Credit System as Central Bank and IFC Conclude Major CIS/STCR Workshop

Mohamoud Walaaleye

The Central Bank of Somaliland and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, have concluded

central role in coordinating the project and addressing technical and institutional requirements.

The workshop was attended by Deputy Governor Hamse



a high-level workshop focused on implementing the Credit Information System and Secured Transactions and Collateral Registry (CIS/STCR) project, a major initiative aimed at strengthening the country's financial infrastructure and expanding access to credit.

The workshop, opened by Central Bank Governor Abdinasir Ahmed Hirsi, brought together key financial-sector stakeholders to assess progress on the project and identify the steps required for its effective implementation.

Discussions focused on critical areas including system requirements, technological infrastructure, legal and regulatory issues, and the integration and use of other financial data. Participants also examined measures needed to ensure that the new system can effectively support lenders and borrowers across Somaliland.

A major milestone during the workshop was the official launch of the Project Steering Committee, alongside technical committees responsible for legal, policy and credit-information matters. The committees are expected to play a

Abdirahman Khaire and Director General Yasin Jama Ahmed, as well as representatives from the Central Bank, IFC, commercial banks, mobile money service providers, consultants and other stakeholders in the financial sector.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants reached an agreement on priority actions and the respective responsibilities of the stakeholders, marking another step toward the implementation of the CIS/STCR system.

The project is expected to help strengthen confidence in Somaliland's financial system, improve credit-risk management and expand access to financing by providing more reliable credit information and strengthening mechanisms for using assets as collateral.

The initiative represents a significant move toward developing a more modern and inclusive financial sector in Somaliland, potentially making it easier for businesses and individuals to access financing while giving financial institutions better tools to assess lending risks.

WADDANI Chairman Engages Hargeisa's Intellectuals in Push to Expand Party Membership



Mohamoud Walaaleye

WADDANI Party Chairman **Hirsi Ali Haji Hassan**, accompanied by senior party leaders, held a meeting with intellectuals and prominent community figures from Hargeisa's **Ahmed Dhagah** and **31 May** districts.

The meeting focused on the party's **Membership and Subscription Program**, as WADDANI seeks to accelerate efforts to expand its membership base and strengthen its organizational structures.

Party leaders and participants discussed ways to deepen

engagement with communities and encourage broader participation in the party's membership and subscription initiative.

The gathering forms part of WADDANI's wider efforts to strengthen its relationship with intellectuals, community leaders and different segments of society across Hargeisa.

The party said continued engagement with the public remains an important component of its efforts to build stronger connections with citizens and expand its grassroots support.

Taiwan Funds Red Sea Maritime Security Project in Somaliland



By M.A. Egge

Taiwan has funded the Red Sea Fusion Centre; a project aimed at safeguarding freedom of navigation and strengthening maritime security in the Red Sea, Taiwan's Representative Office in Somaliland has announced.

Taiwan's support is expected to encourage more international stakeholders to join the initiative based on shared interests and a common vision, as revealed by the office.

Senior Somaliland officials were seen at the project's presentation, including Somaliland Coast Guard Commander Brig Gen Ahmed Hurre Hariye, Interior Minister hon. Abdalle Mohamed Arab, Presidential Affairs Minister Khadar Hussein, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Taiwan's Representative to Somaliland.

The project comes amid growing international concerns over maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Djibouti Emerges as Key Houthi Logistics and.....



commercial links across the Bab el-Mandeb. The investigation says Houthi outreach to the Afar community included individuals traveling from Obock in northern Djibouti by small boat to Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen.

The report identifies Mohammed Alawsan, an Afari previously affiliated with the Red Sea Afar Democratic Organization, as a central figure in the relationship. By 2016, the Houthis had allegedly established a training base for him in Yemen and placed him in charge of an Afari community there.

The researchers say Afaris traveled from Obock to Yemen in small groups, with the Houthis offering financial, political and military support, including the possibility of training in Iran.

The relationship eventually collapsed. According to the report, Afari recruits resisted Houthi ideological indoctrination and suffered significant casualties after being deployed in the Yemen war. Alawsan organized protests and a strike before being arrested in 2024 and later executed by the Houthis, the investigation says.

Despite that rupture, Houthi outreach to Afar networks reportedly continued.

An Afari leader cited in the report said Houthi messages were transmitted through Eritrean opposition figures and included offers of training and weapons. The leader rejected the approach, warning that cooperation would draw the Afar into a broader regional conflict and increase instability.

A Vulnerable Maritime Crossroads

Taken together, the investigation portrays Djibouti as more than a geographic waypoint. Its position beside the Bab el-Mandeb, established maritime infrastructure, extensive commercial traffic and longstanding connections with Yemen have made it a valuable environment for Houthi logistics. At the same time, the country has benefited economically from the disruption that the Houthi campaign has caused to conventional Red Sea shipping.

That creates a difficult security paradox: the same commercial openness that has strengthened Djibouti's role as a regional trade hub can also make it attractive to illicit networks seeking to move cargo toward Yemen.

The Century International investigation does not establish that Djibouti's government is directing or politically sponsoring Houthi operations. Instead, it documents allegations of Houthi efforts to exploit commercial networks and local intermediaries while noting Djiboutian authorities' denial of complicity.

For Djibouti, the stakes extend beyond individual smuggling cases. As Houthi networks become more sophisticated and maritime competition around the Bab el-Mandeb intensifies, the country's ports are increasingly positioned at the intersection of legitimate global commerce, regional security and clandestine supply chains.

Beyond Weapons: Somaliland–Israel Security Ties Could Reshape the Horn of Africa’s Strategic Landscape

Mohamoud Walaaleye

AfriNews 24 has published a new report examining the expanding security relationship between Somaliland and Israel, suggesting that the emerging partnership could go far beyond the provision of military equipment and develop into a broader framework built around

model from one based primarily on conventional military hardware toward a more integrated system combining technology, intelligence and trained personnel.

Could Air Defense Become the Next Frontier?

Perhaps the most significant possibility raised by AfriNews 24 is



intelligence, technology, maritime security and advanced defense capabilities.

According to the report, information emerging about the cooperation points to potential collaboration in intelligence gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance, maritime security, search-and-rescue operations, unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), secure military communications and defense technology.

Training, Intelligence and Coastal Security

A significant element highlighted by AfriNews 24 is the potential development of specialized training programs focused on surveillance, intelligence gathering and information analysis.

The report also underlines the strategic importance of protecting Somaliland's coastline, particularly the waters surrounding Berbera. With the city positioned near the Gulf of Aden and the wider Red Sea corridor, enhanced maritime surveillance and coastal-security capabilities could become a central component of Somaliland's emerging security architecture.

The potential partnership could also strengthen emergency-response and search-and-rescue capabilities, allowing Somaliland to develop more sophisticated systems for responding to security incidents and emergencies along its extensive coastline.

Drones and Secure Military Communications

Another area identified in the report is the possible expansion of Somaliland's use of drones for surveillance and reconnaissance. Such technology could provide enhanced capabilities for monitoring large areas, gathering intelligence and supporting maritime-security operations. The report also points to the potential adoption of more secure military communication systems, alongside Israeli expertise in engineering and mine-clearance operations.

Together, these capabilities could gradually shift Somaliland's security

future cooperation involving advanced air-defense systems, including Israel's Iron Dome, as well as military aircraft and reconnaissance drones.

While such possibilities remain part of the broader discussion about future cooperation, their potential significance would be considerable. An expansion into sophisticated air-defense and aerial-surveillance capabilities could represent a major transformation in Somaliland's security infrastructure.

The report suggests that the long-term objective could ultimately be the creation of an integrated security architecture combining intelligence, surveillance, maritime protection, secure communications, emergency response, trained personnel and advanced defense technology.

Berbera at the Heart of a Strategic Corridor

At the center of this emerging strategic picture is Berbera. Located on the Gulf of Aden, close to one of the world's most important maritime corridors, Berbera occupies a position of growing geopolitical significance. Its proximity to the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb makes developments in its security environment relevant far beyond Somaliland's borders.

If Somaliland's maritime surveillance, intelligence and defense capabilities continue to expand, the consequences could extend across the wider Horn of Africa and Red Sea region.

The potential Somaliland–Israel security relationship, therefore, could represent more than a conventional military partnership. It could evolve into a broader cooperation model built around intelligence, technology, maritime security, communications and human capacity—potentially giving Somaliland a more prominent role in the evolving security architecture of the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea.

Defence minister scoffs at naysayers as concerns Burao development



While heeding the fact that the Togdeer Development Committee was not a bonafide arm of the state but an organization meant to address developmental aspects in the region, he noted, "It is true that Burao airport is closed those responsible for closing the airport, happen to be the very same individuals who are now publicly crying wolf purporting to speak about Burao's development".

He pointed out that the facts on the culprits were something well known to the residents.

The Minister underscored the fact that the government has a clear plan and will not deviate from the path it deems correct. "Burao suffers from visible neglect in many areas, and as a government, we are fulfilling our responsibilities as per cue".

He scoffed at the culprits and chided them, "The members of the public are aware and know who you are and recognizes you; you cannot hide your true colours. As for us, we understand the mandate for which we were appointed hence we have a clear path ahead which we will not deviate from it. I am attentive to my people, and my doors are open to you but beware of the troublemaking way-wards."

By M.A. Egge

In spite of the fact are many aspects and areas in the city of Burao requiring development, the government is steadfast in fulfilling its obligations regarding the progress.

These were the sentiments of the Minister of Defence Hon. Mohamed Yusuf Ali stated at the Togdeer Development Committee meeting. The minister lamented that

naysayers who were initially behind the closure of institutions such as the Burao airport were now crying wolf in public alleging sabotages that were of their own making. He pointed out that there were tangible areas that have been neglected that needed appraisal for development hence was unequivocal that the administration of the government of the day is on course to address them.

Somaliland Finance Ministry Reviews World Bank Projects, Tightens Fiscal Oversight

Mohamoud Walaaleye

Somaliland's Finance Ministry reviews World Bank-funded development projects as the government strengthens fiscal oversight, fights corruption and seeks to stabilize the Somaliland shilling

Somaliland's Ministry of Finance and Economic Development convened a quarterly review of World Bank-funded development projects, bringing together senior government officials and project coordinators as the administration seeks to accelerate implementation, strengthen accountability and ensure that development financing produces measurable results.

The meeting, chaired Sunday by Director General Mohamed Hassan Suleiman and organized through the ministry's Portfolio Center of Excellence (PCE), focused on the performance of projects being implemented by government institutions across Somaliland. Officials reviewed implementation progress, expenditure, project management and coordination, while identifying obstacles that could delay the delivery of planned activities.

The review comes as the government places greater emphasis on public financial management and the effective use of external development assistance. Participants assessed the tangible



results generated by World Bank-supported programs and examined whether projects remained aligned with their approved objectives and implementation schedules.

Suleiman stressed that development resources must be managed efficiently and transparently.

The director general said projects should remain focused on their approved objectives while ensuring that external support and public resources are used "efficiently, transparently, and effectively" for the benefit of Somaliland's population. He also reaffirmed the Finance Ministry's commitment to working with implementing ministries, government agencies, project coordination offices and development partners to resolve bottlenecks and improve project performance.

Portfolio Center highlights coordination with World Bank Mohamed Abdi, head of the Portfolio Center of Excellence, presented an update on the center's work coordinating and monitoring World Bank-funded projects.

He highlighted continued engagement between the PCE and World Bank management, including discussions intended to facilitate access to development financing and better align available resources with Somaliland's development priorities.

The meeting also reported increased project expenditure and utilization of allocated funds. Directors general and project coordinators provided updates on achievements, implementation constraints and plans for accelerating activities during the next reporting period.

Participants described the quarterly review mechanism as an important tool for strengthening information-sharing and institutional accountability. They also emphasized the need for closer cooperation among the Finance Ministry, implementing agencies, project offices and the World Bank. The meeting ended with a commitment to improve monitoring, coordination and implementation so that development assistance translates into sustainable outcomes.

From Dialogue to Delivery: Somaliland Hosts Regional Push to Build Investment-Ready Cities and Jobs

East Africa City Corridor Dialogue brings together mayors, ministers and regional officials to strengthen urban connectivity and unlock opportunities for women and youth

Republic of Somaliland's capital Hargeisa hosted the Third East Africa City Corridor (EACC)

expand.

The gathering brought together the mayors of Hargeisa, Berbera and Jigjiga, alongside the Mayor of Wajaale District, ministers and other senior officials.

Officials from the Federal Government of Ethiopia and the Somali Regional State of Ethiopia



Dialogue, bringing together city leaders, government officials, international organizations and other stakeholders to discuss how East African cities can work together to drive economic growth, attract investment and create jobs.

Held under the theme "From Dialogue to Delivery: Planned Growth, Investment-ready Cities, and Jobs for Women and Youth," the third edition of the dialogue focused on turning regional discussions into practical action, with particular emphasis on planned urban development, investment opportunities and sustainable employment.

The forum highlighted the growing importance of interconnected cities as engines of economic development across the region. Participants discussed how better planning, stronger links between cities and investment-friendly policies can help cities respond to rapid population growth while creating new economic opportunities.

A key focus of the dialogue was employment for women and young people, with participants emphasizing the need for sustainable job opportunities as East African cities continue to

also participated, highlighting the cross-border nature of the dialogue and the importance of cooperation among cities and communities across the region. Representatives from international organizations and other stakeholders joined the discussions, adding perspectives on urban development, investment and regional cooperation.

The EACC Dialogue comes at a time when cities across the Horn of Africa are facing rapid urbanization, increasing demand for infrastructure and services, and a growing need to attract private investment.

For Hargeisa and other cities participating in the corridor, the challenge is increasingly about moving beyond dialogue toward concrete projects, stronger economic links and opportunities that directly benefit their rapidly growing populations.

With its emphasis on "From Dialogue to Delivery," the Hargeisa meeting seeks to put implementation at the center of the regional urban-development agenda—linking better-planned cities with investment, jobs and stronger regional connectivity.



The Berbera Gambit: Why India Must Recognize Somaliland

The Berbera Gambit argues that India must recognize Somaliland as Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia deepen strategic ties with Somalia and Berbera gains importance in Red Sea security

Berbera Port and the Horn of Africa are emerging as critical nodes in the strategic competition linking India, Pakistan, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia and the wider Red Sea region.

The strategic map around the Red Sea is changing faster than New Delhi can afford to ignore.

On 4 August 2026, Islamabad signed a defense cooperation agreement with Mogadishu covering counterterrorism, military training, exchanges of expertise and the development of Somalia's defense capabilities. Three days later, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement, establishing that an armed attack against one signatory would be regarded as an attack against all three. The pact also envisages deeper defense cooperation across land, sea, air and cyber domains, including unmanned systems, electronic warfare and artificial intelligence.

Neither development, taken separately, amounts to a new military bloc controlling the Red Sea. Nor is there evidence that Pakistan has established a military base in Somalia or that the Makkah agreement is formally directed against India. Indeed, Pakistan and Türkiye have described the agreement as defensive.

But New Delhi should look beyond the labels.

The more consequential question is whether Pakistan is beginning to acquire a strategic position in the Horn of Africa at precisely the moment when the Red Sea, Gulf and western Indian Ocean are becoming interconnected theaters of competition. If that trend continues, India should reconsider one of its longest-standing diplomatic assumptions: that Somaliland can be left outside the architecture of Indian strategic planning.

The answer should be a Berbera counter-gambit — a calibrated Indian strategy centered on Somaliland's port, maritime position and political institutions. Recognition of Somaliland should now be seriously considered not simply because of Somaliland's own statehood claims, but because Berbera may become an increasingly important piece of India's maritime-security architecture.

I. The Pakistan Proposition: From South Asia to the Horn

Pakistan is not returning to Somalia out of African ambition. It is doing what it has always done: converting

military capability into diplomatic leverage. Islamabad possesses a large armed force, decades of counterterrorism experience, and a growing defense industry capable of supplying affordable platforms like the JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft — reportedly of interest to Mogadishu, potentially backed by Saudi financing. What Pakistan lacks — money, technology, and political weight — its new Mecca partners provide.

The equation is elegant in its asymmetry: Somalia provides geography, Pakistan provides military manpower and training, Türkiye provides defense technology and strategic reach, and Saudi Arabia provides financial resources and logistics for long-term deployments. Together, they form what can be termed an adaptable NATO shadow — exploiting Somalia's governance vacuum to project power across one of the world's most vital maritime corridors.

Pakistan's traditional strategic environment has been South Asia. Its competition with India has centered on Kashmir, the western border, nuclear deterrence and the Indian Ocean. But Pakistan has increasingly sought relationships that extend its diplomatic and military influence beyond its immediate neighborhood. Somalia provides an attractive opportunity precisely because it sits beside one of the world's most important maritime corridors connecting the Indian Ocean with the Red Sea and Suez. The danger is not that Pakistan suddenly establishes a giant military base opposite India. The danger is more gradual. Training agreements become defense cooperation. Defense cooperation becomes intelligence cooperation. Intelligence cooperation becomes logistics. Logistics becomes port access. Port access becomes a durable strategic presence. By the time a strategic network becomes obvious, its foundations may already be difficult to reverse.

II. The Turkish Archipelago: Camp TURKSOM and the Drone Littoral

No analysis of Pakistan's Somalia gambit is complete without understanding the platform upon which it rests. Türkiye operates Camp TURKSOM in Mogadishu — its largest overseas military base — hosting Bayraktar TB2 drones, intelligence personnel, and a permanent contingent that has already trained over 15,000 Somali troops. Ankara controls critical nodes including Aden Adde International Airport and the Port of Mogadishu.

Pakistan's trainers and cyber specialists are being inserted into an architecture that Turkey built. Islamabad is not creating a new sphere of influence; it is renting



space inside Ankara's. The implications are profound: a Turkey-Pakistan-Saudi consortium at the mouth of the Red Sea, with Turkish drones providing the eyes, Pakistani officers providing the hands, and Saudi riyals providing the fuel.

Ankara has reportedly proposed establishing a humanitarian drone hub in Berbera — a move designed to extend Turkish influence even into Somaliland's strategic space. If realized, this would compromise the only credible alternative to Turkish-dominated Mogadishu.

III. The Saudi Financier: Riyadh's Indirect Empire

Saudi Arabia's role is often understated because it is indirect. Riyadh does not need troops in Mogadishu; it needs outcomes. The Kingdom looks across the Red Sea with growing concern, aware that instability in the Horn threatens its energy transit routes. By financing Pakistan's African footprint while anchoring it within the Mecca Pact, Saudi Arabia gains a security partner without deploying its own forces.

But the Saudi position is not without friction. Riyadh's opposition to Somaliland's recognition stems from a desire to preserve the territorial integrity paradigm that underpins its own regional influence. Yet this very orthodoxy now traps Saudi Arabia into supporting a Somali federal government whose authority barely extends beyond Mogadishu's perimeter. The Mecca Pact gives Saudi leverage over Pakistan and Turkey, but it also binds Riyadh to the strategic fiction that Mogadishu is a governable partner.

IV. The American Vacuum: Washington's Retreat, Islamabad's Advance

One of the most underappreciated dimensions of Pakistan's August offensive is its timing. Washington remains an important security partner of Islamabad, yet Pakistan is deepening its Mogadishu engagement at a moment when US policy toward Somalia has become more restrictive. The Trump administration has imposed significant restrictions affecting Somali nationals, creating a perceptual vacuum that Pakistan is eager to fill.

Islamabad does not need to replace

the United States; it only needs to occupy strategic space that others leave available. The US remains fixated on Mogadishu while the operational environment shifts beneath it. Pakistan, by contrast, acts on strategic geometry, not diplomatic protocol.

V. The Chinese Shadow: Djibouti and the BRI

No Red Sea chessboard is complete without Beijing. China maintains its first overseas military base in Djibouti, just across the Gulf of Aden from Somaliland's Berbera. Its Belt and Road Initiative has recalibrated Ethiopian and Djiboutian infrastructure dependencies. While China has not openly aligned with the Turkey-Pakistan-Saudi triangle, its presence creates a crowded field where Indian and Western passivity invites Chinese opportunism.

The strategic risk is not that China joins the Mecca Pact, but that it benefits from the instability the Pact's rivals generate. If IMEC — the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor — fails to secure its southern anchor, Beijing's alternative routes through Djibouti become more attractive by default. Corridor governance in the 21st century is increasingly a competition not between armies, but between logistics platforms. China understands this. The question is whether India does.

VI. The Indian Dilemma: Pakistan at the Back Door

India's \$3.7 trillion economy relies on the Red Sea corridor. Approximately 12 percent of global oil and a significant portion of India's container traffic pass through the Bab el-Mandeb. The Turkey-Pakistan-Saudi triangle now sits directly across these routes, with Pakistani cyber specialists and intelligence officers embedded in a country whose coastline overlooks India's western maritime approaches.

New Delhi can no longer treat the Horn of Africa as a secondary theater. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Jerusalem in February 2026 and President Isaac Herzog's subsequent consultations in Addis Ababa signaled that Indian and Israeli strategists understand the danger. But understanding is not action.

The question India must answer is

straightforward: Is Pakistan building a new strategic network across the Indian Ocean? The answer is no longer speculative. The 4 August defense agreement, the 7 August Mecca Pact, the Turkish base infrastructure, and the Saudi financing together constitute a network-in-information. Strategic networks rarely appear overnight. They begin with training arrangements, then defense sales, then logistics relationships, then intelligence partnerships — until years later, they have become components of a much larger architecture. India is watching that architecture take shape in real time.

VII. The Ethiopian Variable: The Hinterland Imperative

Ethiopia is the indispensable hinterland of this drama. With a population exceeding 120 million, Addis Ababa's search for reliable maritime access has made Berbera central to its national strategy. The 2024 Memorandum of Understanding between Ethiopia and Somaliland represents a pragmatic attempt to reduce dependence on Djibouti.

For decades, Djibouti has been Ethiopia's principal maritime gateway. The emergence of alternative corridors through Somaliland gives Addis Ababa greater strategic flexibility. For India, this is valuable. Ethiopia is one of Africa's most consequential states, both economically and geopolitically. A more diversified Ethiopian maritime-access strategy could reduce excessive dependence on a single corridor and create additional opportunities for Indian trade and investment.

Without Ethiopia, Berbera is a valuable port. With Ethiopia, it becomes transformative. This is why any Indian strategy for the Horn must treat Addis Ababa not as a peripheral partner, but as a co-anchor. Ethiopia's access to Somaliland's coastline opens the depth of the Horn to Indian security interests.

Berbera should therefore be considered not simply as a Somaliland project, but as part of a wider Horn of Africa connectivity strategy. Rather than presenting Somaliland recognition as a zero-sum confrontation with Mogadishu, New Delhi could frame engagement around trade, connectivity, maritime safety and regional economic integration.

VIII. The Israeli Precedent: Recognition as Strategic Weapon

On 26 December 2025, Israel became the first country to formally recognize the Republic of Somaliland. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's signature ended 33 years of diplomatic silence because Jerusalem understood a

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fundamental truth: in an era of corridor competition, strategic utility generates de facto centrality even in the absence of complete juridical recognition.

Israel's move can give it a foothold near the Bab el-Mandeb, an intelligence-sharing platform, and a means to dilute Turkish influence in the Horn. It also triggered predictable pushback from Egypt, Jordan, Djibouti, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and a coalition of twenty Middle Eastern and African states — proof that recognition is not merely a legal act but a strategic weapon.

This engagement is best understood through realist rather than legalist lenses: national interests, strategic geography, and the balance of power matter more than inherited diplomatic caution. India, which shares with Israel a robust partnership in missile defense, drones, cyber, and advanced technology, should draw the same conclusion.

For India, Israel's recognition has altered the diplomatic environment. Before December 2025, recognition of Somaliland could be portrayed as an entirely hypothetical proposition. After Israel's decision, the question has become concrete. New Delhi no longer has to ask whether recognition of Somaliland is an entirely hypothetical possibility. It can ask whether Indian interests justify following a path that another major strategic actor has already opened.

But India should not copy Israel. India has its own relationships, its own legal traditions and its own interests in Africa and the Arab world. Recognition would therefore need to be accompanied by serious diplomacy with Somalia, the African Union, Ethiopia, Gulf states and other regional actors.

IX. The Hellenic-Cypriot Anchor: EU and NATO's Eastern Gate

The 10th Greece-Israel-Cyprus Trilateral Summit, held in Jerusalem on 22 December 2025, reaffirmed cooperation in energy, technology, connectivity, and security. This alignment — when extended southward — creates a coherent maritime chain: Indian production, Gulf logistics, Berbera access, Red Sea transit, Levantine security, and Hellenic-Cypriot entry into Europe.

Greece contributes naval capacity and commercial shipping weight. Cyprus contributes legal positioning and EU regulatory embeddedness. Together, they provide the institutional bridge between the Red Sea corridor and the European market. But this bridge requires a southern foundation. Without Somaliland, the Greece-Israel-UAE-Cyprus corridor lacks a stable anchor; without India, it lacks Indo-Pacific scale.

X. The Centerpiece: Recognize

The Berbera Counter-Gambit: Why India Must Recognize Somaliland to Check Pakistan's Red Sea Ambition

By Gulaid Yusuf Idaan

As Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye deepen their security cooperation with Somalia, India must act strategically. Recognizing Somaliland and engaging through Berbera Port can safeguard India's maritime interests and secure the Red Sea corridor.



Somaliland — India's Only Decisive Counter

Pakistan's network is forming in Mogadishu because Somaliland has been kept off the board by diplomatic orthodoxy. The way to counter Pakistan's Red Sea gambit is not to compete for influence inside Somalia's broken institutions, but to recognize and empower the one entity in the Horn that Pakistan, Turkey, and their Saudi partners cannot co-opt: the Republic of Somaliland.

This is not a peripheral recommendation. It is the central strategic imperative of India's western maritime pivot.

Somaliland has operated with substantial autonomy since 1991 and has developed its own governmental institutions, security structures and electoral system. The November 2024 presidential election, where Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi "Irró" won with 63.92 percent of the vote, marked democratic continuity unmatched in the region. Somaliland has maintained 30-plus years of stable self-governance, with four peaceful transfers of power.

The port has undergone substantial modernization. DP World's \$442 million investment helped modernize Berbera, increasing annual container capacity from 100,000 to 500,000 TEUs, with a 17-meter draft and a 400-meter quay. Vessel turnaround times have dropped from 64 hours in 2018 to 25 hours in 2024. Phase 2 is targeting 2 million TEU. Behind the port lies Ethiopia, a landlocked country of more than 120 million people seeking diversified access to international trade.

The strategic equation is therefore straightforward: Berbera + Ethiopia + Gulf of Aden = an alternative logistics architecture. For India, that matters because New Delhi's interests are no longer confined to the Arabian Sea. Indian commerce depends on secure maritime connectivity linking the Indian Ocean to the Gulf and Europe. Disruptions in the Red Sea have already demonstrated how quickly instability around maritime

chokepoints can generate global economic consequences.

Somaliland's claim to statehood should not be reduced to its usefulness to India. It has its own historical, constitutional and political argument. Somaliland was a British protectorate before becoming independent on 26 June 1960. It subsequently entered into a union with the former Italian Somaliland. Following the collapse of the Somali state, Somaliland restored its separate political institutions in 1991. The 2001 referendum saw 97 percent vote for independence. Since then, it has built its own governmental structures, security institutions and electoral system. The question of whether these circumstances satisfy the legal requirements for statehood is complex and contested. Somaliland meets the Montevideo Convention criteria — territory, government, population, and the capacity to enter relations — just as South Sudan did before AU recognition in 2011. The opposition of Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia is rooted not in legal deficiency but in strategic convenience.

India should undertake a serious legal assessment rather than treating recognition as a purely geopolitical transaction. But the legal debate should not obscure the strategic reality: Somaliland exercises political authority, maintains institutions and controls a strategically important coastline. That makes it impossible to ignore. Formal recognition would incorporate India into a web of reliable interlocutors — Israel, the UAE, Ethiopia, Greece, Cyprus, and the United States — at the precise location where the Turkey-Pakistan-Saudi convergence threatens Indian interests. It would give India logistical access, intelligence-sharing arrangements, and sea reach at the Bab el-Mandeb. It would secure maritime commerce for an economy that cannot afford chokepoint vulnerability. And it would deny the Mecca Pact uncontested depth across the southern Red Sea system.

The cost of continued ambiguity is not neutrality; it is strategic exclusion. Every month that India delays, Pakistan entrenches in Mogadishu, Turkey expands its drone footprint, and the space for a southern anchor narrow.

XI. What New Delhi Should Do Now

India should adopt a Berbera Strategy with the following immediate components:

First, **extend formal recognition**. Treat Somaliland as a sovereign interlocutor. The legal and strategic case is sound; the diplomatic cost of delay exceeds the cost of action. Recognition would transform ambiguity into a formal relationship with a strategically located partner at the entrance to one of the world's most important maritime corridors. Second, **establish an embassy in Hargeisa**. Parallel to recognition, open a permanent diplomatic mission. This signals commitment and provides the institutional backbone for deeper cooperation. Even if full diplomatic recognition is initially considered politically difficult, India should establish or expand an official presence in Hargeisa and develop regular political consultations.

Third, **integrate Berbera into IMEC planning**. Work with the UAE, Ethiopia, and Somaliland authorities to designate Berbera as a formal logistics node in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, ensuring Indian commercial and naval access at the Bab el-Mandeb. Indian ministries, shipping companies, infrastructure firms and strategic institutions should assess the port's commercial potential and its relationship with Ethiopian markets. Fourth, **deepen naval and intelligence cooperation**. Initiate maritime domain awareness agreements, port visit protocols, and intelligence-sharing arrangements with Somaliland authorities, complementing India's existing partnerships with Israel and the UAE. India should explore maritime-domain awareness, anti-piracy cooperation, search-and-rescue coordination and port-call arrangements, consistent with international law.

Fifth, **coordinate with the emerging alignment**. Use the Greece-Israel-Cyprus trilateral framework and the Abraham Accords network to multilateralism Somaliland's integration, reducing individual diplomatic exposure while consolidating the southern flank of the Red Sea system. The Berbera corridor should be examined as part of a wider India-Gulf-Horn connectivity strategy rather than as a stand-alone Somaliland initiative. Sixth, **counter the narrative**. Challenge Mogadishu's claims to territorial integrity over Somaliland by emphasizing, in international forums, the distinction between

colonial borders and consensual union.

Conclusion: Build the Alternative Before the Map Closes

Pakistan's August 2026 agreements were not an end state; they were a test. Islamabad is probing whether military capability can be converted into geopolitical relevance beyond South Asia. The Mecca Pact gives it the financial and technological scaffolding to sustain that test. Turkey provides the hardware. Saudi Arabia provides the funding. Somalia provides the geography. The response cannot be bilateral. India cannot match Pakistan's military networking by acting alone. The answer must be equally networked: recognition of Somaliland, integration of Berbera into IMEC, naval and intelligence cooperation with Hargeisa, and alignment with the emerging Israel-UAE-Greece-Cyprus-Ethiopia axis. India's objective should not be an anti-Pakistan bloc in the Horn. That would be strategically counterproductive. Saudi Arabia remains an important Indian partner. Türkiye is too important to be treated simply as an adversary. Somalia is a sovereign state with which India has longstanding relations. Ethiopia is a major African partner.

India's objective should instead be strategic diversification. If Pakistan expands its military relationship with Somalia, India should not respond by demanding that Somalia choose between New Delhi and Islamabad. It should create alternatives. If Türkiye expands its defense presence, India should deepen maritime and technological partnerships elsewhere. If Saudi Arabia finances regional security initiatives, India should increase its own economic and strategic engagement with Riyadh. And if Berbera becomes more important to the regional logistics system, India should ensure that Indian interests have a legitimate place there.

This is classic Indian statecraft: multiple partnerships, strategic autonomy and avoidance of unnecessary bloc politics.

The question is no longer simply, "Why is Pakistan going to Somalia?" The more important question is: "What kind of strategic network is Pakistan trying to build through Somalia?" And the corollary that New Delhi must answer is: "What network will India build to ensure that Pakistan does not build alone?"

The Pakistan-Turkey-Saudi triangle is building facts on the ground in Mogadishu. The only effective, affordable, and immediate counter is for India to build facts in Hargeisa. Recognize Somaliland. Establish the embassy. Secure the corridor.

The time to act is now.

By Gulaid Yusuf Idaan

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