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## Somaliland President Puts Geography, Security and Strategic Access at the Heart of Its U.S. Recognition Case



**President links diplomatic recognition directly to investment, finance, trade and formalized counterterrorism cooperation**

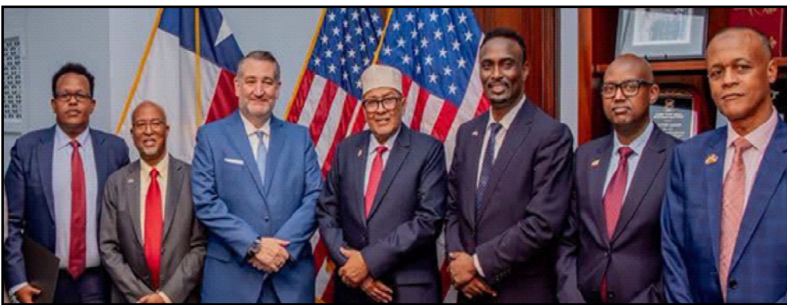
By M.A. Egge

The historic presentation of the essence of the Republic of Somaliland as a formidable sovereign state vividly made by its President H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro at the Hudson Institute in Washington DC underscored his case for closer

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## President Holds an Important Meeting with Senator Ted Cruz on Capitol Hill



By M.A. Egge

The President of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi (Irro), held a crucial meeting at Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., with Senator Ted

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## Somaliland's Financial Access Case Takes Center Stage as Rep. John Rose Presses Treasury Secretary Bessent



Mohamoud Walaaleye

The Republic of Somaliland's push for greater access to the U.S. and international financial systems took a prominent place in a U.S. House Financial

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## Somaliland Central Bank Welcomes U.S. Push to Address International Financial Access Barriers



Mohamoud Walaaleye

The Bank of Somaliland has welcomed renewed U.S. attention to Somaliland's access to the international financial system, following a congressional hearing in Washington where a

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## Guarding Somaliland's Maritime Frontier:

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre on Securing 850 km Coastline**



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## Somaliland joins world alliance for Disaster Management as Founding Member



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## In a Political Culture of Distrust, Waddani Chairman Hirsi's Reputation for Truthfulness Stands Out



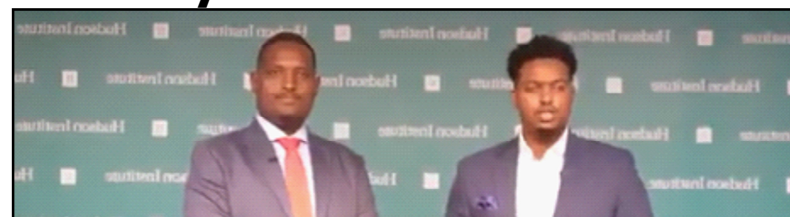
Mohamoud Walaaleye

In a political environment where public trust is often weakened by broken promises and a perceived gap between words and actions, Waddani Chairman Hirsi Ali Haji Hassan has earned a reputation for something increasingly regarded as rare in politics: keeping his word.

An article Omar M. Farah wrote, which I

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## From Atlantic Council to Hudson: Somaliland's U.S. Recognition Case Gains Strategic Weight Through Security and Economic Partnership — Eng. Ahmed



Mohamoud Walaaleye

WASHINGTON — Somaliland's case for recognition in the United States is increasingly being framed not only as a question of history and

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My First Journey Towards Forensic Investigation: Exhumation, Truth-Telling, and the Search for the Missing ( Gabiley 2015)

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# Somaliland President.....

relations with the United States as a strategic partnership built around maritime security, economic opportunity and geopolitical access. It depicted that Somaliland location along the Gulf of Aden gives Washington a dependable partner at a critical point in global trade. While stating clearly that despite the legal historical rights the nation had of its sovereign independence, the issue today is the viability of the nation of Somaliland as it stands today and what it portends for the future of the region's stability, progress and integral global economics.

Speaking at the Hudson Institute in Washington, the Somaliland President underpinned the fact that his visit was aimed at raising awareness of Somaliland's achievements and demonstrating how the territory could contribute to American interests in a volatile region.

The address placed Somaliland's long-running quest for international recognition within a broader argument about security and strategic competition in Africa. From ill-fated Union to Reasserted Sovereignty

President Abdirahman Irro retraced Somaliland's political history to June 26, 1960, when it first gained independence and international recognition from the British before entering into an ill-fated union with Somalia five days later, a move destined to collapse from the word go.

He argued that the union eventually became untenable amid authoritarian rule, oppression and serious human rights violations under the Siad Barre regime. Following the collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991, Somaliland, he said, withdrew from the union and reasserted its sovereignty.

He portrayed the subsequent three decades as an effort to build state institutions without international recognition or access to the international financial system.

Somaliland, he said, established a constitution, functioning national institutions with all the trappings of statehood catering for the people and their country, a national currency, all diverse security arms, while holding elections that have resulted in repeated and orderly transfers of power.

He argued that Somaliland's recognition campaign is not, should not be viewed, as a conventional secessionist claim, but as an effort to restore the sovereignty it possessed before the 1960 union.

A Strategic Case for Washington

The central message of President Irro's address, however, was not historical, but strategic.

He argued that changing geopolitical conditions in Africa and growing instability around the Red Sea have brought Somaliland's



interests increasingly closer to those of the United States.

He criticized the international approach toward Somalia, arguing that years of international financial, diplomatic and military support had failed to produce a sufficiently effective central government.

He further accused Somalia of using its internationally recognized status to isolate Somaliland and prevent it from accessing international institutions, markets and formal agreements with other states.

Against that backdrop, Somaliland has been presented as an alternative partner: stable, democratic and aligned with Western interests.

**Gulf of Aden Becomes Central to the Argument**

Geography was perhaps the strongest element of the Somaliland case.

President Abdirahman Irro highlighted the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the wider Red Sea corridor as critical maritime routes whose importance has been reinforced by regional conflict and attacks on commercial shipping.

He argued that Somaliland's position on the Gulf of Aden gives the United States an opportunity to work with a stable partner close to one of the world's most strategically important maritime corridors.

"Proximity of that kind is a burden, but it's equally a capability," he said, presenting Somaliland's coastline as an asset for maritime security, deterrence and the protection of international shipping.

The argument was reinforced by a reference to Berbera, which the President described as a modernized deep-water port and a potential logistical asset for the United States.

Berbera and the Economic Argument

The address also sought to connect recognition with American commercial interests.

Berbera was presented not simply as a port but as part of a wider economic corridor extending toward Ethiopia and potentially into East and Central African markets.

The President highlighted the economic zone around the port, citing tax exemptions, duty-free storage, foreign ownership and profit-repatriation provisions as incentives for international investors.

He argued that the infrastructure already in place could give American businesses an

opportunity to enter the market earlier rather than later.

Somaliland's largely undeveloped marine resources and unexplored mineral potential were also presented as potential areas for American investment.

The message to U.S. businesses was explicit: Somaliland wanted American companies to take an early position in the market and benefit from what the President described as a first-mover opportunity.

Taiwan and Israel as Examples of Deepening Partnerships

The speech also pointed to Somaliland's relations with Taiwan as evidence of its willingness to build partnerships with democratic governments.

According to President Irro, Somaliland established relations with Taipei in 2020, with cooperation expanding into areas including medical and educational exchanges, trade and investment.

He also highlighted Israel's recognition of Somaliland, describing it as a strategic decision based on mutual security interests rather than an act of diplomatic favor.

He said the subsequent state-level engagement, including a visit to Israel and the opening of Somaliland's embassy in Jerusalem, demonstrated the potential for cooperation between two countries situated on opposite sides of the Red Sea.

Not Seeking to Displace Anyone

A recurring theme of the speech was that Somaliland was offering the United States an additional strategic option rather than seeking to replace existing partners.

"We do not seek to displace anyone," the President said, arguing instead that Somaliland could provide Washington with another dependable point of access along the Gulf of Aden.

He emphasized Somaliland's proximity to the Houthi threat and argued that a stable, effectively governed coastline could support maritime security and the protection of international shipping.

The speech also emphasized Somaliland's record of avoiding attacks against American personnel, vessels and aircraft, portraying that record as evidence of its reliability as a potential U.S. security partner.

Recognition as a Gateway, Not Just a Symbol

President Irro ultimately framed recognition as a practical

# Somaliland's Financial.....

Services Committee hearing on Tuesday, as Representative John Rose raised the issue directly with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

Rose highlighted Somaliland's strategic position along the Gulf of Aden and its potential significance to U.S. security and economic interests, while asking whether stronger financial ties between Washington and Somaliland could contribute to regional stability and help address China's expanding influence in the Horn of Africa.

The discussion followed Rose's meeting earlier in the day with Somaliland President H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro, who is currently in Washington.

During the hearing, Rose asked Bessent about barriers preventing Somaliland from gaining greater access to the U.S. financial system and international payment infrastructure, including SWIFT. He also requested the Treasury Secretary's support for H.R. 7993, the Somaliland Economic Access and Opportunity Act.

The bill, introduced by Rose in March 2026, would require the Treasury Department to submit a comprehensive report to Congress within 180 days examining legal, regulatory, and policy barriers to Somaliland's access to the U.S. financial system. It would also require recommendations concerning financial transparency, compliance standards, remittances, and the feasibility of access to international financial infrastructure, including SWIFT.

"Somaliland is a valuable partner for the U.S., and has the potential even to become a greater partner," Rose said during the hearing, pointing to its strategic location near the Gulf of Aden and major international shipping routes.

He further argued that Somaliland's location could make it relevant to U.S. security and economic interests at a time when China is expanding its influence across the Horn of Africa.

Rose then asked Bessent whether stronger financial ties between Somaliland and the United States could advance American security and economic interests and

contribute to countering China's growing regional influence.

Bessent said he would refer questions concerning recognition to the State Department, while emphasizing the broader relationship between economic engagement and development.

He also indicated that Treasury would review Rose's legislation and engage with the congressman's office. According to the Somaliland Mission to the United States, Bessent committed to reviewing H.R. 7993, receiving a briefing from Treasury's International Affairs team, and continuing discussions with Rose's staff.

H.R. 7993 remains at the introduced stage and has been referred to the House Committee on Financial Services.

The hearing also gave Somaliland's Washington mission an opportunity to publicly welcome Rose's intervention.

The Somaliland Mission thanked the congressman for what the mission described as continued leadership in advancing stronger U.S.-Somaliland economic ties.

The legislation represents a focus on financial access rather than diplomatic recognition itself, requiring Treasury to examine the practical obstacles surrounding Somaliland's participation in U.S. and international financial systems and identify possible pathways for greater engagement, subject to financial-compliance safeguards.

For Somaliland, the issue has implications extending beyond banking. Greater integration with international financial infrastructure could affect remittances, trade, investment, and the ability of financial institutions to establish correspondent relationships with international banks.

The congressional debate therefore places Somaliland's financial-system access within a wider U.S. discussion about economic engagement, maritime security, and strategic interests in the Horn of Africa.

instrument rather than a ceremonial achievement.

For Somaliland, he argued, international recognition would create access to development finance, international trade and formal security cooperation currently constrained by its unrecognized status.

"Recognition will open that channel," he said, linking diplomatic recognition directly to investment, finance, trade and formalized counterterrorism cooperation.

The address therefore sought to shift the debate over Somaliland's recognition from one centered primarily on history and diplomatic

status toward one focused on strategic interests.

Its central proposition was straightforward: Somaliland believes its democratic institutions, geographic position, port infrastructure and willingness to cooperate with the West make it a potentially valuable partner for Washington at a time when maritime security and geopolitical competition are increasingly intertwined.

"Look at the map, and the geography is the witness," the speaker concluded.

# President Holds an Important.....



Cruz of the State of Texas, who has for a long time been a friend and a prominent voice within the U.S. Senate advocating for the cause of the Republic of Somaliland. The meeting focused extensively on Somaliland's efforts toward international recognition, strengthening the strategic partnership between Somaliland and the United States, and opportunities to advance shared interests in security, economic cooperation, regional stability, and broader strategic interests in the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the wider region. Senator Ted Cruz has for a long time been a clearly visible voice in U.S. politics supporting the strengthening of relations between the United States and Somaliland. In August 2025, he formally called on the Trump Administration to recognize Somaliland as an independent country, describing Somaliland as an important partner for the United States, particularly in the areas of security and diplomacy, while highlighting its strategic importance in the Gulf of Aden and the role it can play in U.S. national security interests. During the meeting, the President of the Republic of Somaliland deeply thanked Senator Ted Cruz for his continued efforts and

leadership in ensuring that the U.S. Congress, policymakers, and the American public are properly informed about the reality of Somaliland, its experience of statehood, its democratic system, its security, its development, its national aspirations, and its strategic importance. The President emphasized that Somaliland seeks a relationship with the United States that is not based on aid or dependency, but rather on shared strategic interests, trust, mutual respect, shared responsibility, and long-term sustainable cooperation. Senator Ted Cruz has repeatedly and formally called for the U.S. Government to recognize

Somaliland, describing Somaliland as an important location for U.S. security and strategic interests, and has consistently raised the issue of Somaliland in the U.S. Senate. Senator Ted Cruz previously made a widely cited statement: "Recognizing Somaliland is not charity; it is strategy," reflecting his view that strengthening relations between the United States and Somaliland could contribute to protecting and advancing America's broader interests in a region of major strategic importance to the world. The meeting once again demonstrated the Republic of Somaliland's commitment to building genuine cooperation with the United States based on a long-term vision and substantive strategic content—cooperation that can contribute to regional security, economic opportunities, stability, and the safety of vital waterways important to global trade, as well as the protection of the shared strategic interests of both sides. President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Irro) and his delegation will continue their activities and diplomatic meetings in Washington, D.C., working to ensure that the voice, achievements, aspirations, and strategic importance of the Republic of Somaliland are directly heard and understood at the centers that matter as concerns decisions affecting U.S. foreign policy and the international system.

## In a Political Culture of.....

translated, begins: "Across Somaliland's political landscape, where skepticism toward politicians can run deep, Hirsi has, over the past 14 years, emerged as a prominent political figure whose supporters and even political opponents have repeatedly described him as a man who speaks plainly, stands by his commitments and seeks to turn his words into action." That reputation dates back to his time as Chief of Cabinet and later Minister of Presidential Affairs during the first five years of the late President Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo's administration. During that period, Hirsi was praised for his willingness to honour commitments made to individuals and the state, a quality that helped establish him as one of the

more influential figures in Somaliland's political arena. A Promise to President Silanyo One account cited in support of Hersi's reputation comes from Abdirashid Duale Qambi, a politician who has held several positions in successive Somaliland governments. Speaking in a recent interview, Qambi recalled an encounter with Hirsi shortly after President Silanyo's government took office. "Four months after President Silanyo's government came to office, I asked Hirsi to arrange a meeting for me with President Silanyo," Qambi recalled. He arranged the meeting, and Qambi eventually met the President. According to Qambi, late President Silanyo

# Somaliland Central.....

senior U.S. lawmaker raised concerns over financial and regulatory barriers affecting the country. In a statement posted on X on September 16, Central Bank Chairman Abdirasir A. Hersi said the bank welcomed the discussion during the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services hearing held on September 15. During the hearing, Congressman John W. Rose raised **H.R. 7993, the Somaliland Economic Access and Opportunity Act**, drawing attention to barriers limiting Somaliland's access to U.S. and international financial systems. U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told the hearing that Treasury's International Affairs team would brief him on the issue and that the department would engage with Rose's staff. The Central Bank said the congressional discussion builds on its own engagement with U.S. institutions. In January 2026, the Governor formally wrote to the U.S. Department of the Treasury seeking support in addressing barriers related to international payment systems, correspondent banking and SWIFT connectivity. The bank said that communication also outlined its efforts to strengthen financial integrity and anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) safeguards. For Somaliland's households and businesses, the bank described greater international financial connectivity as a practical

economic priority. It said more efficient financial channels could help reduce the cost and friction of remittances, facilitate international payments by businesses, improve access to global markets and make it easier for students abroad to receive payments. The bank also said improved financial connectivity could support investment and employment. At the same time, the Central Bank emphasized that expanded access would need to be accompanied by stronger regulation, transparency, effective supervision and safeguards against illicit finance. It said it remains committed to strengthening financial-sector supervision, AML/CFT controls, payment-system oversight and compliance with applicable U.S. and international standards. "The Bank of Somaliland stands ready to provide the U.S. Department of the Treasury and other relevant institutions with objective and verifiable information on Somaliland's financial system," the statement said, adding that it would participate constructively in any technical engagement arising from the process. The Central Bank also thanked Congressman Rose for raising the issue and said it welcomed continued dialogue with relevant U.S. institutions. It described its broader objective as building **"a safe, trusted, resilient, and internationally connected financial system"** capable of serving Somaliland's families, businesses and future generations.

was visibly moved when he saw him and appeared concerned about his circumstances. After their conversation, Qambi said, the President turned to Hersi and asked whether he could entrust Abdirashid to him. "Hirsi replied to the President, 'Mr. President, leave Abdirashid to me,'" Qambi recalled. Qambi said Hirsi subsequently fulfilled the commitment he had made to President Silanyo—and went beyond what had been expected of him. For Qambi, the episode illustrated a central feature of Hersi's character: a willingness to make a commitment and then follow through. A Reputation Across Political Lines Hirsi's reputation for truthfulness, according to the account, is not limited to his political allies or those who have worked closely with him. It has also been acknowledged by people who have stood on the opposite side of Somaliland's political divide. Qambi described Hirsi in unequivocal terms, saying: "A man called Hirsi is someone whose character speaks for itself. He is a truthful man, a determined man, and a generous man." The broader argument surrounding Hirsi's political character is that he belongs to a relatively small group of Somaliland politicians known for expressing their views openly, rather than tailoring their words to political convenience. For his supporters, that straightforwardness has become one of his defining political characteristics. A Personal Testimony The account also comes with a personal endorsement from Omar Mohamed Farah, the writer, who said he had interacted with Hirsi over an extended

period during Hirsi's tenure as Minister of Presidential Affairs. Farah said their interactions involved both professional and personal matters and gave him an opportunity to observe Hirsi closely. "I personally witnessed an unusual degree of honesty in him," Farah said, describing the quality as something that distinguished Hersi from many of the national leaders and politicians he had encountered. The testimony places Hirsi's reputation for truthfulness not simply in the realm of political rhetoric, but in personal experiences recounted by people who interacted with him directly. The Value of Keeping One's Word At the heart of the argument is a broader question about political leadership: whether public confidence can survive when political promises are repeatedly separated from political action. In societies where politicians are often viewed with suspicion, the ability to keep one's word can become more than a personal virtue—it can become a political asset. For Hersi, the accounts presented by Abdirashid Duale Qambi and Omar Mohamed Farah suggest that truthfulness and keeping commitments have been central elements of the reputation he has built during more than a decade at the heart of Somaliland politics. Whether viewed through the lens of political leadership, personal integrity or public service, the message is straightforward: in politics, words matter—but the credibility of those words is ultimately measured by what follows them.



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# My First Journey Towards Forensic Investigation: Exhumation, Truth-Telling, and the Search for the Missing ( Gabiley 2015)

## Why Are We Failing to Honour the Brave Young People Serving Their Nation?

By Guleid Mohamed.

Although Somaliland's international humanitarian forensic programme began in 2012 through collaboration between the Government of Somaliland, the Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), and the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF). My own journey into humanitarian forensic investigations began in 2015 during the excavation of a mass grave in **Gabiley**, Samaliland.

By then, international experts had already established the foundation for humanitarian forensic investigations in Somaliland. However, the discipline remained new not only to Somaliland but also to the wider Horn of Africa. Very few people—including government officials, local authorities, and members of the public—had firsthand knowledge of how humanitarian forensic investigations were conducted. For many communities, this was the first time they had witnessed a scientific excavation of a mass grave. The morning of my first mass grave investigation in Gabiley remains vivid in my memory. As I arrived at the site, I immediately noticed the intensity of the environment. The weather was exceptionally hot, and the sun beat down relentlessly throughout the day. Even the international forensic experts, many of whom had worked in different parts of the world, commented on how challenging the Somaliland heat was. Despite the harsh conditions, the team remained focused, fully aware of the importance of the work before us.

What struck me most, however, was not the weather—it was the people. Almost the entire community seemed to be present. Community elders stood together, quietly observing the preparations. Mothers and fathers waited patiently, their faces reflecting years of hope and uncertainty. Young people and children gathered nearby, watching with curiosity as the forensic team carefully prepared the excavation site. The atmosphere was solemn yet filled with expectation.

Many families had lived with unanswered questions for more than three decades. As they watched the excavation begin, there was a shared hope that the investigation might finally reveal the fate of their loved ones. Some believed that parents, brothers, sisters, or children who had disappeared during the conflict might finally be found. Others simply wanted confirmation of what had happened so they could begin to find peace.

As a member of the investigation team, I was entrusted with several responsibilities. Alongside assisting with forensic documentation and recording post-mortem observations, one of my principal duties was **community awareness and communication**. Before and during the excavation, I explained to community members what the forensic team was doing, why the excavation was taking place, and what they could expect throughout the investigation. This required translating complex forensic concepts into language that local communities could understand while addressing their concerns honestly and respectfully.

One question was asked repeatedly: **"How can you identify someone who has been buried for more than thirty years?"**

Their skepticism was understandable. To many people, the idea seemed impossible. If I am honest, I had



wondered the same thing when I first entered the field. Although my educational background in biological sciences helped me understand scientific concepts more quickly, humanitarian forensic investigation introduced an entirely new way of thinking about the human body after death.

As I learned from experienced forensic anthropologists and archaeologists, I came to appreciate that even after decades, human remains can preserve valuable biological information. Through careful archaeological excavation, skeletal analysis, the examination of personal effects, burial context, witness testimony, and post-mortem observations, investigators can gradually reconstruct the identity and story of an individual. I soon realized that identification is rarely based on a single piece of evidence. Instead, it is a careful process of bringing together multiple sources of information until they collectively tell the story of one person.

One aspect that particularly fascinated me was the recording of post-mortem data. Initially, it was difficult to imagine how information collected from human remains could later be compared with information provided by families to assist in identification. As I gained practical experience, I began to understand that humanitarian forensic science is a meticulous and multidisciplinary process in which every observation contributes to a reliable scientific conclusion.

As I explained these methods to families gathered around the excavation, I noticed a gradual change in their reactions. Curiosity slowly replaced doubt. Instead of questioning whether identification was possible, people began asking how the process worked and what information they could provide to assist the investigation. Those conversations taught me one of the most important lessons of my career: community engagement is not separate from humanitarian forensic investigations; it is one of their essential foundations.

Looking back, I now realize that the people of Gabiley were not simply spectators. They were partners in the search for truth. Their presence reminded everyone on the forensic team that every bone recovered belonged to someone who had once lived, loved, and been loved. Every careful movement of the excavation carried the hopes of families who had waited more than thirty years for answers.

That first experience in Gabiley shaped my understanding of humanitarian forensics in ways that no classroom could have achieved. It taught me that an investigator's responsibilities extend far beyond the excavation trench. We are scientists, communicators, educators, and custodians of public trust. Scientific evidence may uncover the truth, but it is honest communication that enables

communities to understand, participate in, and ultimately trust the journey from discovery to dignity.

As I left the excavation site that evening, I realized I had not simply participated in a forensic investigation. I had witnessed the meeting of two worlds: the silent world beneath the soil and the living world of families who had waited decades for answers. From that day forward, I understood that humanitarian forensics is not only about recovering human remains. It is about restoring dignity, preserving memory, and giving voice to those who can no longer speak. After that experience, I developed a strong conviction that I could dedicate myself to the field of forensic science and contribute to it in a meaningful way. I also came to understand that mass graves contain far more than human skeletal remains. They preserve an immense amount of historical, forensic, and evidentiary information that can help reconstruct the circumstances of atrocities and identify victims.

At that time, no Somalilander had been directly involved in forensic investigations of this nature or had the opportunity to participate in the scientific excavation and examination of mass graves. For me, witnessing the recovery of human remains, the forensic investigation into the causes of death, and the careful examination of clothing and personal belongings for evidence was an extraordinary experience. It revealed that every bone, every piece of clothing, and every personal object could provide valuable clues about the identity of the victims and the crimes committed against them.

One of the most moving aspects of this work was the way the victims' families welcomed me. Because I was always working alongside large international forensic teams often consisting of twelve to fifteen specialists, many relatives assumed that I had come from abroad with them. They would ask, "Did you also come from overseas with these experts?"

I would always reply, "No. I was born here in Somaliland. We are working together to serve our country and the families who suffered these atrocities."

I vividly remember one elderly mother whose one of her family had been massacred in Gabiley in 1988, whenever she saw me, she would approach me and say:

"My son, may Allah bless you. Seeing my own people investigating what happened to our loved ones brings us great comfort. It is painful because it forces us to relive the suffering of that terrible day, and each excavation reminds us of our loss. But at the same time, it gives us hope that one day those responsible for these crimes against our people will be brought and will be punished by the international judiciary system."

Her words stayed with me and strengthened my determination to continue this work.

An important part of the investigation involved collecting ante-mortem data, information gathered from the families of missing persons before any laboratory identification could begin. These interviews were designed to document distinctive characteristics that might later assist forensic identification.

Some of the ante-mortem data questions we asked included:

- Did your missing relative have any missing fingers or toes?

- Did they have any dental work, such as fillings or missing teeth?

- Did they have gold teeth or other distinctive dental features?

- Were there any scars, birthmarks, healed fractures, or other unique physical characteristics?

These questions were often difficult for families to understand. Many people looked at me with surprise and wondered how such details could possibly help identify someone who had been killed more than thirty years earlier. It was one of the greatest challenges I faced during those interviews. Explaining the scientific importance of ante-mortem information became an essential part of my work, helping families understand that even the smallest detail could ultimately restore the identity of a loved one.

Every day at that time, I remember large numbers of people visited the two mass grave sites in Gabiley where exhumation process was going on some travelled from across Somaliland, while others came from neighbouring countries such as Djibouti and Ethiopia after hearing that the graves were being scientifically investigated. For many, simply witnessing the investigation was deeply emotional. It represented hope that the truth about their missing relatives might finally emerge after decades of uncertainty.

The work itself was extremely demanding and consisted of two distinct phases. The first was the field investigation, where forensic teams carefully excavated the mass graves, documented every finding, and recovered the human remains and associated evidence using internationally recognised forensic procedures.

The second phase was the laboratory analysis, where forensic anthropologists and other specialists examined the recovered skeletal remains, clothing, personal belongings, and all associated evidence. This stage involved documenting trauma, analysing biological profiles, recording artefacts, and preparing the evidence for future identification and judicial purposes.

As this was my first forensic mission, I found the work intellectually challenging and emotionally overwhelming. Learning the scientific methods, understanding forensic procedures, and coping with the emotional weight of the investigations required considerable determination. However, with each passing day I became more confident and more capable.

After observing my progress, the (EPAF) congratulated me on how quickly I had adapted to forensic fieldwork. They recognised my commitment and determination.

In truth, I was not the first young Somalilander to attempt this work. Others had joined similar efforts before me but were unable to continue for various personal reasons. In my opinion, one of the greatest challenges was the complete

lack of financial support. And participation often depended entirely on personal commitment and voluntary service to one's country. Anyone who has worked under such circumstances understands how difficult it is to sustain this kind of work without institutional financial support. Many capable people simply could not continue despite their dedication.

Why Somaliland's Mass Graves Matter For Somaliland, mass graves carry profound significance. They are not merely burial sites but the strongest pieces of physical evidence documenting the atrocities committed against civilians during the late 1980s. They represent tangible proof of crimes that cannot be erased by the passage of time or by political narratives.

Unfortunately, there are still individuals who dismiss these investigations, sometimes mocking the work by saying, *"the Issaq are just digging up old bones."* I want to make it clear that forensic investigations of mass graves are far more than the recovery of human remains. Every excavation is a scientific, legal, and humanitarian process designed to uncover the truth, restore the identities of victims, document crimes, and preserve evidence that may contribute to justice. These investigations are not conducted according to the wishes or political interests of the people of Somaliland. They are carried out under internationally recognized forensic standards and are overseen by organizations specializing in human rights, forensic science, and international justice. Throughout the process, international experts and representatives from the United States of America and Europe monitor the work to ensure that every stage from excavation to laboratory analysis is conducted professionally, transparently, and in accordance with international legal and scientific procedures. This is part of a broader system of international human rights and accountability, not a locally improvised exercise.

Despite the importance of this work, successive Somaliland governments have not consistently provided the level of institutional support, or financial investment that such investigations require. This is particularly concerning because mass graves constitute one of the most compelling forms of evidence through which Somaliland documents the atrocities committed against its civilian population and preserves an important part of its modern history.

More broadly, Somaliland has never conducted a comprehensive national survey of its mass graves. As a result, no accurate official figure exists for the total number of mass grave sites across the country. Nevertheless, considering that more than 50,000 civilians are estimated to have been massacred during the conflict, it is reasonable to conclude that the number of mass graves is substantial.

Another important issue is that many of these mass graves have never been properly mapped, documented, or scientifically investigated. Their exact locations remain unknown, and numerous sites are still unprotected. As time passes, natural erosion, urban expansion, agricultural activities, and human development continue to threaten these graves, increasing the risk that invaluable forensic evidence and an essential part of Somaliland's historical record could be permanently lost before it is ever documented.

# From Atlantic Council to Hudson: Somaliland's U.S. Recognition Case Gains Strategic Weight Through Security and Economic Partnership — Eng. Ahmed



self-determination, but also as a matter of strategic security and economic partnership, according to Eng. Ahmed Abdilahi, a Somaliland scholar who commented on President Abdirahman Mohamed Abdillahi Irro's recent address at the Hudson Institute.

Eng. Ahmed described President Irro's appearance at the Washington-based policy institute as timely, arguing that it came at a moment when geopolitical dynamics in the Horn of Africa and the wider Red Sea region are undergoing significant change. He said the Hudson Institute's focus on strategic and security policy made it an appropriate platform for the Somaliland president to present his country's position to U.S. policymakers and the wider American public.

"It is a highly valuable development that supports Somaliland's efforts to gain recognition from the United States and other countries," Eng. Ahmed said.

He also placed President Irro's Hudson Institute appearance within a broader sequence of engagements by Somaliland presidents at influential U.S. think tanks.

"People should remember that former President Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, RIP, spoke at the Atlantic Council; President Muse Bihi Abdi spoke at the Heritage Foundation; and now President Abdirahman Irro has spoken at the Hudson Institute," he said.

According to Eng. Ahmed, the significance of the three appearances lies partly in the different policy orientations of the institutions involved.

He argued that while each president addressed Somaliland's interests from a particular perspective, Hudson Institute has a particularly strong connection to strategic and security policymakers at a time when the geopolitical environment surrounding Somaliland is rapidly evolving.

Against this backdrop, he said, President Irro's decision to emphasize regional security, maritime stability and Somaliland's potential role as a strategic partner was particularly relevant.

Three Messages for Somaliland

Asked to identify the two or three most important points from President Irro's speech for the people of Somaliland, Eng. Ahmed

highlighted three themes: U.S. economic interests, regional security and Somaliland's historical case for recognition.

The first, he said, was the president's direct appeal to the American people and President Donald Trump.

Eng. Ahmed noted that President Irro presented Somaliland as a country that could contribute to what he described as the Trump administration's broader vision of making America "great," particularly through investment in Somaliland's mineral resources and other economic opportunities.

He said the message was that Somaliland could become a partner in U.S. investment ambitions while simultaneously advancing its own economic development.

The second major point was security.

Eng. Ahmed highlighted Somaliland's claim that it has maintained security along its coastline for more than three decades, including efforts to prevent piracy and terrorist activity.

With renewed threats affecting the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb, he argued, Somaliland could offer the United States a strategically located and reliable partner capable of contributing to maritime security.

"Somaliland is a strong partner that

could become a staging ground from which the Bab el-Mandeb can be protected," he said.

Recognition Is Not Secession

The third theme he identified was President Irro's detailed explanation of Somaliland's historical and constitutional case for international recognition.

According to Eng. Ahmed, the president emphasized that Somaliland's pursuit of recognition should not be understood as an attempt to secede from an existing internationally recognized state.

Instead, he pointed to Somaliland's independence on **26 June 1960**, when it became an independent state and was recognized by several countries before voluntarily entering a union with Somalia.

President Irro also referred to the 2005 fact-finding mission by the African Union, whose report described Somaliland as a "unique case," according to Eng. Ahmed.

The significance of that argument, he said, is that Somaliland's case does not necessarily fit the conventional African concern that recognizing secession movements could create a "Pandora's box" of territorial fragmentation.

Somaliland, he noted, had defined borders and an established government at independence in 1960.

For Eng. Ahmed, the combination of these historical, economic and security arguments represent a deliberate effort to reposition Somaliland in Washington—not simply as a territory seeking recognition, but as a potential strategic partner for the United States at a critical juncture in the Horn of Africa and Red Sea region.

## Statement by SL-SAG on President of Somaliland's Visit to the United States



SL-SAG warmly congratulates the President of Somaliland H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi Irro and the people of Somaliland on a successful visit to the United States and for presenting Somaliland's story clearly and confidently on the international stage.

During his keynote address at the Hudson Institute, the President highlighted Somaliland's commitment to cooperation, economic partnership,

investment opportunities, regional stability, and constructive engagement with the international community.

He presented Somaliland as a reliable partner that seeks friendship and collaboration based on shared interests and mutual respect.

For more than three decades, Somaliland has demonstrated remarkable resilience, a deep

# Somaliland joins world alliance for Disaster Management as Founding Member



The Republic of Somaliland has officially joined the World Alliance for Disaster Management (WADM) as a founding member, marking a significant step in Somaliland's participation in international multilateral cooperation.

The World Alliance for Disaster Management is a newly established international platform bringing together governments, emergency-response agencies, academic institutions, businesses, and civil society organizations to strengthen global cooperation in disaster preparedness, early warning, emergency response, and post-disaster recovery.

The alliance aims to promote joint training and exercises, capacity building, information and experience sharing, and coordinated approaches to disaster-risk management.

A high-level delegation from the Republic of Somaliland, led by Hon. Abdalle Mohamed Arab, Minister of Internal Affairs and Security, is participating in the inaugural

Assembly of the World Alliance for Disaster Management in Taiwan.

The delegation includes Mohamed Abdirahman Hassan, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Brigadier General Ahmed Mohamed Hassan (Sawahili), Commander of the Somaliland Fire Brigade.

During the visit, the Somaliland delegation is also expected to hold bilateral meetings with key Taiwan (ROC) ministries and institutions, with the aim of further strengthening and expanding cooperation between Somaliland and Taiwan, particularly in areas related to disaster management, emergency response, institutional capacity building, and public safety.

Somaliland's participation in the WADM as a founding member represents a notable development in its engagement with emerging international platforms focused on practical cooperation and disaster resilience.

commitment to peace, and unwavering respect for the rule of law. Against overwhelming odds, the people of Somaliland have built democratic institutions, maintained security, conducted peaceful transfers of power, and fostered social stability through local ownership and consensus-building.

These achievements stand as a testament to the determination and vision of the Somaliland people.

SL-SAG believes that Somaliland's accomplishments speak for themselves. While some may continue to advocate for a political union that has long ceased to function in practice, the reality remains that Somaliland has successfully built and sustained its own institutions from the ground up.

The people of Somaliland have shown that self-governance, accountability, and stability can thrive even in the most challenging circumstances.

Today, Somaliland stands as a compelling example of what can be achieved through peace, perseverance, and democratic governance. The international community, and the United States in particular, should not overlook the strategic opportunity to deepen

engagement with Somaliland. Enhanced cooperation in trade, investment, security, education, and diplomacy would benefit both Somaliland and its international partners.

The timing could not be more important. President Somaliland's visit to the United States provides a unique opportunity to strengthen relationships and explore new avenues for cooperation and friendship.

Somaliland has demonstrated its readiness to engage as a responsible and dependable partner. The world should listen to its message and recognize the remarkable progress its people have achieved through their own efforts.

SL-SAG commends the President and the people of Somaliland for proudly and effectively voicing their aspirations before an international audience. Their message was heard loud and clear: Somaliland is open for partnership, committed to peace, and prepared to contribute positively to regional and global stability. Now is the time for meaningful engagement and stronger ties with Somaliland.

# THT Puzzle

Prepared by: Abdillahi Said Muhummed

|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  |    |    |    | 2  |    | 3  |    | 4  |    | 5  |    |
|    |    | 6  | 7  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 8  |    |    |    |    |    | 9  |    |    |    |    |    |
|    |    | 10 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 11 |    |    |    |    |    | 12 |    |    | 13 |    | 14 |
|    |    |    |    | 15 | 16 |    | 17 | 18 |    | 19 |    |
|    | 20 |    | 21 |    |    |    |    |    | 22 |    |    |
| 23 |    |    | 24 |    |    |    | 25 |    |    |    |    |
|    | 26 | 27 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | 28 |
| 29 |    |    |    |    |    | 30 |    | 31 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |    | 32 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 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    |
| A    |      | N    |      | A    |      | G 6  | O    |      | S    |      |      |
| S 7  | A    | D    |      | L    |      |      | W 8  | H    | E    | A    | L 9  |
| E    |      |      | C 10 | L    | U 11 | B 12 |      |      | D    |      | O    |
|      | 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    |      |      |      |
| S    |      | K 27 | E 28 | P    | T 29 |      | I 30 | S    | S 31 | U    | E 32 |
| E    |      |      | N    |      | O 33 | N 34 |      |      | O    |      | N    |
| T 35 | R    | A    | D    | E    |      | O 36 | N    | E    |      | I 37 | D    |

## Guarding Somaliland's Maritime Frontier:

Mohamoud Walaaleye

Stretching across approximately 850 km, Somaliland's coastline is both a vast natural resource and a strategic maritime frontier. Its waters contain rich fishing grounds, significant tourism potential and access to one of the world's most important maritime corridors linking the Gulf of Aden, Bab el-Mandeb and the Red Sea.

At the centre of efforts to protect this maritime domain is the Somaliland Coast Guard (SLCG), established in 1995 and tasked with safeguarding the country's coastline and territorial waters.

In this interview, Somaliland Coast Guard Commander Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye discusses the force's mission, its responsibilities and the range of maritime security challenges facing Somaliland.

The Horn Tribune: What is the primary role of the Somaliland Coast Guard?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** The primary role of the Somaliland Coast Guard is to ensure the security and safety of Somaliland's coastline and territorial waters.

Our responsibility extends across a large maritime area with significant economic, environmental and strategic importance. We work to protect the coastline, safeguard maritime activities and contribute to the lawful governance of Somaliland's waters.

The Horn Tribune: Somaliland has a coastline of about 850 kilometres. What makes this coastline strategically important?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Somaliland has a long coastline with considerable potential. It has rich fishing stocks, significant tourism opportunities and strategically important locations.

The coastline also lies near one of the world's most important shipping channels, connecting the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea through Bab el-Mandeb. This gives Somaliland's maritime domain importance not only for the country itself but also for wider maritime activity.

The Horn Tribune: What are the main responsibilities of the Somaliland Coast Guard?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** The Coast Guard has a broad range of responsibilities.

These include surveillance and patrolling on land and at sea, search and rescue operations, protection of critical national infrastructure, coordination with international and domestic organizations, protection of the maritime environment, community relations, maritime customs and border control, and maintaining maritime domain awareness.

These responsibilities require the Coast Guard to remain active and responsive across Somaliland's maritime domain.

The Horn Tribune: What does maritime domain awareness mean for the Coast Guard?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Maritime domain awareness is essential to understanding what is happening within Somaliland's waters.

Effective surveillance and awareness enable the Coast Guard to identify activities, respond to potential threats and support the security of the maritime environment. It is an important part of ensuring that Somaliland's waters remain safe, secure and lawfully governed.

The Horn Tribune: What are some of the major maritime security challenges Somaliland faces?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Somaliland faces a range of maritime security challenges. These include illegal fishing, weapons smuggling, human trafficking, wildlife trafficking, drug trafficking and irregular migration.

There are also concerns related to terrorist organisations, piracy groups and the dumping of toxic waste.

These challenges demonstrate why maritime security requires continuous surveillance, coordination and cooperation.

The Horn Tribune: How does the Coast Guard address illegal fishing?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Fighting illegal fishing is one of the important responsibilities of the Coast Guard.

Somaliland's waters contain valuable fishing resources, and protecting these resources is important for the country's economy and coastal communities.

Surveillance and patrolling help us identify and respond to unlawful maritime activities.

The Horn Tribune: Beyond security, does the Coast Guard have a role in protecting coastal communities?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Yes. Community relations are an important part of the Coast Guard's responsibilities.

The people living along the coastline are closely connected to the sea through fishing and other maritime activities. Protecting their safety and supporting lawful maritime activity are therefore important elements of our work.

Search and rescue operations are also a critical responsibility. The Coast Guard must be prepared to respond when people at sea require assistance.

The Horn Tribune: How important is cooperation with other organizations?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Coordination with international and domestic organizations is an important part of maritime security. The challenges facing the maritime domain can cross borders and cannot always be addressed by one institution alone. Cooperation helps strengthen surveillance, information-sharing, response capabilities and the protection of Somaliland's maritime interests.

SOMALILAND

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Guarding Somaliland’s Maritime Frontier:

The Horn Tribune: What is the mission of the Somaliland Coast Guard?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** The mission of the Somaliland Coast Guard is to keep Somaliland’s waters safe, secure and lawfully governed.

This means protecting the maritime domain, supporting lawful activities at sea, responding to threats and helping ensure that Somaliland’s coastal waters remain secure for communities and maritime users.

The Horn Tribune: And what is the Coast Guard’s long-term vision?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Our vision is to build a professional, capable and sustainable maritime force able to protect Somaliland’s maritime domain and serve the wider maritime community.

That vision reflects the importance

of developing a Coast Guard that is professional, capable and sustainable, while remaining focused on the security and safety of Somaliland’s waters.

The Horn Tribune: Finally, what message would you give about the importance of Somaliland’s maritime security?

**Admiral Ahmed Hurre Hariye:** Somaliland’s coastline is a major national asset. Its length, resources and strategic location give it significant importance.

Protecting this maritime domain requires vigilance, professionalism, cooperation and a clear commitment to safety and security.

The Somaliland Coast Guard remains focused on fulfilling its responsibilities and protecting Somaliland’s waters for its people and for lawful maritime activity.