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Somaliland can contribute 2,000 troops for Gaza ISF if formally asked, says President Abdirahman Irro



He meets key U.S. institutions on foreign policy, African affairs and national security

By M.A. Egge.

Somaliland President H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro has said that his government is ready to contribute up to 2,000 troops to the proposed US-led International Stabilization Force (ISF) in Gaza if formally requested, as the

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Somaliland Steps Up Tax Compliance Drive as Finance Ministry Trains Government Institutions



Mohamoud Walaaleye

Somaliland's Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, in partnership with the Office of the Auditor General, has launched a training

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Somaliland Moves to Revive National Theatre in Push to Protect Language, Culture and Literature



Mohamoud Walaaleye

Republic of Somaliland's Ministry of Information, Culture and National Guidance is advancing plans to revive the country's National Theatre, in a move aimed at strengthening the preservation and promotion of the Somali language, culture and literary heritage.

Minister of Information, Culture and National Guidance Hon. Barkhad Jama Batuun said the ministry is working to restore the National Theatre to active service, describing it as an important platform for safeguarding Somaliland's cultural identity and mother tongue.

"We are working to revive the National Theatre, and it will become

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Guurti MP Calls for National Unity Behind Somaliland's Recognition Push as Nation Enters a Decisive Phase



Mohamoud walaaleye

Somaliland House of Elders (Guurti) member Hon. Mamduh Osman Sheikh Hassan has called on Somalilanders to rally behind the country's national cause, saying Somaliland has reached a critical

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The Tollbooth at the Temple Gates: Why Somaliland's Legal Aid Bill Must Rise Beyond Paper Promises



By Advoc. Mohamed Ahmed Abdi Ba'aluul.

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administration pursues closer security and diplomatic ties with Washington and global partners. Speaking to *The Midnight Dispatch* on the sidelines of the Middle East American Dialogue (MEAD) conference on Wednesday, President Abdirahman Irro said Somaliland was prepared to provide personnel to the proposed force but had not made a formal commitment because it was still awaiting a request to be extended.

"If they ask, we can provide," he said. "If they ask me, I am ready."

The proposed U.S.-led International Stabilization Force is ultimately expected to involve about 20,000 personnel in Gaza, with responsibilities including maintaining security, supporting the training of Palestinian police, facilitating humanitarian assistance and preventing Hamas from rebuilding its military capabilities. Uganda has approved a contingent of about 1,200 troops, while Morocco has committed up to 500. Albania, Kazakhstan and Kosovo have also pledged personnel, according to the report.

Irro said Somaliland currently has an army of approximately 25,000 soldiers and a Coast Guard of about 1,500 personnel. He noted that Somaliland has not previously contributed troops to an African Union peacekeeping force.

Israel Recognition Puts Somaliland in Global Spotlight

The President also described Israel's formal recognition of Somaliland as a major breakthrough in the nation's decades-long campaign for international recognition.

Israel became the first country to formally recognize Somaliland as an independent state in December, following Somaliland's restoration of its independence from Somalia in 1991.

Irro said the decision had dramatically increased international attention toward Somaliland.

"There has been much more attention paid to Somaliland following Israel's recognition," he said, adding that the name Somaliland could now be found "in every language in the world—in Indian, Arabic and Chinese."

He said Somaliland had spent 35 years seeking international recognition and engagement, arguing that the country was now receiving a level of global attention that had previously had not been achieved.

During his first official visit to Israel, President Abdirahman Irro opened Somaliland's embassy in Jerusalem in June. Somaliland had previously established a representative office in Taiwan in 2020.

Irro Takes Recognition Campaign to Washington

The Israeli recognition has also become an important backdrop to



Irro's diplomatic campaign in Washington, where he is holding a series of high-level meetings aimed at strengthening Somaliland's case for U.S. recognition and expanding strategic cooperation.

According to *Politico*, President Irro's Washington itinerary includes meetings with Senator Ted Cruz, a prominent congressional supporter of Somaliland's recognition; House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Brian Mast; U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Frank Garcia; and officials at the Pentagon.

The meetings bring Somaliland's case before key U.S. institutions responsible for foreign policy, African affairs and national security. The significance extends beyond the question of recognition. With growing security concerns in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, Somaliland is increasingly seeking to position itself as a strategic partner for the United States, particularly because of its location and the importance of Berbera along one of the world's major maritime corridors.

Irro said he could not point to any U.S. commitment to recognize Somaliland, but confirmed that his government had discussed both recognition and security cooperation with American officials. "We are optimistic," he said.

The meetings of the President in Washington represent his administration's most significant diplomatic engagements with U.S. policymakers as Somaliland seeks to translate growing international attention into formal recognition and a deeper strategic partnership.

Somaliland Seeks Greater Security Cooperation

Israel's recognition has also intensified tensions between Somaliland and countries opposed to the move, particularly Somalia and Turkey.

Irro pointed to Turkey's expanding military role in Somalia as evidence that the geopolitical consequences of Israel's recognition were already being felt in the region.

"There is no free lunch," he said. "Everything has some negative and some positive."

"We created new enemies," he added, arguing that countries that had not previously supplied Somalia with sophisticated military equipment were now providing greater support.

Asked whether Somaliland faced the

possibility of an invasion, Irro cited public statements by Somalia's president and defense minister regarding the possibility of military action against Somaliland.

He said Somaliland had sufficient manpower to defend itself but required more advanced weapons, equipment and military technology. "We need protection," he said.

Irro said Somaliland was seeking assistance from Israel, the United States and other potential partners to help "balance the situation."

He said there is currently no Israeli or American security presence in Somaliland, while suggesting that such a presence could emerge in the future as part of broader security cooperation and deterrence.

Asked whether he would welcome an Israeli security presence in Somaliland, Irro said he expected a foreign presence "maybe in the near future."

President Denies Talks on Israeli Operations Against Houthis

Irro also rejected reports that Somaliland and Israel had discussed using Somaliland's territory or airspace to support Israeli military operations against the Iran-backed Houthi movement in Yemen. He noted Somaliland's geographic proximity to Yemen across the Gulf of Aden but stressed that Somaliland was not currently in conflict with the Houthis.

"As a country, Somaliland, we don't have any conflict with the Houthis at the moment," he said.

"We haven't discussed possible Israeli operations against them," he added.

The president also denied reports that Somaliland had discussed accepting Palestinians displaced from Gaza as part of its relationship with Israel.

"We haven't discussed it with Israel, we haven't discussed it with the Americans, we haven't discussed it with anyone," he said.

Water Technology Tops Somaliland's Economic Priorities Beyond security and diplomacy, Irro said Somaliland's relationship with Israel could generate cooperation in trade, investment and economic development.

He identified water technology as Somaliland's immediate priority, citing the territory's semi-arid climate and the need for improved access to water resources.

During his visit to Israel, Irro said he met representatives of more than 100 Israeli companies, including

Somaliland Steps Up.....

programme in Hargeisa aimed at tightening tax compliance and strengthening financial accountability across government institutions.

The training, which brought together senior financial and administrative officials, focused on improving participants' understanding of tax obligations arising from government expenditures and ensuring greater compliance with the country's tax laws and procedures.

The programme was officially opened by the State Minister of the Ministry of Finance, Hon. Ismail Maulid Abdullahi, and Deputy Auditor General Mustafe Ahmed Mohamed (Waraf).

Participants received detailed guidance on tax procedures, withholding-tax responsibilities, government fees and charges, and tax obligations linked to expenditure on employees, services, fixed assets and government-funded projects.

Managers, directors, accountants and other officials from various government institutions, universities and public health facilities took part in the training.

Officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Auditor General said the initiative forms part of



broader government efforts to improve the quality of public financial management, reinforce institutional accountability and ensure that government entities comply with national tax regulations. The training also placed emphasis on the legal consequences of non-compliance. Participants were briefed on tax-related offenses, penalties and fines that may be imposed for violating statutory tax obligations.

The initiative comes as Somaliland continues to strengthen its domestic revenue systems and public financial management, with authorities placing greater emphasis on tax compliance, accountability and the effective management of public resources.

Somaliland Moves.....

part of our efforts to preserve our culture and protect our mother tongue," Batoon said.

The minister also announced the establishment of a large public forum designed to host evening programs, cultural activities and discussions focusing on issues related to language, culture and literature.

"We are establishing a large public forum here, and at night it will serve as a place where different topics will be discussed," he said.

The initiative is expected to provide a dedicated space for artists, writers, intellectuals and members of the



public to engage in discussions and cultural activities, while helping promote Somaliland's linguistic and literary heritage.

The planned revival of the National Theatre marks an effort to restore a historic cultural institution and create a platform where Somaliland's language, traditions, arts and literary voices can once again take centre stage.

businesses interested in Somaliland's potential oil and gas resources.

Although no major Israeli investment has yet materialized, the president said he expected investment to follow the strengthening of bilateral relations.

"We expect them", he said.

A Broader Strategic Partnership Irro's comments come as Somaliland seeks to expand its international partnerships while placing recognition, security and economic development at the centre of its foreign policy.

The proposed contribution to a Gaza stabilization force, the deepening relationship with Israel and the president's high-level meetings in Washington represent three interconnected elements of that strategy: demonstrating Somaliland's willingness to

contribute to international security, strengthening bilateral partnerships and making the case that Somaliland's strategic location and security capabilities can serve broader U.S. and regional interests. For Somaliland, the diplomatic push comes at a pivotal moment. Israel's recognition has elevated the nation's international profile, while instability around the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has increased the strategic importance of Somaliland's coastline and the port of Berbera.

Irro's message in Washington is therefore broader than a request for recognition alone: Somaliland wants to be treated as a strategic security, economic and diplomatic partner in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea region.

Somaliland to Gain Forensic Expertise at Arizona State University Forum: Advancing Sustainable Forensic Capacity

States, a virtual connection is opening a window into one of the country's most important and still-developing areas of justice: forensic science.

Somaliland is participating virtually in an international forensic forum hosted by Arizona State University in the United States in October 2026, bringing its experiences, challenges, professional knowledge, and future needs into a wider international academic and professional conversation.

Although Somaliland's representatives are not physically in the United States, their participation carries significance that extends far beyond the technology connecting them.

It demonstrates that distance does not have to be a barrier to professional engagement, knowledge-sharing, or international cooperation.

Through the virtual forum, Somaliland has an opportunity to place its own realities directly before an international audience—to explain where its forensic capabilities currently stand, identify the challenges it faces, and articulate the kind of cooperation required to build sustainable national capacity.

For a country where forensic science, mass-grave investigation, exhumation, forensic anthropology, victim identification, and humanitarian forensic practice remain developing fields, such engagement represents an important step toward building expertise that can serve justice while preserving history and protecting human dignity.

A Joint Presentation Bringing Somaliland's Experience to the World

Representing Somaliland in the forum are Guled Mohamed Hassan of the Somaliland Ministry of Justice and Lucia Elgerud, PhD, of Uppsala University in Sweden.

Together, they are delivering a presentation entitled:

"Building Sustainable Forensic Capacity: State of Community Forensics in Somaliland and Ways Forward."

The presentation examines the current state of forensic capacity in Somaliland while looking ahead to practical ways of strengthening the field.

Its focus extends beyond individual expertise. It encompasses training, knowledge exchange, institutional development, research, equipment, international cooperation, and long-term professional partnerships. That broader approach is particularly important.

Building a functioning forensic system is not simply about acquiring equipment or training a handful of specialists. It requires institutions, specialized knowledge, professional networks, sustained investment, research, and the ability to transfer international experience into national structures.

The virtual presentation therefore becomes more than an academic contribution. It becomes a platform through which Somaliland can explain its needs, share its experience, and engage directly with professionals working in a highly specialized field.

From Learning to National Service

For Guled Mohamed Hassan, the journey into forensic science reflects a broader path from scientific education to professional development and, increasingly, national service.

His scientific background at the University of Hargeisa provided a foundation for understanding technical and scientific issues. He later benefited from forensic-related capacity-building opportunities in Somaliland, including training provided by organizations from Latin America.

Those experiences offered exposure to the importance of forensic science and its potential role in Somaliland.

Over time, he also developed professional relationships with individuals and organizations involved in forensic science and humanitarian forensic work. Such relationships can be particularly valuable in a field where specialized knowledge and practical experience may not yet be widely available within Somaliland or the wider Horn of Africa.

Forensic expertise cannot be developed overnight. It grows through education, training, exposure, professional exchange, research, and the gradual accumulation of experience.

Every new connection can therefore become a bridge to knowledge that can eventually be brought home and applied locally.

When Individual Commitment Becomes National Contribution

Perhaps the most significant element of this journey is the connection between professional development and public service.

The knowledge being developed is not simply an exercise in personal career advancement. Within the Somaliland Ministry of Justice, engagement with forensic issues has a direct connection to justice, historical documentation, and the dignity of victims.

This creates a powerful chain:

Professional knowledge '!
Government responsibility '!
International cooperation '!
National capacity.

That connection matters.

Forensic science can provide tools for establishing facts, identifying victims, documenting evidence, and helping communities confront difficult chapters of their history.

For Somaliland, developing such capacity is therefore not merely a



scientific ambition. It is also part of a broader commitment to justice, historical preservation, and human dignity.

Building Capacity That Can Last

The challenge ahead is not simply to participate in international forums, but to transform participation into lasting national capacity.

International training can open doors. Professional relationships can create opportunities. Academic partnerships can transfer knowledge. But the ultimate measure of success is what remains after the conference ends and the virtual connection is closed.

Can; the knowledge return to Somaliland, professionals train others, institutions develop stronger systems, research expand, equipment and technical resources be secured or international partnerships evolve into sustained cooperation?

These are the questions that will determine whether emerging forensic expertise becomes a durable national capability.

Somaliland's virtual participation in the Arizona State University forum represents one step in that longer journey.

It places Somaliland professionals in a global conversation while allowing them to speak directly about realities on the ground. More importantly, it illustrates how professional commitment can gradually become institutional knowledge—and how institutional knowledge can ultimately become a national asset.

Recognizing the Young Professionals Building Somaliland's Future

There is also a broader national lesson in this journey.

Young Somaliland professionals who dedicate themselves to acquiring specialized knowledge, building international networks, and bringing that expertise back to serve their country represent an important national resource.

Their work may not always attract public attention, but the value of their contribution can extend far beyond their individual careers. By entering specialized fields, seeking international exposure, and connecting Somaliland with global professional communities, they are helping create knowledge and expertise that Somaliland will

increasingly need.

Such commitment should not go unnoticed.

Young professionals who work tirelessly to advance Somaliland's capabilities, represent the country internationally, and bring valuable knowledge home should be recognized, honored, and meaningfully rewarded at the national level.

Recognition should extend beyond words. It can take the form of professional opportunities, institutional support, research funding, access to specialized training, and mechanisms that enable young experts to apply and transfer the knowledge they acquire. When a young professional invests in knowledge and uses that knowledge in service of the nation, the achievement belongs not only to the individual—it becomes part of the country's institutional and human capital.

Supporting such people is therefore an investment in Somaliland's future.

A Bridge from Knowledge to Justice

Somaliland's participation in the Arizona State University forensic forum represents more than a virtual appearance at an international event.

It represents a bridge: from learning to service, from international cooperation to national capacity, and from scientific knowledge to justice, history, and human dignity. The journey is still at an early stage. But every trained professional, every international partnership, every research opportunity, and every transfer of knowledge brings Somaliland closer to developing forensic institutions capable of serving its people and preserving its history.

The screen connecting Somaliland to an international forensic community may be virtual—but the knowledge, experience, and national potential it carries can have very real consequences.

For Somaliland, building forensic capacity is ultimately about more than science. It is about developing the expertise, institutions, and human capital needed to establish facts, protect dignity, serve justice, and preserve the nation's history for generations to come.





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The Tollbooth at the Temple Gates: Why Somaliland's Legal Aid Bill Must Rise Beyond Paper Promises



By Advoc. Mohamed Ahmed Abdi Ba'aluul.

Walk into the open, crowded space leading into the Hargeisa Regional Court and you encounter a picture of justice far removed from the quiet dignity of legal texts. The entrance is a restless human crossroads: police officers moving detainees through the corridors, handcuffed and closely guarded; lawyers hurrying between courtrooms with files pressed beneath their arms; anxious relatives waiting for news; accused persons sitting silently under the watch of officers; clerks in blue shirts moving briskly from office to office with papers and case files; and ordinary citizens standing in bewilderment, trying to understand a system whose language and procedures can seem like a maze. Every corner carries a different story of conflict, accusation, debt, injury, divorce, imprisonment or disputed property. For many of those who enter through those doors, however, the first obstacle is not the law itself. It is the cost of reaching it.

For a poor citizen, justice can sometimes look less like an open public institution and more like a row of tollbooths. A litigant may face court fees calculated as a percentage of the value of a claim, potentially reaching three or four per cent of the disputed amount, alongside various procedural expenses and fragmented charges. For a wealthy litigant, such payments may be an inconvenience. For a struggling trader, a casual labourer, a widow, a displaced family or a low-income household, they can be a wall.

Imagine a small trader with a legitimate claim of \$3,000. The amount may represent years of savings, the capital of a modest business, or money desperately needed to support a family. Yet before the merits of his case are even heard, he may find himself calculating whether he can afford the journey to the courthouse at all. This is the uncomfortable reality that any serious discussion of legal aid must confront.

Somaliland therefore needs a Legal Aid Law. But it needs more than a law that sounds progressive, looks impressive in a parliamentary record and gathers dust on a shelf. It needs a law that works in the corridors of police stations, in crowded courtrooms, in detention facilities and in the homes of people who have never before had the confidence or means to approach a lawyer. It needs a law capable of carrying justice across the financial and institutional barriers that currently separate the ordinary citizen from the protection of the law. The Legal Aid Bill is an important opportunity. But Parliament should resist the temptation to measure success by the mere passage of legislation. A legal aid system is not successful because the statute book contains the words "legal aid." It succeeds when a poor detainee can actually speak to a lawyer, when an indigent accused person is represented before the court, when a vulnerable litigant can bring or defend a legitimate claim, and when the absence of money does not silently determine who gets justice and who does not.

The centre of such a system must

be the beneficiary—not the bureaucracy.

The first question should therefore be simple: Where does a person without money encounter the justice system, and who will be there to help?

The answer should not be a distant government office buried somewhere inside an administrative hierarchy. It should be the community paralegal who explains the first legal steps; the duty solicitor waiting at a police station; the lawyer standing beside an accused person before the first crucial hearing; the public defender preparing a case; and the legal-aid officer who can guide a poor litigant through an otherwise bewildering process.

These are the people who should form the living machinery of legal aid.

There is a danger, however, that the Bill could create a large administrative structure while leaving the frontline weak. Offices can be established. Directors can be appointed. committees can be formed. Regulations can be drafted. Reports can be produced. Budgets can be consumed. Yet none of this, by itself, puts a lawyer beside a frightened detainee at the moment that lawyer is needed.

A legal aid system should therefore be built from the ground up, not from the roof down. Somaliland does not need a grand bureaucratic monument to legal aid. It needs a functioning bridge between the citizen and the law.

That means putting resources where the legal crisis actually occurs: at police stations, detention centres, courthouses and within communities. The person who has lost his freedom, the family that cannot afford counsel, and the litigant who cannot navigate the legal system should not have to climb through layers of administration before discovering whether someone will help them.

The Bill must also be carefully fitted into Somaliland's existing legal architecture. Legal aid cannot operate as an isolated island in the middle of the justice system. Its provisions must be harmonised with the Criminal Procedure Code, the Judicial Administration Act and other laws governing police powers, prosecution, courts and legal representation. Where laws overlap, the Bill should make responsibilities clear. Where mandates intersect, the boundaries should be unmistakable. Otherwise, a law designed to open doors could create new corridors of confusion. This is particularly important in criminal cases, where time is not a minor administrative detail. For a person who has been arrested and

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Foreign Policy Makes Strategic Case for U.S. Recognition of Somaliland



Foreign Policy, a leading international publication covering global politics, security, economics and U.S. foreign affairs, has published an analysis arguing that Washington should consider recognizing the Republic of Somaliland, linking such a move to U.S. strategic interests in the Horn of Africa and the Red Sea.

The analysis, written by Steven A. Cook, a *Foreign Policy* contributor and expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, presents a case for U.S. recognition of Somaliland and questions the geopolitical calculations behind opposition to the territory's independence.

The article notes that Israel's recognition of Somaliland in late December 2025 triggered strong reactions from governments across the region and beyond. However, Cook questions whether the opposition is driven solely by the principle of protecting Somalia's unity and territorial integrity.

Instead, he argues that geopolitical and strategic interests play a significant role in shaping the positions of regional states toward Somaliland.

The analysis also revisits Somaliland's historical status, noting that it was formerly a British protectorate and gained independence in 1960 before voluntarily entering into a union with Somalia.

Following years of conflict and the collapse of Somalia's central government, Somaliland reasserted its independence in 1991. Since then, it has spent more than three decades developing its own political institutions, security forces, military structures and system of governance.

According to the analysis, this history gives Somaliland a distinctive legal and political

position compared with other territories seeking to break away from established states.

The article further points to examples from the Middle East and the wider region where governments that now strongly oppose Somaliland's recognition have previously supported or engaged with territories and administrations whose political status remains disputed.

This, the analysis suggests, raises questions about the consistency with which the principle of territorial integrity is applied in international politics. At the heart of the argument is Somaliland's strategic location along the Gulf of Aden and near the Red Sea, an increasingly important corridor for global trade, maritime security and regional geopolitics.

The analysis therefore frames recognition not only as a question of Somaliland's political status but also as a potential strategic calculation for Washington as it seeks to strengthen its position in the Horn of Africa and secure vital maritime routes.

It argues that if states have historically made exceptions to the principle of territorial integrity when political and strategic interests demanded it, Somaliland should not be judged exclusively through the argument of preserving Somalia's unity.

The debate ultimately places Somaliland's longstanding quest for international recognition within a broader question facing policymakers: whether geopolitical realities and strategic interests should influence how the international community approaches territories with established institutions, a distinct political history and longstanding claims to statehood.

The Tollbooth at the Temple Gates: Why Somaliland’s Legal Aid Bill Must Rise Beyond Paper Promises

deprived of liberty, every hour can matter. The right to legal representation cannot be transformed into a bureaucratic waiting room.

The proposed fifteen-day period for evaluating eligibility deserves especially serious reconsideration. A detainee does not experience detention as an administrative timetable. Fifteen days can be an eternity to someone behind bars, particularly when questioning, statements, bail, remand and other critical procedural decisions may arise long before an eligibility assessment is completed. A constitutional right to counsel cannot meaningfully exist if the person entitled to that right must first wait for an administrative determination of whether he or she is poor enough to receive it. The solution is not complicated: where immediate legal assistance is necessary, representation should begin provisionally, with financial eligibility being determined alongside or shortly thereafter. The courthouse door should not remain locked while an official searches for the key. This principle becomes even more important when considering the enforcement of legal-aid rights. A law that says police officers must inform detainees of their right to counsel is only as strong as the consequences for failing to do so. A law that says lawyers must be allowed access to their clients must answer what happens when that access is obstructed. A law that guarantees representation must explain what happens when a person is interrogated, pressured or required to make statements without the assistance to which the law entitles them. Rights without remedies are fragile things. They can look impressive in legislation while becoming almost weightless in practice. The Bill should therefore contain clear reporting, investigation and accountability mechanisms. Where officials deliberately or negligently frustrate a person’s legal-aid rights, there should be consequences. Where evidence or statements are obtained in serious breach of protected procedural rights, the law should provide meaningful remedies, including appropriate rules concerning their admissibility. Otherwise, legal aid risks becoming a polite promise made to people who have no power to enforce it. The same practical seriousness should apply to lawyers themselves. A legal-aid lawyer cannot provide effective representation if access to the client is repeatedly delayed, confidential consultations are obstructed, case files are withheld, or court appearances are treated as a favour rather than a professional

right. The lawyer must be able to meet the client, review the evidence, prepare the defence and speak freely with the person represented. Legal aid is not simply about assigning a lawyer’s name to a case. It is about giving that lawyer the practical conditions necessary to do the job. The Bill should therefore recognise that representation is a service, not a ceremonial appointment. Nor should legal aid be confined narrowly to the moment when a person enters a courtroom. Many legal problems begin long before litigation. A community member may need advice before signing an agreement. A family may need assistance before a dispute becomes a criminal complaint. A detainee may need counsel before giving a statement. A poor litigant may need help understanding whether a claim is legally viable before spending scarce money pursuing it. This is why community-based legal assistance and paralegal services matter. They can become the first bridge across the gap between ordinary people and a legal system that often appears distant, technical and intimidating. But the Bill must also be financially realistic. Legal aid cannot be created by legislation alone. Lawyers must be paid. Paralegals must be trained. Duty schemes must be staffed. Offices require resources. Transportation, communication, case management and supervision all cost money. If the state creates an entitlement without providing a credible mechanism for financing it, the promise will eventually collide with reality. That collision is precisely what Parliament should prevent. The legislators therefore face a choice that is larger than the wording of individual clauses. They can create a legal-aid system that looks orderly on paper but struggles at the point of delivery, or they can design a lean, practical and enforceable system that begins with the person standing outside the courtroom wondering whether justice is something he can actually afford. The distinction matters. Somaliland has passed many laws before. The challenge is not always the absence of legal language; it is the distance between legal language and everyday reality. A right written beautifully in a statute can still be useless to a person who cannot pay the filing fee, cannot find a lawyer, cannot reach a duty solicitor, cannot meet counsel in confidence, or cannot obtain assistance before an irreversible procedural step has taken place. Legal aid should close that distance. That is why Parliament should

pause before passing the Legal Aid Bill in its present form. There is little value in replacing one locked door with another, or in building a bridge that ends halfway across the river. A weak Legal Aid Law could give Somaliland the appearance of reform while leaving the poor stranded on the same side of justice. The country does not need a law merely to fill the statute book. It needs a law that can carry the weight placed upon it—a law that opens the courthouse door not only in words, but in reality. The test should therefore be brutally simple: when a poor citizen arrives at a police station, a detention centre or the courthouse, will this law actually help him? Will a lawyer be available? Will that lawyer be able to meet him? Will the person be informed of his rights? Will financial eligibility prevent immediate assistance? Will there be a remedy when an official obstructs access? Will the system have enough money to function? Will responsibility be clear between the legal-aid authority, police, prosecutors and courts? And, above all, will the law still work when the person standing before it has no money, no influence and no powerful name? Those are the questions Parliament should answer before the Bill is passed. Because legal aid is ultimately not about offices, forms or administrative titles. It is about whether justice remains justice when the person seeking it is poor. The crowded entrance of the Hargeisa Regional Court offers a fitting reminder. Behind every file moving through the hands of a blue-shirted clerk is a human being waiting for an outcome. Behind every police escort is a person whose liberty may depend on what happens next. Behind every anxious relative is a family carrying uncertainty. Behind every lawyer rushing through those corridors is an attempt to translate the abstract language of law into something real. The law should meet those people there—not somewhere far behind another locked door. Somaliland does not merely need a Legal Aid Law. It needs a working legal-aid system: constitutionally coherent, financially accessible, institutionally lean, properly harmonised with existing laws, centred on beneficiaries, and equipped with teeth strong enough to enforce the rights it promises. Parliament has the opportunity to build precisely that. It should not settle for a law that merely hangs a sign above the door. It should make sure the door actually opens.

Somaliland Parliament Presses Coast Guard Commander on Maritime Security and Operational Challenges



Mohamoud Walaaleye
Somaliland’s House of Representatives’ Committee on Internal Affairs, Defense and Security held a high-level briefing with Coast Guard Commander Admiral Ahmed Hure Haariye, focusing on the force’s operations, responsibilities and the challenges confronting Somaliland’s maritime security. The meeting was chaired by Committee Chairman Abdikarim Me’aad Isak and attended by Deputy Chairman Guled Mohamed Warsame, lawmakers and committee staff. Admiral Hure briefed the committee on the Coast Guard’s mandate, day-to-day operations and responsibilities in protecting Somaliland’s coastline and national interests at sea. Lawmakers questioned the

commander on the force’s performance, operational responsibilities and the wider national duties entrusted to the Coast Guard, seeking a clearer picture of its capabilities and the obstacles affecting its work. The session forms part of the House of Representatives’ constitutional oversight and accountability role, through which parliamentary committees monitor the performance of national institutions and examine the challenges they face in fulfilling their mandates. The briefing underscores growing parliamentary attention to Somaliland’s maritime security and the operational capacity of the Coast Guard as the country seeks to strengthen the protection and management of its extensive coastline.

Guurti MP Calls for National Unity Behind Somaliland’s Recognition Push as Nation Enters a Decisive Phase

moment after what he described as a long and difficult journey. Addressing the Guurti during a debate on the national agenda, particularly the issue of current developments, Hon. Mamduh urged citizens to close ranks and stand behind Somaliland’s national achievements and its pursuit of international recognition. “Today, the nation is emerging from a long and difficult journey. What is needed is for us to stand together and support it,” he said. The lawmaker also offered prayers for President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Irro) and his delegation, who are currently in the United States, expressing hope that the delegation will succeed in advancing Somaliland’s recognition efforts. He stressed the importance of national unity at a time he portrayed as a decisive phase for Somaliland’s political and diplomatic aspirations. He called on the public and national institutions to join hands in protecting the country’s interests,



supporting its diplomatic gains and defending the Somaliland cause. His remarks come as President Irro and a high-level Somaliland delegation continue their engagement in the United States, with recognition and the advancement of Somaliland’s strategic interests among the key objectives of the visit. The Guurti member’s appeal underscored the importance of maintaining a united national position as Somaliland seeks to translate its growing international engagement into tangible diplomatic gains.

THT Puzzle

Prepared by: Abdillahi Said Muhummed

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11						12			13		14
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33						34				35	

- ACROSS
- 1 Therefore
- 3 have enough money.
- 6 Wait for
- 8 Being as
- 9 Escaping
- 10 Quantity used on papers
- 11 Eye or lookout
- 13 damaging/opposite of good
- 15 Municipal
- 19 Towards
- 20 Speech
- 23 Go off
- 24 Ocean
- 25 Change or control
- 26 Upon
- 29 Shouts or cracks
- 30 Ticket or meal
- 32 Salaries
- 33 Crash
- 34 Reddish
- 35 Remain
- DOWN
- 1 Secure
- 2 not available in short forms
- 3 breakfasted
- 4 Stand facing
- 5 Repetition
- 7 Calendar week
- 10 Rootle
- 12 amount in cash
- 14 Puppy
- 15 Stairs
- 16 Drink
- 17 Juvenile
- 18 Ending
- 20 Shortly
- 21 BEING AS
- 22 Occasions
- 27 Surname
- 28 Family tree
- 29 Witnessed
- 30 Far away
- 31 Reddish

Previous Answer

B 1	R	E 2	A	C 3	H		R 4	O	U 5	N	D
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	U 13		C		P 14	E	N 15				W
A 16	S	S 17		S 18	P	E	E	D 19		A 20	
	A 21	P	P	L	E		W 22	R	I	N	G
A 23	G	E		E 24	R	A 25	S	E		Y	
S 26	E	A		E		S		S			
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Whatever Happens in Washington, Somaliland Must Prepare Legally for Recognition

Somaliland is independent. There is no taking that back. Seventy-five percent of Somalis were born after 1991 and have no direct memory of unity. Over those 35 years, Somaliland developed national institutions and a democratic culture; Somalis, however, remain mired in corruption, violence, and extremism. As Somaliland fiercely defends its sovereignty, Somali Presidents Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo and Hassan Sheikh Mohamud have, for personal profit, made Somalia a *de facto* colony whose resources and waters Turkey can exploit. Deputy Secretary of State Chris Landau may try to reverse and reject Somaliland sovereignty, but he lives in a fantasy world: Somalilanders will no more rejoin Somalia than Ukrainians will rejoin Russia.

While President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro and his delegation visits the United States to advance Somaliland's cause in Washington and among international delegations at the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Somaliland's parliament must do more to prepare Somaliland's legal code to conform with major international treaties and conventions. Somaliland cannot accede to treaties prior to its recognition by the United Nations as a member state if other member-states object—and Somalia, Turkey, and China certainly will. Still, Hargeisa can both signal to the world its seriousness and commitment to rule-of-law and also distinguish itself from Mogadishu if Somaliland's parliament endorses conventions and treaties that Somalia has joined. For example, Somalia has not joined the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the so-called Palermo Convention, which criminalizes human trafficking and migrant smuggling. Somaliland already fights such smuggling, but declaring its conformity with the Convention would give it the international credit it deserves at no cost to Somaliland's sovereignty nor would it run afoul of the conservative elements in Somali society.

Somalia is also not a member of the Hague Conference on Private International Law. Again, joining many of these Hague Conventions would be common-sense, as they represent responsibilities of almost every mainstream state. For example, the Somaliland parliament could endorse the Hague Service Convention which enables the serving of legal documents from abroad into Somaliland. The Hague Evidence Convention allows investigators to take evidence abroad. The Hague Apostille Convention regularizes the authenticating of public documents. The Hague Child Abduction Convention requires the signatories' cooperation returning children kidnapped by a parent who did not have full custody. While some religious conservatives might object to this, their religious

arguments are undercut by the fact that many other majority Muslim states—from Bosnia to Burkina Faso—have joined.

Somalia likewise has not joined the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court that allows the Court to try genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and crimes of aggression. With war criminals from the Isaaq genocide still sheltered in Somalia, the notion that Somalia will join is fantasy, and so Somaliland can distinguish itself. Somali pundits can argue that the United States has also not joined the Rome Statute, Washington's objections have more to deal with sovereignty concerns against the backdrop of cynical anti-Americanism. Somaliland has more to gain than lose by declaring its intention to join the International Criminal Court on day one of its United Nations accession.

Somaliland's parliament can also affirm its intention to join separately those treaties like the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea to which Somalia is a member. This is important because Somali treaty memberships would not migrate with recognition of Somaliland's 'secession' from Somalia. The Clinton administration set out this stance when, against the backdrop of Quebec's 1995 referendum to become independent, he issued talking points to U.S. diplomats countering Quebecois separatist leaders like Jacques Parizeau and Lucien Bouchard who had argued that an independent Quebec would also be a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The same standard has held true for potential Scottish secession and the status of tripartite Turkey-Syria-Iraq water sharing deals should Kurdistan become independent. Somaliland should be proud of its parliament. While its elections must be more regular, parliamentarians must think about more than minor tweaks of the existing legal code and more about which treaties Somaliland will join, and ensuring the domestic law makes this possible on day one. Indeed, by doing so, Somaliland can show even its critics that it is more serious and has greater capacity than any other aspirant states, from the Palestinians to the Kurds to New Caledonia's Kanaks.

About the Author

Michael Rubin is director of policy analysis at the Middle East Forum and a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

A former Pentagon official, Dr. Rubin has lived in post-revolution Iran, Yemen, and both pre- and postwar Iraq. He also spent time with the Taliban before 9/11. For more than a decade, he taught classes at sea about the Horn of Africa and Middle East conflicts, culture, and terrorism, to deployed US Navy and Marine units.

Dr. Rubin has a PhD and an MA in history from Yale University, where he also obtained a BS in biology.

A Friend's Warning, a State's Opportunity: Rethinking Somaliland's Washington Strategy



Rubin's recent article, "*Somaliland's Delegation is Sending the Wrong Message to Washington*," deserves serious consideration. Not because every conclusion he reaches must be accepted, but because countries seeking stronger international partnerships should listen carefully when longstanding friends raise uncomfortable questions.

His central concern is that Somaliland has built considerable political goodwill in Washington through its relative stability, democratic competition, security cooperation, strategic geography, and broadly pro-Western orientation, but that an oversized or insufficiently focused presidential delegation could weaken that capital by projecting domestic political accommodation rather than strategic discipline.

There is merit in this warning. But the question is larger than whether Somaliland should send five officials or nineteen.

The Real Issue Is Strategic Coherence

Diplomacy is about *signaling*. A delegation communicates before negotiations begin. Its composition signals priorities, authority, preparation, and purpose. Rubin is therefore right to caution against turning an important presidential visit into a collection of disconnected ministerial agendas.

Yet delegation alone is a weak measure of diplomatic competence. Governments frequently travel with political, technical, security, and commercial teams. The real distinction is between a *strategically organized delegation* and an *uncoordinated one*.

Somaliland should therefore focus less on numerical limits and more on mission design. A small presidential negotiating team can handle the most sensitive political engagements, while other officials work through clearly defined tracks for the less critical but strategic engagements.

The President does not need every official beside him in every meeting. But additional officials are not automatically unnecessary either if each has a specific mandate. The essential question is therefore not *how many people are traveling*. It is: *What is each person traveling to achieve?*

Every member should be able to answer three questions: *Why am I going? Whom am I meeting? What measurable outcome am I responsible for?* If those questions cannot be answered, Rubin's criticism becomes difficult to dismiss.

The Pahlavi Comparison Has Limits

Rubin compares President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi "Irro" with Iranian

opposition figure Reza Pahlavi. The comparison is rhetorically powerful, but analytically limited.

President Irro is not an aspirant seeking to prove his readiness to govern. He is the elected president of a political entity that has governed itself for more than three decades and maintains functioning institutions.

Somaliland's challenge is therefore different.

It must demonstrate that *Somaliland itself is a credible, reliable, and strategically valuable partner*. This distinction matters because Somaliland's case must become increasingly institutional rather than personality-driven.

Presidents change. Ministers change. Governments change. A serious Somaliland-U.S. relationship must survive all of them.

Indeed, one of Somaliland's strongest arguments is that political leadership has changed repeatedly while the institutions of the state have endured.

From Recognition Advocacy to Strategic Bargaining

For more than three decades, Somaliland's international case has been largely normative:

We restored our sovereignty in 1991. We built peace through locally driven processes. We established functioning institutions, conducted competitive elections, maintained relative stability, and occupied an important strategic location. Therefore, the international community should address Somaliland's case for recognition.

This argument has considerable historical and political weight.

But international politics does not operate on virtue alone. States act where *principles, interests, and strategic opportunities intersect*. Somaliland, therefore, needs to move from *recognition advocacy* toward *strategic bargaining*.

The question should increasingly become not only why the United States should recognize or engage Somaliland, but what concrete strategic interests the United States and Somaliland can pursue together.

This is particularly important in a changing Red Sea and Horn of Africa environment shaped by maritime insecurity, competition over ports and access, terrorism, Gulf engagement, Chinese influence, Ethiopia's search for diversified trade corridors, and wider geopolitical competition. *Somaliland should position itself within these debates.*

What Should Somaliland Take to Washington?

Somaliland should arrive with a small number of propositions rather than a long list of projects.

The first should be Red Sea and Gulf of Aden security. Berbera lies within one of the world's most strategically sensitive maritime environments. Instability around Yemen, Bab el-Mandeb, and the southern Red Sea increases the value of reliable partners along the African coast.

The second should be counterterrorism and intelligence cooperation. Somaliland's stability should not simply be presented as an achievement deserving international praise. It should be presented as a strategic asset that can contribute to regional security.

The third should be a commercial and

geoeconomic partnership. Berbera Port, the Berbera Economic Zone, and the corridor toward Ethiopia give Somaliland potential importance in logistics, trade diversification, and regional connectivity.

The fourth should be political reliability. Somaliland's democratic competition, relationship with Taiwan, cooperation with the UAE, and willingness to work with Western partners distinguish it within an increasingly contested region.

Learning From Friends

There is also a broader lesson in Rubin's intervention.

Somaliland should value international scholars, policymakers, diplomats, and analysts who have defended its achievements and supported stronger international engagement.

But friendship should never mean permanent agreement. A serious political community must distinguish between *hostility and constructive criticism*. Criticism from friends can be uncomfortable and sometimes wrong. But it can still expose weaknesses before competitors or opponents exploit them.

The appropriate response to Rubin is therefore neither a personal attack nor an automatic acceptance. *It is to ask: What part of this criticism can strengthen Somaliland's diplomacy?* That is how politically mature states engage their friends.

A Somaliland That Knows Its Value

Somaliland's greatest diplomatic risk is not whether nineteen officials board an aircraft. The greater risk is arriving in Washington without a unified understanding of what Somaliland wants from the United States, what the United States may realistically want from Somaliland, and where those interests intersect.

Geography alone does not create influence.

The real challenge is whether Somaliland can convert *geography into geopolitical value, geopolitical value into diplomatic leverage, and diplomatic leverage into durable institutional relationships. That is the political economy of recognition.*

Michael Rubin is right that appearances matter, preparation matters, and amateurism would be costly at such an important moment.

But Somaliland should take the argument further. The objective is not merely to send a smaller delegation. *The objective is to build a more strategic state.*

A successful Washington visit should demonstrate a Somaliland that understands its national interests, coordinates its institutions, listens confidently to constructive criticism, negotiates from its strengths, and approaches the United States not primarily as a petitioner, but as a partner capable of contributing to shared strategic interests.

That would be the strongest response to Michael Rubin's concern, and a more convincing demonstration of the political maturity Somaliland wants the wider international community to recognize.

About the Author

Dr. Abdirahman Gaas is a Somaliland scholar, academic, political analyst, and political economist whose work focuses on governance, geopolitics, regional integration, and democratic development in the Horn of Africa.

Somaliland President's U.S. Visit Raises Hopes for Diplomatic Breakthrough and New Opportunities



The visit of the President of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi Irro, to the United States has generated significant interest among Somalilanders and observers of the country's international affairs.

The high-level visit is centered on strengthening relations between Somaliland and the United States while advancing cooperation in key areas including security, economic development, investment, and Somaliland's long-standing pursuit of international recognition.

For Somaliland, the visit represents an important moment in its foreign policy efforts and its broader campaign to demonstrate its democratic credentials, peace and stability, and record of governance to the international community.

During his stay in the United States, President Irro and his delegation are engaging with U.S. officials, representatives of American institutions, and members of the Somaliland diaspora. The meetings are expected to explore opportunities for expanded trade and investment, infrastructure development, and security cooperation.

The visit has also generated expectations among the people of

Somaliland that closer engagement with Washington could translate into practical economic and development opportunities, while strengthening Somaliland's international standing.

Yonis Hassan Abdi Khaire, a politician and member of the WADDANI Party, said the visit should be viewed as part of a long-term diplomatic effort requiring patience, dialogue, and sustained engagement.

He emphasized that successful diplomacy depends not only on high-level meetings but also on building enduring relationships around shared interests and mutual benefits.

The Somaliland public hopes President Irro's U.S. visit will leave a lasting positive legacy by strengthening the country's international reputation, opening doors for investment and development, and advancing its diplomatic aspirations.

As Somaliland continues to pursue a greater role on the international stage, the visit underscores Somaliland's determination to deepen strategic partnerships while presenting its case through diplomacy, dialogue, and engagement.

Somaliland Police Launches Instructor Training Programme to Build a New Generation of Trainers

Mohamoud Walaaleye

The Commander of the Somaliland Police Force, Brigadier General Abdirahman Abdillahi Hassan, has officially opened a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme designed to prepare police officers to become instructors capable of training future generations of personnel.

The training forms part of the Police Force's broader efforts to strengthen professional skills, institutional capacity, and the quality of policing through the development of qualified officers who can transfer their knowledge and expertise to others.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Brigadier General Abdirahman said the programme was an important component of the force's ongoing reform and organizational development efforts.

"We want to review our police force and continue our efforts to strengthen its performance and organization," he said. "This requires us to produce and prepare officers who can teach and serve

as instructors for the force."

He added that the programme would focus on developing educated young officers capable of contributing to the long-term growth of the Police Force by passing on the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

"As part of our plan, we aim to develop educated young officers who can pass on the knowledge they have acquired to the Police Force," the Commander said.

The initiative is expected to strengthen the Police Force's internal training capacity by creating a pool of qualified instructors who can support continuous professional development and ensure that knowledge and expertise are sustained within the institution.

The programme highlights the Police Command's emphasis on investing in human capital as part of its wider efforts to improve the organization, preparedness, and professional standards of the Somaliland Police Force.