



Report

THE DISAGREEMENT OF THE SOMALILAND POLITICAL PARTIES CAN DELAY THE PRREPARATION PROCESS OF THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS

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This Monthly newsletter from the Election Monitoring Office provides brief description of the political events that occurred in Somaliland, mostly relating with the election process. 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 Somaliland.

INTRODUCTION

165 days are remaining from the date assigned for the elections of House of Representatives and Local Councils in Somaliland - The Election Day is scheduled on March 27, 2019. But, there are enormous hinders on the occurrence of the elections. These emerging issues can affect the election plan and preparation, if not come up a quick plan to solve the challenges, it is very difficult to hold the election on time because of the short period and the tasks which are needed to be done before the election date. Also the stakeholders are not on the same side how election will happen and still there is no common agreed plan and roadmap about the upcoming elections between the political parties.

Challenges to hold the election of parliament and local council elections on time.

Following are the most vital challenges on the upcoming Parliament and Local Council elections:

- **THE ASSURANCE OF THE THREE POLITICAL PARTIES:** in order to hold free and fair election, the election stakeholders must agree the roadmap and preparation process of the election and also the Election Commission must have the confidence of the stakeholders. WADDANI Opposition party is not happy about the work of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and they sent a complaint letter to the president of Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi, which they demanded the termination of the Election Commission, but the president exposed that he is not agreed the accusation from Waddani party to the Election Commission. Still that problem exists, without solving this matter, can affect the election preparation process.
- **ELECTON BILL:** The Bill has been in the Parliament more than three months and still the house didn't debate it. MPs pointed out that there are some political concerns in the bill which MPs in the parliament have opposing views, like the seat allocation of the parliament. They believe that they can't debate the seat allocation formula of the Parliament in the bill, without political agreement among the Political Parties, the Government and the Regions who are complaining about the current seat allocation of the parliament. Somaliland has 6 regions, every region has its own seat allocation of the 82 MPs in the parliament,
 - Sanaag Region has 12 MPs,
 - Sool has 12 MPs,
 - Togdheer has 15 MPs
 - Sahil has 10 MPs
 - Marodi-jeh (Hargeisa) 20 MPs
 - Awdal has 13 MPs

For Example Awdal and Eastern Regions are complaining about the current seat allocation formula and the representation of the parliament which they believe it is unfair. They are lobbying to redistribute the seat allocation to have more seats in the lower house of the Parliament. This issue has its own political weight in the election of House of Representatives.

- **WOMEN'S QUOTA:** in the electoral bill, this needs a political pressure to support the adoption of the quota.
- **SECURITY TENSIONS IN EASTERN REGIONS:** The other political challenges which can be an obstacle to the upcoming election, is the security tensions in eastern regions of Somaliland which has its security and political weight on the upcoming elections. If not solved the security tension of Tukaraq, the armed insurgent movement in Sanaag region and as well as the other post-election grievances resulted by the presidential election, these issues can have a political and security impact and pressure to the upcoming election, particularly in eastern regions, where government will need more security forces during the election preparation and the election day, but now the security forces are busy to those tensions in eastern regions.
- **INTERNATIONAL ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS:** International Election Stakeholders are not giving main concentration and attention to Somaliland upcoming elections unlike the previous elections. This will also have an effect on the current preparation process of the upcoming election. Most of the donors gave their main effort and attention to Somalia's upcoming election. UK's State Minister of Africa Harriett Baldwin and Denmark's Ambassador to Somalia Amb. Mette Knudsen met the president of Somaliland and discussed Election Related issues. It is very important to Somaliland Election Process to have the attention of the International Community.

There are also technical issues which is needed to be done before the election date. For Instance, updating the voter registration, like registering the voters who missed the earlier registration, citizens who reached the voting age after the earlier voter registration etc; all these issues need a concrete plan, political agreement, time and financial input.

SUMMARY OF THE ELECTION ACTIVITIES COMPILED IN THIS MONTH

Following are the election activities compiled in this month, include some of worrying incidents.

1. **September 19, 2018:** The President of Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi met with the chairmen of opposition parties, Waddani and UCID in presidential palace. The agenda of the meeting was about the vital obstacles on the upcoming election. The President and both opposition leaders agreed on;
 - a. To select a committee from the three political parties. The committees consist of 18 members. The committee is mandated to settle and bring the solution of the upcoming election key barriers.
 - b. To arrange special meeting between the president and two chairmen of the opposition parties to discuss emerging change in the region and as well as the role of Somaliland.¹
2. **September 23, 2018:** President Muse Bihi and opposition leaders met again in Hargeisa. During 9 hours long meeting, they have discussed about elections, internal and foreign policy and other important issues.²
3. **September 25, 2018:** the committee of the political parties have met in Grand Hadi Hotel, Hargeisa. The members have set a seven points agenda, the first point was the issue of the National Electoral Commission, since Waddani Opposition Party was not happy the work of the NEC. The meeting concluded without result and agreement on the National Election Commission issue. Members of the committee suggested to UCID and KULMIYE parties to meet privately and to make a compromise and a solution about the issue of NEC.³
4. **September 28, 2018:** Members from UCID and KULMIYE parties have met in the Somaliland Vice-Presidents' house. The aim of the meeting was to seek a solution about the disagreements between the political parties about NEC Issue, but the meeting was concluded without result.
5. **September 30, 2018:** A letter signed by the second chairman of KULMIYE party, Ahmed Abdi Dheere, was stated that the executive committee of the party approved the dismissal of the chairman of the central committee of Kulmiye Jama Ismaciil Shabeel. The decision is also mentioned that the party removed his membership in the party. The second chairman's decision is mentioned that the chairman is violated article 56 of the party's internal constitution. The grounds on the dismissal of Mr. Shabeel are about disciplinary measures of the members and officials of the party.⁴
6. **October 1, 2018:** The Chairman of the Central Committee Jama Shabel, which the party's Executive Committee sacked, told the media that his dismissal is illegal and his central committee of the party are hierarchically higher than the Executive Committee so the Executive committee has not the mandate to dismiss him. He also argued that the second chairman who signed his dismissal was not approved by the central committee so he

¹ Somaliland Channel (September 19, 2018); Government and Political Parties agreed national unity and harmony. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EcBbvWS-laQ>

² Horn Cable Tv (October 5, 2018); 'If Election will not held, we will call for a clan grant conference.' Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljM3ODV28bQ>

³ Arabsiyo news (October 3, 2018); Somaliland: Political Parties talk commented about upcoming election. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vF1_cN_F5_I

⁴ Ilays news (September 30, 2018); Jama Shabel spoke about his dismissal. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HP1Za8-xJ8>

described him (the Second Chairman) that he has no the legitimate power to take that action. Mr. Jama Shabeel have called an urgent meeting of the members of the central committee which he scheduled on the Saturday of October **6, 2018**.⁵

7. **October 03, 2018:** Waddani and UCID political parties hold together a press conference in Hargeisa. Both parties declared that the ruling party declined demands from the opposition parties such as;
 - a. WADDANI demanded the dissolution of the current national election commission (NEC).
 - b. UCID party recommended increasing the members of the National Election Commission from seven to nine.

The Opposition parties stated that they are ready for political dialogue, but the talks have been suspended after ruling party of Kulmiye declined any flexibility and compromise on the conflicted issues. UCID Party claimed that they took a mediation position between KULMIYE and WADDANI positions about NEC. But UCID and WADDANI are on the same position when it comes to the increasing the number of the Election Commission from seven members to nine members (add extra two members).⁶

8. **October 04, 2018:** Kulmiye party proclaimed that they are ready to prepare and held the upcoming elections of House of Representatives and Local Councils on the current scheduled time; The second chairman of Kulmiye Party hinted, if technical delays arise, it will be one or two months, but not more than, according to his press conference. The second chairman Ahmed Abdi Dheere called to the opposition parties to stand with the government and its party for the preparation of upcoming election. Kulmiye party pinpointed that both the ruling party and the government already prepared the budget and the platform of the election. He said that the government handed over the first part of the budget of the upcoming elections to the National Election Commission. Kulmiye party indicated that they are ready for political dialogue between their party and the other opposition parties to solve the standing issues of election. The Chairman also pointed out that, it is the responsibility of the parliament to increase the number of commissioners in National Electoral Commission, during the amending of the election bill, but he suggested that the three political parties must come up a proposal to the parliament.⁷
9. **October 04, 2018:** The chairman of UCID Party, Eng. Faysal Ali Waraabe, during his speech in a ceremony, he criticized both the government and Parliament that they are not still ready for the preparation of upcoming elections. Eng. Faysal stated that if the government will not held the upcoming elections on the current scheduled time, neither the President nor the parliament will not be able to sit their offices after their elected mandate finish. He also stated that they, as opposition party, will organize a clan conference, since the government is not respecting the democratic political system.⁸

⁵ Gebogebo news (October 1, 2018); Jama Shabel, Spoke about his dismissal. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPuJQovTsRM>

⁶ Arabsiyo news (October 3, 2018); Somaliland: Political Parties talk commented about upcoming election. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vF1_cN_F5_I

⁷ Somali Cable (October 4, 2018); Kulmiye Party talk about the position of the opposition parties. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_SqGEBi2Kg

⁸ Horn Cable Tv (October 5, 2018); 'If Election will not held, we will call for a clan grant conference.' Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjM3ODV28bQ>

10. **October 6, 2018:** Jama Shabeel, the dismissed Chairman of the Central Committee of Kulmiye, went to the headquarter of the party in early morning, since he was going to have his scheduled central committee meeting as he told the media, but security forces in the central office refused him to enter the building, as he told the media. Mr. Shabeel argued that these measures were illegal and he declared that he postponed the central committee meeting after one month, which is the coming *November 6, 2018*. Kulmiye party didn't still comment the conference which Jama Shabeel calls and his claims that security forces stopped him.⁹
11. **October 6, 2018:** Chairman of the House of Elders (Guurti), Saleban Mohamoud Adan, stated on an exclusive interview with Bulsho TV, that it is difficult to held the election at this time, because the state is in conflict (in Eastern Regions) and the security forces were deployed in the front line areas. He also pointed out that there is a legal dispute about the electoral laws, particularly those concerns of the parliamentary elections, because some clans are already expressed their concerns against the seat allocation formula of the parliament.

Guurti Chairman mentioned that it will be important to conduct a national conference to settle the complaints about the representation formula of the parliamentary seats in the electoral laws. The Chairman stated that the differences between the political parties of these issues can cause the delay of upcoming election; *“Why not, it (differences between the political parties) will result a delay of the elections, they (Political Parties) are the competitors, they are those who will be elected, if they don't solve their differences how the election will be held on time.”* said the Chairman of Guurti. The Chairman said that he is not supporting the dissolution proposal of the National Electoral Commission, and he argued that he didn't know any reason to disband the election commission. He suggested to the political parties, who are complaining about the National Electoral Commission to change their commissioners in NEC.¹⁰

⁹ Eryal Somali Tv (Oct 6, 2018); Ruling Party and Jama Shabeel's dismissal. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d4Lt7oDmhxQ>

¹⁰ Bulsho TV (October 6, 2018); Exclusive Interview with the Chairman of House of Elders. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WY9KVIB9QWE>

POSITIONS OF ELECTION STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT ‘NEC’

- ❖ Waddani Party has concerns about the current National Electoral Commission and it demanded the dissolution of the National Electoral Commission.
- ❖ UCID party proposed to increase the number of NEC from seven to nine members. The party also claims that they made mediating efforts to settle the differences between KULMIYE and Waddani party.
- ❖ Kulmiye party (Ruling party) maintained that the current National Electoral Commission should finish their legitimate term which will expire until October 2019. The ruling party also disputed the proposals to increase the number of election commissioners.
- ❖ House of Elders which have the mandate to select two members of the National Electoral Commission, stated that they don’t have any evidence about that NEC failed to perform their legal duties and Guurti suggested to those who have complaint about NEC should change their member in the National Electoral Commission.
- ❖ It is an obvious that the two opposition parties are in a same position for the proposal to increase the number of NEC from seven to nine members. They also suggested in reforming the selection criteria of the commissioners in NEC. But the second Chairman of Kulmiye did not welcome the suggestion of the opposition parties and he argued, that his party suggested to increase the number of the NEC during his opposition time (Before 2010 Presidential Elections), he said that the main obstacles of that time was the electoral laws, and he said that still he believe the issue of increasing the number of National Electoral Laws, related to the Legal Issues. [14]

DISMISSAL OF THE CHAIRMAN OF KULMIYE’S CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Before the executive committee dismissed the Chairman of Kulmiye’s Central Committee Jaamac Shabeel, he spoke the media with several times and criticized some decisions from the government such as the newly approved Rape and Sexual Offences act. Mr. Jaamac Shabeel and the General Secretary of KULMIYE Party condemned each other through media before his dismissal. The General Secretary, Hassan Saed argued that Jama Shabel cannot speak on behalf of the party, while Jama Shabel stated that he can speak on behalf of the party.

July 9, 2018, Jama Shabeel spoke with Bulsho TV and criticized the competence and qualification of member of the cabinet that the president built his government. He pledged that he will make government accountable to the party’s political program campaign.¹¹

¹¹ Arabsiyo News (July 9, 2018) Jama Shabel Question the The competence of the Cabinet. Retrieved from. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTWBu8ES6gg>; Eryal Somali Tv (September 27, 2018); Jama Shabel Responded to Kulmiy’s Secretary General. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JJu4vAH2Ik>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The leaders of political parties must come up a sustainable and effective solution for their differences, particularly the issue of NEC. CPA is calling to both Waddani and Kulmiye Political Parties to come up a compromised solution about their positions and give the priority on holding the elections on time.
- Chairman of UCID party, Eng. Faysal Ali, told the media that he took a mediation position to come up a compromised solution of the opposing position of Waddani and Kulmiye parties. This effort is appreciable, CPA is calling the 18 members committee of the three political parties to come up with flexibility and compromise in order to hold the upcoming election without delay.
- CPA is recommending to the donor countries and international community not to give up their support on Somaliland's democratic system especially elections, and give their attention and consideration to the upcoming Somaliland elections. If the international community ignore to give attention to the Somaliland Elections, particularly financial support and technical matters, it will affect the timeline of the upcoming elections¹ and may result further delays.

CONCLUSION

CPA, Election Monitoring Office, after analyzing the emerging issues on elections and above incidents it can conclude that political parties and concerning stakeholders didn't reach still any common understanding of election preparation. This can effect and cause gravity to the upcoming election of House of Representatives and Local Council.
