

TESTING THE SOMALILAND'S 20 YEARS OLD DEMOCRACY

A Pre-Election Report Published by

THE ELECTION MONITORING OFFICE (EMO)
of Center for Policy Analysis (CPA)

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The Election Monitoring Office of CPA was launched in January 2017, to closely monitor and follow up the election related activities happening in Somaliland and to provide briefing papers, advocacy, recommendations, and to educate the public. The Office produces a series of reports about the challenges of Elections, timelines, updates about the Election Laws, etc. The Election Monitoring Office is thanking to the members of ISCO Somaliland for their support of Information gathering.

Election in Summary:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1,065,847 | <i>Registered Voters</i> |
| 2,709 | <i>Polling Stations</i> |
| 552 | <i>Local Council Candidates</i> |
| 246 | <i>Parliamentary Candidates</i> |
| 23 | <i>Electoral Districts</i> |
| 28 | <i>Female Candidates</i> |
| 5 | <i>Gabooye Candidates</i> |
| 3 | <i>Political Parties</i> |

Summary of two Decades of Somaliland's Democratization Process

| | |
|----|---|
| 20 | <i>Years of Multiparty Democracy</i> |
| 6 | <i>One Person One Vote Elections</i> |
| 1 | <i>Constitutional Referendum</i> |
| 3 | <i>Advanced Voter Registrations</i> |
| 30 | <i>Times Delayed the Election of the House of Representative, the Guurti, the Presidential and the Local Councils</i> |

Who Can Vote:

- ❖ All Somaliland Citizen
- ❖ At the age of 15 and plus years old
- ❖ Registered Voters in the Polling Station
- ❖ To be mentally fit
- ❖ Prisoners are not allowed to vote
- ❖ Diaspora Communities are allowed to vote in Somaliland Diplomatic Offices

I. Introduction

This May of 2021 is a very historic month. It is the 30th anniversary¹ of Somaliland's Statehood, the 20th anniversary² of Somaliland's Multiparty Democracy, and the first time to hold two elections together. After 10 years of delay for the House of Representative's Elections³ and three years and six months delay for the Local Council Elections, finally, Somaliland is holding these important Elections on May 31st, 2021. The upcoming elections are vital for the democratic process of Somaliland people because it is the first time that Somaliland is holding a parliamentary election since 2005. The youth generation who are under 30 years old, who are the majority of the population, have never got an opportunity to elect their House of Representatives members⁴, so, this time, the youth generation of Somaliland will get the chance to elect their House Representatives. On the other hand, only one female is in the House of Representatives, and the minority groups have no representation at all. So, these elections are very crucial for the Women, Youth, and Minority Groups.

For the last two decades, Somaliland held six elections of one person one vote,⁵ the referendum of the constitution and three advanced voter registrations. Somaliland's Voter Registration became one of the most advanced voter registrations in the world to secure and increase the integrity of the elections.⁶

798 candidates are contesting the upcoming Elections including 552 Local Council candidates and 246 Parliamentary Candidates. 28 female candidates and 5 candidates from the Gabooye clans (Minority groups) are included the final list from the National Electoral Commission (NEC). The 552 Local Council candidates are contesting 220 seats from 20 Electoral Districts.

NEC increased the number of Polling Stations from 1,642⁷ to 2,709 polling stations, due to the COVID19 pandemic and allowing the voters to have enough space for social

¹ Somaliland reclaimed its independence on May 18, 1991

² Somaliland's Constitutional referendum was held on May 31st, 2001

³ The current House of Representatives was elected in September 2005, and their term ended in October 2010. For the last 10 years, their term was extended 7 times.

⁴ In 2005, the youth generation who was born in 1991 and after, were 14 years old and they were not eligible to vote

⁵ Three Presidential Elections, two Local Council Elections and one Parliamentary Elections.

⁶ "Somaliland Successfully Launches Voter Registration." Interpeace, 21 Jan. 2016, www.interpeace.org/2016/01/somaliland-successfully-launches-voter-registration/.

⁷ At the 2017 Presidential Elections, the number of Polling stations were 1,642

distancing. 1,065,847 voters registered to cast their vote. Comparing to the 2017 presidential Elections, the number of registered voters increased 66%⁸. More than 30,000 people are expected to work during the Election day including NEC staff, Party Agents, Security Officers, Domestic Observers, and International Observers.

Somaliland is one of the most expensive elections in Africa, every vote cost nearly \$20. The president of Somaliland Muuse Biihi Abdi recommended a comprehensive electoral reform after this election, called that the election stakeholders to discuss how to minimize the cost of Elections and holding it timely.⁹

⁸ The number of registered voters increased from 704,089 registered voters of 2017 Elections to 1,065,847 registered voters of the 2021 upcoming elections

⁹ [Khudbadda Madaxweynaha Somaliland ee Dahfurka Wadada HARGEISA BYPASS - YouTube](#) (7:20)

Summary:

- ❖ The National Electoral Commission succeeded to implement the Voter Registration Process and the Preparation of the combined Elections within 9 months with overcoming all challenges.
- ❖ For the last four months, the Election Monitoring Office (EMO) recorded that 10 candidates were arrested, 6 of them from UCID Party, 3 from Kulmiye and 1 from Waddani. Two female candidates from Waddani and UCID targeted and issued their warrant of arrest. The EMO also recorded the detention of 15 supporters of two parliamentary candidates from Awdal Region. These detentions from the security forces are alarming, even though the election stakeholders discussed and reached a consensus.¹⁰
- ❖ On September 3rd, 2020, the three Political Parties signed a voluntary quota to include 18 females and three minority group candidates in the parliamentary candidate list. Only UCID fulfilled their promise and included six female candidates in their parliamentary list. Both Kulmiye and Waddani failed to include the required six female candidates in their list¹¹. Also, only Waddani included one Minority Candidate in their Parliamentary list, while UCID and Kulmiye failed to include any.
- ❖ The EMO recorded concerns of voter card collections in some areas of Hargeisa and eastern regions, targeting the areas of the minority group voters, involved by powerful officers and monetary candidates.
- ❖ The EMO Recorded that, articles of the Political Parties' Code of Conduct and the Election Law¹² were violated.
- ❖ The COVID19 awareness raising in election need to increase. Still the voters did not have much information related to the Election Campaign Safety Protocols.
- ❖ Since the campaign is starting, the EMO recorded concerns from the Opposition candidates related to the use of the public resources to the Election Campaign, as the Code of Conduct requires, the President did not issue three presidential decrees, prohibiting the use of government resources to Election Campaign, that Civil Servants not involve the Election Campaign and that the Government agencies and commanders to closely work together with NEC.

¹⁰ On May 10th, 2021 the President and the three Political Parties reached an agreement

¹¹ Kulmiye has 4 female candidates while Waddani has 3 female parliamentary candidates

¹² Article 26 of the Law No. 91/2020

II. THE ELECTION PREPARATION

Election Timeline: After a long-standing dispute of the Elections, on August 23, 2020, finally, Somaliland's National Electoral Commission (NEC) announced that the voter registration and the long-awaited parliamentary and Local Council Elections would happen within 9 months¹³. NEC immediately started the Election Process, even though there were many challenges, including that the Election Law was not approved¹⁴ at that time and, a limited funding for the elections.

Voter Registration: On November 7th, 2020, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) Released the Voter Registration timetable, which was scheduled to start on November 29th, 2020 and to end on January 13th, 2021. The Voter Registration Process was started timely and conducted in more than 1,200 Voter Registration Centers in all six regions of Somaliland. On March 8, 2021 NEC released a preliminary result¹⁵ of the voter registration. On March 11st, 2021, NEC began the voter card distribution of the first three regions of Sanaag, Sool and Saaxil Regions; while NEC started the second phase of voter card distribution of Awdal, Maroodijeex and Togdheer on March 31st, 2021. The voter card distribution concluded successfully. On May 11th, 2021, NEC released the final list of the voters. 1,065,847 voters registered to cast their vote at the on the parliamentary and Local Council Elections.

Candidates: After months of vetting and prescreening of the candidates, the Political parties submitted their candidates to the National Electoral Commission. On April 22, 2021, NEC released the final list of the candidates for the Local Councils, where 552 candidates are running 220 seats of 20 Electoral Districts of Somaliland with only 15 Female Candidates. The three political parties were required to have 660 local council candidates;¹⁶ but in total, the three political parties are missing 108 candidates in 16

¹³ On August 23, 2020 Kaltun Hassan, from Somaliland's National Electoral Commission announced that the voter registration and the Elections will happen within 9 months [Komishanka Doorashooyinka Somaliland oo ku dhawaaqay xiligay qabanayaan doorashada iyo diwaan galint - YouTube](#) (accessed on May 13th, 2021)

¹⁴ Between October 01 and October 06, 2020, the two chambers of the Parliament approved the Combined Election Law (Law No. 91/2020), On October 14th, 2020 the President signed the Election Law [Xeerk-Guud-ee-Doorashooyinka-iyo-Diiwaangelinta-Codbixiyayaasha-Xeer-Lr.-91-2020.pdf \(garyaqaankaguud.com\)](#)

¹⁵ The 2020/2021 Voter Registration Process was just an update of the 2016/2017 voter registration. In 2017, the final list of the registered voters was 704,089. Other 169,058 returned voter cards registered during the 2016 voter registration period but not collected their cards. During the 2021 voter card distribution, NEC also started distributing the 2016 returned voter cards and the newly registered voters. 424,691 voters registered between November 30, 2020, and January 16, 2021. In total, NEC started to distribute the newly registered voters, and 2016 returned voter cards, which is 593,749 in total.

¹⁶ Each party was required to have 220 Local Council Candidates, but all the three political parties are missing candidates in their list. UCID has 158 Local Council Candidates, Kulmiye has 200 candidates while Waddani has 194 local council candidates.

electoral districts. The three political parties submitted a full list for their candidates in only four electoral districts of Hargeisa, Gebilay, Burco and Laascaanood.

According to the final list from the National Electoral Commission, there are no local council candidates from the three political parties of Badhan, Dhahar and Laasqoray districts of the Sanaag region.

| # | Electoral Districts | Region | District Grade | UCID | Kulmiye | WADANI | Vacant Positions | Approved Candidates | Total Female |
|----|---------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Taleex | Sool | C | 0 | 8 | 7 | 12 | 15 | 2 |
| 2 | Laascaanood | Sool | A | 13 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 39 | 1 |
| 3 | Caynabo | Sool | C | 6 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 18 | 0 |
| 4 | Xudun | Sool | C | 0 | 9 | 4 | 14 | 13 | 1 |
| 5 | Hargeisa | Maroodi Jeex | A | 17 | 17 | 17 | 0 | 51 | 0 |
| 6 | Salaxley | Maroodi Jeex | C | 9 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 25 | 1 |
| 7 | Bali-gubadle | Maroodi Jeex | C | 9 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 26 | 0 |
| 8 | Gabilay | Maroodi Jeex | A | 13 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 39 | 1 |
| 9 | Borama | Awdal | A | 11 | 12 | 13 | 3 | 36 | 2 |
| 10 | Baki | Awdal | C | 2 | 6 | 9 | 10 | 17 | 0 |
| 11 | Saylac | Awdal | B | 11 | 10 | 10 | 2 | 31 | 1 |
| 12 | Lughaya | Awdal | C | 3 | 8 | 4 | 12 | 15 | 0 |
| 13 | Berbera | Saaxil | A | 13 | 11 | 13 | 2 | 37 | 0 |
| 14 | Sheekh | Saaxil | C | 5 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 20 | 0 |
| 15 | Burco | Togdheer | A | 13 | 13 | 13 | 0 | 39 | 0 |
| 16 | Oodweyne | Togdheer | B | 4 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 23 | 1 |
| 17 | Buuhoodle | Togdheer | B | 4 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 22 | 1 |
| 18 | Ceerigaabo | Sanaag | A | 9 | 12 | 13 | 5 | 34 | 2 |
| 19 | Ceelafweyn | Sanaag | B | 9 | 10 | 10 | 4 | 29 | 2 |
| 20 | Garadag | Sanaag | C | 7 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 23 | 0 |
| | Total | | | 158 | 200 | 194 | 108 | 552 | 15 |

On April 25th, 2021, NEC released the final list of the Parliamentary Candidates. 246 candidates from the three political parties are running the 82 seats of the House of Representatives. Only 13 female parliamentary candidates are running, out of the 246 candidates.

| # | Region | Total Candidates | Total seats | Female Candidates |
|---|--------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Awdal | 39 | 13 | 1 |
| 2 | Maroodijeex | 60 | 20 | 2 |
| 3 | Saaxil | 30 | 10 | 5 |
| 4 | Togdheer | 45 | 15 | 1 |
| 5 | Sool | 36 | 12 | 2 |
| 6 | Sanaag | 36 | 12 | 2 |
| | Total | 246 | 82 | 13 |

III. Detentions and Intimidations

Since January 2021, the Election Monitoring Office (EMO) of CPA recorded the detention of 10 candidates from the three Political Parties. Six from the Opposition Party of UCID, Three from the Ruling Party of Kulmiye and 1 from the Opposition Party of Wadani. The EMO also, recorded that the Police targeted two female Parliamentarian Candidates of UCID and Wadani from Sool and Togdheer regions. The Court issued their arrest warrant, and the Police searched their Homes.

The Police arrested 11 supporters of Aamina Cilmi Fariid, a parliamentary candidate of Awdal Region from UCID Party¹⁷. Another 3 supporters of Abdirisaq Ali Osman¹⁸, a parliamentary candidate of UCID from Awdal region. Also, the Election Monitoring Office recorded that the supporters of Sucaad Carmiye Odowaa, a Parliamentary Candidate of Wadani Party from Saaxil Region were targeted and intimidated, to remove their social media accounts, postings that they were supporting and advocating to the candidate.

| # | Name of Candidate | Running | Running from District/Region | Party | Date Arrested | Date Released |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Raage Ahmed Yusuf | Parliament | M. Jeex Region | UCID | 08/02/2021 | 07/03/2021 |
| 2 | Mohamud Ahmed Jama | Local Council | Hargeisa | UCID | 08/02/2021 | 07/03/2021 |
| 3 | Shucayb Mohamed Muse | Parliament | Maroodi-jeex | UCID | 25/03/2021 | April 08, 2021 |
| 4 | Ibraahin Abdi Hussein | Parliament | Maroodi-jeex | UCID | 09/04/2021 | Released |
| 5 | Qaasin Aadan Saleebaan | Parliament | Sool | Wadani | 23/04/2021 | 08/05/2021 |
| 6 | Abdullahi Hirsi Hassan | Local Council | Berbera | UCID | 23/04/2021 | 08/05/2021 |
| 7 | Abdirahman Yusuf Ali | Local Council | Hargeisa | UCID | 28/04/2021 | 08/05/2021 |
| 8 | Axmed Maxamed Jaamac (Xanaano) | Local Council | Hargeisa | Kulmiye | | |
| 9 | Abdillahi Duale Obsiye | Local Council | Zeilac | Kulmiye | | |
| 10 | Faysal Cumar Barre | Local Council | Erigavo | Kulmiye | | Released |
| 11 | Kubra Hassan Mohamud | Parliament | Togdheer | Wadani | Issued a warrant to Arrest On April 28, 2021 | |
| 12 | Canab Cabdi Aw Hirsi | Parliament | Sool | UCID | Issued a warrant to Arrest On April 28, 2021 | |

¹⁷ On April 30th and May 1st, 2021, 11 supporters of Aamina Elmi Fariid, a parliamentary candidate of UCID from Awdal Region were arrested and were released on May 6th, 2021 on bail. [UPDATED INFORMATION ABOUT THE MOST RECENT DETENSIONS OF CANDIDATES AND NEC STATEMENT – Somaliland Elections](#)

¹⁸ On May 16th, 2021, two supporters of Abdirisaq Ali Osman were arrested in Borama but released a day later. On May 19th, two supporters of the supporters of Abdiqani Ali Osman were arrested.

IV. The Clan System and Marginalized Groups:

The Gatekeepers of Voters: In 1991, when the Military regime was ousted the power and Somaliland reclaimed its independence, the first ten years of Somaliland's statehood, the traditional leaders played a very crucial role in both reconciliation, peacebuilding, and state building. The clan system was the base of power sharing. On May 31st, 2001, the Somaliland people voted the constitutional referendum and approved 97%. From that time, the country moved from clan based political system into a multiparty democracy system. Even though the country officially moved from clan-based power sharing into a multiparty democracy, but still the traditional leaders were playing a very crucial role in Somaliland's electoral system.

The subclan structure is extremely complicated. The clan money contribution (Qaadhaan) is what the clan elders collect from the men clan members, and that is how the subclan associations govern their problems and prosperities. Hence, the Somali culture is unique because they often do not ask for money for women, which applies to the women candidates. Therefore, it is hard to be active in this complicated system, considering that the clan system is not an officially vetted legal system/institution; it acts more as a hindrance towards Somaliland politics and the democratization process, because it disregards half of the population and leaves them unrepresented. The patriarchal disposition of clan elders is also a problem that remains unaddressed even though clan leadership is the greatest tool for political platforms causing a wide disparity amongst male political candidates and female political candidates. A man has an instant advantage, regardless of political prowess, education, or monetary background.

During the preparation for the candidate lists of the political parties, the traditional leaders played a very visible role in the preselection process. majority of the political parties' candidates were preselected by their clan leaders. In this election, it is very normal to see that candidates and their clan constituencies are linked together. At this stage of pre-election, most of these candidates are more loyal to their clans than their political parties.

V. Supporting the Marginalized Groups

Limited Representation of Women: On September 3rd, 2020, the three political parties of Somaliland signed an internal agreement to promote women's participation in the upcoming parliamentary and local council elections. They developed a voluntary quota for each political party to have six female parliamentary Candidates.

During the Debate of the Combined Election Bill in the House of Representatives, the Election Monitoring Office (EMO), ISCO Somaliland, CPA and other Civil Society Organizations met the Deputy Speaker of the House and the MPs to approve and support the Quota for Women and Minority Groups. Also, The EMO team and the other CSOs, engaged the three political parties to advocate and support the Quota. Unfortunately, On September 27th, 2020, The House of Representatives¹⁹ rejected the Quota for Women and Minority Groups to include the combined Election Law. The only hope for the women and minority group’s political participation was the voluntary quota from the three political parties.

Only 13 Female Parliamentarian Candidates were included the final list of the parliamentarian candidates of the three Political Parties, which is less than the 18 female candidates that the three political parties promised to include in their candidate lists. Only UCID party included 6 female Parliamentarian Candidates in their final list. Kulmiye included four female candidates and Waddani included three female candidates.

During the 2012 Local council Elections, 2,260 candidates registered to run 379 seats for the local councils of 23 Electoral Districts from 7 Political Associations and Political Parties, namely (UCID, Kulmiye, Wadani, Umadda, Xaqsoor, Dalsan and Rays). The number of female candidates were 172 out of the 2,260²⁰. On November 28, 2012, 323 Local Councilors were elected from 19 Electoral Districts. 10 female candidates were elected out of the 323 Local Councilors.

| # | Elected Councilor | Party | District | Region |
|----|--------------------------------|---------|-------------|----------|
| 1 | Fahiima Yuusuf Abdilaahi Quuje | Kulmiye | Laascaanood | Sool |
| 2 | Istaahil Mohamoud Aadan Hirsi | UCID | Laascaanood | Sool |
| 3 | Qamar Maxamed Saalax Taleex | Umadda | Ceerigaabo | Sanaag |
| 4 | Kiin Saalax Xasan Maxamuud | Xaqsoor | Ceerigaabo | Sanaag |
| 5 | Khadiija Xuseen Xasan Ahmed | Wadani | Sheikh | Saaxil |
| 6 | Kawsar Aw Cali Jaamac Bulaale | Xaqsoor | Salaxley | M.Jeex |
| 7 | Sahra Ahmed Abdilaahi Xirsi | Umadda | Borama | Awdal |
| 8 | Nimco Ahmed Abdi Hassan | Xaqsoor | Gebilay | M.Jeex |
| 9 | Cibaado Maax Cilmi Kaahin | Kulmiye | Gebilay | M.jeex |
| 10 | Muna Qorane Curaagte Diiriye | Wadani | Oodweyne | Togdheer |

¹⁹ The House of Representatives rejected the Quota for Women and Minority Groups to include the Election Law [Somaliland: Golaha Wakiilada oo laalay Kootadda Haweenka. - YouTube](#)

²⁰ Pillar of Peace Repor “ *Confronting the Future of Somaliland’s Democracy: Lessons from a Decade of Multi-Partyism and the Way Forward*” APD, [Report-website-version.pdf \(africaportal.org\)](#)

After 9 years, only 15 female candidates are running for the Local Council Elections out of 552 candidates from the three political parties namely UCID, Kulmiye and Wadani. In 2012, the female candidates were 8% but in 2021 the running female candidates are 2.7%.

| # | Districts | 2021 LOCAL COUNCILS | | | 2012 Local Council Elections | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| | | Female Candidates | Male Candidates | # of Seats per District | Female Candidates | # Male Candidate | # Seats per District | # Female Elected | # Total Male Elected |
| 1 | Saylac | 1 | 30 | 11 | 3 | 99 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| 2 | Lughaya | 0 | 15 | 9 | 0 | 78 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 3 | Baki | 0 | 17 | 9 | 3 | 75 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 4 | Borama | 2 | 34 | 13 | 12 | 135 | 21 | 1 | 20 |
| TOTAL AWDAL | | 3 | 96 | 42 | 18 | 387 | 64 | 1 | 63 |
| 5 | Gabiley | 1 | 38 | 13 | 6 | 141 | 21 | 2 | 19 |
| 6 | Baligubadle | 0 | 26 | 9 | 1 | 90 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 7 | Salaxley | 1 | 24 | 9 | 4 | 87 | 13 | 1 | 12 |
| 8 | Hargeisa | 0 | 51 | 17 | 9 | 166 | 25 | 0 | 25 |
| MAROODIJEEX | | 2 | 139 | 48 | 20 | 484 | 72 | 3 | 69 |
| 9 | Berbera | 0 | 37 | 13 | 8 | 139 | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| 10 | Sheekh | 0 | 20 | 9 | 9 | 82 | 13 | 1 | 12 |
| TOTAL SAAXIL | | 0 | 57 | 22 | 17 | 221 | 34 | 1 | 33 |
| 11 | Burco | 1 | 38 | 13 | 9 | 138 | 21 | 0 | 21 |
| 12 | Oodweyne | 0 | 23 | 11 | 15 | 104 | 17 | 1 | 16 |
| 13 | Buuhoodle | 1 | 21 | 11 | 2 | 40 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| TOTAL TOGDHER | | 2 | 82 | 35 | 26 | 282 | 55 | 1 | 54 |
| 14 | Caynaba | 0 | 18 | 9 | 7 | 84 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 15 | Laascaanood | 1 | 38 | 13 | 17 | 130 | 21 | 2 | 19 |
| 16 | Xudun | 1 | 12 | 9 | 1 | 29 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 17 | Taleex | 2 | 13 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL SOOL | | 4 | 81 | 40 | 25 | 243 | 60 | 2 | 45 |
| 18 | Garadag | 0 | 23 | 9 | 3 | 88 | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| 19 | Ceelafweyne | 2 | 27 | 11 | 10 | 109 | 17 | 0 | 17 |
| 20 | Ceerigaabo | 2 | 32 | 13 | 15 | 132 | 21 | 2 | 19 |
| 21 | Badhan* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 83 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| 22 | Dhahar* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 59 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| | Laasqoray* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL SANAAG | | 4 | 82 | 33 | 66 | 471 | 94 | 2 | 49 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | 15 | 537 | 220 | 172 | 2088 | 379 | 10 | 313 |

²¹ The data was compiled by the Election Monitoring Office with a secondary data from the APD and Interpeace Report of 2012 Elections [Report-website-version.pdf \(africaportal.org\)](#)

A Male Campaigners between the Candidate Women and the Voters: Women engagement with their voters is an obstacle that needs to be addressed because the clan leaders are the voters' gatekeepers. Already the traditional leaders prefer a male representation in their clan. The clan-based Voter system prefers to vote for less qualified men rather than competent women, because of their clan affiliation. But there are a youth generation and women voters who have less affiliation with their traditional leaders. The youth generations and women voters need huge coordination, finance, and campaign strategy to unite their voices to counter the clan-based political system. That is why it is very important to financially support the female candidates to organize those women and youth voters, who are the majority of the population.

a. The Minority Groups

On September 27, 2020, the Somaliland House of Representatives rejected the quota for Women and Gabooye clans (minority groups) in the electoral Bill, which was a massive setback to the efforts of the Somaliland civil society and independent activists who were advocating for the quota for almost two decades. While, on September 03, 2020, the three political parties signed an agreement on a voluntary quota to include three Parliamentary candidates from the Gabooye clans in their list and for the local council candidates to be limitless.

Unfortunately, the political parties' agreement was not fully implemented. Now, there is only one parliamentary candidate from the Gabooye clans out of the 246 candidates running for the House of Representatives, Barkhad Jama Batun a parliamentary candidate of the WADDANI party for the Maroodijeex region. Although the UCID party nominated a parliamentary candidate from Gabooye to run for the Togdher region, that candidate did not appear at the NEC's final list.

On the other hand, there are four local council candidates from the Gabooye clans out of the 552 local council candidates from Hargeisa, Borama, Buroa, and Erigavo districts. One candidate is running for the UCID party while, the three others are running from the WADDANI party.

One of the biggest challenges that the Gabooye clans face regarding to the upcoming parliamentary and local council elections on 31 May 2021 is, that the Gabooye clans are scattered in all six regions of Somaliland. There is no single electoral district concentrated on the Gabooye clans to focus on winning their seats.

Under those above-mentioned circumstances, the candidates from the Gabooye clan are facing enormous challenges that can be divided into an internal and external challenges. Some of the internal challenges are, that the Gabooye community was marginalized for a long time. “they did not get an opportunity and support to participate in the decision-making tables of the country. Still, most of them are not well prepared for the elections due to the perceptions and long traditional practices, including clan-based issues among the Gabooye clans, which need to deal with each clan in their own structures, and also, to fear of losing the elections while the majority clans lead all the state institutions, which is another barrier” said Yusuf Suldan Goodaad the Executive Director of the ADAM Academy. The Economic challenges are one of the key external challenges for the minority group candidates. Since the Somaliland elections are so expensive, according to CPA's Presidential Finance²², and the low-income candidates cannot afford the campaign expenses.

Vote-buying and voter card collection is another problem experienced by the voters from the Gabooye voters. The moneyed candidates target the voters from the Gabooye clans and IDPs, which violates the Somaliland's election laws.

The Election Monitoring team of EMO received information related to, buying, and collecting a voter cards, that was reported in some locations of Hargeisa district, Sool and Sanaag Regions. The majority of these incidents that the monitoring team recorded were targeted the locations of the minority groups and the constituents of a female candidates. The intention of the voter card collection is to increase their vote.

During the voter education campaign, The NEC did not prepare specific voter education messages for the Gabooye community to raise their awareness to increase the registered voters from the Gabooye community to vote for their candidates and other candidates who have programs and policies supporting the Gabooye community.

The civil society dominated by the majority clans, seems to be not honest with the advocacy for the Gabooye issues, particularly their political participation, and they did not give enough room to advocate against the challenges of this community.

²² *Somaliland: Sources of Campaign Financing in 2017 Presidential Elections*. Center for Policy Analysis. (2018, June 15). <https://cpahorn.net/somaliland-sources-of-campaign-financing-in-2017-presidential-elections/>.

V. Voter Education

It's the first time that Somaliland is holding two elections at one time. So, the voters need to understand more about the voting system and how they can elect one time a local councilor and parliamentary candidate. The two candidates that the voter need to elect can be a same party or two different parties. On the other hand, NEC divided the Polling Centers into several Polling stations. In the 2017 Presidential Elections, the number of the polling stations were 1,642. According to the final list from NEC for the Polling stations of the May 31st, Parliamentary and Local council elections, the number of Polling stations were increased from 1,642 of 2017 presidential elections to 2,709 polling stations of the upcoming elections. One Polling Center was divided into two or more polling stations, so the registered voters need to have clear instructions to recognize their correct polling station.

a. Securing the Elections

The Ministry of Interior leads the security of the Elections, while the Police, the National Intelligence Agency, and the Military plays a significant role in the Elections' security. Nearly 7,000 Police forces²³, additional number of military personnel and other security agencies are expecting to secure the upcoming elections. The International Partners supported the training of the Somaliland police forces to secure the upcoming elections and respecting the election laws. The international partners also handed over 13 vehicles to the justice department for using the risk assessment teams of the elections.²⁴

For the last four months, the Election Monitoring Office recorded that the Police Forces were involved in multiple incidents of arresting candidates and their supporters. The EMO has received complaints from some of the Opposition Candidates from the Sool Region who have expressed concern about the military's role in the election campaign. Those candidates shared EMO an evidence with military officials campaigning for a candidate from the ruling party. To verify and confirm that information, the EMO office tried to reach the accused officials but could not reach them.

²³ [Somaliland: 7000 Police Officers Deployed to NEC During May Elections - Somaliland Sun](#)

²⁴ [Somaliland Justice department receives vehicles \(hornobserver.com\)](#)

VI. RECOMMENDATION NEEDS TO FOCUS PRE-ELECTION

TO NEC:

- ❖ Since the COVID19 Pandemic still exists in Somaliland, the Civil Society Organizations are recommending to the NEC to increase the awareness-raising of the COVID19 and how the election stakeholders and voters follow the required protocols during the preparation and the Election Day.
- ❖ The Election Monitoring Office is welcoming that NEC increased the number of polling stations to counter the spread of COVID19. EMO recommends that NEC align the voting procedures with the COVID19 Protocols, including the Social Distancing, Masking, etc.
- ❖ The Election Monitoring Office is welcoming that NEC and the Election Stakeholders shortened the Election Campaign days. Since the Election Campaign is expected to bring crowds, still it is unclear, if there are any safety protocols in place to follow during the Campaign to prevent the spread of the COVID19, the EMO is calling NEC to issue COVID19 Safety Protocol in Election Campaign and Public gatherings during the Pre-Election period.
- ❖ Since NEC extended or increased the number of Polling stations from 1,642 to 2,709 polling stations and divided one polling center into number of polling stations, EMO is recommending to the NEC to design the voter education to help the voters to recognize their new polling stations.
- ❖ The Election Monitoring Office is calling NEC to monitor the polling centers in the Minority Group constituencies closely and counter if powerful candidates try to collect voter cards from the voters of the minority groups.

TO THE GOVERNMENT:

- ❖ The Election Law and the Code of Conduct require the Security sector to be neutral; the EMO is calling the President and the Ministry of Interior to ensure the neutrality of the Security forces as the Election Law and Code of Conduct require.
- ❖ Since the situation of the Eastern Regions is very sensitive and some of the opposition candidates express concerns against the security forces; the EMO is calling the government to give more attention to the security of the eastern regions and make sure that the Armed Forces are not involved in any Political Campaigns during the Pre- and Post-Election period.
- ❖ Article 17 of the Code of Conduct requires the President:

- To issue a Presidential decree instructing officials of the armed forces and the government officials to fully cooperate with the NEC and assist them in conducting the elections.
- The President is supposed to issue a presidential decree suspending government vehicles and transportation to be used for political campaigns. Prohibit government vehicles to be branded with a specific party or candidate's symbols and slogans.
- To issue a Presidential decree to forbid civil servants to campaign for a Political Party or candidate during the elections. Also, to enforce equal use of state media like Radio Hargeisa, SLNTV, and Dawan Newspaper.

So, the EMO is calling the President to issue these required presidential decrees.

TO THE THREE POLITICAL PARTIES:

- ❖ The EMO is calling the Three Political Parties to come up with a memorandum of understanding of minimizing the role of traditional leaders in the election to counter any post-conflict elections, led by candidates backing by traditional elders
- ❖ The EMO is calling the three Political Parties to respect the Election Law and the Code of Conduct
- ❖ The EMO is calling the three Political Parties to increase the information sharing of Pre- and Post-Election to counter any fake news.

The Judiciary:

- ❖ Since the Judiciary Department is very crucial for the Elections, and their neutrality is very important, the EMO recommends that courts be ready to handle the election dispute with utmost attention to impartiality, professionalism, and timely decisions.