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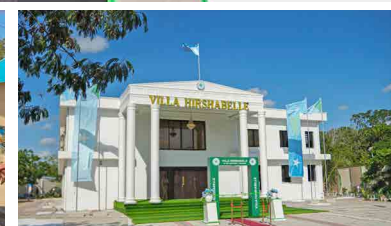
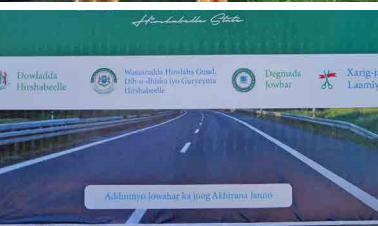
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## Hirshabelle: Roads, Institutions & Ambition





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Security Gains Transforming Daily Life in Mogadishu



# Hirshabelle: Roads, Institutions & Ambition

By **Fuad Haji Abdiweli**

**O**n June 11, Jowhar became the stage for one of the most significant demonstrations of state-building and development in recent Somali history. In a day marked by the inauguration of major infrastructure projects, the opening of modern government institutions, and a far-reaching national political address, the city showcased the growing momentum of Hirshabelle State and its expanding role in Somalia's broader journey toward stability, prosperity, and democratic progress.



Leading the historic visit was the President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who arrived in Jowhar accompanied by Hirshabelle State President Ali Abdullahi Hussein (Ali Guudlaawe). Together, they inaugurated a portfolio of landmark projects that many observers regard as a defining moment in Hirshabelle's development journey.

The projects officially opened included Villa Hirshabelle, the newly constructed headquarters of the Ministries of Education and Finance, and three major roads, Horseed Road, Hanti-wadaag Road, and Jowhar-Bile

Road. Collectively, these investments represent a substantial advancement in infrastructure, governance, and public service delivery, while reinforcing Hirshabelle's ambition to become one of Somalia's leading Federal Member States.

The inauguration marks one of the most important infrastructure milestones in the history of Hirshabelle. More than a collection of new buildings and roads, the projects symbolize a long-term vision focused on strengthening institutions, improving services, stimulating economic growth, and creating opportunities for citizens.

Among the most prominent developments was the official opening of Villa Hirshabelle, the state's new presidential complex. Designed as the official seat of the presidency, the modern facility stands as a visible representation of the state's determination to build effective, durable, and professional institutions capable of serving future generations.

The new headquarters for the Ministries of Finance and Education further reflect this commitment to institutional development. These facilities provide government departments with dedicated working environments, enabling them to operate more

efficiently and deliver services more effectively to the public.

For years, many public institutions across Somalia functioned under challenging conditions, often lacking permanent facilities and adequate infrastructure. The completion of these modern government offices demonstrates how far Hirshabelle has progressed in its efforts to establish a stronger administrative foundation.

Former Prime Minister Prof. Ali Mohamed Gedi highlighted this transformation, noting that government institutions that once operated from makeshift facilities are now housed in purpose-built offices designed to support long-term public service delivery. The shift represents a significant step in the professionalization of governance and administration within the state.

Equally important were the transportation projects unveiled during the visit. The opening of Horseed Road, Hanti-wadaag Road, and Jowhar-Bile Road represents a major investment in connectivity and mobility throughout the capital.

The newly completed Hanti-Wadaag Road is particularly significant for the region's economy. By connecting agricultural communities more effectively to markets, the road is expected



Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud praised the Hirshabelle administration for its commitment to development and the successful implementation of projects that directly benefit the public.

to reduce transportation challenges, facilitate trade, and strengthen economic activity throughout the region.

Residents are also expected to benefit from improved access to government services, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and commercial opportunities. Better roads often serve as catalysts for broader economic development, and local leaders believe these projects will help unlock new opportunities for businesses and communities alike.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud praised the Hirshabelle administration for its commitment to development and the successful implementation of projects that directly benefit the public.

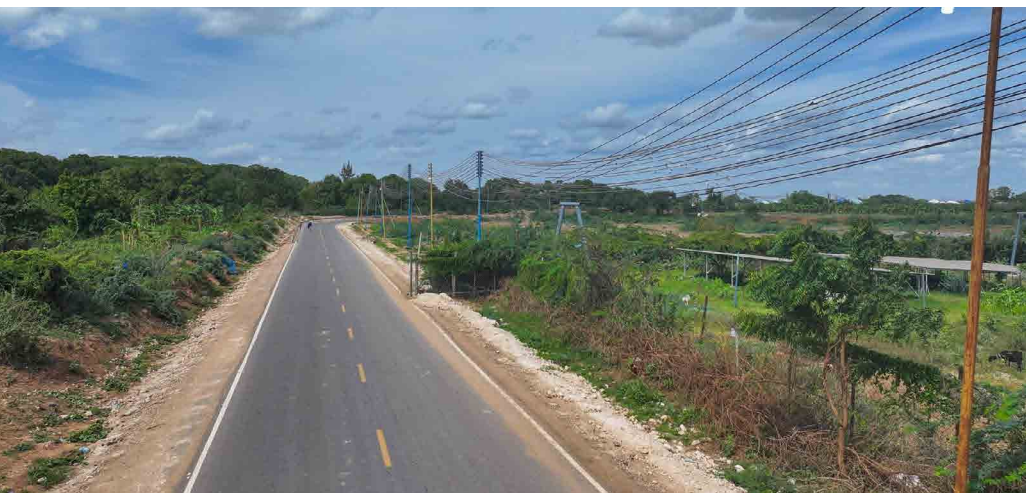
He noted that the visible progress being made in Hirshabelle demonstrates the increasing capacity of Somalia's Federal Member States to deliver meaningful results and contribute to national development and stability. The President commended the state's investment in infrastructure and governance, emphasizing that strong institutions and modern public facilities are critical pillars for sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

For President Ali Guudlaawe, the day represented both a celebration of achievements and a reaffirmation of future ambitions.

"This milestone is part of what Hirshabelle is focusing on, development and making the state one of the best-performing Federal Member States in Somalia," President Ali Guudlaawe said.

His administration has made development a central priority, focusing on infrastructure, public services, education, economic growth, and institutional strengthening. During the ceremonies, he announced that additional major projects are already under implementation and will be unveiled in the coming months as part of the government's

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broader modernization agenda.

The state's educational investments have been particularly noteworthy. According to Minister of Education Said Hagar Hagaley, the newly inaugurated ministry headquarters will support educational services reaching more than 100,000 students.

Beyond the ministry building itself, the administration has overseen the construction of 23 new schools stretching from Mataban to Balcad, while 11 existing schools have undergone full rehabilitation. An additional 15 schools have benefited from expanded classroom capacity, creating improved learning opportunities for thousands of young people.

These achievements reflect a growing recognition that education remains one of the most important foundations for long-term development. By investing in schools, facilities, and educational administration, Hirshabelle is helping to prepare a new generation of citizens equipped to contribute to the region's future growth.

The Ministry of Finance headquarters represents another important milestone. Minister of Finance Cabdiraxiin Ciise Cadow explained that the modern two-story facility contains 18 offices and two conference halls designed to enhance financial management and revenue administration.

The improved institutional capacity is expected to strengthen fiscal governance, improve efficiency, and create a more favorable environment for investment and economic expansion. Strong financial institutions are widely viewed as essential components of sustainable development, enabling governments to plan, implement, and maintain public services more effectively.

The day's events also highlighted the broad support behind Hirshabelle's development agenda. Senior federal and state officials, members of parliament, traditional elders, business leaders, and residents gathered in Jowhar to witness what many described as a transformative moment for the state.

Former Mayor of Mogadishu, Mohamed Osman Ali Maxamed, publicly commended the visible progress taking place across the region. Former National Intelligence Chief General Abdirahman Turyare noted that the successful implementation of large-scale projects demonstrates both improved security



and institutional growth.

Political figure Muhyaden Sabey emphasized the importance of cooperation between the administration and local communities, describing citizen participation and self-reliance as key drivers of success.

Meanwhile, Chairman of the Somali Chamber of Commerce Abdikariin Gabeyre encouraged the private sector to take advantage of emerging opportunities in Jowhar, particularly within the city's historically important agricultural and industrial sectors. His call reflected growing optimism about the region's economic potential and its attractiveness to investors seeking opportunities in Somalia's evolving economy.

As the official ceremonies concluded, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud joined President Ali Guudlaawe for an official dinner hosted at the newly inaugurated Villa Hirshabelle. The gathering provided an opportunity not only to celebrate the day's achievements but also to discuss the broader future of Somalia.

It was during this visit that President Hassan Sheikh delivered one of his most significant political addresses, outlining a vision for Somalia's democratic future and calling for a transition away from clan-centered politics toward a modern, issue-based political system.

Addressing political leaders, officials, and guests in Jowhar, the President highlighted what he described as a contrast between Somalia's rapidly improving physical infrastructure and the need to modernize its political framework.

"The only thing wrong with Somalia is the politics; we must move beyond personalized

politics," President Hassan Sheikh stated.

Reflecting on Somalia's political evolution, he observed that the country had moved from the era of warlords to a system heavily reliant on traditional clan structures. While acknowledging the role these systems have played, he argued that Somalia's continued development requires a more mature democratic model.

"As a society, we need to progress as a nation. We need the politics of parties, just like civilized nations," he affirmed.

The President outlined a vision centered on universal suffrage and direct citizen participation in governance. Under such a system, political leaders would compete based on policies, ideas, and public support rather than traditional power arrangements.

In his words, a future candidate "needs to be part of a political party with a known manifesto, sell it to the public, and go to the public to plead for a vote directly".

"We need to institutionalize the political process and move away from the current chaos," he concluded.

As President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud concluded his regional tour, he laid foundation stones for additional projects planned for the future, ensuring that the momentum generated in Jowhar would continue beyond the day's ceremonies.

For many residents, leaders, and observers, June 11 will be remembered as more than a day of inaugurations. It was a demonstration of what coordinated leadership, institutional investment, and community partnership can achieve.

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# Governor Ahmed: The Man Who Brought Madaraka to Wajir

How Governor Ahmed Abdullahi Turned a National Celebration into a Historic Moment for Northern Kenya

By Fuad Haji Abdiweli

For decades, national celebrations in Kenya seemed to belong to other places. The grand parades, presidential addresses, military displays, and national spotlight often rotated among major cities and regions that had long enjoyed visibility in the country's political and economic landscape. For many residents of Northern Kenya, these occasions were events watched from afar on television screens rather than experienced firsthand. That changed on June 1, 2026, when Wajir County hosted the country's Madaraka Day celebrations for the first time in history.

As thousands of residents streamed into the newly constructed 10,000-seater stadium, joined by President William Ruto, senior government officials, members of the judiciary and legislature, diplomats, and visitors from across Kenya, there was a widespread sense that something bigger than a national holiday



was taking place. For Wajir, the celebrations represented recognition, inclusion, and arrival. At the center of that achievement stood Governor Ahmed Abdullahi, whose leadership and persistence helped transform what many once considered an unlikely dream into reality.

The significance of the occasion cannot be overstated. Never before had Northern Kenya hosted a national celebration of this scale. For generations, the region had often found itself described through the language of distance and marginalization. Yet on this historic day, Wajir became the center of national attention, demonstrating not only its readiness to host a major event but also its growing importance within Kenya's national story.

Governor Abdullahi understood from the beginning that bringing Madaraka Day to Wajir would require more than a request. It would require preparation, planning, and proof that the county could successfully host an event watched by millions of Kenyans. Long before the celebrations arrived, extensive efforts were already underway to position Wajir as a worthy host. The county embarked on an ambitious journey that included improving infrastructure, coordinating with national government agencies, mobilizing local stakeholders, and presenting a united vision for the future of the region.

The most visible symbol of that effort greatly rose from the ground. In just over one hundred days, a modern 10,000-seat stadium emerged in Wajir, becoming one of the fastest public infrastructure projects of its kind in recent Kenyan history. What had once been an empty site was transformed into a venue capable of hosting a national celebration. To many residents, the speed of construction seemed almost unbelievable. Yet the stadium quickly became a powerful symbol of what focused leadership and collaboration could achieve.

Beyond the stadium itself, preparations extended across the county. Roads were rehabilitated and upgraded, street lighting expanded, water connectivity improved, and Wajir International Airport modernized to accommodate increased traffic and visitors. The physical transformation was impossible to ignore. Residents watched as projects that had long been discussed moved rapidly toward completion. Businesses prepared for increased activity, communities organized welcoming events, and local institutions worked together to ensure that Wajir would present its best face to the nation.

Perhaps one of Governor Abdullahi's greatest achievements during this period was fostering unity among leaders across



the county. Large national events often expose political divisions, but in Wajir, the preparations became a unifying project that transcended political differences. County leaders, elders, professionals, youth groups, business communities, and national government officials rallied around a shared objective. The governor consistently framed the event not as a victory for an individual administration but as a collective achievement for the people of Wajir and Northern Kenya as a whole.

That message of unity was woven throughout his Madaraka Day address. Speaking before thousands of attendees, Governor Abdullahi described the celebrations as a defining moment in Wajir's journey. He reminded the nation that the people of the county had long waited for a day when they could host fellow Kenyans, stand alongside national leaders, witness the country's military parade, and participate directly in one of the Republic's

*While the stadium served as the centerpiece of the celebrations, Governor Abdullahi understood the importance of ensuring that the event left a lasting legacy. Infrastructure can host a celebration, but symbols create memory. One of the most memorable moments of the day came when the governor requested that the newly constructed stadium be named after the late Ahmed Khalif, one of the region's most respected political leaders and human rights advocates.*



most important occasions. For many residents listening from the stands, his words captured decades of aspiration and hope.

The governor also offered a powerful reflection on the meaning of Wajir itself. He noted that the name "Wajir" translates to "coming together," an observation that resonated deeply with the spirit of the occasion. Historically, Wajir has served as a meeting point for communities, traders, and cultures. Situated strategically within Northern Kenya, it has long functioned as a gateway connecting people and commerce. By hosting Madaraka Day, Wajir was once again bringing people together, this time from every corner of the country.

### **Building a Legacy Beyond the Celebration**

While the stadium served as the centerpiece of the celebrations, Governor Abdullahi understood the importance of ensuring that the event left a lasting legacy. Infrastructure can host a celebration, but symbols create memory. One of the most memorable moments of the day came when the governor requested that the newly constructed stadium be named after the late Ahmed Khalif, one of the region's most respected political leaders and human rights advocates.

In an emotional address, Governor Abdullahi recalled his own political journey and the admiration he held for Ahmed Khalif. He explained that his first involvement in politics came not as a candidate but as a campaign manager helping Khalif reclaim his parliamentary seat. For the governor, naming the stadium after the late statesman was not merely a ceremonial gesture; it was an opportunity to honor a man who had helped pave the way for future generations of leaders from Northern Kenya.

President William Ruto immediately **continued on page 12>>**



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embraced the proposal, announcing that the facility would be officially known as Ahmed Khalif Wajir Stadium. The decision added a deeper historical dimension to the celebrations. The stadium would not simply stand as a monument to Madaraka Day 2026 but also as a permanent tribute to one of the region's pioneering leaders.

The moment underscored Governor Abdullahi's broader vision for Wajir's development. Throughout his tenure, he has consistently argued that development must be accompanied by recognition, dignity, and inclusion. Infrastructure alone is important, but equally important is ensuring that communities see themselves reflected in the national narrative. The successful hosting of Madaraka Day achieved both objectives simultaneously.

President Ruto's remarks during the celebrations reinforced this message. He spoke candidly about historical injustices and the challenges that many residents of Northern Kenya had faced over the years. He emphasized that no county should be considered too remote to deserve development and no citizen too distant to deserve opportunity. The decision to bring Madaraka Day to Wajir, therefore, was not only about geography. It was a statement about belonging.

For Governor Abdullahi, that message may ultimately be one of the most enduring outcomes of the event. The roads, airport upgrades, street lights, water projects, and stadium will continue serving residents long after the celebrations have ended. Yet perhaps the greatest achievement lies in the confidence generated by the occasion itself.



Wajir demonstrated its ability to host the nation. Its residents welcomed visitors from across Kenya. Its leaders showcased a united front. And its young people witnessed their county become the focus of national attention.

Years from now, residents will undoubtedly remember the military parade, the presidential address, and the excitement of seeing Wajir on

every television screen in the country. But they may remember something else as well: that a determined governor believed Wajir deserved its moment, worked tirelessly to make it happen, united leaders behind a common purpose, and helped deliver one of the most significant milestones in the county's history.

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# Building Democracy from the Ground Up

## BY 5 MAGAZINE TEAM

**T**he election of Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur “Aden Madobe” as the new leader of the Southwest State of Somalia marks more than a change in regional leadership. It represents a significant milestone in Somalia’s democratic journey and a powerful demonstration of the country’s growing commitment to representative governance.

On June 10, in the city of Baidoa, lawmakers overwhelmingly elected Aden Madobe as President of the Southwest State for the next five years. Madobe secured 88 votes, while his challenger, Abdiaziz Mohamed Jawari, received one vote, according to official election results. While the landslide victory itself attracted national attention, the real significance of the election lies in the unique democratic process that made it possible.

## From Citizens to Parliament to President

For the first time in Somalia’s federal history, a regional state leader has been elected by lawmakers who themselves were chosen directly by the people through one-person-one-vote elections. This historic achievement is being celebrated as a major success in Somalia’s ongoing efforts to strengthen democratic governance and move away from indirect electoral systems that have dominated the country’s politics for decades.

The process began on May 10, when citizens across Southwest State went to the polls to elect their local representatives in elections organized by Somalia’s National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC).

The elections were officially launched by NIEBC Chairman Abdikarim Ahmed Hassan, who oversaw the opening of polling

stations where citizens cast their votes for representatives of their choosing.

For many voters, it was a landmark moment. Ordinary citizens were no longer observing political decisions from a distance; they were actively shaping the composition of the institutions that would govern them.

On May 25, the commission announced the official results, confirming the election of local lawmakers chosen directly by voters. Those elected representatives then selected the leadership of the regional parliament. The newly formed parliament subsequently held the presidential election, which resulted in Aden Madobe’s victory.

The sequence created an unprecedented democratic chain: citizens elected representatives, representatives elected parliament leadership, and parliament elected the regional president. Political observers have described the process as a major step toward



institutionalizing democratic governance at the regional level.

### A Victory for Democratic Reform

The successful implementation of one-person-one-vote elections in Southwest State is widely viewed as one of the most important political achievements in recent years. For the Federal Government of Somalia, the process serves as a proof of concept that democratic elections can be organized successfully and peacefully despite the country's complex political landscape.

The achievement aligns with broader national efforts to expand direct elections across Somalia and eventually establish universal suffrage at the federal level. Government officials and political analysts alike see Southwest State as a model that could be replicated in other federal member states as Somalia continues its democratic transformation.

The successful conduct of the elections has reinforced confidence in national institutions and demonstrated growing public trust in democratic processes. Perhaps most importantly, it has shown that Somali citizens are eager to participate in shaping their political future when given the opportunity.

### Presidential Recognition

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud praised the democratic process and congratulated Aden Madobe on his victory. The President commended the maturity demonstrated by lawmakers, parliamentary leaders, election officials, and presidential candidates throughout the electoral process.

The sequence created an unprecedented democratic chain: citizens elected representatives, representatives elected parliament leadership, and parliament elected the regional president. Political observers have described the process as a major step toward institutionalizing democratic governance at the regional level.



He also extended his best wishes to the newly elected leader as he assumes responsibility for guiding Southwest State through its next chapter.

"I congratulate the new leader of Southwest State, Mr. Sheikh Aden Mohamed Nur, on his victory in the elections held in the region," President Hassan Sheikh said. "I hope he will focus on uniting the people of Southwest State and work toward peace, development, and stronger governance."

The President highlighted the importance of the interconnected elections that enabled citizens to participate directly in choosing their representatives. According to President Hassan Sheikh, the elections have opened a new chapter in Somalia's democratic history by demonstrating political maturity, civic awareness, and the Somali people's commitment to building a democratic system based on free and fair elections.

He further praised the hundreds of thousands of citizens who participated peacefully in the voting process, noting that their patience, determination, and civic responsibility reflected growing confidence in state institutions and Somalia's democratic future.

### Aden Madobe's Vision for Southwest State

Speaking after the announcement of the results, Aden Madobe expressed gratitude to lawmakers for their overwhelming support and outlined his priorities for the coming years.

"I am grateful for the confidence placed in me by the members of parliament," he said.

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“My priority will be to promote unity among our people, advance reconciliation efforts, and build stronger democratic institutions.”

These priorities are expected to guide his administration as it works to strengthen regional governance while contributing to Somalia’s broader nation-building efforts.

**A Veteran Statesman Takes the Helm**

Aden Mohamed Nur Madobe brings decades of political experience to his new position. Widely known as Aden Madobe, he currently serves as Speaker of the House of the People in Somalia’s Federal Parliament, a position he has held since April 2022.

Throughout his long political career, he has occupied several senior leadership positions during key periods in Somalia’s modern history.

Madobe previously served as First Deputy Chairman of the Rahanweyn Resistance Army before joining Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government. He later held the positions of Minister of Justice and Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament.

Between December 2008 and January 2009, he briefly served as the Acting President of Somalia during a transitional period. In 2014, he was appointed Minister of Industry and Commerce, further expanding his experience



in government administration and national leadership.

Born in Hudur, the capital of Bakool Region, Madobe has remained one of the country’s most influential political figures for more than two decades. His extensive experience at both federal and regional levels is expected to play an important role as Southwest State pursues development, security, and governance reforms.

**A Model for Somalia’s Future**

The significance of Aden Madobe’s election extends beyond the Southwest State. The process that brought him to office has become

a symbol of Somalia’s democratic aspirations and the gradual transition toward a political system based on direct citizen participation.

For years, Somalia’s leaders have spoken about the goal of implementing one-person-one-vote elections nationwide. The successful experience in Southwest State provides tangible evidence that this vision can be achieved.

By allowing citizens to directly choose their representatives and creating a legitimate electoral pathway from voter to parliament to president, Southwest State has provided a glimpse of what Somalia’s democratic future could look like. For many observers, that may be the most important victory of all.

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Fifa president has prostrated the organisation before Donald Trump and lost control of his own tournament as a result

By Jonathan Liew

Even the Nazis tried to tone things down a bit. Before the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, acutely conscious of how it might be perceived by foreign visitors, the Third Reich tried to soften some of its harder, more intolerant edges. Antisemitic signs and images were removed from shops and other public places. Der Stürmer was removed from newspaper kiosks. Paragraph 175, the country's strict anti-homosexuality law, was temporarily suspended.

By contrast, the 2026 men's World Cup is being co-hosted in a country utterly indifferent to what a foreign visitor might think of it. In this respect, the US of Donald Trump is tonally different to any host of a major sporting event that has preceded it: a country that actively wants you to see the darkness in its heart, the inhumanity at its core, that gets off on your revulsion.

We can assume, for example, that the administration knew exactly what it was doing when it turned away Omar Abdulkadir Artan at its borders just days

## Omar Artan scandal reveals Gianni Infantino for what he is: One of sport's greatest cowards

before the tournament. After all, Artan is from Somalia, one of the many countries about which Trump has made his views entirely clear, previously describing Somalis as "garbage" and "crooks". "We want to make sure we are not going to allow a soccer tournament to be the opportunity for terrorists to potentially get in the country," said Andrew Giuliani, head of the White House World Cup task force.

On one level you had to marvel at the levels of cartoon evil necessary to unite the rest of the world in sympathy for – of all people – a referee. But of course this was simply one scene in the World Cup's theatre of performative cruelty. The vice-captain of Iraq was detained for seven

hours on arrival. Thirteen members of the Iranian delegation are still waiting for visas, and their allocation of fan tickets has been revoked. According to the BBC, 11 of the 48 participating countries – all of them from the global south – are facing travel restrictions or unusually high rates of visa rejections.

What of Fifa, the organisation that appointed and accredited Artan for its tournament, which boasted last summer that "everyone will be welcome"? After all, the sport's governing body has rarely been shy of using its leverage over past host countries. In 2014 it threatened to strip the Brazilian city of Curitiba of hosting rights after construction of its stadium fell behind schedule. In 2018 it successfully



What of Fifa, the organisation that appointed and accredited Artan for its tournament, which boasted last summer that “everyone will be welcome”? After all, the sport’s governing body has rarely been shy of using its leverage over past host countries. In 2014 it threatened to strip the Brazilian city of Curitiba of hosting rights after construction of its stadium fell behind schedule.

persuaded Russia to relax its stringent immigration laws to allow fans visa-free entry, and even intervened to overturn a ban on the German investigative journalist Hajo Seppelt. “Freedom of the press is very important to Fifa,” it said, one of many Fifa statements over the years that has not aged well.

Fifa was able to do these things because to a large extent it was dealing with countries who were seeking to project themselves: desperate for the soft power,

the validation, the tourism revenue. On some level, every men’s World Cup host since 2010 has needed Fifa more than Fifa needed it.

The US may be the first ever host country where this traditional balance of power has been reversed. It doesn’t need the money; indeed, for all the gouging of ticket and transport prices, it is barely going to make any. According to a Saxo Bank report, the anticipated benefit will be less than 0.1% of GDP, and “is not a meaningful growth driver”.

But, of course, Fifa definitely does need the money. Unlocking the dynamic revenue streams of the US sporting economy is Gianni Infantino’s best chance of maintaining the revenue growth that buttresses his power base. By way of illustration, the 2030 World Cup – to be held in Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay – is already forecast to generate higher costs and lower ticket revenue, with the shortfall to be made up from an uplift in marketing revenue and broadcast rights.

With the World Cup now expanded to 48 teams, there is a rapidly dwindling pool of countries with the size, the means and the infrastructure capable of hosting.

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In essence, Fifa now needs the US far more than the US needs Fifa, which has had a direct effect on the indignities and inconveniences it has been prepared to swallow. Will it raise its voice if immigration raids take place at stadiums? What if the next Renée Good or Alex Pretti fancies protesting somewhere near a World Cup venue?

In reality, Fifa has already articulated its worldview most eloquently. Indeed in continuing to parrot the phrase “football unites the world” like a malfunctioning pull-string doll, Infantino is tacitly expressing his opinion that there are people he simply does not consider part of the world, perhaps does not even consider human at all. And so to the jailed dissidents of Russia and the nameless migrant workers of Qatar we can add the imagined enemies of the Trump White House: whether Senegalese football supporters or reporters asking questions or a referee from Somalia embarking on the greatest honour of his professional life.

The only meaningful solution – a smaller and more modest World Cup, less beholden to autocratic power, more accountable to its public – is also the only solution that can be safely ruled out. Instead, the power

*The only meaningful solution – a smaller and more modest World Cup, less beholden to autocratic power, more accountable to its public – is also the only solution that can be safely ruled out. Instead, the power imbalance of this World Cup may well end up setting a template for subsequent sporting events to follow.*

imbalance of this World Cup may well end up setting a template for subsequent sporting events to follow. Rest assured, Saudi Arabia 2034 will have noted Fifa’s prostration here, its utter spinelessness in the face of hard autocratic power and urgent commercial imperative.

For a generation Fifa has enthusiastically participated in what the academic Martin Müller described as “event seizure”, the way in which big sporting events take possession of their host cities and societies, rewrite local laws, empty local budgets.

Here, the opposite appears to have occurred. The World Cup has not seized control of the US. Instead the US has seized control of the World Cup, taken this cherished global heirloom and turned the whole thing a shade of puce Maga.

Perhaps none of this moves you unduly. Perhaps you still regard sporting spectacle as your cherished escape from politics. In which case enjoy your World Cup of games split into four quarters, decimated by heat and exhaustion, compromised by an unfair qualification process. Enjoy your largely meaningless group stage, the thousands of empty seats, the masked police standing guard just at the edge of shot, the long lingering shots of Infantino and JD Vance in the stands.

Infantino is, of course, the symptom rather than the disease here. And yet, given his own self-image as a kind of messianic pan-global statesman, there is a certain irony in the fact that this summer will cement his legacy as one of sport’s greatest cowards: a weak and petty man who lost control of his own tournament. A man who quivered in the face of genuine conviction. A man who had the world’s most powerful cultural force in his hands, and ended up giving it away.

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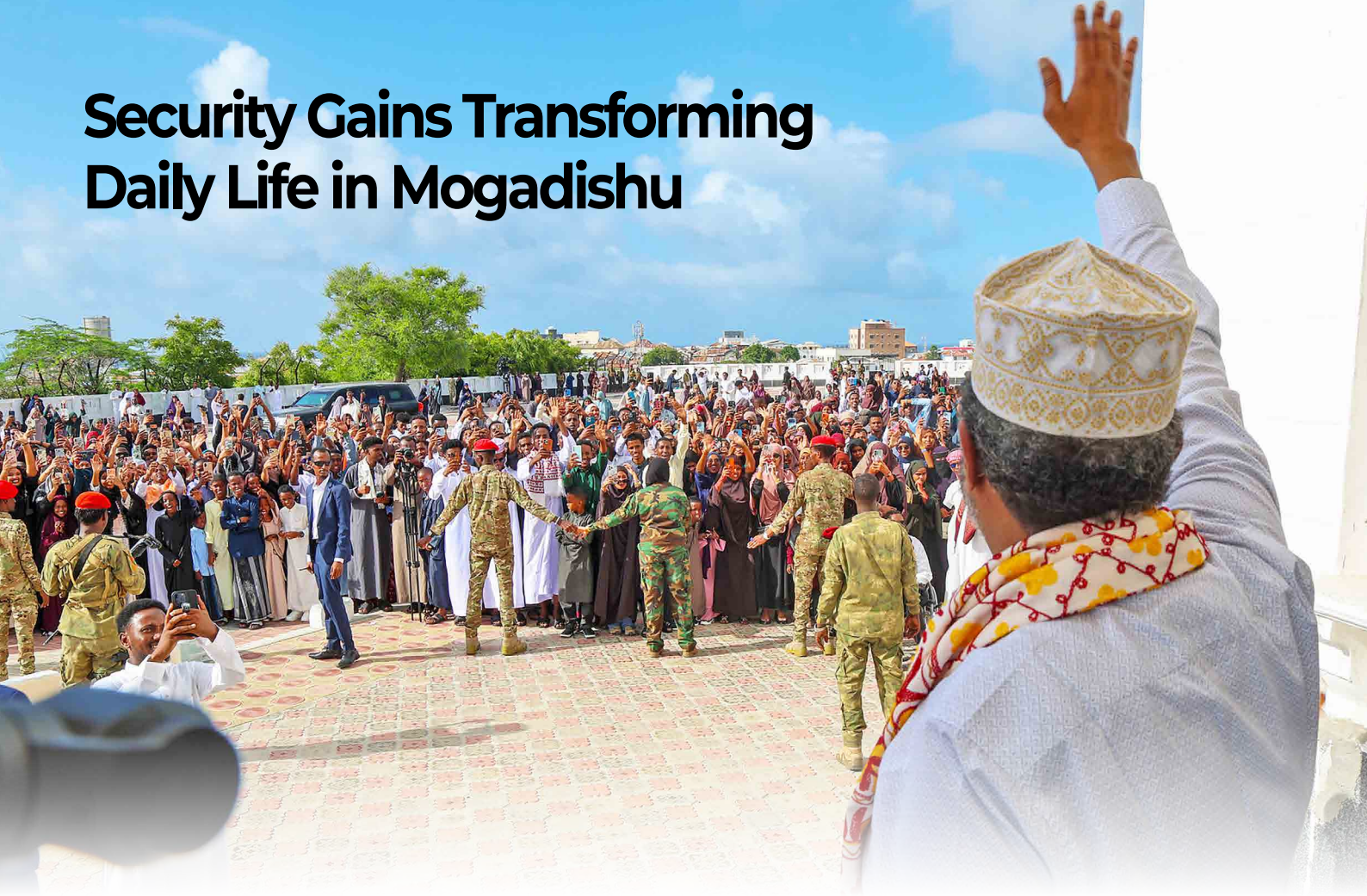
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# Security Gains Transforming Daily Life in Mogadishu



By 5 Magazine Team

**O**n a warm evening in Mogadishu, thousands of football fans gathered in Taleh to watch the UEFA Champions League final between Arsenal and Paris Saint-Germain. Families, young people, and sports enthusiasts filled the area, cheering, celebrating, and enjoying the match late into the night. For many residents, the gathering represented more than a football event. It was a powerful illustration of how much life in the Somali capital has changed. Large crowds assembled in a public space with confidence, reflecting a growing sense of security that is increasingly shaping how people live, work, and move throughout the city.

Across Mogadishu, similar signs of change are becoming part of everyday life. Residents speak of driving across the city at all hours with greater peace of mind, government officials commute from neighborhoods that were once considered too risky, and families are exploring housing options in districts they previously would not have considered. While challenges remain, many citizens believe the capital is experiencing one of its most stable periods in recent years, with security improvements

*This transformation has also changed the daily lives of government employees and senior officials. In the past, security concerns often forced many public servants to remain concentrated in a handful of heavily protected neighborhoods. Today, it is common to find officials living in different parts of the city and commuting to work each day like ordinary citizens.*

creating visible benefits that extend far beyond checkpoints and patrols.

The growing sense of security is perhaps most evident in the way people move around the city. Not long ago, many residents carefully planned their journeys, avoiding certain

areas or limiting travel after dark. Today, conversations with citizens across Mogadishu reveal a different reality. Many people say they are able to drive through different districts with far less fear and anxiety than in previous years. Whether traveling for work, visiting relatives, or simply enjoying the city's social spaces, residents increasingly describe a sense of freedom that was difficult to imagine just a few years ago.

This transformation has also changed the daily lives of government employees and senior officials. In the past, security concerns often forced many public servants to remain concentrated in a handful of heavily protected neighborhoods. Today, it is common to find officials living in different parts of the city and commuting to work each day like ordinary citizens. Many leave their homes in the morning and return late in the evening, a routine that reflects growing confidence in the city's security environment. For residents, seeing government leaders move more freely throughout Mogadishu has become another visible sign of normalization.

The effects of improved security are extending beyond mobility and into the city's



“I have lived in Mogadishu for most of my life, and the difference is clear,” says Abdullahi Mohamed, a businessman in the city. “Today I can drive across districts for work and family visits without constantly worrying about security.”

Many residents attribute these positive developments to the security measures implemented under the administration of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud.

housing market. As more people feel comfortable living in a wider range of neighborhoods, demand is becoming less concentrated in traditionally preferred districts. This shift has created greater flexibility for families seeking housing and has contributed to lower rental costs in some parts of the city. Areas that were once overlooked due to security concerns are now attracting new residents, helping spread economic activity and opportunities more evenly across Mogadishu.

Many residents attribute these positive developments to the security measures implemented under the administration of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Citizens frequently point to the absence of

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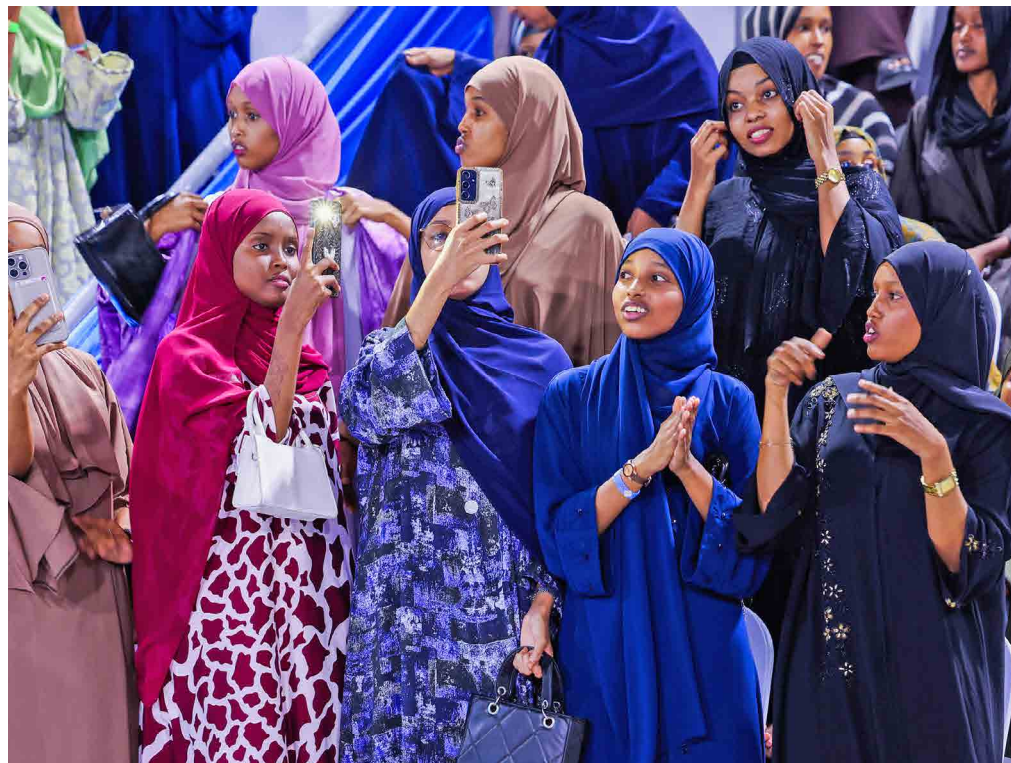
major bomb attacks in the capital and the significant reduction in targeted killings that once generated widespread fear. While no one claims that every security challenge has been solved, many acknowledge that the overall situation has improved considerably compared to previous years.

"I have lived in Mogadishu for most of my life, and the difference is clear," says Abdullahi Mohamed, a businessman in the city. "Today I can drive across districts for work and family visits without constantly worrying about security."

Fadumo Ali, a mother of four, shares a similar perspective. "What encourages me most is seeing people gather together and enjoy public spaces again," she says. "There is a level of confidence that many of us have not experienced in a long time. We hope this progress continues."

The significance of these gains has become a common topic of discussion as Somalia enters a period of heightened political activity. Opposition groups continue to organize campaigns and call for public demonstrations, while debates about the country's future remain active. Many Mogadishu residents emphasize that peaceful protest is a constitutional and democratic right that should be protected. At the same time, they stress the importance of ensuring that political activities are conducted responsibly and do not undermine the security improvements that have benefited ordinary citizens.

For many people, the conversation is no longer solely about security operations or government policies. Instead, it is about the



practical impact those improvements have on daily life. It is reflected in the confidence of thousands gathering to watch a football match in Taleh, the freedom to travel across the city without fear, the ability to choose where to live based on preference rather than security concerns, and the optimism that comes from seeing a city gradually reclaim its normal rhythm.

Mogadishu's journey is far from complete, and challenges undoubtedly remain. Yet the

changes witnessed across the capital suggest that the city is entering a new chapter. The resilience of its people, combined with sustained efforts to improve security, has helped create an environment where hope increasingly outweighs fear. For many residents, that may be the most important measure of progress of all. The Mogadishu of today is not merely safer; it is more confident, more connected, and more optimistic about the future than it has been in many years.



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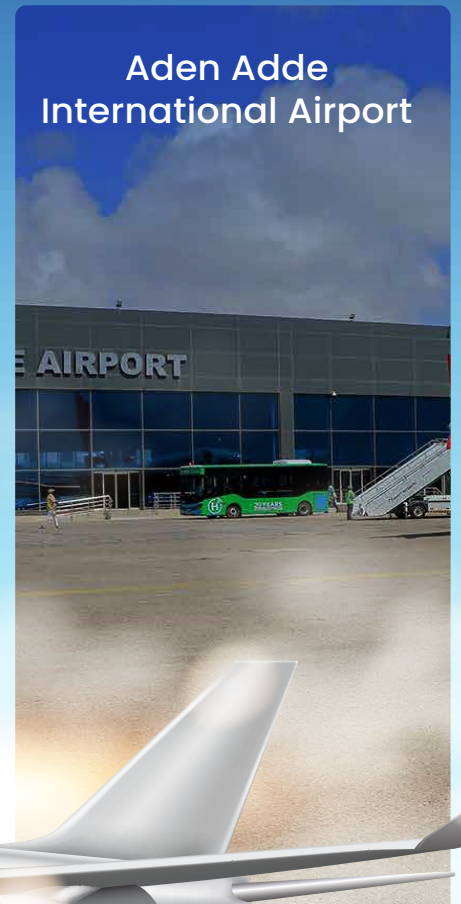
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# It's a Trumpian World Cup for racism and cynicism – why don't those who condemned Qatar 2022 say so?



We must highlight the awful stance of the White House towards so many competing nations, but also the hypocrisy of leaders who acquiesce

By **Jeremy Corbyn**

**O**mar Artan was to be the first Somali to referee at the World Cup finals. A Fifa-certified referee since 2018, Artan officiated at the Africa Cup of Nations in 2023 and was named the 2025 Confederation of African Football men's referee of the year. Last weekend, as we know, Artan was denied entry to the United States at Miami international airport.

The US has not officially given a reason for Artan's ban, but we know that Somalia is one of the countries on Donald Trump's travel ban list. After the news reverberated around the world, an administration source, speaking on condition of anonymity, claimed the move came about because Artan had possible



links to possible terrorists. But that claim, in the face of a furore, merits widespread scepticism. There is a word for this: racism. For this disgraceful decision is just the tip of the iceberg. Somalia is one of 39 countries – including Laos, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and South Sudan – on a US travel ban list. This means fans from more than a quarter of the countries taking part in the World Cup are facing visa rejections and restrictions; so much for Fifa's claim that "football unites the world". The World Cup is meant to bring people together, but this year's tournament threatens to drive people apart.

This is what happens when a World Cup is cohosted by an administration that divides, detains and deports at will. International organisations have been sounding the alarm for months about this tournament – and a human rights emergency that extends far beyond match officials, to players, fans and residents alike. According to a recent report by Amnesty International, the "starkest threat" at the World Cup, cohosted by the US, Canada and Mexico, is posed by "the machine of abusive,



discriminatory and deadly immigration enforcement and mass detention in the USA”.

We all saw the footage in January of an Immigration Control Enforcement (ICE) agent shooting dead Renee Good. Two weeks later, ICE agents claimed another victim: Alex Pretti. These are just two high-profile incidents; at least 17 people have died in ICE custody this year. In June last year, the US moved to deport more than 500,000 legal immigrants – six times the number of people who will watch the World Cup final in the MetLife stadium in New York. The acting director of ICE has said that the agency will be “a key part of the overall security apparatus for the World Cup”.

So far, neither Fifa nor the US have offered any assurance that fans will be safe from unlawful detention, raids or deportation. Nor have they provided satisfactory answers to a range of other concerns raised by Amnesty: severe restrictions on peaceful protest; the further displacement of homeless people; the expansion of mass surveillance; and doubts over the ability of the US to provide the “safe, welcoming and inclusive” tournament promised by Fifa, particularly to members of the LGBTQ+ community. When Qatar held the World Cup four years ago, I joined human rights organisations in raising concerns over freedom of expression,

**This is a rank hypocrisy that has helped justify horrendous complicity in some of the worst crimes imaginable. Since Trump was awarded the newly created Fifa Peace prize in December 2025, the US government has illegally kidnapped the president of Venezuela, waged an illegal war on Iran and deepened its criminal blockade on Cuba.**

LGBTQ+ rights and the appalling exploitation of workers, many of whom died while building the tournament’s infrastructure. I cannot help but notice the deafening silence of those – including our prime minister – who spoke out four years ago. The double standards are astounding, and expose the cowardice of those who defend human rights only when it is convenient to do so.

This is a rank hypocrisy that has helped justify horrendous complicity in some of the worst crimes imaginable. Since Trump was awarded the newly created Fifa Peace prize

in December 2025, the US government has illegally kidnapped the president of Venezuela, waged an illegal war on Iran and deepened its criminal blockade on Cuba. In all three cases, the US has relied on the moral cowardice of our own government, which has failed to condemn the abduction of a head of state, allowed the use of its airbases for strikes on Iran, and abandoned the Cuban people in their time of need. That’s quite the hat-trick. That’s without mentioning the UK’s participation, alongside the US, in Israel’s genocide in Gaza.

“I’m not responsible for America’s immigration policy.” That is what government minister Liz Kendall said this week, in response to a question about Omar Artan’s ban. That’s true. But so is this: part of the reason the US shows such flagrant disregard for human rights is because it enjoys the blissful silence from governments like our own. I love football, but it is a game. People’s lives are not. It is time this government had the courage to blow the whistle on a foreign policy of appeasement, cowardice and hypocrisy – and started defending the human rights of everyone, everywhere.

**Jeremy Corbyn is the MP for Islington North and parliamentary leader of Your Party. He was leader of the Labour party from 2015 to 2020**

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# Asal Hair & Skin Clinic: Somalia's Award-Winning Leader in Hair Restoration

As hair restoration continues to gain popularity across Somalia, \*Asal Hair & Skin Clinic\* remains at the forefront of the industry, providing advanced solutions for hair loss, baldness, and thinning hair.

Before the establishment of specialized hair restoration services in Somalia, many individuals struggling with hair loss had limited treatment options and often needed to travel abroad in search of professional care. Access to modern hair transplant procedures, advanced diagnostics, and long-term treatment plans was both costly and challenging.

Established in 2022, Asal Hair & Skin Clinic has helped bridge this gap by introducing internationally recognized hair restoration treatments and making them accessible within Somalia. Through innovation, patient education, and specialized care, the clinic has played a significant role in transforming the

hair restoration sector in the country.

This commitment to quality and innovation was recognized when Asal Hair & Skin Clinic was awarded \*Best Hair Clinic 2025\*, a milestone that reflects the trust and confidence of thousands of patients.

Hair loss affects both men and women and can result from genetics, hormonal changes, stress, medical conditions, nutritional deficiencies, or ageing. At Asal Hair & Skin Clinic, every patient receives a personalized treatment plan designed to achieve natural and long-lasting results.

The clinic offers a comprehensive range of services, including:

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- **Beard Transplant**
- **PRP & GFC Therapy**
- **Exosome Hair Treatment**
- **Laser Hair Therapy**

- **Hair & Scalp Analysis**
- **Post-Transplant Care and Support**

With modern technology, experienced specialists, and a patient-centered approach, Asal Hair & Skin Clinic has successfully helped thousands of clients restore not only their hair but also their confidence.

"Winning Best Hair Clinic 2025 is a reflection of our commitment to delivering world-class hair restoration services in Somalia. Our goal is to provide natural results, exceptional patient care, and long-term solutions for hair loss," said the management of Asal Hair & Skin Clinic.

Today, Asal Hair & Skin Clinic is widely recognized as a pioneer in Somalia's hair restoration industry, helping patients access advanced treatments locally while reducing the need to seek care outside the country.

**\*Asal Hair & Skin Clinic\***

**\*Best Hair Clinic 2025\***

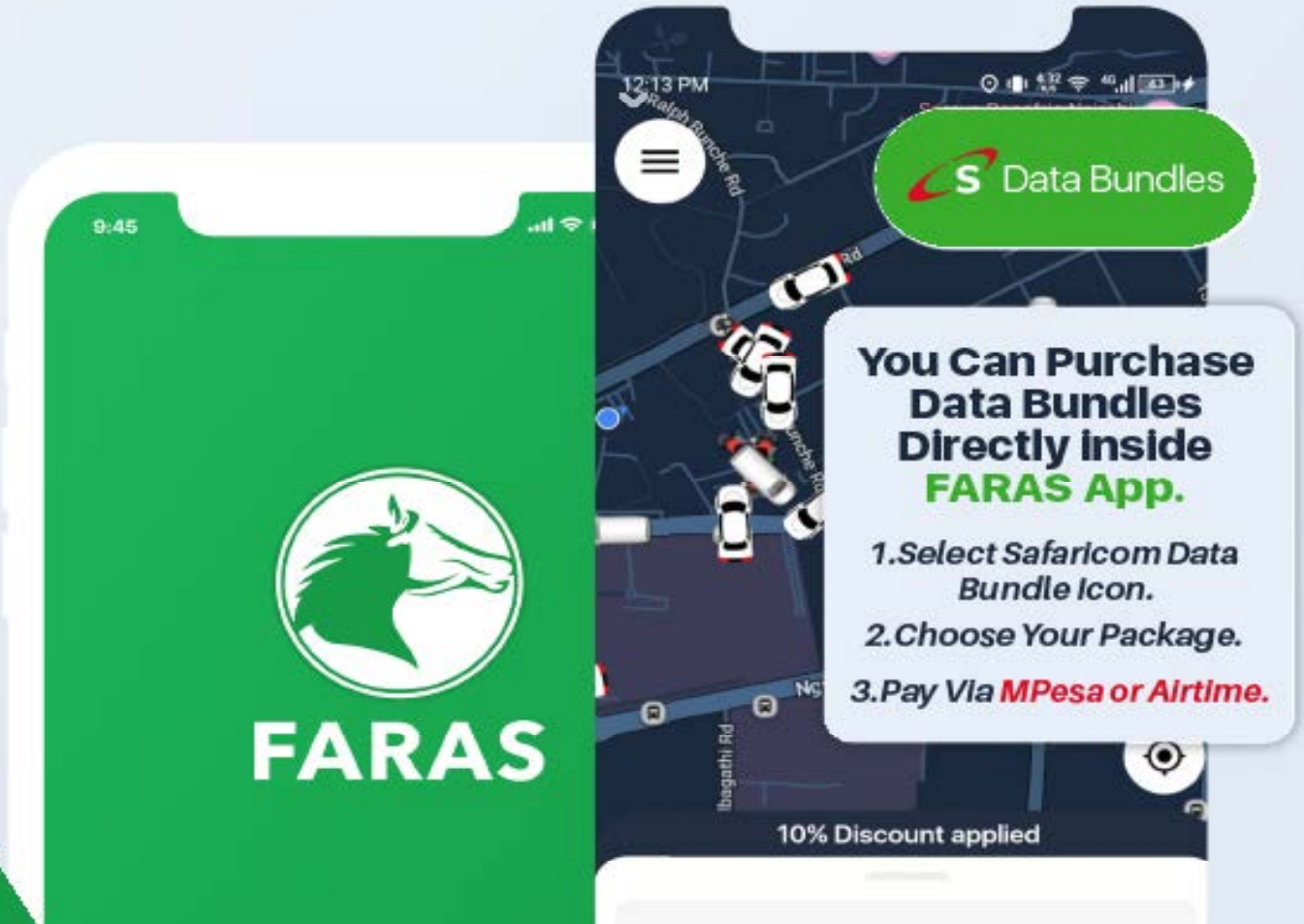
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# Foreign interference and the struggle for Somali sovereignty

By **Abdirahman Roble Ulayare**

## Introduction

The question of who continues to interfere in Somalia and prevent it from becoming a fully sovereign state capable of determining its own destiny is not difficult for informed Somalis to answer. The roots of this problem go back to the colonial era and extend through the decades following Somalia's collapse in the early 1990s. Many Somalis believe that external powers, regional actors, and internal collaborators have played a major role in shaping the country's prolonged instability.

Understanding this issue requires examining the historical legacy of colonialism, the geopolitical interests of foreign powers, and the internal weaknesses that have allowed interference to persist.

## Colonial Legacy and Structural Damage

When Somalia gained independence from colonial rule under Britain and Italy, the country inherited a deeply damaged political and social structure. Colonial administrations had disrupted traditional governance systems,



weakened social cohesion, and undermined indigenous institutions of justice, education, and self-administration.

Rather than strengthening Somali unity, colonial rule introduced policies that fostered division and rivalry. The colonial strategy of "divide and rule" created social fragmentation and empowered individuals who were more loyal to colonial interests than to the wellbeing of Somali society. When

colonial powers eventually withdrew, they are left behind political structures that lacked strong legitimacy and national cohesion.

As a result, Somalis were never given a genuine opportunity to rebuild their institutions independently or restore systems that reflected their own cultural and religious values.

## Renewed Foreign Influence After the State Collapse

Following the collapse of Somalia's central government in 1991, foreign powers once again became deeply involved in Somali affairs. Western countries, particularly the United States, saw an opportunity to shape the country's political future. At the same time, neighboring states such as Kenya and Ethiopia became active participants in Somali political processes.

Over the past three decades, numerous international conferences have been organized to address Somalia's political crisis. However, many critics argue that these conferences often served external interests rather than genuine Somali reconciliation.

## Political Engineering and the Rise of Warlords

Neighbouring countries, particularly Ethiopia, have played a significant role in Somali political affairs. Some Somali observers argue that Ethiopia has supported political arrangements that prevent the emergence of a strong centralized Somali state.

One of the most controversial developments in Somalia's political reconstruction was the introduction of the 4.5 clan power-sharing formula during the Arta Conference in Djibouti in 2000. Although many Somalis initially viewed the formula as a temporary solution to clan conflicts, critics argue that it institutionalized clan divisions within the political system.

Transitional governments created through externally mediated processes often struggled to function effectively. At the same time, warlords and armed factions remained powerful, sometimes receiving indirect support from foreign actors seeking to influence Somalia's internal dynamics.

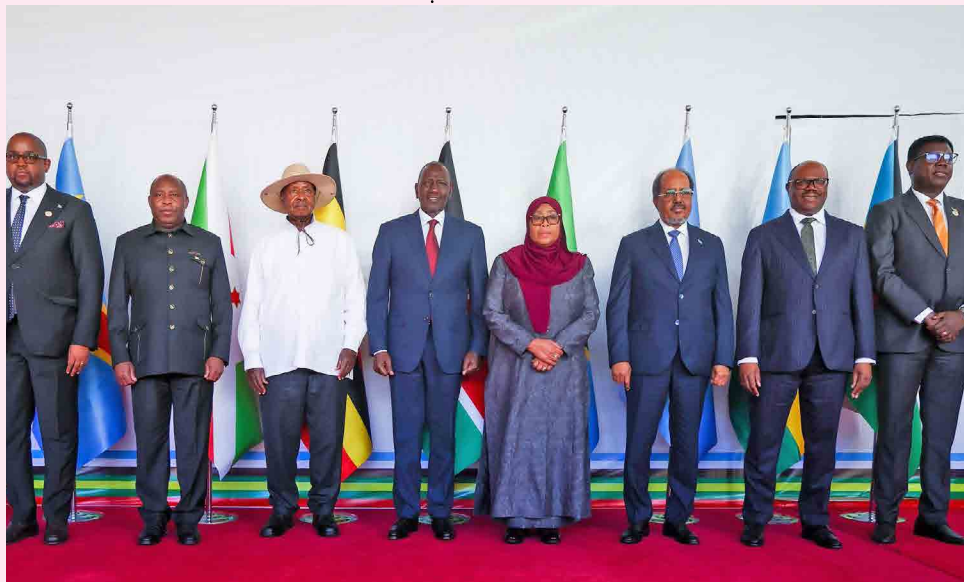
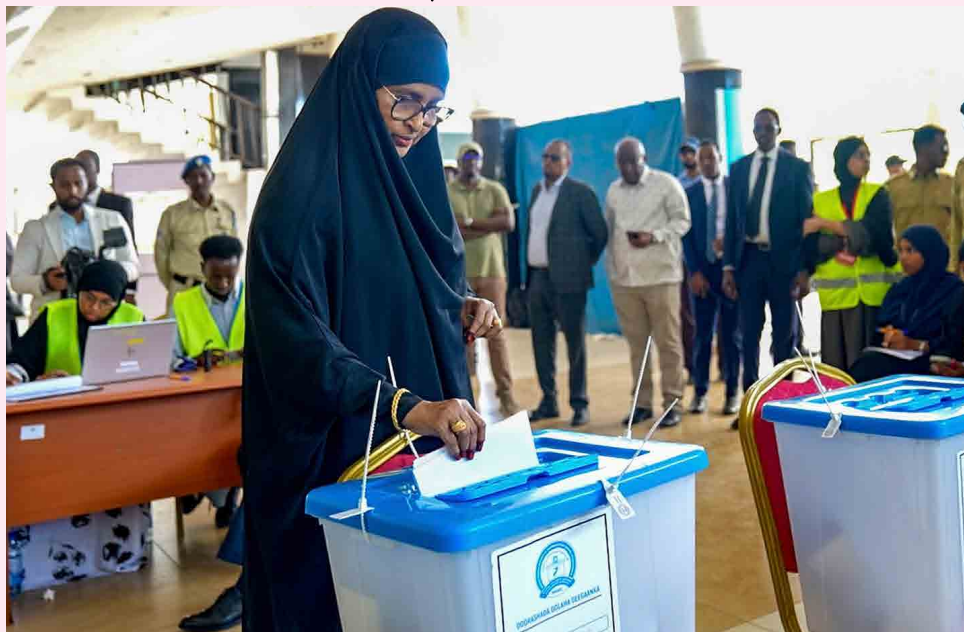
These dynamics contributed to the fragmentation of the country into regions controlled by different political and military actors, further weakening national unity.

### Regional Intervention and the Federal System

Neighbouring countries, particularly Ethiopia, have played a significant role in Somali political affairs. Some Somali observers argue that Ethiopia has supported political arrangements that prevent the emergence of a strong centralized Somali state.

The introduction of Somalia's federal system remains controversial. While federalism can function effectively in many countries, critics argue that the version implemented in Somalia has contributed

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to political fragmentation and competition between regional administrations rather than strengthening national institutions.

### Extremism and Prolonged Instability

The rise of extremist groups in Somalia further complicated efforts to rebuild the state. The spread of insecurity disrupted economic activity, weakened social cohesion, and severely limited mobility between regions. In some areas, the proliferation of weapons among civilians fuelled cycles of violence that extremist organizations exploited.

These conditions have prolonged Somalia's instability and make it difficult to establish effective national governance.

### Dependency and Weak Institutions

Another major concern is Somalia's dependence on foreign aid and external mediation. Critics argue that decades of international assistance have not been matched by the development of strong national institutions.

Key elements of statehood remain weak or incomplete, including:

- A fully functioning constitutional court
- Independent electoral systems
- Professional and unified security forces
- Effective accountability mechanisms within government

Without these institutions, Somalia's political system remains vulnerable to both internal disputes and external influence.

### Emerging Partnerships and Changing Dynamics

In recent years, Somalia has sought to diversify its international partnerships. Over the past fifteen years, Turkey has become an important partner in Somalia's reconstruction. Turkish involvement has included infrastructure development, humanitarian assistance, and military training programs.

Supporters argue that Turkey's approach differs from that of traditional Western actors because it emphasizes mutual economic cooperation and long-term partnership.

Critics, however, debate the broader geopolitical implications of new alliances.

Regardless of differing perspectives, Somalia's growing engagement with new partners reflects an effort to expand diplomatic options and reduce reliance on traditional power structures.

### Conclusion

Somalia's long struggle to achieve stable governance and full sovereignty cannot be explained by a single factor. Colonial legacies, regional rivalries, global geopolitical interests, and internal political divisions have all played significant roles.

For Somalia to move forward, many analysts argue that the country must strengthen its national institutions, reduce political fragmentation, and develop a governance model rooted in Somali realities rather than externally imposed frameworks.

Ultimately, the future of Somalia depends on the ability of its people to build a political system that ensures justice, unity, and independence while navigating a complex international environment.

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# Somalia's deepening crisis of legitimacy and the risk of fragmentation

By Dr. Ali Said Faqi

Somalia appears to be entering one of its most fragile political moments in recent years. The constitutional amendments adopted in March 2026 have opened a deep dispute over governance, constitutional standing, and the future direction of the Somali state. The controversy has intensified further following the expiration of both the presidential term on May 15, 2026, and the parliamentary mandate on April 14, 2026, pushing the country into an increasingly sensitive constitutional and political vacuum.

For the public and the opposition, the amendments represent an attempt by the president to remain in power outside the spirit of political consensus that has long guided Somalia's state-building process. Critics argue that the changes were never genuinely about reform, but about creating a legal and political pathway to preserve the current administration's hold on power. As a result, public confidence in national institutions and constitutional governance continues to weaken.

The central issue is no longer simply about elections. It is about constitutional standing, trust in institutions, and whether Somalia's political actors can still manage disagreements within a consensual national framework.

In this op-ed, we will attempt to examine several critical questions that lie at the center of Somalia's deepening political crisis, including the future role of the security forces, the capacity of the opposition to challenge the current political order, the reactions of regional states such as Puntland and Jubaland, the implications for Somaliland, the evolving role of international actors such as Türkiye, and



whether Somalia is heading toward deeper fragmentation.

## Will the army remain loyal as the president's legitimacy continues to erode?

One of the most critical questions is the role of the security forces. Somalia's army may continue to remain institutionally loyal to the presidency, but institutional loyalty does not always translate into political unity. Somalia's security sector operates within a highly complex environment shaped by clan considerations, regional interests, political loyalties, salaries, foreign partnerships, and internal power dynamics.

If political tensions continue to escalate, different reactions may emerge within the security establishment. Some commanders may remain aligned with Villa Somalia. Others may seek to distance themselves from political confrontations altogether, while some units could increasingly prioritize regional or clan interests over centralized authority.

History also shows that under prolonged political crises, sections of the security forces

can fracture, with some officers openly siding with opposition movements or rival political actors. Somalia's past instability demonstrates how divisions within the army can quickly transform political disputes into broader security confrontations.

Escalating violence in Mogadishu and across other parts of the country could eventually pressure the president to return to negotiations. Somalia's political history has repeatedly shown that serious security deterioration can force rival actors back to the negotiating table after prolonged periods of confrontation.

The greatest danger arising from divisions within the security forces may therefore not be an immediate collapse of the state, but the gradual weakening of institutional cohesion and centralized authority.

## Can the opposition transform political frustration into meaningful pressure?

The opposition remains politically active but organizationally fragmented. Its greatest strength lies not in military power, but in its argument that the current administration no longer possesses a broadly accepted constitutional mandate. Through legal arguments, political mobilization, and international engagement, opposition groups are attempting to frame the crisis as one of constitutional standing rather than armed confrontation.

Yet the opposition also faces serious limitations. It lacks unified leadership, a coordinated national strategy, and strong public mobilization capability inside and outside Mogadishu. Unless opposition actors establish closer coordination with Puntland, Jubaland, other influential stakeholders, and the public at large, their ability to significantly alter the political balance may remain limited.

### What role will Puntland and Jubaland play in the next phase of the crisis?

Puntland is likely to continue presenting itself as a defender of federalism and constitutional balance, while Jubaland may increasingly resist what it views as federal overreach and political centralization.

But the political crisis may not stop at resistance alone. An equally important question is whether one of the regional states, particularly Puntland or Jubaland, could eventually take the lead in organizing a broader opposition conference aimed at challenging the political legitimacy of the current federal leadership.

If the political deadlock in Mogadishu continues and no meaningful agreement emerges, opposition actors could eventually attempt to establish a parallel political process outside the authority of Villa Somalia, particularly now that both the presidential and parliamentary mandates have expired.

Such efforts could include attempts to create alternative representative institutions or a rival political administration claiming constitutional legitimacy. Somalia's political history has repeatedly shown that prolonged constitutional crises can produce competing centers of authority and deepen national fragmentation.

### Will Somalia's political crisis strengthen Somaliland's diplomatic position?

Beyond the internal political struggle, the crisis will likely produce wider geopolitical consequences.

Every prolonged political deadlock in Mogadishu strengthens Somaliland's long-standing argument that Somalia remains politically divided and unable to effectively govern its federal system. Continued disputes between the federal government and regional states, uncertainty surrounding elections, and constitutional disagreements further reinforce Somaliland's diplomatic case internationally.

This does not necessarily mean widespread international recognition of Somaliland is imminent. Many African states remain cautious because of the African Union's traditional position on preserving colonial borders and concerns over encouraging

separatist movements elsewhere.

Nevertheless, continued instability and political fragmentation inside Somalia are likely to provide Somaliland with greater diplomatic visibility and stronger arguments in its international engagement efforts.

### Will Türkiye maintain its current position or gradually recalibrate?

Türkiye has become one of Somalia's most influential international partners through military cooperation, infrastructure projects, humanitarian assistance, diplomacy, and economic investment. Ankara's support has played a major role in strengthening Somalia's institutions and security capabilities.

However, growing anti-Turkish sentiment within sections of Somali society is increasingly complicating that relationship. Turkish influence in Somalia has largely depended on public goodwill built through visible development projects, hospitals, roads, scholarships, and humanitarian support. If Turkish backing becomes increasingly associated with internal political disputes, that soft power advantage could gradually erode.

Türkiye is now increasingly accused by sections of the opposition and the public of providing military support to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud during internal political confrontations, including allegations surrounding drone support when federal forces moved into Baidoa in Southwest State of Somalia.

These perceptions have been further reinforced by controversial fisheries, oil, and gas exploration agreements that many Somalis believe lacked transparency and public accountability. As a result, growing sections of the public increasingly view Türkiye's support for President Hassan Sheikh as closely tied to protecting those strategic agreements amid concerns that a future government could revisit or challenge them.

Together, these developments place Ankara in a delicate position. The longer Somalia's political crisis continues, the greater the risk that Türkiye may become politically identified with one side of a constitutional dispute rather than

maintaining its broader image as a long-term partner of the Somali state.

For this reason, Türkiye should approach the situation pragmatically. While Ankara should continue supporting Somali state institutions and protecting its strategic interests, it should also gradually reduce the appearance of direct political alignment with any one leader while choosing to quietly encourage de-escalation and political stabilization.

### Is Somalia heading toward deeper fragmentation?

With both the presidential term and the parliamentary mandate having expired, Somalia is entering an increasingly dangerous constitutional and political vacuum. The central dispute is no longer simply about elections or constitutional amendments, but about who possesses the legitimacy and authority to govern the country moving forward.

The federal government may continue insisting on its constitutional interpretation, despite the president himself having previously stated publicly that any changes related to term extensions would apply not to the current administration, but to the next one, before later changing his position.

At the same time, opposition groups, regional states, and other political actors are increasingly challenging the current political order, raising the risk of deeper institutional paralysis and competing claims of authority.

The greatest danger may not be an immediate collapse of the state, but the gradual erosion of national cohesion, weakening confidence in federal institutions, growing fragmentation, and the risk of increasing international isolation. Somalia's recent history has repeatedly shown that unresolved political disputes can evolve into broader security and governance crises if left unmanaged.

Without a credible political settlement and an agreed electoral roadmap, Somalia risks drifting into a prolonged period of political fragmentation and instability whose consequences could extend far beyond Mogadishu.

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# Somali identity and the logic of layered resilience

By **Abdiaziz Ali Mohamed**

**S**omali identity is not a singular or static construct. It is a layered and historically produced formation shaped by three dominant forces: a deeply embedded Islamic worldview, an enduring clan-based social structure, and more recent influences stemming from diaspora experiences, state-building efforts, and global modernity. Rather than superseding one another, these layers coexist—sometimes mutually reinforcing, sometimes in direct competition. Together, they create a complex identity system that continues to define Somalia’s political and social trajectory.

The central argument of this analysis is that Somalia’s future cannot be understood as a linear transition toward a singular model of governance or a homogenized national identity. Instead, it must be viewed as an ongoing process of institutional and cultural fusion. This fusion, however, is not automatic; it relies heavily on trust-building, the establishment of functional institutions,

and a lasting political settlement capable of balancing profound clan realities with the vital need for national cohesion.

## **Clan Foundations and Early Social Order**

Long before colonial intervention, Somali society was systematically organized around r̄r kinship units—patrilineal descent groups tracing their lineage to a common male ancestor. These groups functioned as the primary units of governance, resource allocation, and social order. Authority was largely exercised by esteemed clan elders who advised a chosen leader, ensuring community cohesion through customary law (xeer).

These essential kinship systems scaled upward into larger clan families, predominantly the Daarood, Hawiye, Dir, and Isaaq, alongside the Digil and Mirifle (often associated with the Rahanweyn). Governance across these confederations was inherently decentralized. Political legitimacy was grounded not in formal, codified institutions, but in lineage, collective consensus, and customary

authority.

Yet, even within this foundational structure, a critical conceptual dilemma emerges for contemporary reflection: This question remains largely unresolved and continues to animate Somalia’s modern political imagination.

## **Competition, Migration, and Coastal Integration**

The harsh realities of resource scarcity produced cyclical competition between clans, often culminating in conflict over grazing lands and water. By the 16th and 17th centuries, expansive migration patterns had drastically reshaped clan geography across both northern and southern Somalia. In the south, various Somali groups contributed to the gradual decline of earlier polities such as the Ajuran Sultanate, while urban centers like Mogadishu evolved into dynamic arenas of shifting clan influence.

By the 19th century, extensive coastal trade networks had deeply integrated Somali clans into the broader economic systems of the Indian Ocean. Bustling ports such as



Berbera, Zeila, Merca, Brava, and Mogadishu emerged as critical nodes of both commerce and political influence. Consequently, groups like the Geledi exercised substantial authority over inland-southern regions, acting as intermediaries between the interior and the coast.

At this historical juncture, Somali society was already operating as a highly adaptive hybrid system—internally regulated by clan structures, but externally seamlessly connected to global trade routes. This raises another vital interpretive lens:

**Colonial Reconfiguration and Dual Governance**

The late 19th-century colonial period introduced entirely new administrative frameworks under British and Italian control, abruptly overlaying indigenous clan systems with external, state-centric governance structures. Rather than effectively eliminating customary clan authority, colonialism merely reconfigured it. This intervention created dual systems of power: a formal, bureaucratic colonial administration operating alongside an informal, deeply entrenched customary governance network.

This resultant duality would later become a defining, and often paralyzing, feature of the Somali postcolonial state—a system wherein imported institutional frameworks and indigenous authority structures coexist in perpetual tension rather than harmonious

Although Somalia eagerly adopted a parliamentary democracy, political competition swiftly fragmented along strict clan lines. The infamous 1969 elections, boasting over 1,000 candidates distributed across 64 political parties, starkly reflected both robust democratic participation and severe institutional fragility.

integration.

**Independence and Fragmented Democracy (1960–1969)**

Independence in 1960 joyously united British Somaliland and Italian Somalia into a single sovereign republic. However, beneath the euphoric nationalism, the new state inherited profoundly incompatible administrative systems and deeply embedded, competing clan loyalties.

Although Somalia eagerly adopted a parliamentary democracy, political competition swiftly fragmented along strict clan lines. The infamous 1969 elections, boasting over 1,000 candidates distributed

across 64 political parties, starkly reflected both robust democratic participation and severe institutional fragility. Coalition governments proved notoriously unstable, and day-to-day governance increasingly depended on transactional clan bargaining rather than cohesive ideological platforms.

This turbulent period invites a structural inquiry: The answer, tragically at the time, remained elusive. The assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke in 1969 and the subsequent military coup abruptly terminated the parliamentary experiment, violently ushering in a new authoritarian phase.

**Military Rule and the Paradox of Clan Suppression (1969–1991)**

The Siad Barre regime aggressively introduced “Scientific Socialism,” officially banning all manifestations of clan identity while, paradoxically, relying heavily on covert clan networks for governance, patronage, and survival in practice. This glaring contradiction came to define the era.

The state relentlessly centralized power, brutally suppressed dissent, and attempted to forcefully replace kinship identity with a manufactured nationalist ideology. However, rather than dissolving the resilient clan structures, these heavy-handed policies

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merely pushed them underground, where they slowly incubated and later re-emerged significantly more politically charged and weaponized.

Following the disastrous Ogaden War and escalating internal repression, armed opposition movements systematically formed along distinct clan lines—including the SSDF, SNM, and later the USC. These organized groups eventually succeeded in violently overthrowing the Barre regime in 1991.

Here, a deeper philosophical and political question arises: Somalia's harrowing historical experience definitively suggests the latter.

### **State Collapse and Fragmentation (1991–2000)**

Following the total collapse of the central government, Somalia descended into a prolonged and devastating period of fragmentation. Warlords and heavily armed clan militias quickly filled the massive power vacuum, aggressively carving territory into fiercely competing spheres of influence. The capital, Mogadishu, became the tragic epicenter of relentless, violent factional conflict between rival groups.

Numerous international interventions tragically failed to restore lasting order. Seeking stability, the north saw Somaliland declare independent sovereignty in 1991; meanwhile, in the northeast, Puntland successfully emerged in 1998 as a functional autonomous regional authority.

This chaotic era forces a critical examination of belonging: For the vast majority of Somalis, the answer understandably shifted toward localized, clan-based authority structures that could guarantee immediate physical security.

### **Transitional Governance and Persistent Fragmentation (2000–2012)**

Over the subsequent decade, multiple internationally backed transitional governments—notably the Transitional National Government (TNG) and later the Transitional Federal Government (TFG)—attempted to painstakingly rebuild national authority from the ashes. However, these nascent institutions persistently struggled

with profound deficits in legitimacy, pervasive insecurity, and deep-seated, historically rooted clan distrust.

The meteoric rise of the Islamic Courts Union in 2006 briefly engineered a fleeting moment of centralized order predicated on strict religious governance. Unfortunately, its rapid external dismantling and the subsequent emergence of the militant group al-Shabaab plunged the region into renewed, asymmetrical conflict and widespread radicalization.

This turbulent chapter highlights yet another crucial structural tension: In Somalia's complex case, the answer proved highly temporary, violently contested, and ultimately unstable.

### **Federalism and Contemporary State-Building (2012–Present)**

Since 2012, Somalia has tentatively pursued a federal system under a provisional constitution. While this ambitious framework theoretically aims to accommodate vast regional and clan diversity, its practical implementation remains fiercely contested. Ongoing disputes between the Federal Government in Mogadishu and various Federal Member States over resource power sharing, electoral models, and constitutional authority consistently reveal severe, enduring trust deficits.

Federalism, in this complex contemporary context, operates paradoxically as both the proposed solution and the persistent problem: it formally recognizes historical diversity while simultaneously institutionalizing the very divisions that threaten unity.

This leads directly to the defining present-day question: The ultimate answer depends entirely on equitable implementation, the slow building of trust, and sustained political will among Somali elites.

### **Diaspora, Return, and Hybrid Modernity**

A singularly defining feature of contemporary Somali society is the immense, multifaceted role of the global diaspora. Millions of Somalis residing abroad actively contribute to their homeland through massive financial remittances, intense political engagement, and direct

return migration. They bring with them novel administrative practices, globalized perspectives, and vital capital.

This influx creates an entirely new sociological layer of identity: a dynamic hybrid space navigating between deep-rooted tradition and global modernity. However, the social and political integration between newly returned diaspora actors and long-standing locally rooted communities is notoriously uneven, raising another key consideration:

### **Conclusion: Toward a Blended Future**

Somali identity is best understood academically and practically as a layered, constantly evolving system rather than a fixed, ancient essence. It is continuously shaped by proud clan heritage, deep Islamic tradition, violent colonial disruption, catastrophic state collapse, and dynamic diasporic reintegration.

The future stability of Somalia does not lie in the forced dominance or eradication of any single layer. Rather, it lies in their careful, deliberate reconciliation. However, true reconciliation is not merely a symbolic gesture—it is a deeply institutional requirement. It demands the construction of functioning governance systems, strictly enforceable constitutional frameworks, and innovative political arrangements that can accurately reflect and balance clan influence without becoming fully captured by it.

Somalia's identity, then, is akin to a reflection in a moving river: instantly recognizable yet constantly being reshaped by historical motion. Each successive period does not erase the previous one; it absorbs and reconfigures it.

The central, monumental challenge for the next half-century is whether Somalia can successfully transform this incredibly complex, layered identity into a stable, equitable governing framework. If it eventually succeeds, this new state will likely not resemble standard, imported Western models of statehood. Instead, it will proudly represent a uniquely Somali synthesis—built not on the futile attempted elimination of inherent difference, but on the profound, institutionalized ability to govern peacefully through it.

**Banaadir Gas** waa shirkad Soomaaliyeed oo ku takhasustay bixinta xalalka gaaska ee guryaha, ganacsiyada, iyo hay'adaha kala duwan. Waxaan ku dhisannahay kalsooni, tayo, iyo badbaado si aan u gaarsiino macaamiisheena adeeg joogto ah oo ay ku tiirsanaan karaan maalin kasta. Hadafkeennu waa inaan noqono shirkadda ugu horreysa ee bixisa adeeg gaas oo casri ah, ammaan ah, isla markaana daboolaya baahiyaha bulshada Soomaaliyeed.



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## The Somali Livestock Manifesto: Turning a National Heritage into a Global Powerhouse

By **Ahmeed Abdi Hussen**

For centuries, the Somali herder and the livestock trader have been the backbone of our nation. Even in the face of immense challenges, their resilience has been nothing short of legendary, achieving a milestone of over five million live animals exported annually.

But today, we stand at a crossroads. To truly honour this achievement, we must stop selling our “gold” at the price of “silver.” The path forward is clear: Somalia must master the Supply Chain - the journey from the pasture to the plate—to transform our livestock from a raw commodity into a high-value, premium global brand.

**The Gap: Why Our Hard Work Earns Less**

Currently, there is a fundamental

mismatch between what the Somali bush provides and what the modern global market demands. The market pays for consistency, data, and health guarantees - three things our informal system cannot yet prove at scale. High-end buyers want every animal in a batch to be the same weight and have a verified “digital passport” of its health history. Because we currently provide animals with varying weights and no tracking data, the market views our exports as “high risk.” This results in the “Informality Discount,” where we lose out on millions of dollars simply because our supply chain does not yet speak the language of the modern buyer.

**Phase 1: The Engine of Growth – The Finishing Feedlot**

The most critical link in bridging this gap is the Finishing Feedlot. This is not just a pen;

it is a professional “value-engine” where the nomadic animal is transformed into an industrial-grade product.

**The Transformation Process:**

**1. Digital Entry:** Upon arrival, every animal is weighed and fitted with an RFID “Animal Passport.” This chip records its origin, starting a digital paper trail that global buyers crave.

**2. Health Optimization:** A veterinarian administers a standardized protocol of vaccinations and deworming. No longer is health a “guess”; it is now a verified data point.

**3. Scientific Finishing:** For 30 to 60 days, animals are moved onto a high-protein diet of specialized fodder and clean water.

**4. Standardization:** If a contract requires 35kg animals, the feedlot ensures every single head in that batch is exactly 35kg. This creates the uniformity required by high-end international supermarkets.

**Phase 2: Protecting the Asset – The Floating Bridge**

Mastering the supply chain means protecting the weight we’ve just added. We must upgrade our sea transport into a “Floating Bridge.” By using specialized vessels with mechanical ventilation and



onboard feeding, we ensure the animal arrives at its destination “bright,” healthy, and at full weight. We stop “leaking” our profits into the ocean through dehydration and stress.

### The “Proof of Concept”: Ready for the Global Stage

When we master these live animal improvements, we achieve a historic breakthrough. We prove to the world that Somalia can now procure 10,000 high-quality, healthy animals with transparent tracking data and identical weights.

This is the exact “Proof of Concept” required to launch modern value-addition projects. History shows us that many slaughterhouses and meat processing projects across Africa have failed—not because they lacked a building, but because they failed to master the supply chain. Without a steady, predictable stream of standardized, healthy animals, these expensive facilities quickly run out of “fuel” and collapse. By perfecting the live trade first, we build the technical and logistical “muscle” to ensure our industrial future survives and thrives.

### Phase 3: The Government as the Global Ambassador

Mastering the supply chain allows the government to step into its most powerful role: The Architect of Brand Somalia. No longer just a regulator, the government becomes a

proactive partner in opening new doors.

**Market Negotiation:** With a “Certified Premium” supply chain in place, the government can negotiate high-level trade treaties and “Equivalence Agreements” with foreign powers, ensuring Somali products are pre-cleared for entry.

**Securing Sovereign Contracts:** The government can represent the Somali livestock sector at the highest levels, securing long-term supply contracts with foreign military, hospital, and retail chains that require the strict health guarantees only a digital system can provide.

**The Global Brand:** The government leads the marketing of “Somali Desert-Prime,” promoting our animals as a world-class, organic protein source. This shifts our reputation from “raw commodity” to “luxury brand.”

### Phase 4: The Industrial Dividend – Value Addition

Once the government has opened the markets and the feedlots have “locked in” the quality, Somalia moves into Full Industrialization

**Tripling Revenue:** Exporting chilled and frozen meat in branded boxes is worth 300% more than exporting a live animal.

**Youth Employment:** Modern abattoirs and tanneries (leather factories) will create

thousands of high-tech jobs for Somali youth—from food scientists to logistics managers.

**Market Independence:** We are no longer dependent on a single region. We can open markets in Europe, Asia, and the Americas, ensuring our economy remains resilient against regional shocks.

### The Roadmap: A Self-Sustaining Investment

This transformation is a high-yield investment that pays for itself. The government seeds the infrastructure, but the system is run by professionals:

**1 Seed the Infrastructure:** Use state funds or loans to build the first generation of centers.

**2 Outsource to Professionals:** Private Somali companies manage the facilities for a fee-per-animal.

**3 The Sustainability Loop:** Because the system adds 5 fee to use it. The government uses these fees to recover its investment and build the next hub.

### Conclusion: Our Herd, Our Future

We salute our herders and traders for their 5-million-animal milestone. Now, let us give them a system that matches their ambition. By professionalizing the supply chain and leveraging government diplomacy to open new markets, we move from being “price takers” to “price setters.” We will turn the Somali sheep into a globally recognized premium brand, securing a wealthy and industrial future for all Somalis.

The gold is in the herd. It is time we start refining it ourselves.

**If you can add below information at the bottom would be nice:\*\*\*\*\*About the author: Ahmed Hussein, New Business Development expert in Agro-processing and Agribusiness with extensive international experience. A qualified Food Scientist (master from Cornell University) and a Food Processing Engineer (Master from University of Toronto). Board member of ASAP - Association of Somali Agricultural Professionals based in Atlanta Georgia USA.**

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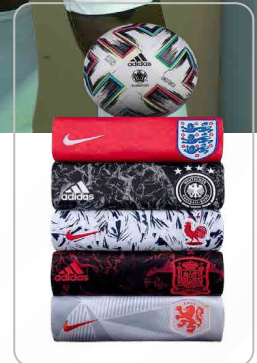
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# Research or Political Campaign? A Response to the Heritage Institute

## A Response to the Heritage Institute's Assessment of Somalia's Diplomacy

By **Ali Mohamed Omar**

**T**here is a difference between analysis and cynicism. Between honest critique and institutional self-harm. Between research meant to strengthen a country and commentary that ends up undercutting the very institutions carrying that country's flag in the toughest diplomatic rooms in the world.

A recent policy paper invites the Somali public, and our international partners, to question what Somalia has accomplished in its first year on the United Nations Security Council. On the legitimate questions about institutional capacity, the Federal Government welcomes the scrutiny. Indeed, we are the first to admit that rebuilding our foreign service is an ongoing process. We are also the first to demand more of ourselves. But the paper makes claims that misread the facts, misrepresent the work of our diplomats, and blur the line between an analyst's role and a political candidate's ambitions. This deserves a clear public response.

### Let me start with the facts.

Somalia did not return to the UN Security Council by accident, accommodation, or sympathy: Somalia returned through a rigorous and competitive election. The same goes for our seat on the African Union Peace and Security Council, where the sovereign representatives of the nations of our continent entrusted Somalia with the serious peace and security responsibility through a process no candidate can shortcut and no commentator can wish away.

On 6th June 2024, in a secret ballot of the UN General Assembly, more than two-thirds of the world's nations gave Somalia their confidence to take a seat in the most prominent diplomatic body on earth. On



11 February 2026, in another vote, this time where African foreign ministers gathered in Addis Ababa, Somalia was elected to the African Union Peace and Security Council for the very first time in our history. Two ballots and two clear answers to one question: is Somalia ready to lead? The world said yes but The Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, in its April 2026 report, appears to have said no.

This response is not written in anger but for the record because this matters. The world watched Ambassador Abukar Dahir Osman take the gavel as President of the UN Security Council in January 2026 and run the Council's business with composure, command of procedure, and discipline of message.

The world watched Somalia stand alone and then stand vindicated when a UN member state moved unilaterally to recognise a breakaway claim on Somali soil. Within hours, the African Union, the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the United States, China and the European Union all reaffirmed their commitment to Somali sovereignty. That global chorus did not happen by accident but because Somali diplomacy had laid the groundwork for it, diplomat by diplomat, mission by mission and capital by capital for months.

The world watched Somalia articulate and vote with conviction at the UN Security Council on the questions that define our challenging times including on Gaza,

Sudan, counterterrorism, and the integrity of borders. Somalia is clearly not a passive seat-warmer or a diplomatic decoration but a real voice with purpose and diplomatic weight.

The world watched Africa entrust Somalia with a place on the continent's premier security body for the first time in the body's twenty-three-year history. Africa does not hand that seat to a state whose diplomatic apparatus, as the report claims, is merely visible without capacity. Arguably, African Union member states watched Somalia for a year on the UN Security Council and reached their own conclusions after witnessing our strong, principled and professional performance. The world has seen Somalia's diplomatic capabilities. The question is what the Heritage Institute has chosen not to see.

The Heritage report struggles to be consistent even with itself. On one hand, it repeatedly acknowledges Somalia's "credible and visible presence" on the Security Council and recognises that we have restored our international standing after decades of state collapse. On the other, it sets out to diminish those same accomplishments by painting Somali diplomacy as structurally incapable of meaningful agency. However, the facts say otherwise.

Somalia has chaired Security Council sessions with professionalism and composure. Somalia has led African positions on issues affecting the continent. Somalia has defended the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity at a moment when those principles face direct pressure in the Horn of Africa. Somalia has navigated one of the most polarised periods in modern multilateral diplomacy while balancing relationships with global powers, regional actors, and African partners. And we have done all of this while still rebuilding our state after a destructive prolonged period of collapse. This reality should inspire measured national confidence not intellectual contempt dressed up as academic sophistication.

No serious observer denies that Somalia still faces institutional challenges. This is true and nobody can deny this. In fact, State-building is an arduous process of incremental development and progress which is not finalised in a decade, or after a single election cycle, or under conditions of insecurity, terrorism, economic fragility, and external interference. Rebuilding our diplomatic institutions is an ongoing national project which we are truly committed to.

There is a profound difference between recognising institutional gaps and dismissing national achievements. Impartial researchers focus on the former while political commentators excel in the latter.

The young Somali diplomats now serving in New York, Addis Ababa, London, Washington, Geneva, Nairobi, Doha, Ankara, Riyadh, Brussels, New Delhi, Beijing, Cairo and elsewhere are working under extraordinary pressure. Many of them operate with limited staffing, limited technical infrastructure, and immense political demands. And yet they represent Somalia with professionalism and determination on a daily basis. To reduce their work to a story of dysfunction is not a fair or constructive criticism. It is an injustice to public servants carrying the weight of national representation through one of the most difficult and consequential periods in our modern diplomatic history.

One passage in the report deserves a direct reply. It describes the Permanent Mission in New York as hardworking and experienced and then, in the next breath, calls those same diplomats reactive, under-equipped, and unable to shape outcomes. The report does this without naming a single failed negotiation, without citing one resolution Somalia could have shaped and did not, and without offering a single example of a coalition our mission failed to build.

Our young diplomats in the UN are real people. They have names. They have families. They put in long hours in a city far from home, working files that run from sanctions regimes to maritime law to the defence of our coastline. They do this work while their counterparts from larger missions often have ten times the staff and a hundred times the budget. To dismiss their record in a public report, on the basis of three anonymous interviews and an admitted inability to reach cur-

rent officials, is not rigorous research but lazy and misleading analysis which undermines our national diplomatic efforts.

#### **Where does the researcher end and the candidate begin?**

The founders of the Heritage Institute are openly positioning themselves to run for the highest office in the land. That is their right as citizens. However, it forces an uncomfortable question into the light: what does it mean when the people aspiring to lead our public institutions are using their research platform to weaken those very institutions in the eyes of the public?

This report does not arrive in a vacuum. It arrives at a moment when its authors have one foot in the academy and the other in the campaign. Given this, every paragraph has to be read twice once for what it says, and second for what it is engineered to do.

A research institute is a public entity that should be built on trust. Its credibility rests on a clear separation between the work of analysis and influence and the naked pursuit of political office. When the leadership of an independent research body starts positioning itself for the highest offices of the state while continuing to publish reports grading the very government those offices would replace, the public deserves a straight answer: which hat is being worn, and when? This is not only a Somali question.

Around the world, the firewall between research and candidacy is the foundation of policy credibility. Once that firewall comes down, two things happen. First, every finding no matter how carefully phrased starts to read like a campaign brief. Second, the institution itself shrinks, because the public can no longer separate the analysis from the ambition. This is a disaster for public knowledge and debate and it reduces politics to mere theatre wrapped in academic dishonesty.

#### **Honest critique is welcome. Manufactured critique is not.**

Let me be precise. No one at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims the process of rebuilding our institutions are finished. No one claims every appointment has been ideal, every brief filed on time, every coordination meeting producing the result we wanted. We are a state under reconstruction. We say

so openly. We have said so at the Security Council itself. This is a fact.

Honest critique sharpens us. It tells us where the gaps are, and offers remedies grounded in the facts. Honest critique acknowledges what is been achieved before pointing to what needs further effort and attention. Good faith also requires three things: accurate facts, a transparent method, and intellectual honesty about the difference between holding a government accountable and seeking to replace it. Accordingly, by these measures, the Heritage report fails to meet the benchmark.

#### **A country returning to the table**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our Diplomats are not asking for the gentle assessment a wounded country sometimes gets from its friends. We are merely requesting that those who write about us, especially those writing from inside our own country, hold themselves to the same standard of evidence they demand of the diplomats they are assessing. This is only fair.

The young Somali diplomat in New York, drafting a statement at three in the morning before a Council vote, is doing the work of the nation. The young Somali diplomat in Addis Ababa, lobbying for a Peace and Security Council seat no Somali had ever held, was doing the work of the nation. The world has weighed that work. The verdicts are on the record and manifested through casted votes which point to the success of our regional, continental and global diplomatic achievements. It is therefore striking that some among us still struggle to see what much of the international community already recognises.

In conclusion, Somali diplomacy today is stronger, more respected, more confident, and visible more consequential than it has been in decades. This does not belong to a single administration, minister, or political faction. It belongs to the Somali state and people. It is a matter of national pride.

To our diplomats: the country sees you. Africa sees you. The world sees you. The work continues.

To the authors of the report: research is a vocation. So is candidacy. The two are not the same. The public deserves to know which one you are practising, on any given day, when you sit down to write.



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