



REPORT

THE BIGGEST THREAT OF SOMALILAND ELECTION PROCESS IS THE VIOLATION OF ELECTION RULES AND REGULATIONS

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Center for Policy Analysis (CPA)**

The newsletter from the Election Monitoring Office provides brief description of the political events that occurred in Somaliland. CPA was established to help the countries of Horn of Africa region to build, peace, democracy, human rights and effective governance systems where all citizens are equal. CPA is based in Hargeisa, the Capital of Republic of Somaliland.

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BACKGROUND

Somaliland voter cards registration process for the upcoming presidential election scheduled on November 13, 2017 enters the last and third stage. The distribution of cards started 12th August 2017 at Sool and Sanaag regions, east of Somaliland to finalize the process. The registration will continue 28 days to provide the already registered citizens an opportunity to collect their cards at the polling stations to be able to cast votes.

Despite warnings given by the National Electoral Commission (NEC), the two main political parties continue ignoring the Code of Conduct by waging campaigns. The law prohibits the political parties to campaign during the registration process. This election is not the first one Somaliland held since it declared independence from Somalia in 1991. In 2001, Somaliland people voted for and approved a new constitution. Following the acceptance of the Constitution, Local Councils election took place in 2002. The first presidential election happened in 2003 and in 2005 the members of the House of the Representatives were elected by the public. In 2010, Somaliland attracted the attention of the world when then incumbent president conceded defeat for the opposition contender Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo, the current president who is not seeking reelection. In 2012, the second Local Councils election was conducted.

The first voter registration was made in 2009, ahead of 2010 presidential election. It has been noted that the registration failed and was annulled. Therefore, in 2012 local council's election was held without voter cards. Hence the ongoing voter registration process is very important for Somaliland to hold free and fair election.

The following are incidents that happened in last week:

WORRYING INCIDENTS

- On August 3 2017, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Cirro), the presidential candidate of Waddani, resigned from his post as the Chairman of the House of Representatives which he held since 2005. His resignation is related to his candidacy for the upcoming presidential election. Two members of the parliament run for his replacement. Baashe Mohamed Farah (MP from Sool region and member of the ruling party, Kulmiye) and Abdirahman Talyanle (MP from Sanaag region and member of Waddani opposition party) competed for the post. [1]
- On August 6, the House voted for the two contenders. Baashe Mohamed Farah, who was the first deputy chairman of the House, was declared as the winner in narrow votes of 39 to 38. Talyanle accepted the results and congratulated Baashe as the winner of the votes. Hours later Talyanle disputed the results and said that there was a fraud in the counting of votes. He claimed that he was the one who got the 39 votes and accused the secretariat of the House of committing fraud. He declared that he is the legitimate Chairman of the House. [2][3]

- On August 7, the Minister of Information, Osman Sahardid, stated that the legitimate chairman of the House is Baashe Mohamed Farah and warned Talyanle not to claim chairmanship, saying his claims are contrary to the laws. [4]
- On August 8, the members of the House of Representative entered into a standstill. It also turned into physical brawl and sound of gun fire was heard in the parliament headquarters. This saga started after MP Saleeban Ali Kore, who supported Talyanle, and Baashe Mohamed Faarah exchanged heated words and physical brawl. Security forces handled the situation and detained MP Koore. Later security forces released the MP [5]
- On August 8, MP. Talyanle stated that he submitted a law suit to the Supreme Court to challenge the decision. He filled a case at the court. At the same day, the Chief of Supreme Court Aden Haji Ali confirmed that they received the law suit. [6][7]
- A clan conflict in El-afweyn district is not yet solved. On 21 July 2017, inter-clan violence reemerged in El-afweyn district of Sanaag region. At least 6 people died and more than 10 other individuals were injured in a clash between two clans. This conflict started last year and number of violent clashes occurred causing deaths. There have been unsuccessful peace settlements and negotiation efforts made by the government and traditional leaders. The Government and the leaders of the political parties called on both clans to stop fighting and resolve disagreements peacefully. [8]
- On August 4, there were conflicting meetings in Buuhoodle. Khaatumo Leader, Ali Khalif Galaydh and his Parliament sacked the Vice-president of Khatumo Mr. Abdalla Mohamoud Ali who was elected the position of vice-presidency in 2014. But impeached vice-president Abdalla, refused the dismissal. Abdalla Mohamoud and other fellow members hold a meeting which they claimed that they impeached both President Ali Khalif and the chairman of the Parliament. They selected Abdalla Mohamoud to be the new President of Khatumo. Ali Khalif accused that Puntland is behind the political conflict in Khatumo. [9]
- On August 8, Somaliland National Electoral Commission warned Kulmiye and Waddani political parties of making political campaigns. They called the parties to respect the Code of Conduct during the voter registration process. [11]
- On August 8, Somaliland senior Police Commanders announced that they tightened the security ahead of the upcoming election. [12]
- On August 8, the Minister of Interior, Yasin Faratoon, stated that the government will tighten the security and stability for the upcoming election. Minister Faratoon, addressing in Laascanood's voter registration distribution launching ceremony, also said that they met Puntland officials and reached mutual understanding about not to interfere the voter registration process in eastern regions. The Minister gave warned and stated that the government will take legal measures against what he call illegal armed groups or anyone who tries to disturb Somaliland security during the election. Puntland's Minister of Information dismissed that there is agreement between the two sides about the elections. [13][14]

Recommendations

The Center for Policy Analysis (CPA) makes the following recommendations to hold free and fair election:

1. The conflict of the chairmanship of the House of Representatives should be solved peacefully and in accordance with the legal procedures in place; The brawl and dispute in the House of Representatives can become great obstacle to the upcoming elections. Dispute of the election of the house speaker, revealed out how some political parts can refuse the results if it would not happen on their favor. NEC should plan and establish procedures of avoiding ambiguity and political disputes to the upcoming election.
2. Effective measures should be taken to avoid result disputes similar to the one in the chairmanship of the House of Representatives. This should include respect of the procedural laws and strengthening monitoring mechanism;
3. The Judiciary should be independent from the political parties. It is very important the courts to be independent and impartial; how the Judiciary branch adjudicate dispute on the election of House of Representatives' Speaker. It shall affect how the political parts will perceive the fairness of Judiciary verdict on the upcoming election if dispute arise.
4. The inter-clan violence in El-afweyn should be solved to avoid the conflict to have a negative consequence in the voter card distribution exercise or the election;
5. The political parties and the government should respect and implement the decisions of the National Electoral Commission; CPA is calling both Kulmiye and Waddani to respect the code of conducts they signed and abide the rules and regulations of the elections.
6. The political parties should stop using polarizing and sensitive remarks.
7. Political conflict in Khatumo, is thoughtful worrying, facing Somaliland election process. If one of conflicted parties signed understandings with Somaliland, get support from outside to target the election process.
8. Inter-clan violence conflict in El-afweyn, is one of the key risks to upcoming election, if it will not resolve. Inter-clan conflict in El-afwen will affect polling stations for the presidential election in November 13, 2017. There should be specially trained security forces for the voting stations in El-afweyn town or other fragile places.

CONCLUSION

CPA is calling to the stakeholders for greater efforts to ensure the election will take place on time, and to solve any barriers that may slow down the preparation of the elections.

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About Center for Policy Analysis

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