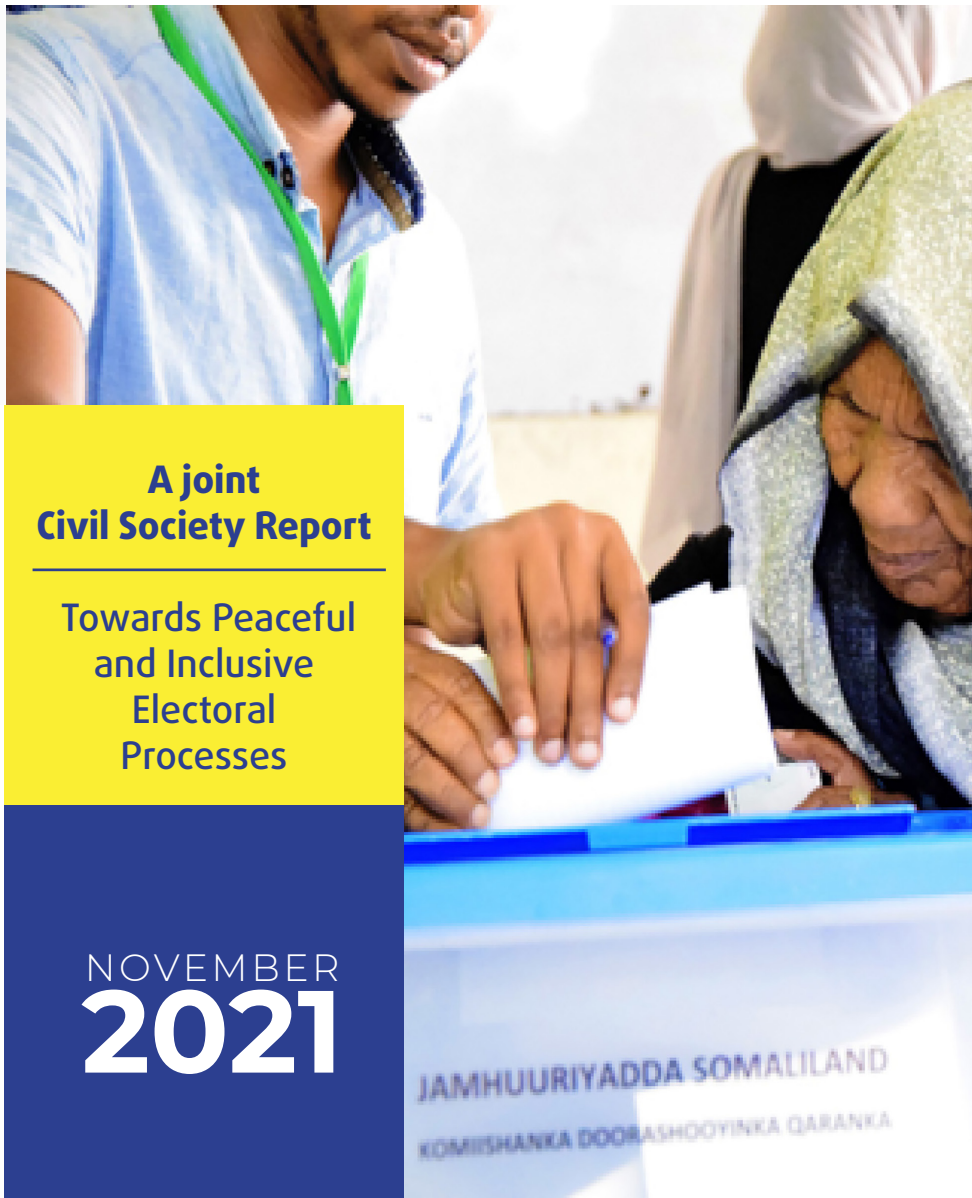


SOMALILAND VOTES FOR PEACE

Combined Parliamentary
and Local Elections 2021



**A joint
Civil Society Report**

Towards Peaceful
and Inclusive
Electoral
Processes

NOVEMBER
2021



CONCLUDING SUCCESSFUL ELECTION



Funded by European Union

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Somaliland Votes for Peace: Combined Parliamentary and Local Elections 2021	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Content	iv
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures	vii
Forward	viii
Executive Summary	ix
Summary of Key Findings	x

1. SECTION ONE: Somaliland Elections Context	1
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Political Context	2
1.3 Political System	4
1.4 Legal Framework	5

2. SECTION TWO: Election Observation Mission	7
2.1 Voter Registration Process	8
2.2 Civic and Voters Education	8
2.3 Voter Registration in 2021	9
2.4 Voter Registration Observation Mission	10
2.5 Parliamentary and Local Council Elections Observation Mission	11
2.5.1 Voting	13
2.5.2 Voting Process	14
2.5.3 Counting	15
2.6 CPA Election Monitoring Office	15
2.7 International Election Observation Missions	16

3. SECTION THREE: Conflict Mitigation	17
3.1 Pre-election Conflict Assessment	18
3.2 Pre-election Assessment Recommendation	19
3.3 Establishment of ESR	19
3.3.1 Various CSOs Committees and Conflict Monitors	20
3.3.2 Nabaad Ku Codee (Vote in PEACE) Studio	21
3.3.3 Mitigation Mechanism	22
3.3.4 Stakeholders' Harmonization	23
3.4 Pre-election Conflicts	24
3.4.1 Campaign Period conflicts	24
3.5 Election Day Conflicts	25
3.6 Post-Election Phase	26
3.6.1 NEC Preliminary Results	26
3.6.2 Objections and Appeals	27
3.6.3 Supreme Court Final Verdict	27
3.6.4 Eastern Region Election Results	27



4.	SECTION FOUR: Women's political Leadership	29
4.1	Somaliland Women in Politics	30
4.2	The Need for Women Empowerment Interventions	31
4.2.1	Pre-Election Interventions to Increase Women Political Empowerment	31
4.2.2	Advocacy for Fee Exemption for Women and Minority Candidates	32
4.2.3	Indirect Support for Women and Minority Candidates	32
4.3	Support Provided During the Electoral Phase	33
4.3.1	Women Situation Room	33
4.4	Critical Challenges Faced by Women in May 2021 Elections	34
4.4.1	The Clan System	35
4.4.2	Clan Influence on Political Parties	35
4.4.3	The Financial Barriers	36
4.4.4	Lack of Confidence in Electoral Stakeholders	36
4.5	What is Next for Somaliland Women?	36
4.5.1	Tackling Inclusion Issues & Improving Women Participation	36
4.5.2	Raise Societal Awareness of Women's Leadership Through Media.	37
4.5.3	Promote More Inclusive Institutions.	37
4.5.4	Strategizing Women Financial Support	38
4.5.5	Breaking the Cycle of Gender Exclusion in Political Party Development	38
5.	SECTION FIVE: CSOs Election Contribution	39
5.1	Role of the Media	40
5.2	People with Disabilities	41
6.	SECTION SIX: Conclusion and recommendation	43
6.1	Conclusion	44
6.2	Recommendations	45
6.2.1	Political Parties	45
6.2.2	National Electoral Commission	45
6.2.3	The Government of Somaliland	45
6.2.4	International Community	46
6.2.5	Civil Society Organisations	46
	References	47
	Appendices	49

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Number of Councilors Per Electoral Districts	5
Table 2: List of the Official Registrants in 2016 Voter Registration	8
Table 3: Voter Registration Schedule 2020/2021	9
Table 4: Total Valid Voter Registrants in 2021	10
Table 5: Final Voter Registration by NEC (2017 and 2021).	10
Table 6: Polling Station Personnel	12
Table 7: Political Parties agents by gender	23
Table 8: Regional Distribution of Votes in Somaliland's Elections (2002-2021).	23
Table 9: Women Candidates Result for the Combined Elections 2021	31
Table 10: The 2021 Candidates Disaggregated by Gender and Political Party	32
Table 11: Fee Exemption for Women and Minority Candidates	32
Table 12: PWD Observer and Conflict Monitors in 2021 Elections	42

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1: ESR Reporting Mechanism	21
Figure 2: ESR Information Sharing with Stakeholders	22
Figure 3: Types of Incidents Reported to the ESR During the Pre-election Period	22
Figure 4: Election Day Conflicts Reported	24
Figure 5: Preliminary Results Complaints Per Region	25
Figure 6: Local Council elections preliminary results	26
Figure 7: House of Representatives preliminary results	26
Figure 8: Preliminary Results Complaints per Region	27

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFIS	Automated Fingerprint Identification System
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CPA	Centre for Policy Analysis
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CRPD	Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities
DEOM	Domestic Election Observation Mission
EISA	Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa
EGBV	Election Gender Based Violence
ESR	Election Situation Room
EU	European Union
IEC	Information Education Communications
MMC	Media Monitoring Committee
MoI	Ministry of Interior
NAGAAD	Network of Women's Organizations in Somaliland
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
SOLJA	Somaliland Journalists Association
SONSAF	Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
SNDF	Somaliland National Disability Forum
SOYDAVO	Somaliland Youth Development Voluntary Organization
VAWP	Violence Against Women in Politics
WIJA	Women in Journalism Association
WSR	Women Situation Room
YOVENCO	Youth Volunteers for Development and Environment Conservation
SILC	Swedish International Liberal Centre
UCID	Ururka Caddaalada Iyo Daryeelka, "Justice and Welfare Party"

FOREWORD

The 2021 Parliamentary and Local Council Elections were yet another stern test of the entire gambit of Somaliland electoral democracy: from the processes and systems that facilitate them to the people who run and participate in them as well as the legislative and regulatory framework. Once again, Somaliland election held up exceptionally well and the Somaliland National Electoral Commission (NEC) succeeded against all odds in delivering the elections within the agreed timeframe. Both local and international observers were able to declare Somaliland elections as free, fair and credible. Successful elections are a collective effort. On behalf of the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF), I wish to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to key stakeholders and partners who made the elections possible. In Particular:

The Ministry of Interior (Mol) Minister, Mohamed Kahin Ahmed, cooperated and assisted in various aspects of the electoral conflict mitigation and monitoring missions. Similarly, NEC administrated the election well and we would like to congratulate NEC members for their continued integrity, commitment, determination, and professional excellence.

Moreover, I would like to thank the three political parties for valuing democracy and setting their differences aside. It is due to this commitment from the political parties and their desire for Somaliland to be stable, thriving and peaceful, which resulted in holding a successfully combined parliamentarian and Local Council elections. The various civil society organizations, businesses and labour organizations, traditional leaders, religious and faith-based organizations, the wider public and other groups participated in myriad ways to make the elections a success. In particular, special thanks go to the NAGAAD network, WIJA, CPA, SOLJA, ADAM Academy, DANGUUD Consortium and SNDF for their contribution in finalizing this report.

Special thanks go to the local conflict monitors, domestic election observers and media stations for their continued hard work observing the Somaliland election process. This report highlights the various stakeholders' significant contributions to holding a transparent, accountable and credible election.

I would like to show much appreciation to the Government of Somaliland for the timely allocation of funds to the election process, and the European Union for their continued financial and technical support in voter education, registration and democratization processes in Somaliland.

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Anwar Abdirahman Warsame



SONSAF Chairman

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report evaluates the Somaliland May 2021 parliamentary and local government elections. It provides civil society organisation's (CSOs) analyses of the pre, during and immediate post-election processes with a special focus on the voter registration, CSOs observation mission, women empowerment and conflict mitigation.

The CSOs observed many challenges that could hinder the overall election cycle, including the election law undergoing amendments, droughts in the six regions of Somaliland, Covid-19 pandemic, the nature of the combined elections and general political instability, especially in the eastern regions that share a border with Somalia, which was highlighted in the pre-election assessment conflict analysis report. Considering the challenges presented by the combined election, Somaliland once again showcased its political maturity by putting aside its political differences and ensuring that CSOs, political parties, and government institutions pulled together to ensure the elections' successful conclusion.

Despite the successful elections, it is unfortunate that the elections lacked inclusiveness, as there were no women elected to the House of Representatives, which has a total of 82 seats and only three women were elected into Local Council. However, one minority member was elected to parliament with the highest number of votes among the 82 MPs. These figures show that Somaliland falls short of affirmative action targets and efforts to support women in electoral processes. In addition, its democracy largely excludes people living with disabilities and people from minority groups.

The CSOs observed that the cost of politicking in the country is extremely high, this, coupled with the political patronage and patriarchal culture, makes it difficult for marginalized groups particularly women to contest and be elected.

The methodology of the post-election report is based on a systematic, comprehensive gathering of information for fact-based, politically impartial analysis as presented in this joint CSOs analysis report of findings and recommendations. As elections are high-stakes processes in which political power is won and lost, which by nature creates a degree of conflict that needs to be managed, so violence does not ensue and following the pre-election assessment key findings, SONSAF established the ESR, through the technical support of EISA under the EU funded PEACE project. The Election Situation Room (ESR) was established as a mitigation mechanism that is designed to observe, report, analyse and facilitate responses to violent threats, voter corruption, compliance to the electoral code and human rights abuses to the peaceful conduct of the election.

The ESR served as one of the mitigating factors of reducing and responding to electoral violence during the pre, during and post-election periods. Through the ESR, SONSAF developed election conflict monitoring indicators to monitor the national context of the pre-election phase, identify risk areas based on hotspot mapping analysis across the regions of Somaliland. SONSAF also deployed 700 conflict monitors as well as 82 roaming conflict monitors (CSOs, religious and traditional leaders), National Election Monitoring Committee consisting of 18 CSOs members, and Regional Election Monitoring Committees consisting of between three to six CSOs members in each region.

Furthermore, each committee included five traditional elders and three religious' leaders. Conflict monitors were trained to monitor and report back electoral violence that in turn could combat impunity while identifying potential risks and trends for security forces, government authorities and political contestants to address.

The National and Regional CSO's Committees were engaged for a period of three months and held weekly meetings to monitor, mediate and report back on strict adherence to the electoral law and tensions in all six regions during the pre-, during and post-election periods.

To complement the PEACE project and the ESR, under the Dan-Guud Consortium, SONSAF deployed 200 domestic election observers in all 20 electoral districts. Domestic election observers were deployed to deter fraud, expose problems and irregularities, provide an accurate measure of the quality of the election and promote confidence in the

process and outcomes. CPA, additionally, deployed 100 election monitors that were sent out to observe election day processes and procedures with a particular focus on monitoring the electoral environment around polling stations.

This resulted in CSOs election conflict monitoring and domestic election observation missions reaching 65% of the polling centres. The CSOs observed the overall election process, including voter registration, election campaign, election day and post-election activities. The use of observation and monitoring strategies by both SONSAF and CSOs organisations played an important role in contributing to a peaceful and inclusive electoral process. Additionally, SONSAF collaborated and supported the three national parties in political space management and minimising political tensions between the parties throughout the electoral cycle.

In this regard, SONSAF and CSOs partners wish to submit this report based on reports obtained from conflict monitors and domestic observers. This report is to highlight the key role of the CSOs joint mission in observing the entire electoral cycle and also highlights concerns and recommendations observed pre-during and post-election period.

Summary of Key Findings

Pre-elections

The report considered various issues throughout the election cycle of Somaliland combined Parliamentary and Local Council elections 2021. The main findings during the pre-election period are;

- The opposition parties didn't agree upon the formulation of NEC members, as the presidential nomination (the NEC Chairman) was accused of being biased since he previously campaigned for the Kulmiye party which posed significant threat to the peacefulness of the election. This caused a deadlock between the political parties and delays to the elections, needing urgent resolution, as this could have resulted in major security issues. Still, the emergence of the self-appointed committee established to mediate and found a way to resolve the dispute.
- Upon the agreement between the three political parties, NEC faced significant challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic, voter registration, amendments to the election law, funding, capacity gap and logistics disruption caused by the pandemic. Nonetheless, NEC promptly started the preparation of the combined elections, including implementing the voter registration, advocating for the approval of the election law, securing the election funding, and issuing the timetable of the combined elections.
- The SONSAF ESR recorded clan tensions, candidates' arrests, drought, unethical campaigning, and Covid-19. Nevertheless, these issues were dealt with as the Mol ensured that the election was heavily securitized as they had deployed over 11,000 security personnel.
- During the candidates vetting process, a significant number of reports were received by the SONSAF's ESR and CPA's EMO, ranging from candidate detention, harassment, and alleged intimidation by the government. For instance, there were 11 arrests of candidates, six from the opposition party of the Justice and Welfare Party (UCID), four from the ruling party of Kulmiye and one from the opposition party Waddani. Moreover, the Court issued arrest warrants to two female parliamentary candidates of UCID and Waddani in Sool and Togdheer regions. In response to the arrest, CSO produced a press release to discourage the authorities of such actions that could impact the election. All concerned candidates were later freed or cleared of any wrongdoing, however resulting in concerns of alleged government interference with the electoral process and some candidates dropped their candidacy.

Election day

- The CSOs conflict monitors combined with the domestic observers' missions covered over 54% of the polling stations. The conflict monitors reported a largely peaceful election with little electoral violence with only 2 cases nationally directly linked to conflict. Maroodijeex region police fired at a group of youths conducting illegal campaigning and a misunderstanding between two functions of Somaliland security forces in Sool region leading to a shoot-out

with no injuries reported. The domestic observers reported that although NEC electoral procedures were administrated to a good standard, there is still room to improve in future elections with minor mistakes prevalent during this election.

- On election day, 83% of the recorded cases were related to polling station issues, primarily queues, and missing names from the voter registration list, 10% accounted for complaints regarding the voting procedures. Many voters were forced to wait for a long time to cast their ballots, with some not finding their names on the register once inside polling stations.
- The inaccessibility of polling stations was alarming for People with Disabilities (PWDs). SNDF attempted to support PWD with portable ramps, accounting for under 3% of the polling stations. However, PWDs were physically assisted, and despite the challenges, an overwhelming 94% were able to cast their vote. Additionally, for the first time, 50 PWDs participated in the local domestic election observation and conflict monitoring missions.
- The Covid-19 safety protocols were not followed in all the polling stations and campaign rallies. There was no social distancing, and the vast majority of the participants/voters were not wearing masks. There were Covid-19 awareness messages outside the polling stations, but those instructions were rarely followed as the Covid-19 safety protocols require.
- Somaliland media played a significant role in covering the election fairly and transparently. In particular, during the campaign period, the media played a neutral and professional role by disseminating information about the candidates. Fair media reporting assisted in balanced media reporting of all electoral candidates regardless of gender. Moreover, SOLJA Media Monitoring Centre ensured that no fake news (abusive, false or unbalanced) was reported that could jeopardize the smooth running of the elections which contributed to the mitigation of electoral conflict. The media also did not report false preliminary results, except for some social media sites that published minutes of non election results. They immediately apologized for and removed their social networking. Under the PEACE project, SONSAF and WIJA conducted training for all media houses to ensure the ethical reporting of the elections and encourage women participation.
- The overall voter turnout was 65% and voting took place in a generally peaceful environment. Voters waited patiently in long lines to cast their ballots, and party agents were present in 95% of the polling stations observed by the CSO observer and conflict monitors. As a result, many polling stations experienced large voters' queues and remained open after the official closing time.
- Somaliland continues to lag behind in terms of laws addressing women rights, especially about electoral processes. Political parties' constitutions make no provision for affirmative action concerning the nomination of women or other marginalized groups like the youth, minorities, and PWDs. Somaliland's legal framework does not provide for affirmative action, despite several unsuccessful attempts by the last parliament to legislate gender equality. The quota for women and minority groups was rejected by parliament in September 2020. In addition, the political parties failed to implement fully the voluntary allocation, which they promised during their political campaigning. This resulted in the total absence of female members in the House of Representatives.
- Voter registrations in the eastern region in Somaliland increased, however, did not translate to an increase in seats from sub-clans from these regions exacerbating the under-representation of eastern sub-clans in parliament.

Post-election

- The Supreme Court received 25 complaints after NEC announced the preliminary results of the May 2021 election, where 20 cases reached the level of arbitrations. All but one of the complaints lodged were made by male candidates. Due to lack of evidence, the Supreme Court unanimously rejected claims and confirmed that the preliminary results of NEC were correct, and the complainants accepted the decision and the results.

SECTION ONE

1



SOMALILAND ELECTIONS CONTEXT

1. SECTION ONE: Somaliland Elections Context

1.1 Introduction

On 31st May 2021, Somalilanders were at the voting booths once again to democratically elect 82 members for the House of Representatives and 246 members for the Local Council. These combined elections were the 7th elections held since the declaration of independence in 1991 and determined who would become legislators locally and nationally.

This is the first combined report of Somaliland's prominent CSOs including the Dan-Guud consortium led by SOYDAVO, ADAM Academy, SONSAF, NAGAAD, CPA, SNDF, WIJA and SOLJA. The CSOs provided input and analysis of the overall role played during the election cycle due to its election objectives and activities. A short profile of each entity can be found in the CSOs section of this report. The report assesses the overall performance of the election cycle, including the pre-during and post-election periods, and evaluates key stakeholders' roles in the election process.

1.2 Political context

The Republic of Somaliland reclaimed its independence in 1991. Ever since its independence, it has made remarkable progress in achieving peace and stability by establishing functioning government institutions and holding credible multi-party elections.

Through their traditional system of governance (led by clan and community leaders), the people of Somaliland managed to negotiate a peaceful settlement of disputes among their competing clan groups, established a functioning government and embarked on rebuilding their country and livelihoods with little outside help. Somaliland has created relatively complex political arrangements that incorporate different interest groups and yield inclusive policies based on a multi-party democratic system (Bradbury, 2008)¹

On 31st May 2001, Somaliland's constitution was ratified through a public referendum, with the support of 97% of its population and with 1.1 million voters. [1] Article 9 (1,2)² of the constitution indicates that Somaliland shall move away from the clan-based system and adopt a multi-party approach, where only three political parties are adopted. Thus, based on the democratic principles stipulated in the constitution, Somaliland enacted electoral legislation and adopted inclusive policies based on a multi-party democratic system in 2002, such as Article 9 (2), and Article 40 stipulates the formations of Local Councils and House of Representatives respectively.

A key achievement was introducing a multi-party system in 2001, holding several elections, including the 2005 presidential elections, where the opposition party lost the election by 80 votes and accepted the results. Somaliland has also successfully held the following elections.

- Presidential Elections (2003, 2010 and 2017)

¹ Bradbury, Mark. *August 2011; Securing the Peace in Somaliland: Summary and contextual analysis*

² Somaliland Constitution Article 9 (1,2)

- Parliamentary Elections (2005 and 2021)
- Municipal Election (2002, 2012 and 2021)

Despite demonstrating political maturity and institutional capacity, Somaliland is yet to be rewarded with the international recognition it surely merits.



Additionally, the Government enacted the Somaliland Regions and District Self Administration Law No.23 in 2002 and 2007 to put into effect the provisions of the Constitution in defining the structures of regional and district councils (Hashi, 2008).³

The emergence of constitutional democracy and the establishment of institutional frameworks continued, Somaliland created platforms for the progressive development of democratic processes. This democratization process has matured through the completion of six democratic elections between 2002 and 2017, attended by international observers, who recognized them as fair and representative.

Nonetheless, Somaliland power and political interests are driven by clan-based social orders and norms that undermine the performance of formal institutions. The dominance of socio-political economic interests in and over formal institutions and systems of accountability has a particularly negative impact on the implementation of inclusiveness in Somaliland.

Though Somaliland has held regular multi-party elections in the past twenty years, the country had to also contend with ongoing dynamic political environment. Nonetheless, before the 2021 election, six largely peaceful, free and fair elections were held, contributing to Somaliland's model of democracy and nation-building.

³ Hashi (2008) Somaliland Electoral Laws "Somaliland Law Series"

In December 2002, the people of Somaliland went to the polls for the first time in more than three decades, electing 332 councillors to manage the affairs of their towns in 23 electoral districts. These elections were the first democratic elections that heralded the end of the clan-power sharing formula and marked the onset of a democratic process. Besides allowing the voters to participate in an open and competitive electoral process for the first time in thirty years, the Local Council elections were also significant in decentralizing the system of governance by granting local communities more power to manage their affairs.

The people of Somaliland have become convinced that multi-party democracy is the best way of managing power relations within the country, for realizing citizens' rights, for producing a more accountable government, and for strengthening Somaliland's claim for international recognition (Yusuf, 2011).⁴

1.3 Political System

Somaliland is a presidential system where the president is the Head of State, Government and is the Commander in Chief of the Defence Forces. The president is also the chief appointing officer. In addition, he appoints key positions such as the Judges of the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court, the Chief Justice, the Electoral Commission and the Resident District Commissioners. The president is elected every five years.

The 2001 constitution established three branches of government, namely the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Following a referendum in 2001 and constitutional amendments thereafter, the country now operates a multiparty system, but Article 9(2) limits the number of political parties to three⁵. The country's current political parties are Kulmiye (the ruling party) and UCID and Waddani as the opposition parties.

Legislative power is vested in the parliament, for which elections are held every five years. The constitution provides for the judiciary to operate as an independent branch of government. The country also operates under a decentralized local government system with the primary local government unit being the district. The districts are composed of units that range from grades A, B, C and D.

In Somaliland, the Regions & Districts Law (Law No: 23/2019) outlines the roles and responsibilities of regional and district authorities. Officials at the regional level are appointed by the Central Government and include the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the Regional Executive Secretary and Regional Directors of each Ministry. Somaliland is divided into 14 regions and over 100 districts⁶. Out of these, six regions and 42 districts have been approved by the Parliament. Thus, officially, NEC has 23 electoral districts out of the 100 districts in the country.

At the second local tier are districts. While there are 42 officially recognized districts, only 23 have an elected Local Council. The Local Council elect Mayors and their Deputies, and the central government appoints District Executive Secretaries. These three district officials constitute the Executive Committee of the district that runs the local administration. The Local Council are organized into other subcommittees such as the permanent committee, composed of the chairpersons of these sub-committees. The last Local Council elections took place ten years ago, and people can vote for individual candidates. The mayors will continue to be elected by their council members. Women's representation in the councils is extremely low with only three councillors in Somaliland among the 220 locals' councillors.

⁴ Yusuf and Bradbury (2011); *Public Perception of Local Councils in Somaliland*

⁵ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/somaliland_constitution.htm, (2005, April)

⁶ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Faafinta_wkb_Xeerka_Gobollada_iyo_Degmo.pdf, (2009, December)

Table 1: Number of Councillors Per Electoral Districts

No.	City	Grade	Number of Councillors Per Electoral City	Number of women
1	Saylac	B	11	1
2	Lughaya	C	9	0
3	Borama	A	13	2
4	Baki	C	9	0
5	Hargeisa	A	17	0
6	Bali-Gubadle	C	9	0
7	Salaxlay	C	9	1
8	Gabiley	A	13	1
9	Berbera	A	13	0
10	Sheikh	C	9	0
11	Burco	A	13	1
12	Odwayne	B	11	0
13	Buhodle	B	11	1
14	Caynaba	C	9	0
15	Laas Canood	A	13	2
16	Xudun	C	9	1
17	Taleex	C	9	1
18	Garadag	C	9	0
19	Ceel-Afwayn	B	11	2
20	Ceerigaabo	A	13	2
Total			220	15

1.4 **Legal Framework**

Somaliland has a generally sound and comprehensive electoral and legal framework that facilitates holding genuine democratic elections and is necessary for effective elections that adhere to national and international standards. The Constitution entrenches democracy by providing for a multi-party system, the separation of powers within a presidential system, a majoritarian electoral system, term limits for elected officials, and regular elections managed by the NEC.

Somaliland is a constitutional democracy with an executive branch headed by an elected president, a bicameral legislature and a separate judiciary. However, due to the legacy of the experience of centralized government, Somaliland’s political system invests considerable power in the Presidency, which means that the Parliamentary oversight role, and the independence of the judiciary branch, are somehow compromised.

Therefore, the needed checks and balances of the democratic arrangement are largely wanting. The Constitution (2001) is the primary source of national election standards for Somaliland and contains provisions stipulating citizens’ fundamental rights. Citizenship is addressed in Article 4, and the political system in Article 9, paragraph 1, which states: “The political system of the Republic of Somaliland shall be based on peace, cooperation, democracy and plurality of political parties” in paragraph 3 of Article 9, the constitution recognizes the formation of political parties based on region or clan as unlawful, stipulating: “A special law shall determine the procedures for the formation of a political party, but it is unlawful

for any political party to be based on regionalism or clannism." Paragraph 2 of Article 9 also limits the number of political parties to three. Article 8 of the constitution contains provisions for the equality of citizens under the law. Article 12(7) establishes the NEC as an independent statutory body to organize and administer national elections following the Somaliland constitution and electoral laws.

However, electoral politics and the transition from a system based on clan balance to one of majority rule have created the perception of 'winners' and 'losers', highlighting divisions within Somaliland. In this respect, electoral politics has not done away with the clan system and political power remains concentrated in the essentially unchanged male urban elite. Moreover, despite having the right to vote, women are systematically excluded from politics and decision-making processes, through culturally influenced barriers.



SECTION TWO

2



ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION

2. SECTION TWO: Election Observation Mission

2.1 Voter Registration Process

The unsuccessful trial of the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) meant Somaliland adopted the Biometric Voter ID Registration System that uses the IRIS scanning technology. The first trial run of the Biometric system was conducted in Hargeisa and Baki in 2014, with 1062 registration. The system was deemed successful, and Somaliland became the first country in Africa to implement the Biometric Voter Registration System. Ahead of the 2017 Somaliland presidential elections, voter registration was officially rolled out in the six regions. According to NEC registration results, as stipulated in Table 2, a total of 907,528 registrants were recorded; however, NEC confirmed the valid registrants as 873,442 while confirming 34,086 as invalid registrants due to duplications. As a result, the presidential election in 2017 saw 65% of the eligible voters casting their vote. The system's success was a game-changer for Somaliland since the system would identify any irregularities and install confidence in election results.

Table 2: List of the official Registrants in 2016 Voter Registration

District	Total Registrants	Total Valid	Total Duplicate
Nationwide	907,528	873,442	34,086

Source: NEC Website⁷

2.2 Civic and Voters education

Under the PEACE project SONSAF provided support to NEC, to conduct civic education, through media campaigns. NEC is mandated to ensure voters are aware and informed of the choices when casting a vote in an election. Thus, a continuous and increased civic and voter education that aims to support the rights of peoples to participate in the election processes with the correct information on their choices was rolled out.

Voter's education emphasizes the rights and the civic duties of the voters. Although voter education was conducted in the pre-election period, ideally it should be an ongoing effort. Voter education must be a continuous awareness of the rights and responsibilities of freely electing their representatives. Civic education was made accessible to all citizens regardless of gender. Thus, the key objectives of voter education are;

1. To increase the awareness of voters understanding of the electoral procedures.
2. To promote free and fair elections civic responsibilities.
3. To empower less informed groups and districts with low election turnouts.
4. To provide information on voter registration, dates, timetable, clusters, eligibilities, and roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.

⁷ Somaliland national Electoral commission <https://slnec.org/>

A successful civic and voter education contributes to the overall security and voters' turnouts. Civic education provides a positive framework for collective civic identity. As such, it can be a stabilizing factor in societies. Civic education seeks to give citizens the understanding and the habit of engaging in a nonviolent contest to participate constructively in politics and, more broadly, civic life and service to the community. In October 2020, SOYDAVO and NEC signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish and collaborate on voter education. The EU funded Dan-Guud Consortium led by SOYDAVO supported NEC's voter education awareness campaign in Somaliland, particularly in its eastern regions.

Under the Dan-Guud consortium, SOYDAVO, YOVENCO, and several other local partners (sub-grantees), including SONSAF and Adam Academy for minority groups, launched voter education awareness in Maroodijeh, Togdheer, Sahil, and Sanaag regions. More than 50 vehicles mounted with loud microphone speakers were hired to carry out awareness-raising activities in rural and urban communities.

The Information Education Communications (IEC) materials were developed and distributed to educate voter registration. As a result, the new voters' registrants were 424,691 (refer to table 4) for the combined 2021 elections increasing to 1,065,847, indicating that NEC and the CSOs successfully implemented civic and voter education campaigns.

2.3 Voter Registration in 2021

On 4th November 2020, President Muse Bihi Abdi released a presidential decree declaring the voter's registration to start on 29th November 2020. NEC confirmed the dates and released the schedule for the voter registrations in electoral districts as indicated in Table 3 in four clusters, and each cluster was given four days to complete the voter registrations.

Table 3: Voter Registration Schedule 2020/2021

Cluster	Region/District	Duration
Cluster 1	Awdal Region Gabiley District Baligubadle District Salahley District	29th November - 2nd December 2020
Cluster 2	Hargeisa Region Sahil Region	13th - 16th December 2020
Cluster 3	Togdheer Region Aynabo District Gar-adag District EL-Afwayn District	27th-30th December 2020
Cluster 4	Erigabo Region Badhan District Dhahar Districts Las-Koray District Las-Anod Region Hudun District Taleh District	10th - 13th January 2021

The voter registration witnessed high turnout in all clusters; consequently, NEC extended the registration period and provided mobile voter's registration centres to cope with the demand. Overall, NEC's efforts and dedication were commendable in managing the voter's registrations effectively.

2.4 Voter registration Observation Mission

During voter registration in 2020/2021, SONSAF deployed 66 domestic observers in the four different clusters consisting of 85% male and 15% female. The observers underwent comprehensive training that focused on introduction to voter registration and understanding voter registration mission. The observation mission covered 50% of the voter registration centres. The observers reported that it took 9 minutes to register a voter in both urban and rural areas. Overall, NEC administrated the voter registration smoothly, and no major issues were observed.

Table 4: Total Valid Voter Registrants in 2021

No.	Region	Valid registrants per region	Percentage
1	Maroodijeh	186,421	44%
2	Togdheer	69,445	16%
3	Awdal	52,732	12%
4	Sool	43,320	10%
5	Sahil	37,765	9%
6	Sanaag	35,008	8%
	Total	424,691	100%

Interestingly, for the first time, the voter registration coverage included Xudun and Taleex districts of the Sool Region and Badhan, Dhahar, Las-Koray districts of Sanaag Region. The inclusion of these districts meant that the Sool region saw the highest increase of voter registration of 39% which compared to 2017, on the other hand, Sanaag region voter registrations also increased by 28%, this can be considered significant step towards the political inclusivity of the eastern regions in Somaliland political environment as in the past the eastern regions have experienced low turnout and consequently low representation in parliament.

Table 5: Final voter registration by NEC (2017 and 2021).

Region	Registered Voters 2017	Registered Voters 2021	Difference in figure	Increase in %
Saaxil	60,817	98,503	37,686	38%
Sool	63,698	103,832	40,134	39%
Sanaag	80,334	111,623	31,289	28%
Awdal	102,571	145,919	43,348	30%
Togdheer	147,440	205,591	58,151	28%
Maroodi-jeex	249,229	289,613	40,384	14%
Total	704,089	1,065,847	361,758	34%

Sources: NEC

Considering the challenges, of Covid-19, combined elections, droughts, ongoing and conflicts in eastern regions, the May 2021 elections saw a significant turnout. Although, there is a decrease of 14% from 2012 local elections, this is mainly down to the usage of the IRIS technology that minimised voting duplications and the above mentioned changes.

2.5 Parliamentary and Local Council elections Observation mission



Under the Dan-Guud consortium, SONSAF deployed an election observation mission consisting of 200 observers (65% male, 35% female observers) during the May 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections. The domestic election observers were deployed to deter fraud, expose problems, election irregularities and provide an accurate measure of the quality of the election process whilst promoting confidence in the process and outcomes of the election.

During the recruiting process, the observers went through a rigorous screening process to ensure independence and impartiality were maintained at all times and ensuring a gender balance was achieved. The observers were fully trained on the election code of conduct and the observation methods. The observers used a data collection mobile app called Open Data Kit (ODK) to collect data on the election day. The ODK had an online interface (Power BI), and the data was instantly presented in the ESR to be analysed and shared with relevant stakeholders.

The combined elections attracted the highest turnout in Somaliland history, reaching over one million potential voters. Previously, the polling centres were 1642; however, due to the global pandemic, the likely high voter turnout and the droughts that displaced many rural communities, NEC increased the polling stations to 2709 to cope with the challenges.

The election observers were instructed to report on the staffing of the polling stations according to the Somaliland election law 91/2020, which indicates the individuals that can have a presence in the polling station on election day, as stipulated in Table 6.

Table 6: Polling station personnel

Agents	Polling station coverage %
Security Forces	96%
NEC Staff	85%
Party Agents	89%
CSO Observation Missions:	
• Observation (CPA & Dan-Guud) 300	17%
• Conflict Monitors (SONSAF) 782	48%

The law states that security forces ensure public order, mitigate against conflicts, protect electoral officials, equipment, and general polling station queue management. The observers reported that 96% of the required security forces were present in the observed polling station across all voting districts, which is a testament to the peaceful elections. Security forces played an essential role in ensuring the peace of the election, with continuous focus on queue management and general security of polling stations.



Under the election law, polling station staff must be four members appointed by NEC. The observers reported that 85% of the polling stations had all four-polling staff present at 07:00, and 100% of the observed polling station had two or more staff members present at 07:00. Additionally, it was reported that 42% of the chairperson in the polling station accounted for females, while 18% accounted for women of the mandatory 4 NEC polling station staff. Thus, signifying the influential role women play in the electoral and democratic events of the country.

Political party agents are an essential component of an election, as they are the 'watchdogs' for their respective political parties or independent candidates. Article 110(1) of the election law permits political parties to have representatives in the polling stations. An agent is generally responsible for monitoring electoral practices and reporting any malpractices that may arise, contributing to enhancing the transparency and credibility of the procedures. In the May elections, the political parties were well represented at the polling stations as 89% of agents attended the observed polling stations. The high political parties' presence in the polling stations contributed to the peaceful elections.

The final group the election law permits inside polling stations are the election observers, particularly the domestic observers. The CSOs deployed conflict monitors and domestic observation missions, covering 65% of the polling centres, reporting overall election procedures and conflict-related incidents.

The voting documents and equipment are an essential part of the election process, for instance, sealed voting box, D-1 form (results form), Ink (fingerprint ink), final voter List, counting forms etc. SONSAF observers/monitors reported that 98% of the essential materials were available in the polling stations. However, two percent of the polling stations were missing or ran out of essential materials. For instance, observers reported missing torches and stamps running out of ink. Although the percentage is small, it is vital to ensure that essential materials are

present to avoid any future conflicts. Integrity of fair and balanced elections are based on transparent fully equipped electoral processes.

2.5.1 Voting

According to the Somaliland Election law 91/2020 article 114(1)⁸, the official opening time of the polling station begins at 07:00 and ends at 18:00. According to the observers, 61% of polling stations opened according to article 114(1). In comparison, 88% of the polling stations opened within 07:30. Delays were due to preparations and setting up of voting equipment, and NEC staff arriving late, especially in rural areas. When the voting time ends, the law permits those already in the queues to be allowed to cast their vote. Observers reported that 95% of the voters in the line were allowed to vote. Delays in voting time can potentially be a trigger conflict due to long queues.

NEC used the biometrics technology IRIS system to minimize duplication or double voting in the Voter Registration process.



⁸ http://www.somalilandlaw.com/electoral_laws.html, Elections Law No. 19/2020

As a result, on average, only 5% of voters attempted to cast their vote twice, and the IRIS system proved to be effective in identifying such attempts. In addition, the IRIS system helped to minimize conflict between political parties, which has often occurred in the post-election period in Somaliland elections. Minimising double voting through the IRIS system is an important conflict mitigation method and it translated to the limited complainants.

2.5.2 Voting Process

The voting process proceeded smoothly in most polling stations. However, some polling stations experienced delays in the opening, resulting in a tense voter atmosphere due to the late start of the voting and the ESR receiving frequent calls. Nevertheless, very few voters were denied access to the polling process and were turned away because of not being eligible or challenged their eligibility which in turn reduced the likelihood of conflict.

According to Election law 91/article 103, each polling station must have at least two closed-in voting booths intended to secure voter privacy when marking the ballot to cast their vote. A substantive 94% of observers reported witnessing NEC staff adhering to strict privacy procedures. The remaining 6% stated the polling stations lacked partition, and in some cases, the voters did not use the voting booth; however, no harm or conflict was reported as a result.



2.5.3 Counting

The Election Law 91/2021 articles 109 and 110 allow political party representatives and local observers to be in the polling station for the entire polling day from the opening to counting the votes. It was reported that 92% of the political party representatives and local observers were allowed to stay while 8% did not witness the counting phase.

However, the ESR call centre received several calls from the observers and monitors claiming they were not allowed to stay for the counting period. As a result, Mr A. Ali, NEC Chairman, addressed this issue during live broadcasting using the 'NABAAD KU CODEE' studio at the SONSAF compound. As a result, a large number of the observer and conflict monitors were allowed back into the polling station to participate in the counting.

Furthermore, as stipulated in Election Law 91/2020, article 118(1), the political party representatives have the right to record their results. The observers reported that 98% of the party agents were allowed to record the result, which indicates the transparency of the voting procedures by electoral officials reducing the likelihood of conflict significantly.

2.6 CPA Election Monitoring Office

The CPA's EMO was a voluntary election observation mission with the core objective of supporting Somaliland's democratization process by enhancing the electoral system's transparency.

As it was a voluntary election monitoring mission, CPA did not have the credentials to observe inside polling stations directly, however, did deploy 100 (75% male, 25% female) election monitors across five regions of Somaliland. The EMO observed the overall polling station vicinities, its operation and in general how the election happened in those electoral districts. This was done by interviewing voters in the queue as well as documenting all incidents they witness or the election information they received.

CPA EMO key findings:

- The timely occurrence of the 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections as planned per the NEC schedule announcement on August 23rd, 2020.
- Ill-defined or unclear rules and regulations around the process of verifying education certificates.
- Reports of unlawful detention and intimidation of candidates and their campaign supporters during the pre-election phase.
- The increased role of the traditional elders, particularly in rural areas. Their role focused on; influence on selecting their respective clan representative, campaigning and gathering prospective voters.
- Voter confusion in recognizing their designated polling stations due to splitting the polling centre into multiple polling stations.
- Inaccessible polling stations for people with disabilities leading to unequal participation in public life for PWDs.

2.7 International Election Observation Missions



The 2021 Somaliland parliamentary and Local Council election was observed not only by local observers, but also by several international election observation missions and an international diplomatic mission. The Brenthurst Foundation Somaliland Election Monitoring Mission, an African led mission led by the former president of Sierra Leone, Hon. Ernest Bai Koroma, consisted of 21 members. The team spent the days ahead of elections in an intensive set of preparatory meetings with election officials from the leadership of the NEC to technical staff involved in voter verification and lead CSOs like SONSAF and SOLJA. For election day, the team observed five key centres accounting for more than 70% of the voting population with two-person teams in each centre visiting a number of polling stations.

The Limited International Election Observation Mission (LIEOM) funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, limited in scope and duration, consisted of a team of 12 international short-term observers, and visited 80 out of the 2709 polling stations.

SECTION THREE 3



CONFLICT MITIGATION

3. SECTION THREE: Conflict Mitigation

3.1 Pre-election Conflict Assessment

An election process requires significant efforts and resources to implement free and fair elections successfully. A pre-election assessment is a vital component of the election process; it identifies potential triggers or conflict hotspots and defines indicators of early warning signs during the election cycle. SONSAF, through the PEACE project, conducted a pre-election assessment on all six regions of Somaliland to develop a conflict monitoring strategy that mitigates election tensions and conflicts. Additionally, the report aimed at aiding other stakeholders with election planning and administrative processes. The key findings of the pre-election assessment were as follows;

- a. **Clan Dimensions:** Somaliland consists of several clans that are interrelated and reside in different regions. As the 2021 election was the representative and Local Councils' election, the stakes were high for clan dignity. Most clans wanted to see their candidates succeed over their neighbours and partake in the decision processes. Therefore, it was essential to note that the parliament members symbolize beyond their role; they signified dignity and security for clan members. Hence clans aspired to elect candidates from their families to ensure representation. However, this was found to be a potential factor in creating violence between rival clans/supporters.
 - Inter-clan clashes – Candidates were selected among families or communities; this could potentially divide communities; for instance, inter-family candidates will campaign from the three political parties, unavoidably causing internal clan quarrels and disputes due to the limited number of voters, especially in rural areas.
 - Campaign conflicts - May 2021 elections are localised, and voters will elect their representatives in the local and parliament elections. Consequently, tribal conflicts were highly likely as clashes may arise during the campaign period or even in the election results.
 - Border disputes – The pre-election assessment found that tensions between Somaliland and the Federal State of Puntland increased significantly due to border disputes; An increase in clashes between security forces in the eastern regions, particularly Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer was reported. Subsequently, risks of attacks on polling stations, election staff and equipment were to be closely monitored. Border security was vital to conducting peaceful elections. The pre-election report categorises the eastern regions to be highly prone to conflict during the election period.

- b. **Drought** - The pre-election report identified widespread drought affecting the people of Somaliland and their livestock. This undoubtedly disturbed the presence of the voters in their locations as well as movement and population dynamics where most nomads will seek to search for pasture for their animals and crossed into neighbouring countries thus, causing administration issues and loss of voter democracy rights. In addition, this might bring about tensions since some communities will not have the opportunities to vote for their candidacy because of the displacements, while others can vote.
- c. **Covid-19** – The global pandemic caused significant health implications while restricting the movement of people and goods. The assessment highlighted that many communities were struggling to deal with the virus, as they have lost loved ones. Additionally, the health safety protocols that included social distancing, hygiene, face masking etc., had limited the movement of voters' and led to a lack of awareness of voting protocols due to the health restrictions.

3.2 Pre-election Assessment Recommendation

Below are the main recommendations that emerged from the study

- Political parties should ensure positive campaign points that would fit their rhetoric and avoid campaign slogans that could impact election security.
- The government of Somaliland should ensure the constitutional regularisation of the position of parliamentarians in all three parties to avoid bringing the law and electoral system into disrepute. Furthermore, adhere to the provisions of the Media Act to prevent illegal harassment of journalists.
- Ensure a secure environment for all those involved in electoral related work, including party agents and domestic and international observers, and provide sufficient security, particularly in conflict hotspots, including border districts.
- Stakeholders should provide greater election awareness, civic education, better understanding of the election process and the global pandemic and the health measures to stop further spread of the virus.
- CSOs should continue increasing the level of campaigns and programmes currently underway (e.g., on voter awareness) etc. This should be allied to a greater voter and civic awareness programme.
- CSO should liaise with political parties on ensuring quotas for women and minorities making these positive campaign points for the parties to attract greater support.

3.3 Establishment of ESR

As elections are high-stakes processes in which political power is won and lost, which by nature creates a degree of conflict that needs to be managed, so violence does not ensue and following the pre-election assessment key findings, SONSAF established the ESR under the EU funded PEACE project. The ESR is an election conflict mitigating platform that brought together Somaliland CSOs and governmental institutions mandated to deliver Somaliland 2021 Parliamentary and Local Elections. The main objective of the ESR was to contribute to the reduction of conflicts and tensions during the election cycle, through this platform, relevant CSOs working on elections, governance and human rights issues were able to work



together, to coordinate their efforts, share and disseminate information on different aspects of the electoral cycle enabling near real-time redress of electoral misconducts and disputes by the relevant government institutions and the broader community.

The CSOs participated in the ESR setup (e.g., NAGAAD Network, SNDF, SOLJA, SOYDAVO, Adam Academy), which profiled a positive sign for ensuring inclusive participation especially regarding women, youth and PWDs participation in electoral processes.

This helped avoid incoherence, duplication and confirmed that CSOs spoke with one voice. The ESR was operational from April - July 2021, covering all election periods. The ESR capitalized on data collection on conflicts monitors in the field and enabled CSOs to engage with official election structures and local and international stakeholders for near real-time redress of election-related conflict. The call centre was a vital component of the ESR mitigating model. The centre was equipped with trained agents (20) that recorded data on ODK and web interface.

As it was the first time in Somaliland an ESR was established, SONSAF had to overcome the initial hurdle of selling the concept

to all election stakeholders due to the perception that the ESR is a concept that should come under NEC mandate. Ensuring the ESR was accessible to the entire Somaliland population was an additional challenge to overcome. Two fiercely competitive telecommunication companies provide their services in Somaliland, which causes both carriers to be inaccessible to one another. This resulted in the ESR call centre creating a short-code where voters from both telecommunication companies can call up.

3.3.1 Various CSOs Committees and Conflict Monitors

Under the ESR conflict mitigation mechanism, Figure 1 below illustrates the various reporting agents and committees designed to mitigate the election conflict. Conflict monitors were trained on the ESR manual, reporting any election-related conflicts or issues through an online ODK application or the call centre (short-code 370). The call centre staff would instantly receive the information to share with the mitigating authorities (MoI or NEC).

- **Election day conflict monitors:** The designated 700 conflict monitors were trained to monitor and report back electoral violence that in turn could combat impunity while identifying potential risks and trends for security forces, government authorities and political contestants to address.
- **Traditional Elders and Religious Leaders:** A total of 41 traditional elders and religious leaders were deployed across all regions and had a unique role to play during the election period. They would play an active role in the mitigation and resolution of any conflicts and reporting election incidents to the call centre ESR agents for remedy.
- **National Election Monitoring Committee:** The committee consisting of various key CSOs members that

were active during the pre, during and post-election periods, closely working with election stakeholders, particularly with NEC, political parties and relevant government agents, by following election-related incidents and mediating where necessary. They also roamed on election day in their assigned region and produced regular press releases and position papers on election issues during the entire electoral cycle.

- **The Regional Election Committees:** The committees were active during the pre, during and post-election periods and were based in all six regions of Somaliland consisting of CSOs, community elders, youth and women, PWD and minority groups. They were capacitated to report any election incidents, both administrative and violence, to the ESR call centre.
- **General Public:** The call centre short-code was advertised on numerous communication channels for the public to utilise the call centre and share any issues and violence occurring during the election period.

Figure 1: ESR Reporting Mechanism



- **ESR Reporting Method:** The data captured in the ESR call centre was immediately processed and analysed (incident report format) by the statistical consultant, who, in turn, shared the information with the relevant agents, either NEC or Mol.

3.3.2 Nabaad Ku Codee (Vote in PEACE) Studio



The digital transformation has changed the way people communicate and acquire information; election news flows faster and easier than ever; consequently, the opportunities to seek, receive and convey information is unprecedented. Election news has become vulnerable due to the ease of access to unverified and fake news.

In an election environment where tensions and political rivalry are high, it is vital to keep the public informed and for the public to receive regular, if not live, feeds of the election day event. Unfortunately, rumours and fake news can travel far and cause damaging consequences and insecurities in a society rooted in tribal and clan conflict.

Due to experience and lessons learnt from previous elections, SONSAF coordinated a call for action by establishing the “Nabaad Ku Codee (Vote in PEACE) Studio” to confront and prevent misinformation in the May 2021 Parliamentary and Local Council elections. The Studio under the PEACE project component aimed at ensuring that accurate information was communicated to the public. The Vote in PEACE Studio was the first of its kind in Somaliland. Activities related to the elections were broadcast live on various TV channels under the Nabaad Ku Codee Studio. Some of the activities included;

- Live reporting from all six regions throughout the election day.

- Regular live security updates by the MoI, Minister Mohamed Kaahin.
- Live election updates by NEC Chairman Abdirashid Ali Mohamud.
- Updates by the political parties' chairmen, encouraging supporters to vote peacefully.
- CSOs and prominent leaders were urging the public and stakeholders to prioritise the peacefulness of the elections.
- Live debates on the election aimed at promoting peaceful elections.
- Regular incidents report from the ESR
- Nabaad Ku Codee CSO desks, enabling information sharing amongst CSOs

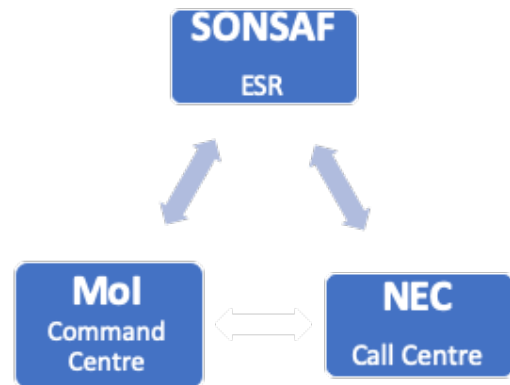
The "Vote in PEACE" Studio became very successful on the day as the public received news directly from key stakeholders such as MoI, NEC, CSOs and Chairmen of the political parties in real time. As a result, the 'Nabaad Ku Codee' studio became the number one source for election news; an example is that the "Nabaad Ku Codee" hashtag was trending on all social media platforms. In addition, the Studio prevented much of the misinformation or fake news associated with elections, thus contributing to the peaceful elections in Somaliland.

3.3.3 Mitigation mechanism

The effectiveness of information sharing amongst CSOs, the election management body, the state, and other institutions supporting democracy was critical to a peaceful election. For example, Figure 2 indicates the risk mitigation process between ESR, the MoI command centre mandated to ensure the security of the election

and the NEC call centre, which was tasked to deliver and administrate the elections. In addition, other institutions and actors supporting democracy such as the media, human rights and women organizations had access to regular ESR reports.

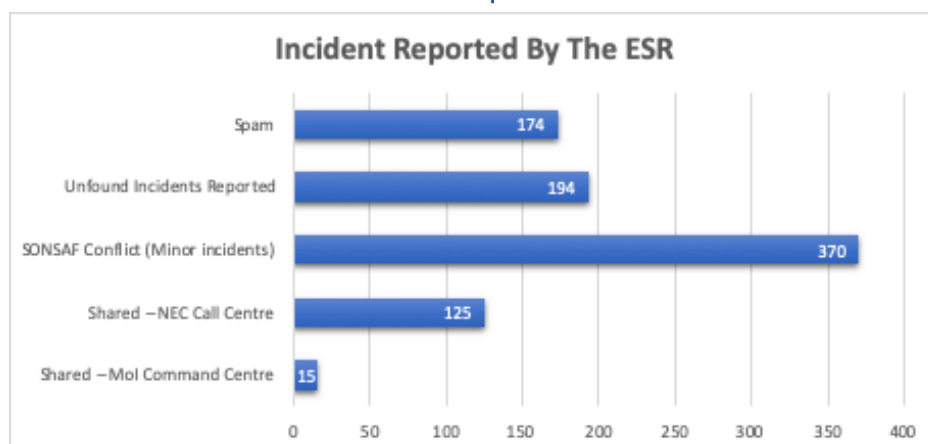
Figure 2: ESR Information Sharing with Stakeholders



The data captured in the ESR call centre was immediately processed and analysed (incident report format) by the statistical consultant, who, in turn, shared the information with the relevant agents, either NEC or MoI. Additionally, the ESR processed daily conflict assessment briefings and weekly conflict assessment reports that were shared with electoral stakeholders and the public through media. Daily and weekly briefings processed by the ESR ranged from women candidates reporting that their clan elders were arrested, to voters complaining about drought conditions and the distance to polling stations.

Overall, 878 cases were reported to the ESR, as highlighted in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Types of incidents reported by the ESR



3.3.4 Stakeholders' harmonization

Somaliland election stakeholders experienced differences as the election approached, mainly on the legal framework of the election laws. SONSAF, under the PEACE project, created a political space management platform that bring together all election stakeholders such as the three political parties, UCID, Kulmiye & Waddani, to solve their differences.

The overall objective of this platform was to minimise major issues that can jeopardise free and fair parliamentary and local elections 2021. High election stakeholder meetings were conducted through this platform, and as a result, SONSAF facilitated the successful officiation of the signing of the Electoral Code of Conduct on the 24th March 2021. The conduct provided a structure for election dispute resolution, the conduct of the campaign, as well as the fair use of state resources. Waddani, UCID and Kulmiye all pledged to ensure all of their candidates adhere to the Electoral Code of Conduct. SONSAF additionally organised a number of high-level political debates that were live streamed through media houses. Debates among competing electoral candidates have become a campaign centrepiece in elections worldwide, allowing voters to make informed choices and encourage candidates to focus on policy issues.



Additionally, SONSAF collaborated with the three national parties in training 7,778 political party agents across 2,709 polling stations. The training covered the election laws, procedures, and political parties code of conduct, to ensure the political agents at all costs avoid acts that may cause insecurity and follow the correct procedural process to record any election infringements.

As indicated in table 7, female representation in the deployment of political party agents remained low across all three parties, with the overall average of female political party agents being 19%, compared to 81% of male agents.

Table 7: Political Parties Agents by gender

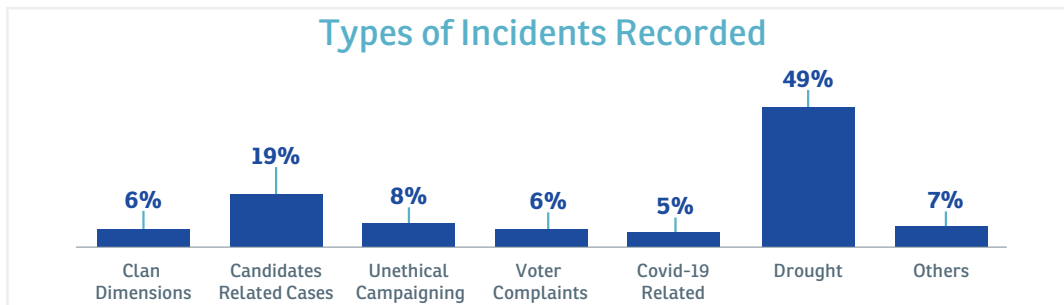
Political Parties Agents Based on Gender				
Party	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Waddani	2110	543	2653	20%
Kulmiye	2151	514	2665	19%
Ucid	2016	454	2470	18%
Total	6277	1511	7788	19%

3.4 Pre-election conflicts

The ESR call centre recorded election-related incidents from all regions of Somaliland. The graph indicated that 49% of the reported cases during the pre-election period were droughts related; a large number of the callers complained about the polling station distance since they moved away from their permanent residence in search of water for their livestock. An example of this is that one caller stated, “I registered in Karin Village, and now moved to Raqo area due to the drought, we need to change the polling station to Dhudhubo to vote”. Furthermore, the displaced people were requesting mobile voting stations in the area they were residing. All reported cases were escalated to the NEC call centre.

Clan dimensions were a critical variable in the 31st May elections. The pre-election conflict mapping report identified Awdal and Eastern regions as potential election conflict hotspots. There was a high correlation between the identified hotspots and the reported pre-election cases. Out of all the incidents reported during the pre-election period, only 6% were related to clan clashes. Out of this 6%, the majority of cases reported occurred in the Eastern or Awdal regions. The data captured indicated clashes between rival clans in Togdheer (Buhodle), Sool (Laas Canood), Awdal (Baki and Borama), and Sanaag (Ceerigaabo). As a result, and to mitigate further clan conflicts, the elections were heavily securitized. Minister Mohamed Kahin of MOI stated that 11,000 security personnel were deployed for the 31st May elections. Under the PEACE project, SONSAF established a close collaborative working relationship with the MOI Command Centre and the ESR Call Centre to share critical security-related incidents. The appropriate security forces dealt with the reported incidents immediately.

Figure 4: Types of Incidents reported to the ESR during the pre-election period



3.4.1 Campaign period conflicts

The May 2021 elections received massive media coverage as the last parliamentary election occurred 16 years ago, and the elections were judged as clan orientated making the election highly sensitive and conflict-prone.

Each political party established a political party selection committee to select suitable candidates for their respective party. After several meetings with all three political party selection committees by the National Election Monitoring Committee as well as Regional Election Monitoring Committees, it was found that their selection processes were similar in approach, and although often looking to recruit candidates based on their merit, were influenced or pressured by clan elders. The selecting committees, across all parties, faced the difficulties of clan elders’ involvement, where they had pre-selected or preferred candidates (majority men) regardless of the political experience and knowledge. However, the parties preferred more seasoned party candidates with a balance of women, minority and PWDs. Overcoming these challenges was very difficult, with many political parties buckling under pressure ultimately looking to secure seats.

As Figure 4 shows, the incidents reported to the ESR connected to candidates during the pre-election was 19%, ranging from arrests and harassments of candidates and their supporters, in addition to clashes relating to rival supporters during the campaign period. The detention of 11 candidates, mostly from opposition parties, caused some concern regarding election security and the apprehension of

alleged government interference with the electoral process. Some of the claims for the arrests were fraudulent documentation, previous criminal activities, and clan complaints. However, after massive media coverage and pressure from CSOs and the international community, all 11 candidates were released without charges, resulting in some candidates abandoning their candidacy.

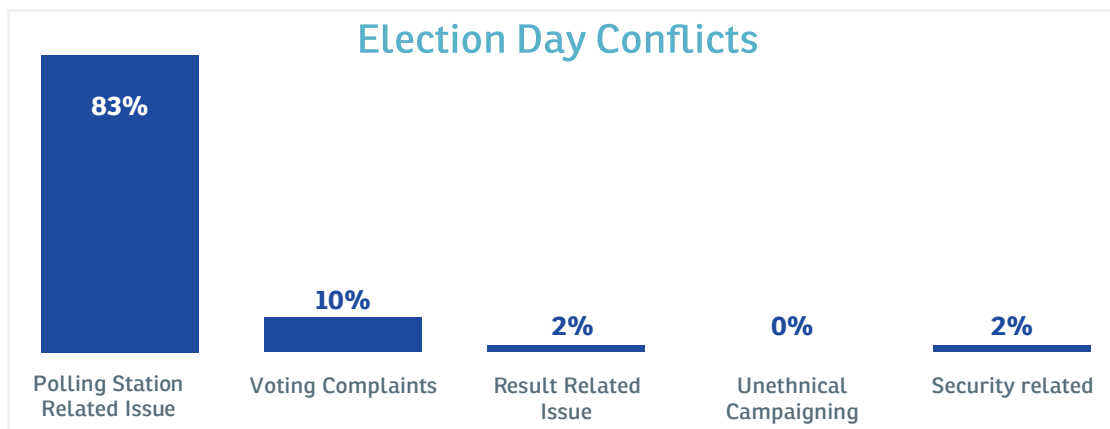
Furthermore, there were warrants for two women candidates in the eastern regions, suspected of working with the neighbouring Federal Government of Somalia and accused of undermining the elections. One of the candidate campaign managers (a candidate sister) was arrested. Additionally, a female candidate from the Awdal region was harassed by police and was allegedly pressured to relinquishing her candidacy for a Kulmiye party from the same clan/constituency. The CSOs, in particular, SONSAF and NAGAAD, worked extremely hard to warrant the rights and fair treatment of these women. The CSOs pressure groups met with the police commissioner and released press statements; again, no charges were brought to the candidates, and they participated in the elections. Finally, there were occasional reports of attacks on candidates, campaign offices and clashes between rival supporters. For instance, UCID and Waddani parties' campaign offices were attacked, and supporters were injured in the Sool and Sanaag regions. Moreover, a female candidate's campaign office was attacked, and her promotional materials were destroyed in the Salaxlay district of the Maroodijeex Region. The case was reported to the NEC and Mol through the ESR, which allowed for NEC and Mol to take swift action resolving the issue.

3.5 Election Day Conflicts

The elections were held on 31st May 2021 in over 2,709 polling stations consisting of 1642 voting centres. It was found that Somaliland adhered to the election law and good international elections practices indicated that domestic observations and conflict monitoring contributed to the fairness and transparency of the election results.

Historically, Somaliland election day has been prone to insecurities, however, remarkably, the 2021 election was largely peaceful with only two percent of the cases reported to the ESR by the deployed conflict monitors, general public and the regional election monitoring teams being security related. The most significant security-related case reported was in the Hargeisa district. It was reported that security forces had fired at a group of youth that was causing mischief and illegal campaigning in the vicinity of polling stations, which led to minor injuries and the polling temporarily being closed. The situation was reportedly resolved by the security forces, and the polling station reopened soon after.

Figure 5: Election Day conflicts reported



Additionally, misunderstandings between two functions of Somaliland security forces were reported, resulting in them mistakenly firing at each other in the Sool region, though no injuries were recorded.

The vast majority of cases reported to the ESR were around polling station procedural issues, as identified in the election observation part of this report. These cases were directly reported to the NEC call centre allowing for immediate de-escalation of polling stations issues.

3.6 Post-Election Phase

3.6.1 NEC Preliminary Results

The 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections yielded surprising results for the three political parties in Somaliland. The WADDANI opposition party managed to grab victory in the House of Representatives election with a majority of 31 seats, followed by the ruling party KULMIYE securing 30 seats and the UCID party 21 seats. This is only the second time since Somaliland declared its independence in 1991 that an opposition party won the House of Representatives election.

Regarding the municipal election, results favoured the ruling party, with Kulmiye securing the most seats at 93, followed by WADDANI securing 79 seats and UCID 48 seats.

Figure 6: Local Council Elections Preliminary Results

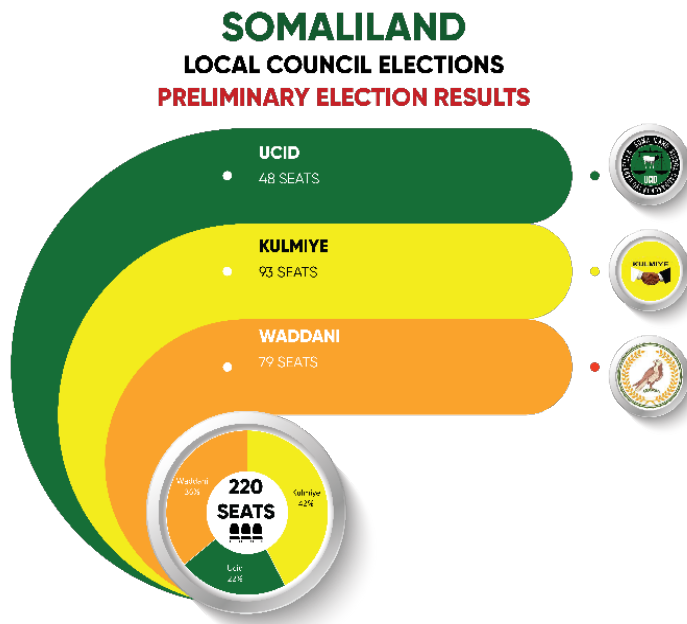
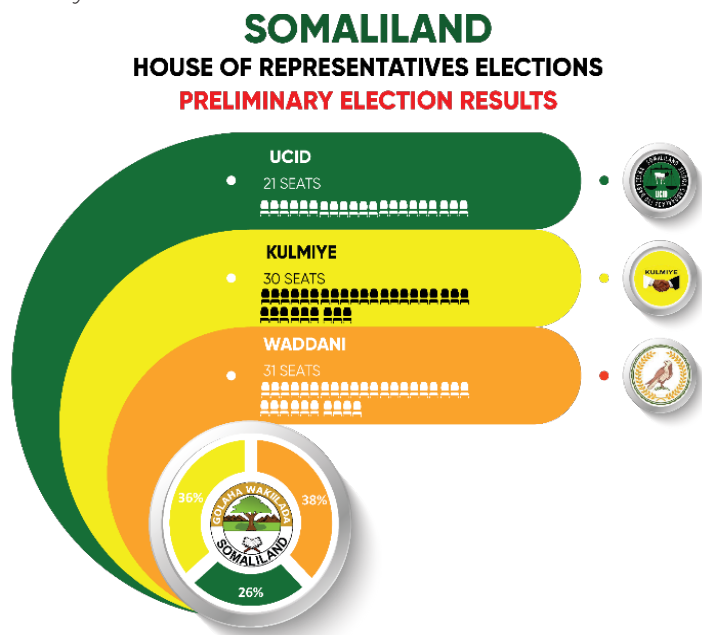


Figure 7: House of Representative Preliminary Results



3.6.2 Objections and Appeals

Following the announcement of the preliminary results by NEC, the Regional and District Courts of the Republic of Somaliland received 25 complaints, of which 20 reached the level of arbitrations after fulfilling the set criteria. All but one of the complaints were made by male candidates.

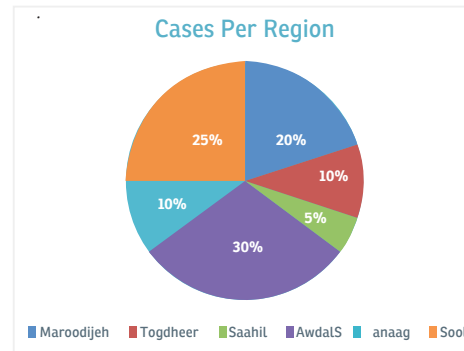
Although all of the complaints were related to the results of the election, the cases differed slightly. The claims made against NEC mainly fell under the following three points;

- Method of counting and aggregation of preliminary results.
- NEC's final total didn't match the results they had received in the polling stations.
- Votes were incorrectly added to another candidate with the same or similar name.

Regarding regions, the graph below illustrates that the complainants. Although they came from all six regions of Somaliland, Sool and Awdal regions, accounted for 55% of the cases; this correlates with the pre-election assessment key findings that these two regions are sensitive to the elections. In the past, for example, the Awdal region disputed the allocations of the parliamentary seats. Maroodijeh accounted for 20% of the cases, understandably it has a significantly higher ratio of voters where the remaining 25% accounted for the other three regions.

When assessing the claims by Political Parties, 50% of the complaint cases represented the Kulmiye Party candidates, and the remaining 50% were equally shared by UCID and Waddani parties.

Figure 8: Preliminary Results complaints per region



3.6.3 Supreme Court Final Verdict

The Somaliland Supreme Court received the evidence presented by the parties and heard the oral arguments from the defendants and accusers for two weeks. The Supreme Court took an additional week to carefully deliberate and consider the evidence put forth by the parties. Finally, the Supreme Court unanimously rejected the arguments of the complaint cases since it lacked clear evidence of wrongdoing by the Commission. As a result, on 28th June 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that the preliminary results of NEC were correct and that the candidates' complaints had no legal basis or lacked evidence to indicate otherwise. The CSOs closely monitored the cases and the procedures to observe the fairness of the trials for the candidates.

As a result of the Somaliland Supreme Court verdict, the two opposition parties announced the formation of a coalition allowing them a majority in parliament and subsequently allowing them to vote in their chosen Speaker of the House and collaborate on city councils across the different regions as well as select mayors together. The ruling party acknowledged the results allowing for a swift transition of power.

3.6.4 Eastern Region Election Results

Due to the increased voter registration in the eastern regions there was hope that Dhulbahante and Warsengeli tribes would gain more seats in the house of representative.

Unfortunately, this was not the case as both clans lost seats to the dominant Isaq clan, resulting in 74% of the House of Representative seats being occupied by the Isaq tribe.

Although these elections occurred in a democratic manner, the decades-old argument of the Isaq dominance in Somaliland politics remains. The Dhulbahante and Warsengeli tribe's argument remains valid, and their political grievances must be addressed by the Somaliland government to ensure more inclusive political environment for all, otherwise this could have major implications on further elections. The limited representation of none Isaq tribes in Somaliland house of representative can be addressed through political dialogue and electoral awareness through voter education process. Table 8 compares the regional distribution of voters in the Somaliland election from 2002 to 2021.

Table 8: Regional Distribution of Votes in Somaliland's elections (2002-2021).

Region	District 2002	Presidential 2003	Parliamentary Elections 2005	Presidential 2010	Local Council Elections 2012	Presidential Elections 2017	Local Council & Parliamentarian Elections 2021
Maroodi-Jeex	186,383	208,864	253,229	238,651	314,663	249,229	263,739
Awdal	100,495	65,934	133,026	81,399	114, 459	102,571	90,053
Saaxil	27,234	30,537	52,479	29,211	57,251	60,817	65,618
Togdheer	66,598	115,064	121,751	111,653	160,460	147,440	137,155
Sool	6,261	9,702	20,557	20,878	49,383	63,689	63,080
Sanaag	53,096	57,938	89,286	58,515	114, 642	80,334	75,090
Total	440,067	488,039	670,328	538,247	810,858	704,089	694,735

Source: NEC AND APD⁹

⁹

Pillars of peace Academy of peace and Development (2015)

END OF CHAPTER 3 NOTE

The establishment of the Election Situation Room contributed significantly to the overall prevention, monitoring and mitigation of electoral violence during the 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections. It allowed for real-time conflict data sharing and improved civil society, government and electoral institutions' collaborative working relationships and information sharing processes. With the 2022 presidential election and the House of Elders election at our doorstep, Somaliland government institutions and electoral stakeholders are advised to look at the causes of triggers of violence and assess strategies and methods that can help mitigate violence and encourage peace.

To take the success of the first-ever establishment of the ESR and the Vote for Peace Studio as an example to promote accountability among democratic institutions and build confidence in electoral processes through impartial, accurate information and assessments.

SECTION FOUR 4



WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

4. SECTION FOUR: Women's political leadership

4.1 Somaliland Women in Politics

Despite representing half the country's population, female participation and representation in Somaliland politics is low, with less than 3% of Somaliland legislators being women. Historically, women have mainly played an active role in the political development and establishing stability in this country. Often not allowed to participate in the clan negotiations organised by men, Somaliland women would use grassroots campaigns to mobilise their communities for peace, playing a significant role in ending the clan-based conflicts of the early 1990s¹⁰.

Over the years, Somaliland women continuously fought for their participation in parliament and top-level decision-making positions. Nevertheless, their involvement in the central national political arena is limited, though often crucial in gathering prospective voters. In 2002 only five women contested local elections, 140 did so in 2012, seeing an incredible increase, although only ten were eventually elected. In 2005, six women ran for parliamentary elections, and only one female candidate from Borama won a parliamentary seat.

According to an Academy for Peace and Development (APD) report¹¹, the executive branch of the government has tried to intervene over the years to promote a women's quota, which was thought to be a suitable response to the women's failure to be elected but faced stiff opposition from the legislative institutions. In 2011, after many years of advocacy by the CSOs and, in particular, by women organisations, the Somaliland President submitted a 30% quota for women and minority groups in both houses of parliament¹². This was one of several amendments to the Electoral and Voter Registration Law.

The House of Elders rejected the quota because it would violate the Somaliland Constitutional provision that all citizens are equal before the law¹³. Exclusion of women from participating in decision-making processes means that they do not enjoy the fundamental right to be elected to public office in the same way as men; therefore, being denied the formal equality accorded to everyone under Article 8(1) of the Somaliland Constitution, and quotas are, consequently, special compensatory measures to help them attain that equality.

The drive to promote women in decision-making positions were informed by international conventions, action plans and goals, which have provided a robust framework for Somaliland women's advocacy on the importance of women's representation in a post-conflict context.

In 2009, the Somaliland Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family developed a National Gender Policy¹⁴ guided by the Universal

¹⁰ *Inclusive Peace & Transition, 2017*

¹¹ *Academy for Peace and Development, Somaliland women's political participation and leadership, 2002*

¹² *SIHA Network, A reflection on the Gender Equality Agenda in Somaliland, 2019*

¹³ *SORADI, The Saga of the Pursuit of Women's Quota in Somaliland, 2011*

¹⁴ *Somaliland Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs and Family, Somaliland National Gender Policy, 2009*

Declaration of Human Rights II of the United Nations Charter, International Law and the African Union Gender Policy (2009), to spearhead the overall co-ordination of mainstreaming gender in national development, government and civil society by transforming institutions, policies, procedures and budgetary allocations.

Yet, it seems that the implementation of the gender policy might not have materialised and/or made any progress in closing the gender divide in public life in Somaliland. According to the Somaliland Gender Gap Assessment (2019)¹⁵, the gender gap for political empowerment was reported to be 0.2 (with 1 being complete equality), showing that no real progress has been made in the ten years that the National Gender Policy was developed. In addition, data in the Gender Gap Assessment showed that community openness towards women’s political participation and women’s perceived ability to influence decision-making stand in stark contrast to the reality of women’s representation in government structures.

4.2 The Need for Women Empowerment Interventions

With the deficient representation of women in politics and the continued challenges of aspiring female leaders in Somaliland, the PEACE project’s second main objective was to increase women’s participation in Somaliland’s electoral and governance processes. This was done by focusing on providing indirect support to the 2021 female local and parliamentary candidates during the pre-election and electoral phase. To enhance women candidate’s electability in the 2021 elections, the PEACE project supported the following interventions:

4.2.1 Pre-Election Interventions to Increase Women Political Empowerment

To try to tackle the lack of political participation of women and minorities, the three political parties (Kulmiye, UCID and Waddani) agreed to provide a voluntary quota for women and minorities in their respective candidates on the 3rd September 2020, for the 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections agreeing on the following points:

- To each appoint six women candidates for the Parliamentary election.
- To each appoint one minority candidate for the Parliamentary election.

In short, the three political parties agreed to select a combined total of 18 women and three minority candidates for the parliamentary elections. At the same time, there were no restrictions in the local elections as it was open for any candidate interested in taking part in the election contest.

During the 2021 Parliamentary and Local Council elections, women candidates running for the parliamentary seats almost doubled compared to the 2005 elections, with 13 women running in 2021, compared to 7 in 2005. However, there was a significant reduction of 91% in the Local Council women candidates since 2012, with only 15 women running this year, Table 9 and Table 10 display the women candidates for the May 2021 Local Council and Parliamentary election. A visible gender difference can be seen in the number of men and women running during the May 2021 election.

Table 9: women candidates result for the combined elections 2021

		Local Council	Parliamentarians
Year	Seats	Women candidates	
2021	Candidates:		13 out of 246
	Successful Candidates:		0 out of 82
	Candidates:	15 out of 747	
	Successful Candidates:	3 out of 220	

¹⁵ Oxfam, Somaliland Gender Gap Assessment (2019)

Table 10: The 2021 candidates disaggregated by gender and political party

Gender Disaggregation per political party						
		Ucid	Kulmiye	Waddani	Total	Total candidates
Parliamentary	Women	6	4	3	13	
	Men	76	78	79	233	246
Local Council	Women	4	6	5	15	
	Men	245	243	244	732	747

Though all three parties agreed to put a voluntary women quota in place, the Ucid party was the only party that adhered to the agreement and selected six women parliamentary candidates. On the other hand, the Kulmiye and Waddani parties only had four- and three-women parliamentary candidates, respectively.

Various other interventions were implemented for women candidates in the pre-election phase by CSOs, particularly the NAGAAD Network. Interventions included community dialogues on women's political participation, panel discussions and transformative gender norm change campaigns such as the "*Dooro Xildhibaanad Campaign*" (*Vote in a Female Councillor/Parliamentarian*). The partnership between NAGAAD Network and Interpeace with support from the Sweden Embassy also allowed NAGAAD to lobby on behalf of women candidates with their respective clan elders, allowing for some of the female candidates to receive the successful endorsement and backing of their clan.

4.2.2 Advocacy for Fee Exemption for Women and Minority Candidates

NAGAAD Network and SONSAF advocated for the registration fee exemption for women and minority candidates during the pre-election period. On 1st March 2021, Somaliland President H.E accepted the request from the CSOs and relinquished the mandatory fees for the women and minority candidates. The presidential decree stated, "*to encourage the political participation for women and minority candidates, Somaliland government will pay all the mandatory fees*". The directive instructed the Ministry of Finance to pay the fees for women and minority candidates upon the confirmation of NEC. In addition, the political parties followed suit and waived all the political parties' fees. Table 10 indicates the waived fees by NEC and the Political Parties.

Table 11: Fee Exemption for Women and Minority Candidates

Candidates	NEC	Waddani	Kulmiye	Ucid
Parliamentarian Candidates	\$4,750	\$3,000	\$2,400	\$3,000
Local Council A	\$1,830	\$1000	\$1,200	\$1,200
Local Council B	\$825	\$500	\$825	\$825
Local Council C	\$470	\$400	\$470	\$470

4.2.3 Indirect Support for Women and Minority Candidates

The 2021 Parliamentary and Local Council women and minority candidates received indirect and tangible support through the PEACE project to boost their chances and tackle the challenges and disadvantages they face. The support included:

- Mobilisation of campaign offices
- Mobilisation of vehicles
- Campaign materials (billboards, caps, scarfs, T-shirts)
- Media campaign, including debates, social media activities

On the 11 & 12th March 2021, SONSAF, in collaboration with the Swedish International Liberation Centre (SILC) & NAGAAD Network and with support from the Swedish Embassy, conducted a needs assessment workshop for the women parliamentary and Local Council candidates. The assessment focused on identifying the current pressing challenges facing women in participating in Somaliland political decision-making processes. Through intense consultation with the women candidates, it was determined that the most pressing needs were the lack of access to finance with the high cost of mobilising voters and the lack of women candidate visibility. Thus, the indirect support offered through the PEACE project could not have come at a more appropriate time. Somaliland has a long border with Ethiopia, and with most of the rural communities consisting of pastoralists, crossing over the border to seek water for their livestock is very common. The 28 women and 5 minority candidates received support in mobilising their voters that had been displaced due to droughts. Each candidate received logistical assistance to transport their voters to their nearest polling stations on election day. In the 2021 Local and Parliamentary elections, a total of 33 women and minority candidates were supported with 188 vehicles under the PEACE project.

Furthermore, all 33 women and minority candidates also received support with opening campaign offices in their respective constituencies. Under the PEACE project, a total of 72 offices were supported in opening up, relieving the pressure from the already financially pressed women and minority candidates. When it comes to visibility, women and minority candidates received indirect support with visibility material consisting of printing of billboards, flyers, t-shirts and the management and promotion of social media pages, allowing for increased visibility for women and minority candidates.

Additionally, women candidates were provided with various platforms to debate their campaign pledges and discuss critical policy issues. These platforms consisted of live TV debates and social media promotions.

Once NEC officially finalised the 2021 Parliamentary and Local Council candidates list, SONSAF, in collaboration with NAGAAD Network, organised a public event on the 1st of May 2021 to recognise the women and minority candidates running for the upcoming election allowing again for increased visibility. The event was attended by the women and minority candidates, election stakeholders such as NEC, political parties, CSOs and media houses. The event celebrated the candidates' commendable achievements by making it to the official NEC list and publicly launching their political campaigns.

SIDA, through Nagaad Network, also provided political campaign and social media campaign strategies capacity building and awareness-raising activities to support women political empowerment. Capacity building training revolved around public speaking, leadership and strategic management skills.

4.3 Support Provided During the Electoral Phase

4.3.1 Women Situation Room

Women face myriad challenges¹⁶ when exercising their political rights, the most alarming of which is the perceived increase in violence against women in politics (VAWP), including violence against women during elections. To mitigate violence against women during the election, NAGAAD Network established a Women Situation Room (WSR) to provide early warning of and early responses to election-related gender-based violence (EGBV) during the 2021 Parliamentary and Local Council Elections.

The aim was also to ensure peace and stability during the electoral cycle while forging social cohesion, promoting integration, and increasing the participation of women and youth in the electoral process in line with UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The WSR's headquarter was located in Hargeisa, and it monitored election issues across the six regions of Somaliland. The WSR was managed by call operators

¹⁶ See section 4.4 for critical challenges faced by women in the May 2021 elections

recruited and trained by NAGAAD. During the 15 days that WSR was operational, it received 10,561 calls from across the country. Most of the calls were received during Election Day. However, 1474 calls were received from May 25th to May 30th (during the campaigns).

In most cases, callers wanted information on voting procedures and centres. The incident report categories include:

- Late start of the polls.
- Physical abuse of women candidates or voters.
- Rape.
- Electoral offences.
- Inadequate security presence.
- Spontaneous violence against political campaigns.

Women submitted more than 87.7% of the 72 complaint reports received. Although the Women's Situation Room was a women-led initiative, it also served male candidates and voters. Much data and knowledge is still needed on violence against women during Somaliland's Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Elections. A glaring gender bias exists in current programs, research and efforts to collect data on electoral violence.

Compared to men, women and youth voters experience different types of violence in other spaces, before, during and after elections. When women experience violence during elections, entrenched family, social and hierarchical relationships between perpetrators and survivors are often involved. This undermines efforts to reduce EGBV.

4.4 Critical Challenges Faced by Women in May 2021 Elections

There are historical, socio-cultural, and psychological reasons for the underrepresentation of women and the dominance of men in gatekeeping positions. The patriarchal social structure of the Somali society, characterized by male dominance, is sustained and strengthened by value systems and cultural rules that propagate the notion of women's inferiority to men. It limits women's access to resources and restricts their opportunities to participate in decision-making or even in decisions that affect their own lives. Through the PEACE project and various other CSOs programmes that targeted support at the 2021 women parliamentary and Local Council candidates, the following challenges have been identified:



4.4.1 The clan system



The politicization of clan identity (clannism) is perceived to be one of the most significant barriers to women's political participation and leadership, according to many of the women candidates running during the May 2021 local and parliamentary elections. Regrettably, women are seen as unreliable representatives in the political arena due to their dual affiliation to their father's and husbands' clans. Consequently, both sides view them with suspicion and doubt their loyalty and level of commitment to fighting for their cause.

Only two female candidates out of the 13 parliamentary candidates were publicly endorsed by their clan, averting capable female candidates from participating from the offset. As a result, the number of female candidates was a drop in the ocean, further limiting the probability of their success at the ballot box. In addition, many of the female candidates supported by CSOs reported directly competing with male relatives from their clan, and therefore being accused by clan leaders as splitting the votes and consequently potentially losing a parliamentary or Local Council seat for their community.

4.4.2 Clan Influence on Political Parties

The influence clan elders have on choosing a candidate is not limited to affecting the women candidates only. The Somaliland political parties are influenced and affected by the society's patriarchal solid clan system and often receive tremendous pressure from clan leaders to accept their selected clan candidate or risk losing their votes. The ruling party, Kulmiye, reported that clan elder endorsement is one of the key candidate selection criteria, ruling out any potential candidates that do not have the backing of their clan. In the 2021 election, many women complained about the challenge of political parties not accepting them as candidates. The parties were only interested in gaining/winning seats which they argued could only be achieved through a clan backing system, in turn, side-lining women that have been an integral part of the political parties since its establishment.

4.4.3 The Financial Barriers

Another challenge identified during the PEACE project interventions is the incredible financial barriers faced by Somaliland women candidates. Though great achievements have been made in this election with the President and the political parties waiving the mandatory registration fee for women and minority candidates, access to political finance remained a challenge. Electoral costs in Somaliland can run considerably high, with the average campaign costs potentially reaching in the tens of thousands according to some candidates. Many women do not have the private capital to fund large campaigns and mobilize many people. Moreover, in the cultural context, financially women candidates are often excluded from receiving the monetary contributions (Qadhaan), which clan elders collect from all clan members for their chosen candidate.

An interesting finding was that women candidates reported that the support received from NGOs and the government (i.e., waiving of fees) had adverse effects on their candidacy and campaigning. The International and CSOs support received was perceived as them pushing an external western agenda. In addition, the financial support made the women candidates seen as weak, with them needing financial assistance to run their campaigns, which led the community, particularly the elders, to believe them to be unsuited candidates (as often candidates are wealthy businessmen with the backing of private sector funds). Furthermore, due to the droughts in the rural communities, there was a need for necessities like water and dry food. Male candidates were able to provide these necessities to the communities in return for their votes. In essence, men were able to gain and leverage on the dire needs of the community, whereas women, on the other hand, were not able to provide this support to the communities. Thus, losing voters due to their financial limitations.

4.4.4 Lack of Confidence in Electoral Stakeholders

Many of the 2021 parliamentary and women candidates lacked confidence in electoral stakeholders, such as their respective political parties. Although political parties agreed to put the voluntary quota to boost women's political participation, this did not necessarily translate into political party practices that promote gender equality. Women candidates reported that political parties and NEC had been at times inaccessible and unresponsive to their concerns. Concerns raised were the allegedly unfair distribution of electoral equipment, such as license plates that were to be used for vehicles on election day to monitor polling stations. Lack of confidence in one political party and the Commission by women candidates can exasperate the challenges women face. A straightforward complaints mechanism will need to be put in place within political parties and NEC to ensure these electoral stakeholders are held accountable to ensure their measures and commitments of achieving gender equality are put into practice.

4.5 What is Next for Somaliland Women?

4.5.1 Tackling Inclusion Issues & Improving Women Participation

As identified in this report, women face myriad challenges. They often lack the knowledge and capacity to be confident enough to put themselves out there and compete fully with their male counterparts as candidates. Increasing women's political participation can be done through effective leadership training programs and the continued investment in and prioritising girls' education. Education and employment outside of the home can increase Somali women's power and status within their families and communities. Higher education is explicitly a key component of women's capacity to influence high-level decision making. Education should not be limited to formal mainstream education but should also include civic education. This can encourage women to understand their electoral rights and empower them to become active in grassroots politics to address social norms against women's participation.

4.5.2 Raise Societal Awareness of Women's Leadership Through Media.



Mass media can challenge attitudes and expectations at a much greater scale and foreground examples of role models. Women with leadership aspirations should be trained in how to engage with the media. In this context, radio shows, posters, and social media presence could highlight the achievements of local female leaders and media-savvy position holders are important emissaries of women's leadership and can serve as role models for Somali girls and boys. Additionally, women may build networks of followers and friends, which can translate into real power. Such networks may be capitalised into political support and credibility in future elections.

4.5.3 Promote More Inclusive Institutions.

For women to have meaningful participation and leadership in public life, structural and institutional reform with changes in formal rules and to address gender imbalances in public institutions in Somaliland will need to be made. More enabling institutions and working cultures involve:

- Building civil and political rights, electoral and party reform.
- Reforming discriminatory laws.
- Shifting sexist attitudes and practices towards women in public life.
- Developing formal platforms and mechanisms, such as quotas and opportunities to participate in constitutional reform.
- Warranting that the developed Somaliland National Gender Policy is adhered to by all public institutions and workplaces and practised will ensure women have meaningful, equal participation in public life.

4.5.4 Strategizing Women Financial Support

A key variable to the lack of women being elected during the 2021 Local Council and Parliamentary election was the financial disparity between male and female candidates. Although all the administration costs were waived by the government and the political parties, the financial differences remained. Therefore, the Somaliland government and other election stakeholders are recommended to introduce policies and legislation on political finance that can contain gender-targeted measures that explicitly promote women's participation using public funding and/or gender-neutral regulations that do not directly seek to reduce the gender gap but help to do so in practice. Political finance regulation is often seen as a tool for levelling the playing field by reducing election costs, cutting corruption, and increasing oversight.

4.5.5 Breaking the Cycle of Gender Exclusion in Political Party Development

With the expiration of political party licenses and the announcement of the Somaliland President of opening up the registration of new political parties in 2022, the cycle of gender exclusion in political party development needs to be tackled. Suad Ibrahim, a 2021 parliamentary candidate, reported that *"If Somaliland women want to move forward in politics, they must be visible in political parties and play an active role within leadership positions."* The formation of new parties during periods of political transition represents a potential opportunity to break these patterns. Transitions can transform the broader political, legal, and social barriers to an inclusive kind of politics. The development of new party branches and rules and the renegotiation of broader institutional frameworks can enable women and other marginalised groups to push for greater political representation within party structures.

END OF CHAPTER 4 NOTE

Throughout the 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections, women in Somaliland faced and continue to face considerable challenges in their pursuit of political participation. Although CSOs and international interventions such as the indirect support provided through the PEACE project mitigated some of the obstacles, the road is still very long, and deeply entrenched social norms and attitudes continue to create hurdles to political inclusiveness for women.

Toward future elections, a clear shift in biased gender norms in the Somaliland society is needed through critical thinking and consensus-based dialogue involving a wide range of stakeholders from civil society, government and the community. In addition, engagement with clan elders and religious leaders may be beneficial as women candidates identified them as key actors in many of their challenges.

SECTION FIVE 5



CSOs ELECTION CONTRIBUTION

5. SECTION FIVE: CSOs Election Contribution

5.1 Role of the Media

The Somaliland media landscape is diverse and vibrant. The constitution and Somaliland Press Law no.27/2004¹⁷ provide freedom of expression and freedom to hold opinions, including sending and receiving information without interference. However, the media law stipulates that citizens exercising their freedom of expression should not override the rights of other citizens. Approximately 14 printed newspapers, 11 independent television channels and more than 200 websites were operating in Somaliland, all privately owned. One state-owned radio station, Radio Hargeisa, and a government-run newspaper, Dawan. The media is regarded as one of the primary pillars of governance to promote, educate and inform the citizens about the matters that affect their lives, such as political developments and social interventions. Thus, in preparation for the combined elections, a media code of conduct was consigned on 23rd February 2021 among all the leading stakeholders, namely the Ministry of information, culture and national guidance, NEC, Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), & Women in Journalism Association (WIJA). SOLJA and the other CSOs have been monitoring the media throughout the election cycle.

The monitoring reports noted that most of the messages broadcasted by the TV stations, published by News Papers and Websites, were related to notifications of the Somaliland NEC about the election process in a general and specific programme in particular, such as voter registration, card replacement, and the election timetable. The media covered the election from beginning to end efficiently and transparently. During the candidates' campaign, the Somaliland media played a neutral and professional role by disseminating information about the candidates' candidacy for Local Council and representatives. The state media provided an equal opportunity for the national parties. The state media, including Somaliland National Television and Radio Hargeisa, showed impartiality and accorded platform for the oppositions to express themselves. All the election campaigns of the three parties were covered equally and impartially. Some of the news and information published by these media outlets were about the election candidates and their plans. It also included stories about the voters who had lost their voting cards, celebratory events to support some of the candidates running for the elections and general election-related news, whether they come from the Commission or other parties such as State officials dealing with electoral matters.

There were no reports of any abusive, false or unbalanced reports that could jeopardize the smooth running of the elections. The news, announcements and interviews broadcast by all media outlets assessed on election day were non-violent and positive. The media also did not report false preliminary results, except for some social media sites that published rumours of incorrect election results, which

¹⁷ [http://www.somalilandlaw.com/press__media__law.htm#Presslaw, The Press Law \(No: 27/2004\)](http://www.somalilandlaw.com/press__media__law.htm#Presslaw,The%20Press%20Law%20(No:%2027/2004))

they immediately apologized for and removed from their social networking sites. More than 94% of the news reports and messages had a positive impact. For example, the news and announcements related to voter card distribution required full backing of ethical principles. Hence, the news, reports and messages indicated that there had been very little violation of these ethical principles. During the campaigning period, it was reported that the vast majority of people who gathered in political squares did not wear masks nor complied with social distancing rules.

The media influence what the public sees and hears about elections. The perspectives of those who run the media shape stories that are covered. It is therefore vital that news outlets are neutral and remain impartial. The role of the media houses through SOLJA and WIJA has been shown to have played an integral role in conflict mitigation, by ensuring no reports of any abusive, false or unbalanced reports were published on Somaliland news outlets.

WIJA also, ensured women candidates were receiving equal, fair and unbalanced coverage in the Somaliland media during the 2021 elections. This was done by training journalists as well as media houses on the importance of women political participation.

5.2 **People with Disabilities**

In Somaliland, PWD participation in leadership and political environments is limited and restricted at local and national levels. According to the Somaliland National Disability Forum (SNDF), PWDs accounts for 700,000 people in Somaliland but are highly under-represented in political arena, whether in elected offices, civil service, the private sector or academia. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change and their right to participate equally in democratic governance. PWDs face several obstacles to participating in political life:

- Structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions still limit their options to run for office.
- Capacity gaps mean PWDs are less likely than other groups to have the education, contacts and resources needed to become influential leaders.
- PWDs have remained unrepresented in social, economic and political arenas due to weaknesses in Somaliland social and economic systems.
- The complete lack of sensitive policies, economic capacity, cultural limitations, and clan-based representation limits the inclusiveness of PWD.

SNDF implemented a project titled "Empowerment of PWDs on Constitutional and Electoral Processes". The European Union supported a project through NEC to promote PWD rights on Constitution and Election issues. The project intended to ensure that polling stations were accessible to people with disabilities by installing ramps, raising awareness amongst election stakeholders on PWDs rights, recruiting people with disabilities as domestic election and conflict observers, and encouraging political parties concerning the importance of recruiting disabled candidates.

SNDF urged SONSAF to include PWDs in the election as domestic election and conflict monitors; as a result, 50 individuals with disabilities were trained and deployed in polling stations across the six regions of Somaliland. However, this was the first election PWDs were recruited as domestic election observers and conflict monitors, accounting for only 5% of observers and monitors.

In May 2021, SNDF conducted awareness-raising activities targeting PWDs to ensure they understood their fundamental rights as enshrined in the Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). During the

awareness activities, SNDF formulated and disseminated messages to educate PWDs about their rights to participate in elections, explicitly concerning PWDs' rights to elect the candidates that support their cause. As a result, awareness-raising activities helped many disabled people vote, especially those with hearing difficulty and physical disabilities. Table 12 shows the deployment plan of the PWDs conflict monitoring missions and regional coverage.

Table 12: PWD Observer and Conflict Monitors in 2021 elections

Region	No. Observers and Conflict Monitors
Maroodijeh	31
Togdheer	5
Awdal	5
Sahil	3
Sool	3
Sanaag	3
Total	50

END OF CHAPTER 5 NOTE

Through the 2021 Somaliland Parliamentary and Local Council Election, CSOs mobilized and played an integral role in appearing as nonpartisan citizen election observers and conflict mitigation actors. SOYDAVO, CPA and SONSAF afforded the election missions through the ESR and EMO engaging in early warning signs of election conflicts. On the other hand, WIJA and SOLJA provided media monitoring; additionally, NAGAAD Network provided early warning and early responses to election-related gender-based violence.

Finally, SNDF allowed for an inclusive electoral process for PWDs. Coordinating efforts yielded the CSOs to make great strides in monitoring and mitigating related electoral violence while enhancing the integrity and transparency of the overall electoral process.

SECTION SIX

6



CONCLUSION AND **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6 SECTION SIX: Conclusion and recommendation

6.1 Conclusion

Somaliland achieved a remarkable milestone in conducting twin Parliamentary and Local Council elections for the first time in the country's history, withstanding significant challenges and holding the election within nine months.

The voting patterns indicated a break from the past; young voters departed from tradition disregarding clan and political party considerations, electing "popular, progressive and celebrity candidates". Hon. Laab Saalax as MP and Mayor Abdikarim Ahmed Mooge in the Hargeisa Local Council, subsequently becoming the Mayor of Hargeisa, benefited this novel democratic phenomenon. In addition, the overwhelming electoral victory by Barkhad Batuun for the House of Representatives from the minority community was another fundamental achievement for the people of Somaliland.

Despite these overall successes and gains by the people of Somaliland, the election results and patterns also highlighted the systemic configuration and defaults of the electoral system and concerns were raised about the government interfering with the electoral processes with candidates from opposition parties being detained or harassed. Through influence from the CSOs, the Human Rights Commission and NEC, detainees were released, though clan and political pressure forced some to withdraw their candidacy.

Furthermore, many clans and communities were significantly reduced from their representations at the House of Representatives and the Local Councils; this was the case for many clans hailing from the eastern regions. The drought primarily caused the low turnout in the eastern provinces, continued tribal conflicts and low civic education and awareness.

The lack of political inclusion for women in the House of Representatives was unexpected; there have been joint efforts by the international community, government, political parties and CSOs to support women's political participation, though regrettably, no women were elected into parliament and only three women were elected into Local Council. A long-term intervention and strategy to help and include women in politics are needed to tackle deeply entrenched social norms and attitudes that continue to create barriers to political participation for women. A clear shift in discriminatory gender norms in Somaliland is needed through critical thinking and consensus-based dialogue involving a wide range of stakeholders from civil society, government, and the community. Additionally, women need to understand and capacitate themselves on the informal and formal political languages and strategies, access political platforms and how to get their political messages across effectively.

To conclude, this election has been a victory as indicated by the findings and observations in this report; in comparison to previous elections, the efforts by the political parties, the government and CSOs were geared up to promote peaceful elections. The establishment of the ESR and the various election conflict monitoring and domestic observation missions have contributed significantly to the overall prevention, monitoring and mitigation of electoral violence during the 2021 parliamentary and Local Council elections. Given the fine line that exist between election observation and election conflict monitoring there is a need to clearly define the scope of these two in all future interventions.

With the 2022 presidential election and the House of Elders election at our doorstep, Somaliland government institutions and electoral stakeholders are advised to look at the causes and triggers of potential violence and assess strategies and methods that can help mitigate violence and encourage peace. To take the success of the first-ever establishment of the ESR and the Vote for Peace Studio as an example to promote accountability among democratic institutions and build confidence in electoral processes through impartial, accurate information and assessments. The complete lack

of representation of key segments of society in the seat allocations disturbs social and political cohesion, representation, and equity fundamentals. The authorities, civil society and key public institutions should strive to consolidate the gains of the 2021 election and build broad political agreement on how to make continued progress towards stable, peaceful and inclusive democracy in Somaliland. The Horn of Africa, more broadly, is not known for its stable or democratic governments. Somaliland is a success story in a part of the world where there are few. The most recent elections yet again demonstrate the country's determination to chart its path.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Political Parties

- Deploy sufficient representatives to polling stations to ensure transparency and promote credibility in managing the voting processes and minimize irregularities.
- The political parties to increase support for women party participation by formalizing an internal party quota, capacitating women wing and denouncing the politicization of clan identity in selecting election candidates. This can be done by nominating a committee from the three political parties to examine the current political party dimension. Agreeing on a more holistic approach to include more women and minorities will improve the chance of a more inclusive political environment in Somaliland.
- The political parties should continue waiving all chargeable fees to women and minority candidates, which will minimize the financial gap between male and female candidates.
- Promoting accountability and transparency in political parties regarding party funding and expenditure should be a key priority.
- The political system in Somaliland is clan-based, and as previously reported, political parties are heavily influenced by clan leaders in selecting candidates. Therefore, consensus-based dialogue is needed between political parties and clan elders to set a candidate selection system in place that is based on merit rather than clan affiliation.

6.2.2 National Electoral Commission

- Although there has been a gradual increase in voter registrations in the eastern region, particularly the Sool region, over the last ten years, NEC is encouraged to continue to boost civic education and electoral awareness campaigns in the eastern regions to increase participation.
- NEC should continue to educate Somalilanders on their role in the democratic process, and further attention should be given to voter education. Voter education should conceptualise a broader civic education programme emphasising the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- It was found that the very vast majority of polling stations in Somaliland had layout designs that prevented disabled voters from accessing voting booths. Therefore, NEC is encouraged to increase the number of disability-friendly polling stations or implement alternative voting mechanisms such as providing absentee voting for voters with disabilities.

6.2.3 The Government of Somaliland

- The Government, as the ruling party, should adhere to strict election impartiality and ensure all government institutions avoid involving themselves, particularly during the election campaigning as this could impact the security and the development of Somaliland's democratic reputation.
- Consider introducing political finance regulation, as it is often seen as a tool for levelling the playing field by reducing election costs, cutting corruption, and increasing oversight. Legislation on political finance can contain gender-targeted measures that explicitly promote women's participation using public funding and/

or gender-neutral regulations that do not directly seek to reduce the gender gap but help to do so in practice.

- As documented in the report, the eastern regions of Somaliland (Sool and Sanaag) had a low turnout of voters, as a result, the number of seats in the Parliament has reduced in comparison to previous years. The government should redouble awareness-raising efforts, general voter education and dialogue between Somaliland authorities and local elders in this conflict-prone region. This would ensure under-represented communities are included in governing bodies in future elections and in turn would address disaffection in eastern regions.
- The Somaliland Government, in particular the newly elected parliamentarians, should consider introducing legislations promoting affirmative action and fast track the women's quota and equal opportunities for the minority groups to bring domestic laws in line with international commitments.
- The newly elected parliament should address existing gaps within the Electoral Law. The Electoral Law does not currently favour PWDs and marginalised groups; an urgent amendment is needed.

6.2.4 International Community

- The International Community should continue increasing its support to provide technical knowledge on elections to the Government by investing in theoretical and practical training to Government Institutions, NEC and political parties.
- Women political participation should not only receive attention during the election period. International communities are encouraged to look at implementing a long-term strategy to support women in political participation. This can be done through fostering women's political leadership skills and capacities by developing a programme that teaches

'hard skills' in negotiation, influencing, communication and consensus-building, and growing technical expertise within the context. These skills could help women work with legitimacy and confidence in key sectors and at all levels within the political system.

6.2.5 Civil Society Organisations

- During the 2021 elections, the Somaliland Civil Society community mobilized and played an integral role in acting as nonpartisan citizen election observers and election conflict mitigation actors. CSOs should continue to coordinate their efforts and play an essential part in future elections to ensure the promotion of a peaceful electoral environment is continued.
- CSOs should continue to monitor electoral practices of all election stakeholders closely and act as pressure groups to hold them accountable when witnessing any misconduct.
- CSOs should continue advocating and lobbying for women and minorities' political participation by creating stable and safe platforms for public dialogue and debate for women and minority groups. Efforts could focus on supporting public conversations through targeted interventions in the media and broader discussion around the progress and setbacks attached to women and minority groups' political engagement throughout the 2021 electoral process. Critically there should be an emphasis on creating proper platforms for such dialogue, rather than isolated, one-off events.
- CSO to promote the formulation of an equivalent of cross-party Women's Caucus. Women's caucuses have been created to increase women's impact on political decisions. It is generally believed that the building of cross-party caucuses can help provide the peer support necessary to promote a gender equality legislative and policy agenda.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: OBSERVATION OPENING FORM

SONSAF		Goobjoogayaasha Maxaliga ah ee Doorashada G. Deganka Iyo Baar. 2021									
<h3>Opening Form</h3>		Time arrived: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"><tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr></table>					Time left: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 20px;"><tr><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td><td style="width: 25%;"></td></tr></table>				
Region/District	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Name of the Polling station	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>								
	No. of the Polling station	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/>								
	Tirada Waraaqaha Codaynta ee la helay		<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>								
ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENT		Yes	No								
1 Did you observe any form of intimidation within the outer perimeter of the polling station?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
2 Did you observe any form of disorder within the outer perimeter of the polling station?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
3 Did you observe any campaign material within the outer perimeter of the polling station?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
4 Were campaign activities taking place around the polling station?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
PRESENCE OF AUTHORISED PERSONS		Yes	No								
5 Were all four PSEO members present according to the law?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
6 Was the chairperson a woman?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
7 How many members of the PSEO were women?		<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>									
8 PRESENCE OF PARTY REPRESENTATIVES AT THE POLLING STATION		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
UCID <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/> KULMIYE <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/> WADDANI <input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
9 Were International observers present in the polling station?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Nidaamka Furitaanka		Yes	No								
10 Were all essential materials available? aa ma yaalaan goobta? If no which are missing?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
Ballot papers	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	stamp	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>								
indelible ink	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	seals	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>								
touch	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>	registration book	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>								
		ballot boxes	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>								
		booths	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>								
		Envelopes	<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>								
11 Did the polling station chairperson properly assign the PS staff their work?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
12 Were the packages of ballot papers intact before opening?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
13 Was the polling station arranged to ensure the secrecy of the vote?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
14 Was the polling station accessible for persons with disabilities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
15 Did the Chairperson check the accreditation and the ID card or the official Letter of Appointment of party agents and observers?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
16 Did the PS Chairperson show to the party representatives and domestic observers that the ballot box was empty before sealing?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
17 Was the inner cover of the ballot box properly sealed?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
18 Were party representatives and/or domestic observers allowed to record the number of the seal?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
19 Were unauthorised persons present at the polling station?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
if yes describe? _____											
21 Did the polling start later than 07:00?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
if yes specify		<input style="width: 50%;" type="text"/>									
22 Did the chairperson/or the Secretary enter properly the required information into the polling book record? codaynta?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								
23 Miyey jirtay cid sharciyad u haysata inay soo gasho goobta codbixinta oo loo diiday? Haday "Haa" tahay fadlan sheeg?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>								

Evaluation											
24 Your overall assessment of the opening process											
A. Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Good	<input type="checkbox"/>								
C. Fair	<input type="checkbox"/>	D. poor	<input type="checkbox"/>								
E. Very poor	<input type="checkbox"/>										
Wixii soo jeedin ah ama Xog dheeraad ah Fadlan u isticmaal dhabarka warqada											



APPENDIX 2: OBSERVATION VOTING FORM

SONSAF Domestic Observers for the Local councils and House of Representative Elections 2021	
Voting Form	Time Arrived <input type="text"/> Time Left <input type="text"/>
Region/District <input type="text"/>	Name of the Polling station <input type="text"/>
NO. Polling station <input type="text"/>	Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of ballot papers received <input type="text"/>	
Environment Assessment	
YES NO	
1 Did you observe any form of intimidation within the outer perimeter of the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
2 Did you observe any form of disorder within the outer perimeter of the polling station? If Yes please specify	<input type="text"/>
3 Did you observe any campaign material within the outer perimeter of the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate photo <input type="checkbox"/> B. Party logo <input type="checkbox"/>	
C. Voting instructions favouring for party <input type="checkbox"/>	
D. Amplifiers singing for a party <input type="checkbox"/>	
4 Were campaign activities taking place around the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Were any other unauthorised persons present at the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unauthorised police <input type="checkbox"/> Candidates that was not casting their votes <input type="checkbox"/>	
C. Party campaigners <input type="checkbox"/> Government Officials <input type="checkbox"/>	
6 Were the unauthorised persons present at the polling station directing/interfering in the work of the polling station staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Was the police / security presence at the polling station according to the regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was the police / security presence at the polling station according to the regulations?	<input type="checkbox"/>
U dhaqmaya kuna haysta shaqaalaha goobta codaynta shaqadooda <input type="checkbox"/>	
Mid amraya shaqaalaha goobta codbixinta <input type="checkbox"/>	
Mid iska fadhiga oon sugayn amaanka iyo habsami u socodka shaqada goobta codbixinta <input type="checkbox"/>	
8 Did you observe any campaign material inside the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Did you observe any form of intimidation inside the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Were PSEO staff doing their work properly and according to the procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Were there any restrictions that prevented observers / party reps from performing their duties?	<input type="checkbox"/>
PRESENCE OF AUTHORISED PERSONS	
Yes No	
12 Were all four PSEO members present?	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 Was the chairperson a woman?	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 How many members of the PSEO were women? <input type="text"/>	
15 Were Party representatives present in the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
UCID <input type="checkbox"/> KULMIYE <input type="checkbox"/> WADANI <input type="checkbox"/>	
16 1. Were International observers present in the polling station? If yes specify	<input type="checkbox"/>
POLLING PROCEDURE (Fadlan sheeg hadii ay jiraan wax aan caadi ahayn)	
Haa Maya	
17 Were all essential materials available? If no which are missing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ballot papers <input type="checkbox"/> stamp <input type="checkbox"/> voter list <input type="checkbox"/>	
indelible ink <input type="checkbox"/> Ballot boxes <input type="checkbox"/> Voting booth <input type="checkbox"/>	
Toach <input type="checkbox"/> Registration book <input type="checkbox"/> Empty envelopes <input type="checkbox"/>	
18 Was the inner cover of the ballot box properly sealed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
19 Does the chairperson check the stamp at the back of the ballot paper?	<input type="checkbox"/>
20 If no did the chairperson stamped the unstamped ballot paper?	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 Were voters' fingers checked for traces of indelible ink?	<input type="checkbox"/>
22 Were disabled voters asking for assistance assisted according to the procedures? (xeer 91 Dorrashoyinka 112, 08)	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 Were illiterate voters asking for assistance assisted? If "yes" who assisted them? (112)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party representatives <input type="checkbox"/> Chairperson of the PSEO <input type="checkbox"/>	
relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
26 Did you observe any case of voters receiving more than one ballot paper?	<input type="checkbox"/>
27 Did you observe any case where a voter was voting or attempting to vote more than once?	<input type="checkbox"/>
28 Did you observe any case of group voting?	<input type="checkbox"/>
29 Were any voters refused the right to vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>
30 30. If yes what was the reason?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Already voted <input type="checkbox"/> B. Refused deliberately <input type="checkbox"/>	
other <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify the reason <input type="text"/>	
31 Did you observe anyone who is voting for an absentee?	<input type="checkbox"/>
32 Does the layout of the polling station ensure the secrecy of the vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>
33 Were NEC instructions on how to vote displayed within the polling centre?	<input type="checkbox"/>
34 Was there a large crowd waiting to vote?	<input type="checkbox"/>
35 Did you observe anyone voting with a pre-marked ballot paper?	<input type="checkbox"/>
36 Were the party representatives leaving the polling station during the polling procedure?	<input type="checkbox"/>
37 Were the party representatives talking to the voters queuing outside the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
38 Did any of the Polling station staff dismissed from the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
39 Did you observe any intentional break of the secrecy of the vote? If yes, please specify?	<input type="checkbox"/>
40 Did the party representatives or/and the domestic observers express any concerns regarding the process in the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, please specify? <input type="text"/>	
41 Did the Chairperson/complaints officer or the Secretary enter properly the required information into the polling book?	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMPLAINTS	
Haa Maya	
42 Were any complaints recorded into the polling book by the time of your arrival?	<input type="checkbox"/>
43 Were any complaints recorded into the polling book during your observation in the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/>
if yes please specify? <input type="text"/>	
Evaluation	
44 Evaluate the general environment/ atmosphere at the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/> A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor
45 Evaluate how the procedures were implemented by the PSC members?	<input type="checkbox"/> A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor
46 Evaluate the voters' understanding of the procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor
47 Evaluate the overall performance of the PSC members	<input type="checkbox"/> A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor
48 Your overall assessment of the polling station?	<input type="checkbox"/> A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor
Wixii soo jeedin ah ama Xog dheeraad ah Fadlan u isticmaal dhabarka warqada	

APPENDIX 3: OBSERVATION COUNTING FORM

SONSAF Domestic Observers for the Local councils and House of Representative Elections 2021			
Counting	Time Arrived	Time Left	
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Region/District	<input type="text"/>	Name of the Polling station	
	NO. Polling station	<input type="text"/> Rural	<input type="text"/> Urban
	Number of ballot papers received		
			<input type="text"/>
Assessing environment			Haa Maya
1 How many polling station members were present at the time of closing?			<input type="text"/>
2 Were domestic observer and party representatives refused to be present when the counting procedure started? la bilaabay tirinta codadka?			<input type="text"/>
3 Did the Chairperson remove the two seals from the external cover and the seal from the inner cover of the ballot box in front of party representatives and domestic observers?			<input type="text"/>
4 Were invalid votes determined according to the procedure? Were disputed ballots determined according to the procedure?			<input type="text"/>
5 Were all ballots without the PS stamp determined as invalid?			<input type="text"/>
6 Were each candidate(s) vote(s) counted accurately and according to the procedure?			<input type="text"/>
7 Did the polling station staff members finish the counting procedure?			<input type="text"/>
8 Did all party political representatives receive a copy of the Written Result Record? please specify ? _____			<input type="text"/>
9 Were domestic election observers allowed to write party political vote results? If no please specify ? _____			<input type="text"/>
Results			
10 Total votes	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
11 number of voters voted	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
12 Voted cancelled	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
13 disputed votes	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
14 valdi votes	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Result per party			
15 UCID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
16 KULMIYE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
17 WADDANI	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Qiimayn			
18 Evaluate the general environment/ atmosphere at the polling station? A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
19 Evaluate how the procedures were implemented by the PSC members? A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
20 Evaluate the voters' understanding of the procedures A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
21 Evaluate the overall performance of the PSC members A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
22 Evaluate the overall performance of the political representatives A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
Your overall assessment of the closing process A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
Wixii soo jeedin ah ama Xog dheeraad ah Fadlan u isticmaal dhabarka warqada			



APPENDIX 4: OBSERVATION CLOSING FORM

SONSAF Domestic Observers for the Local councils and House of Representative Elections 2021			
Closing Form	Time Arrived		Time Left
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>
Region/District	Name of the Polling station		
	NO. Polling station	Rural	Urban
	Number of ballot papers received		
ASSESSING CLOSING PROCEDURES			Haa Maya
1 Were voters queuing outside the polling station at 6:00 Pm?			<input type="text"/>
2 Were all voters queuing allowed to vote?			<input type="text"/>
3 When did the polling station closed? State time? <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
4 Did the total number of voters' names marked on the voting list equal the number of used ballots?			<input type="text"/>
5 Were the used, unused and spoiled ballots properly reconciled according to the procedures?			<input type="text"/>
AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED PERSON(S)			Yes No
7 3. Were all four PSEO members present?			<input type="text"/>
8 3. Were all four PSEO members present?			<input type="text"/>
9 5. How many members of the PSEO were women? State a number? <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
10 6. WERE PARTY REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT IN THE POLLING STATION?			<input type="text"/>
UCID <input type="text"/> KULMIYE <input type="text"/> WADDANI <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
11 Were observers present in the polling station?			<input type="text"/>
12 Were unauthorised person(s) present at the polling station during the counting process? If yes specify			<input type="text"/>
tahay fadlan sheeg?			<input type="text"/>
un crediti police officers <input type="text"/>			Candidates that was not casting their votes
campaigner for political party <input type="text"/>			Government Officials <input type="text"/>
ASSESSING COUNTING PROCEDURES			Yes No
13 Did the polling station closed at 6:00pm? If No please specify			<input type="text"/>
Xiliga xidhitaanka <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
14 Were PSEO member present at polling station during closing procedure?			<input type="text"/>
If No please specify <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
15 were political party present closing time if No			<input type="text"/>
please specify? <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
UCID <input type="text"/> KULMIYE <input type="text"/> WADANI <input type="text"/>			<input type="text"/>
Cabashooyin			Haa Maya
16 were there any complaints during closing time? if yes, please specify?			<input type="text"/>
17 were any complaints recorded? If yes specify			<input type="text"/>
Evaluation			
18 Evaluate the general environment/ atmosphere at the polling station?			
A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
19 Evaluate how the procedures were implemented by the PSC members?			
A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
20 Evaluate the voters' understanding of the procedures			
A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
21 Evaluate the overall performance of the PSC members			
A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
22 Evaluate the overall performance of the political representatives			
A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
Your overall assessment of the closing process			
A. Very Good <input type="checkbox"/> B. Good <input type="checkbox"/> C. Fair <input type="checkbox"/> D. poor <input type="checkbox"/> E. Very poor <input type="checkbox"/>			
Wixii soo jeedin ah ama Xog dheeraad ah Fadlan u isticmaal dhabarka warqada			

APPENDIX 5: ESR CONFLICT MONITOR OBSERVATION FORM

1	Name (Reporting Person):	
2	Gender:	<input type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
3	Category of the Reporter:	<input type="radio"/> National Election Monitoring Committee (NEMC) <input type="radio"/> Regional Election monitoring committee (REMC) <input type="radio"/> Traditional Leaders <input type="radio"/> Religious leaders <input type="radio"/> Observers <input type="radio"/> General Public
4	Age:	<input type="radio"/> 15-25 <input type="radio"/> 26-35 <input type="radio"/> 36-45 <input type="radio"/> 46-55 <input type="radio"/> 56+
5	Tel. Number:	
6		<p>Maroodi Jeex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Hargeisa <input type="radio"/> Salaxley <input type="radio"/> Baligubadle <input type="radio"/> Gabiley <p>Awdal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Saylac <input type="radio"/> Baki <input type="radio"/> Borama <input type="radio"/> Lughaya <p>Saaxil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Sheikh <input type="radio"/> Berbera <p>Togdheer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Odwayne <input type="radio"/> Burco <input type="radio"/> Buhodle <p>Sool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Laascaanood

APPENDIX 5: ESR CONFLICT MONITOR OBSERVATION FORM

	Regions & Districts:	<input type="radio"/> Xudun <input type="radio"/> Taleex <input type="radio"/> Caynaba Sanaag <input type="radio"/> Ceerigaabo <input type="radio"/> Ceel-Afwayn <input type="radio"/> Gar Adag <input type="radio"/> Badhan
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2. Incident

7a	Type of conflict related election:	<input type="radio"/> Clan tensions/conflict <input type="radio"/> Campaign conflict <input type="radio"/> Post-election conflict <input type="radio"/> Result Related conflict <input type="radio"/> Polling station and queue conflict <input type="radio"/> Other: _____ <input type="radio"/> None of the above
7b	Time of incident:	_____
7c	What is causing the conflict? <i>(Full Detail)</i>	_____ _____
7d	Are there any casualties?	<input type="radio"/> Death <input type="radio"/> Injuries <input type="radio"/> Loss of assets <input type="radio"/> Others _____ <input type="radio"/> None of the above
7e	Rate the risk the level:	<input type="radio"/> High <input type="radio"/> Medium <input type="radio"/> Low
8	Availability of law enforcement in the reporting area:	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

APPENDIX 5: ESR CONFLICT MONITOR OBSERVATION FORM

9	Are there any other issues affecting the election?	<input type="radio"/> Drought <input type="radio"/> COVID-19 <input type="radio"/> Disability access <input type="radio"/> Others_____ <input type="radio"/> None of the above
10a	Please give brief description of how this will affect the election?	<hr/> <hr/>
11	Did you witness any violence, pre- during and post-elections?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
11a	What has caused the violence?	<input type="radio"/> Attacks on candidates, supporters or families <input type="radio"/> Clashes between rival supporters <input type="radio"/> Intimidation of opposition and the media <input type="radio"/> Attacks on electoral officials <input type="radio"/> Attacks on observers <input type="radio"/> Others_____
12	Where there any violence against women?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
13a	What types of violence occurred against women during election period?	<input type="radio"/> Intimidation <input type="radio"/> Discrimination <input type="radio"/> Gender Based Violence <input type="radio"/> others_____
13b	Who is committing the violence?	<input type="radio"/> Police <input type="radio"/> Men in queue <input type="radio"/> Men outside the polling station <input type="radio"/> Election staff <input type="radio"/> Candidates' supporters <input type="radio"/> None of the above <input type="radio"/> Other_____
14a	Are any candidates pressured or rejected to make election campaign?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No

APPENDIX 5: ESR CONFLICT MONITOR OBSERVATION FORM

14b	If yes, which political part do they belong too.	<input type="radio"/> Kulmiye Party <input type="radio"/> UCID Party <input type="radio"/> Waddani Party
15	Any other Comment	<hr/> <hr/>
16	Rate the accuracy of the reporter's information.	<input type="radio"/> Accurate <input type="radio"/> Fairly Accurate <input type="radio"/> Poor information

APPENDIX 6: ELECTION REPORT PARTNERS PROFILE

CSOs participation in the election was primarily carried out through civic education and election observation. The majority of the CSOs were organized under SONSAF to observe the elections. The following CSOs were SONSAF's partners in this Election Report.

CPA:

Is a non-governmental, non-profitmaking think tank that was established in December 2014 to help the Horn of Africa region build peace, democracy, human rights, and effective governance systems where all citizens are equal. CPA, which is the first think tank in Somaliland, works for the advancement of social, political, and economic analysis as a fundamental approach to the understanding and explanation of social phenomena and as a prerequisite for the decision-making processes through research, debates, conferences, dialogues, workshops, and training.

The Centre is researching in-depth any issue of public concern. It can be an issue of ongoing political debate or an issue that has not yet gained the attention of policymakers. In addition, CPA provides alternative policy options to policymakers and other stakeholders through quality research and a balanced assessment of options that policymakers could pursue to resolve the problem.

NAGAAD:

Is a non-governmental, non-profit making, voluntary Network. It brings together 46 women organizations and has offices in three regions in Somaliland. It was founded in Hargeisa, in 1997 and is registered with the Ministry of Planning as a local NGO. NAGAAD was formed to serve as an organized, collective voice of women who are determined to fight for their socio-economic and political rights as equal citizens of Somaliland.

NAGAAD envisions a gender equitable Somaliland with educated healthy and economically stable Somaliland women and youth who are equipped with knowledge and skills to pursue their basic rights and democratic values. NAGAAD is the only nationwide women's network that coordinates women's issues and liaises with concerned agencies, builds the capacity of women organization and coalitions by transferring skills on political leadership, advocacy and lobbying, campaign management, resource mobilization and conflict resolution.

SNDF:

The idea leading to the establishment of a disability network organization, which emerged in 2002, culminated in the establishment of Somaliland National Disability Forum (SNDF) in 2004. SNDF is national representative body principally established to advocate and lobby for the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs). The organization's main aim is to represent the interest of PWDs and improve their living conditions. Somaliland National Disability Forum (SNDF) is a legally registered local Non-Governmental Organization based in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

The organization is 42 member organizations, majority of which are organizations catering for people with disabilities (PWDs), Service providers and minority organizations across the six regions of Somaliland.

The organization also assists its multi-disabilities clients and their associates in many different areas. SNDF's membership is open to all organizations representing the interest of PWDs.

SOLJA:

Somaliland Journalist Association (SOLJA) is an independent, non-governmental, non-political and non-profit making organization based in Hargeisa Somaliland. It was established on Feb 2003 to defend and promote the rights and freedoms of the media, and generally, to help expand the boundaries of freedom of speech and expression in Somaliland, and to empower member journalists and ensure high standards of journalism/reportage in Somaliland.

It's legally registered with the Ministry of Information of Somaliland as "Somaliland Journalists Association" with the mandate to build up and foster the knowledge and skills of the journalists to make information on education, developmental activities, and entertainment access to the public; and to defend and advocate the rights of the journalists.

SOYDAVO:

Somaliland Youth Development and Voluntary Organization (SOYDAVO) is a local non-governmental organization (LNGO) with its headquarters in the city of Burao, Somaliland, and regional sub-offices in Hargeisa and Erigavo. SOYDAVO was established and registered in June 2006. SOYDAVO is originally a youth-based organization and has retained throughout its years of existence the identity of promoting youth empowerment.

SOYDAVO staff including the executive team is under 35 years old and comprise of both women and men as SOYDAVO enforces a strict gender equality policy into its recruitment processes. SOYDAVO is committed to working with human dignity, self-development, and to make people promoters of their own growth for women, youth and children through mobilization of their own potential and by implementing projects that meet their needs for education, health, skill training, income generation, sports and self-empowerment.

ADAM ACADEMY:

Is an independent organisation that leads work in empowering the rights of members of the minority clans in Somaliland. Adam Academy was founded to advocate for minority community members and to work towards achieving an egalitarian society where women, children and men from all ethnic backgrounds are equally significant. Adams Academy regularly engages with the parliament, government, political parties and is currently actively working with minority candidates in the upcoming parliamentarian and local election.

NOTE

REPORT AUTHORS



This report is the result of collective efforts from various contributors.

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