

2019

SIU FORUM

Reasons and Results of International
Interventions in Somalia and the way
forward



SOMALI INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY -SIU



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INTRODUCTION

Is a Public Medium used for debates or discussions which people can talk about a problem or matter especially of public interest like: Political Issue, Sharea and Law, Educations, Health Sciences , Technologies, Agriculture Sciences, Business and Economics, anyone can participate like Government Members, Political Parties, Health Organizations, Students, Lecturers, Civil Society, Experts, and Other Society Members. Forum was established to foster dialogue among a broad range of stakeholders practitioners, policy makers, community members, academics, and others and to provide ongoing opportunities to confront issues of mutual interest and concern. The Forum provides a neutral venue for broad-ranging policy discussions that can aid in coordination and cooperation between public and private stakeholders. Sponsoring members include: Federal agencies, state and local associations, health professional associations, and private-sector business associations

Somali international university forum has been created to foster friendly discussion and sharing between professional ideas and educators around the world. Discussions within the forum range across all areas and the forum can also be used to share resources and ideas.

FORUM OBJECTIVES

1. To adopting a broad dialogue with the participation of all relevant authorities (governmental sector, private sector, community organizations and regional and international universities and institutions)
2. To Discuss how to identify critical knowledge and skills gaps among professionals involved in political issue, Sharia and law, educations, health sciences , technologies, agriculture sciences, business and economics design and implementation
3. To Identify examples of effective learning actions in support of higher education strategies
4. To Identify the impacts of effective skills development and training
5. To facilitate information exchange and experience-sharing and learning
6. To Improve future prospects of vulnerable young people regarding education, research and developments
7. To Strengthen professional, context specific approaches in youth work across Somalia
8. To Boost participation of marginalized young people in decision making processes
9. To Support individuals, groups and agencies working with educations and research

THE FEDERAL STATE CONSTRUCTION AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PROCESS

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INTRODUCTION

The main obstacle to the acceptance of a federal constitution is the question of division of powers between the federal government and the federal member states. There are also issues deriving from power struggles within the federal government. The past year has seen increased tension between the federal government and the member states. But for international partners, the federal state construction is the only possible way ahead. Why?

After the collapse of the central government of Somalia in 1991, the country descended into a period of lawlessness and protracted civil war. In 2000, the first Transitional National Government was formed in neighboring Djibouti, and the Transitional National Charter was adopted which adhered to the unitary character of the state. However, a significant transformation occurred in 2004 when participants of the Nairobi conference made a decision, without widespread consultation, to make a complete break with the past and introduce a federal system of government, which was new to Somalia and a clear indication of a substantial change to the status quo antebellum.

The decision to adopt a federal system of government was reached by the unelected faction leaders attending a reconciliation conference in Kenya in 2003, and the majority of the Somali people did not have any say. It was clear, and evidence also suggests, that some neighbouring countries like Ethiopia and Kenya pushed and supported the adoption of the federal system.

ARTICLE 1 of the Provisional Constitution stipulates that “Somalia is a federal, sovereign, and democratic republic founded on an inclusive representation of the people...” The constitution is provisional and needs to be approved in a popular referendum; nonetheless, the formation of “federal member states” is “completed”. It is not clear yet what would happen if the population rejects the constitution and the federal system of government. Furthermore, the manner in which regional administrations were formed was not entirely consistent with the constitution. For instance, article 49 stipulates that “the number and boundaries of the federal member states shall

be determined by the House of the people of the Federal Parliament.” However, before any such weighty decision is reached the parliament “shall nominate a national commission which shall study the issue, and submit a report of its findings with recommendations to the House of the People of the Federal Parliament.”

Interestingly, before the parliament determined the number of federal member states and their boundaries, groups and individuals mostly former faction leaders started to form their own administrations often with the help of the neighboring countries of Somalia. Some other member states had been created with the help of the Federal Government. In accordance with the provisional constitution, it is even doubtful if we can use the term “federal member states” since their formation was not compatible with the Provisional Federal Constitution.

CURRENTLY, the relationship between the Federal Government and some Federal Member States is strained. As a result, all the important political decisions that need a political agreement between the FGS and the FMS including the Security architecture, resource sharing, issues pertaining to 2020/21 elections are not addressed. In the next section, I will attempt to answer the following Two questions: Is the federal system of government the only option available to Somalia? How can the current political stalemate be resolved?

It is crucial at the outset to state that Somali people are divided on the question of what governance system is suitable for Somalia and they need to debate whether the current federal system can work. But most people agree that power should be decentralized. Unfortunately, the political elite failed to reach consensus. In my opinion, there should be a healthy debate pertaining to the federal system (its variations) and the viability of other alternatives should be seriously considered. It appears, at least on the surface, that the space for such a debate is not there, but it will come during the popular referendum on the provisional constitution.

Proponents of the federal system argue that there are several problems inherent in Somalia that necessitates the adoption of a federal system of government. First, the civil war in Somalia caused deaths of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of Somalis and that created a significant mistrust in the political system and among the Somali people. For that reason, they argue, it is essential not to centralize the power but a decentralized governance system particularly federalism is the best option. This bottom-up approach can incrementally build up trust and enhance cooperation between the Somali people.

SECOND, given the bad experience that Somali people inherited from the authoritarian regime that was in power from 1960-1969, people want greater participation in the political system, and they want to elect their regional and national representatives and leaders. They do not wish to their governors and district commissioners to be appointed from Mogadishu. That is one of the reasons people support federalism.

THIRD, from the independence up until the collapse of the central government, almost all public services were concentrated in Mogadishu. If someone wanted to apply for a passport, he or she had to travel to Mogadishu to obtain one. Likewise, the only University in Somalia was situated in Mogadishu; students from all corners of the country had to come to Mogadishu for university education.

CONCLUSION

In my opinion, all these afore-mentioned challenges can be addressed by the adoption of a decentralised unitary system. In 1999, a Technical Consultative Symposium organised by the government of Djibouti recommended “a decentralised unitary” system of governance based on the 18 regions that existed before the collapse of Somalia’s central government in 1991. This was the only time after the collapse of the central government that there was a meaningful discussion among the Somali people on the shape of government suitable for Somalia. Evidence suggests that the “decentralised unitary” system is the best suitable governance system for Somalia at the moment.

The current political stalemate can be solved if the constitution is used as guidance. Prior to the conclusion of the constitutional review, the contentious articles dealing with allocation of powers, natural resources, judiciary options and elections sharing should be discussed and agreement reached. To achieve that the leaders of the FGS and the FMS leaders need to cooperate on these issues transparently and inclusively.

WHY IS THERE AN INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN SOMALIA?

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INTRODUCTION

Why is there an international intervention in Somalia?

In the opinion of almost all independent experts, this intervention has been a failure. It has failed to deliver peace, development or a functioning state to Somalis. It costs an enormous amount of money – 250 million Euros per month to support AMISOM alone. This is paid by taxpayers, mostly in Europe and America. What is the interest of the West to continue the intervention?

1. To fight terrorism? That is clearly not working. By the way, Al Shabaab has never attacked a target in Western countries.
2. To steal Somali natural resources like oil? There is no evidence of that, it is a Somali fantasy. If that's what we want, we're also failing.
3. To save lives? Somalis are still living miserably, with no access to public services. This is also failing.

Looking specifically at state-building we see an even more obvious failure: after a decade of intense involvement, the federal government is still incapable of providing essential services even to the population of Mogadishu. It is currently gripped in a political deadlock and can't achieve any of its main objectives: adopting a constitution, preparing for democratic elections, ensuring its own security and further building the state. I have sympathy for this government, I believe it's doing its best, but progress is very slow.

WHAT KEEPS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FROM LEAVING?

Should be seriously considered in Somalia. Do Somalis assume that the international community will always stay to provide financial and security support to the state? In my meetings in Mogadishu over the past two weeks, nobody seems concerned with building a sustainable state: a Somali state that is not dependent on external support that can operate on its internal revenue.

Instead of being the expression of Somali society, through a social contract, the Somali state is like a portal to the international community and its resources: money, more money and political legitimacy.

There is not much public discussion about what kind of state Somalia should have. It seems that has already been decided, and the real discussion is about how to share its resources and sell the project to the Somali people, or how to secure the buy-in of the Somali population. Sell, buy, it's all about money. It seems money is at the heart of the state-building project.

The federal state-building discussion should be about the principle of self-government through devolution, and how all Somali communities can be given a stake in this state. Instead, the discussion is only about how Mogadishu will or will not share power with political elites in the capitals of the federal member states. It is left to those regional elites to involve the rest of their population. Will that work?

Why would the Somali population support the state, notably by agreeing to pay taxes, if they have no stake in this state, if it gives nothing back to them? This question must be considered first: what kind of social contract can be reached between the political elites and the population? Next question is: what kind of state can be built on this social contract. Instead of accepting Western blueprints, you must think out of the box!

Many Western observers have been surprised that after the collapse of the Somali state, the society and the economy kept developing. The collapse of the state did not cause the collapse of Somali society. This is the advantage of having a weak state-society link. This led experts to make romantic statements about pastoral democracy, how Somalis can live without a state. But in the 21st century, you need a state. Other observers have become hopeless, that after 28 years of state collapse and hundreds of billions of dollars of expenses, Somalia still is the number one 'failed state'. They say that Somali culture is to blame, that clannism, corruption and the rejection of the rule of law are part of Somali culture and that's why there will never be a functioning state in Somalia.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL SOMALI STATE-BUILDING ARE AVAILABLE.

First, we have Somaliland. It has many problems, including a high degree of corruption, weak social services, massive unemployment; but it has been remarkably successful compared to the rest of Somalia and even compared to other African countries. There have been peaceful transfers of powers, low crime and violence rates, and slow but steady economic growth. Most observers agree that the relative success of Somaliland is based on a broad participation of society in the state-building project. This participation takes place through the clans but also through the economy and the desire to have a modern, functioning state. Somalilanders have a

stake in the state; there is some kind of social contract. Another intriguing ‘success’ is that of Al Shabaab. They govern their areas with fiscal discipline, relying only on national income, paying salaries on time. Their justice system is good, law and order is very tight, their administration is not corrupt and they have managed to largely eliminate the clan factor in politics. They have successfully dealt with three main problems of Somali politics: clannism, corruption and external dependence. But they reign through fear, there is no social contract. Given a chance, most people would choose to live in the chaos of the federal government, rather than under Al Shabaab. This shows that we cannot blame Somali culture for the failures of the current federal state-building project. But, strangely, I don’t see any debate about the lessons that we can learn from these relative success stories. Not among Somali civil society, and not among the UN, IMF, EU and other partners bankrolling Somali’s state-building project. It is clear that only one possible state-building project is being considered, and all options are ignored. Why is there only one alternative?

LET US TURN TO ANTONIO GRAMSCI FOR AN EXPLANATION.

This Italian political philosopher, who died in 1935, questioned how a ruling class manages to hold on to power. He demonstrated that it was not through physical power - a monopoly of violence and material wealth – but by imposing a certain vision of the world and its values, that a ruling class maintains hegemony – which means complete domination. Successful rule is through consent, not force.

We can see an example in money. People used to be motivated to participate in society by honor. A good reputation as a fair, honest person was more important than wealth. But in a capitalist society, only money is important. The person who takes a decision against his financial interest, and for his honor, is now considered a fool. You see how we have all been made to believe that money is the most important thing in life. Through the media, through education, through our politicians we are taught to run after money. As a result, capital reigns supreme in this world. The capitalist class has, we can say, achieved hegemony.

Now we can understand why the international intervention is continuing in Somalia. It is successful in one thing: in establishing the hegemony of the Western state model, based on liberal capitalist democracy. The main goal of young Somalis is to obtain money, and then spend that money on phones, cars and other consumer products. This reinforces the hegemony of the West.

By speaking English, wearing a suit and tie, and learning to talk like Western people, Somalis get access to the international ruling class. These are the people living in Halane, they are like the missionaries of Western hegemony, spreading the word throughout the world. Joining this international ruling class is getting access to wealth and prestige, for you and your family. It is a rational choice.

CONCLUSION

I believe this explains the reason for the international intervention in Somalia better than any other explanation. However, this model may not be as stable as it seems. Let's look at two perspectives, one from Europe, the other from Somalia.

Let us not forget that the European states, and their external projects such as helping Somalia, are all paid for by the work of Europeans. All the high salaries and rents paid in Halane are paid for by taxpayers, most of them in the West. They are getting back less and less for their money, and they are starting to revolt. Trump and the populists in Europe are a sign of that revolt. The day is not far away when these populist politicians will say: why are we wasting our money in Somalia? Then, suddenly, you will face serious funding cuts.

From the perspective of Somalia, most of the population is receiving no benefit from the donor-driven consumption of the Somali political class. They would prefer the money now used to buy Landcruisers, i-Phones and expensive houses in Mogadishu to be invested in infrastructure and social services. Do they have a stake in this state? That will make them willing to pay taxes and otherwise obey the government and its Rule of Law? If not, the Somali state may remain weak. The result is permanent instability. Therefore a debate such as the one we're holding today is most useful. We must think out of the box, forget the external model for a while. Somalis have to consult, within society, what kind of state they want. Lessons can be drawn from the experiences of Somaliland and even, of Al Shabaab. I believe the key question is: what is the social contract that can be the basis of the coming Somali state?

AMISOM INTERVENTION

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INTRODUCTION

AMISOM intervention: The reasons for the intervention by troop-contributing countries are two-fold:

1. By maintaining a military presence in Somalia these countries are capable of influencing outcomes that correspond to their national security interest. This includes, but is not limited to, fighting terrorism. Ethiopia and Kenya clearly have other interests, to ensure that a strong Somalia does not destabilize their countries through their Somali populations. Also, they may be interested in combat experience for their armed forces and keeping defense budgets high for domestic political reasons.
2. Troop-contributing countries have a financial interest in maintaining their presence in Somalia, as their governments receive more money than they spend on keeping their troops there. To extend this income arrangement, international donors (EU) must be willing to pay, and their national public opinion must not call for the troops to come back. This is why maintaining high threat levels (to secure international commitment) is balanced by ensuring minimum casualties.

The European Union, United Nations and African Union all have reasons to prefer regional states to contribute the troops, rather than UN peacekeepers or bilateral military missions from powerful countries. This is balanced by the realization that the current stalemate is unproductive and expensive, thus the EU and the UN are pushing for an exit strategy.

BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF NATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

International partners wish the Somali security forces to achieve sufficient capacity to exercise a monopoly of violence, passing through a defeat of Al Shabaab and the taming of regional separatist forces as well as criminal groups such as pirates and kidnappers, and leading to the

stabilization and pacification of Somalia. The reasons this strategy has had very little effect until now may be double:

1. The technical approach to capacity building (training, providing weapons and materiel) has failed because of political obstacles. Troops remain loyal to their commander and clan, meaning they are never fully integrated and can be infiltrated by Al Shabaab, and can decide to desert or take side jobs as their first loyalty is not to the national government. A second political obstacle has been the failure of the government to set up a functioning Ministry of Defense which can provide civilian oversight to the armed forces.
2. The context in which the army has been set up makes security sector reform very difficult, as a war is being fought, and external armed forces (AMISOM, USA) are taking a lead role in this war. Uncoordinated donor action is the result of many donors prioritizing their own national security interests, including US, UAE, Turkey and EU, and their own techniques and materiel.

What is an actionable strategy to break the deadlock and create an armed force that has good relations with the public, that is under professional civilian oversight and that enforces peace throughout the country? Is there another way to deal with Al Shabaab?

The Foreign Policy Magazine wrote an article entitled ‘Somalia Is a Country without an Army’
By Amanda Sperber , August 7, 2018, 1:07 pm

CONCLUSION

“Somalia is like cleaning a pig,” one Ugandan AMISOM colonel told Foreign Policy. “You clean it, and it gets dirty.” He compared Somalia to Afghanistan. If the coalition in Afghanistan left, he argued, the Taliban would easily take the country back. The same was true for Somalia. Is that statement true?

The answer is broad. There are Somali armed forces that have been trained for many years. There have been conferences that discussed how to rebuild Somali armed forces. But little has hitherto been achieved. The question, therefore, is; Why Somalia is so important and what is wrong with Somalis and want to rely on others or need for, Aid dependence?

ISLAM PERSPECTIVE ON STATE-BUILDING

Shiekh Bashir Ahmed Salad

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INTRODUCTION

Well, why are we talking about Islam now, though it has been overlooked for years? Perhaps this is the last ditch effort to find away-out and simply because Somalis are Muslims.

The distinctive nature of Somalia in current situation had a unique resemblance to the one that dominated the Arabian Peninsula just before the rise of Islam. The polytheistic nomadic Bedouin clans placed heavy emphasis on kin-related groups, with each clan clustered under tribes. The most remarkable feature of the political life of Arabia before Islam was the total absence of political organization in any form. All Arabs were notorious for certain characteristics such as arrogance, conceit, boastfulness, vindictiveness and excessive love of plunder. Their arrogance was partly responsible for their failure to establish a state of their own. They lacked political discipline, and until the rise of Islam, never acknowledged any authority as paramount in Arabia.

LITERATURE

Under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad, He molded a “nation” out of a rough mass without basic structure. He invested the Arabs with a new dynamism, idealism and explosive creativity, and they changed the course of history. He created an entirely new mental and psychological ecology, and his work placed an emphatic period in world history; it was the end of one era and the beginning of another. Upon his arrival in Medina, Muhammad unified the tribes by drafting the Constitution of Medina, which was a formal agreement between Muhammad and all of the significant tribes and families of Medina, including Muslims, Jews, Christians, and pagans. This constitution instituted rights and responsibilities and united the different Medina communities into the first Islamic state, the Ummah.

An important feature of the Constitution of Medina is the redefinition of ties between Muslims. It set faith relationships above blood ties and emphasized individual responsibility. Tribal identities were still important, and were used to refer to different groups, but the constitution declared that the “main binding tie” for the newly created Ummah was religion. This contrasts with the norms of pre-Islamic Arabia, which was a thoroughly tribal society. This was an important event in the development of the small group of Muslims in Medina to the larger Muslim community and empire.

Look what Mohamed's successor Abubakar said in his acceptance sermon: You have elected me to be your first Caliph, and I am not the best of you. If I do well, help me, and if I do wrong, redress me. Truthfulness is loyalty and disregard for truth is treason. The weak among you shall be strong in my regard, until I have restored their rights, if God pleases; and the strong among you shall be weak in my sight until I have wrested from him the rights of others, if God pleases. If any group of Muslims ceases the holy war, Allah will afflict them with humiliation. If adultery spread among people, surely Allah will enfold them with troubles. Obey me as long as I obey God and His Messenger. But if I disobey God or His Messenger you owe me no allegiance. Arise for the prayer, God have mercy upon you.

CONCLUSION

Abubakar delivered this remarkable speech in a time when populations were literally suffering terribly under the brutality of repressive monarchs. In less than a decade from the death of Muhammad, the Muslim armies almost bloodlessly, in a limited number of crucial battles, quickly found themselves in full control of the whole Arabian Peninsula, the Egyptian and East Mediterranean possessions of the Byzantine Empire, and the whole span of the Sasanian Empire to the east.

In Somali context, it is a demanding to stipulate on prophet's footsteps in urgency fashion.

**CHANGING THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM TO ACHIEVE A “ONE MAN ONE VOTE”
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM: HOW TO BUILD A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT AND
OVERCOME THE CURRENT CRIPPLING POLITICAL CULTURE**

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INTRODUCTION

It is automatically assumed that every country in the world should have a similar democratic system, and the international community is pushing Somalia to adopt this model. This model also comes with extras, such as a strong civil society; maintaining tolerance for human rights, including those of women and minorities; freedom of press and association; an “open market”; and in general, a society based on liberal values. Reasons:

1. There is a strong belief that this socio-political model is the best in the world, and that it is based on universal values; therefore, each country can and should adopt this. A country that is based on this model is truly part of the international community, not a rogue or closed state, and can engage in mutually-profitable relations with other members of the international community. Note that this argument is not based on any consideration of the social system in Somalia.
2. International intervention can only be seen as a success by the public opinion of the powerful states contributing to the intervention if it results in a democracy. Any other exit strategy can be seen as a failure.

We can see how the model is failing in the core Western states (the USA with Trump, the UK with Brexit, France with the social protest, and a rising populism in many democracies), while states that have rejected it—China, Russia, Turkey, the Gulf states—seem to be doing better. Thus, we should ask the question: is this system the appropriate one for Somalia? Can this discussion still be held at a national level? As the progress towards a one-man-one-vote presidential system has been questionable, it seems that such a national debate is in high demand.

LITERATURE

The topic that I wish to address is election and governance in Somalia. As you are aware, the fundamental reason for our state collapse is the deficit of democracy and capable leadership. After the collapse of the state in 1991, Somalia went through two phases.

The first phase was 10 years (1991-2000) in which the warlords were engaged in a bloody civil war under the banner of clans. Of course, it should be clear that there is no political animosity between Somali clans which may cause clan conflict. The conflict was simply political and emerged after the military regime took over power in 1969, blocking political space. As a result, armed oppositions toppled the regime and failed to agree to form a functioning government.

The second phase began with the Djibouti-held Peace and Reconciliation Conference in 2000. In this conference, a complete paradigm shift occurred regarding the Somali reconciliation approach. The new approach was to offer Somali civil society the leading role in the reconciliation, instead of the warlords who have failed to agree on anything in the past 10 years. Fortunately, I was one of the Somali intellectual technical team assigned to organize the conference and to oversee the drafting of the Transitional Charter. This drafting committee consisted of 32 individuals (5 members of each 4.5 clans and 5 members from women's group, plus 2 technical experts). We drafted the Charter in 30 days in high spirits as volunteers at Arta High School.

It is worth noting that the Djibouti Reconciliation Conference adopted a new frame of power sharing based what is termed the 4.5 formula. The participants refused all other options, such as regional or district-based power-sharing, as proposed by some experts. For about 20 years, we are still using the 4.5 clan power-sharing system. All 5 regimes established since 2000 suffered a systemic clan system that crippled its functions. The system of governance was recycling the same failed approaches with a predatory culture of the political elites.

Many analysts misunderstand the reality of Somali political processes and its historical evolution. We have to understand that Somalia has gone through two political frames since 1991. The first frame was the frame of the civil war and the dominance of the warlords, who failed to agree on power sharing. The second was the frame of reconciliation based on clan power sharing and the adoption of federalism. Through this frame, which spanned 20 years, the Somali government had failed to produce functioning state institutions. The selection of members of the parliament by clan elders was a reconciliation process and did not employ the proper state

building mechanism. This power-sharing system aimed at bringing Somalis together and forming a nominal state albeit a dysfunctional one. Moreover, federalism has been adopted as part of the reconciliation process over the past 20 years. The motive for agreeing on federalism was the widespread mistrust in the society and a fear of restoring a dictatorship. Unfortunately, federalism was misunderstood and the leaders of the regional states think and operate as though they are parallel governments. As such, relations between the center and regional states are drastically strained.

The third phase of the historical evolution is expected to occur in 2020. This phase has to be the state-building stage which moves Somalia from clan power-sharing to one of party politics. It is the time of empowering citizens and enabling them to elect their leaders in a “one person one vote” system. This transition is likely to be challenging as it will reintroduce a democratic election in Somalia in 60 years, the previous election taking place in 1969. Carrying out a fair democratic election is a huge task that requires changing perceptions, approaches, and the political culture. The destructive political culture that destroyed the Somali state still remains an obstacle to restoring its institutions consists of four compounded elements: Political Clannism, the Commercialization of Politics, Fraud and Violence, and foreign patronage.

This political culture was developed during the period of Italian trusteeship (1950-1960). It was derived from the adopted party system, which was a replica to the Italian unlimited political parties. Moreover, the election model based on the “first past-the post” and district constituencies aggravated local political conflicts and caused rigged elections and violence. In the Somali context, the adopted political party system and the election model led to unlimited clan-based political parties in Somalia. It also encouraged clannization and a commercialization of politics.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, rebuilding a democratic Somalia should address and mitigate these four corrupt cultural elements. To mitigate clannization and the commercialization of politics, the Somali government adopted proportional representation of the single national constituency. Accordingly, members of the parliament will not be elected by their clans, but through a national vote of closed list. In this system, politicians can only buy votes through the provision of services to citizens, such as education, health, and employment. A proportionally-elected system has the power to transform a young, educated, and unemployed post-civil war generation who could not

care less about clan politics. The biometric system and registered votes proposed by the electoral commission will also minimize rigging elections and restoring trust in the electoral process. Finally, foreign patronage will not be effective if the presidential system is adopted. In president will be elected directly by the public vote. The ongoing efforts to achieve this milestone will essentially change the current flawed political culture in Somalia. This means that Somalia's genuine state-building process needs to start by holding nationwide elections and ensuring a proper electoral system. We should all strive to make that historic moment happen to ensure we have leaders who have the legitimacy who can protect the public interest.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION 1

My name is Mohamed Yusuf; I remember that, in 1988, a Government-owned warplane bombarded the village where I lived. It destroyed our properties and killed my grandfather. The only time in which I deal with government personnel is when I want to get a Government document. I always face security problems whenever I encounter government security. I work at Bakaaro market and a number of times I have found myself in danger due to the government forces. Every day, we see explosions and suicide bombers in every corner of Mogadishu. Can you please tell me why I need a government? Other than problems, I don't get any benefit from it. Moreover, you were Presidential candidate in 2012. Should you have acted differently to solve our security problems?

ANSWER 1

Mohamed Yusuf, your question is very important. You are implying that we should abandon government because we experience more problems than benefits. For sure, that will not work for you if you want to live in this part of the world. If you want to live without a government, go to the rural areas and tend your camels. In modern times, the unit with which the world deals with is a recognized state that can sign international agreements. For your information, the colonial powers seized the Somali territories because there no national state had been in place. If we had a national state, it would not have been possible for them to patrician us. We were segmented clans principalities scattered in the Horn of African region lacking political unity. Instead, we have to

change the mindset of looking into the government as evil, and instead, work together to transform it into a good government that protects us and our properties. Therefore, we should believe in ourselves in creating such a government. To achieve that, you should pay your taxes and contribute to building the state. Puzzlingly, businessmen like you build large and beautiful buildings and houses in Mogadishu, yet you contribute less to creating national security forces. Some of you may think wrongly that they can survive and thrive without collective security.

QUESTION 2

Following the fall of Siyad Barre's regime, Somali intellectuals and international community had made several attempts to help Somali build their own state. Yet, the question that boggles everyone's mind is: why does Somali lack a functioning government that has the capacity to stabilize the country, restore peace and security, law and order, and has the power and legitimacy to fill the void left by Barre's regime?

ANSWER 2

A prominent Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe, was bewildered with his country's performance—Nigeria—one of the most and fascinating states in Africa, with an abundance of human and material resources. Essentially, Achebe could not figure out the challenges that held this oil-rich country back. Reflecting on that, Chinua crafted his well-known novel "What Is The Trouble With Nigeria?". He made his case by arguing that the geographical features of Nigeria were its perfect-beautiful landscape, intriguing seas, and talented people. Ultimately, he puts the blame down squarely to a total failure of leadership. When it comes to Somalia, "What's the trouble with Somalia?" Not only over the course of the last three decades but rather since it had gained independence. Specifically, the Somali conundrum dates back to the 60s, and continues through the 70s, and 80s, when the nation could hardly be described as a strong, prosperous, and united Somalia. This is mainly due to the fact that our forebearers did not lay the foundation of good governance. If they would have, the government institution would not have collapsed. In brief, I want to say articulately with one vivid example that helps you to get my point. In Prayer, you are supposed to face the Qiblah; you should turn your face to that certain direction. If it happens that

you turn your face the other way round intentionally, will your prayer get right? Of course not. Similarly, Somalia started off on the wrong track, so any attempt to move forward would avail.

The trouble with Somalia falls into three main categories, which I believe most of you will agree.

1) **Misconception of Islam:** the ultimate goal of being a Muslim actively implies upholding a set of personal obligation to the community and abiding by a clearly defined code of social and moral conduct. Literally, you are supposed to be the best human being in terms of ethics: you are supposed to keep strictly to the ethical norms by staying away from deceiving, thieving, lying, and seizing people's property unlawfully. However, if we just turn our focus to the fundamental tenants of Islam, such as prayer and Haj, and leave the ethics behind, our understanding of Islam is far from being correct. Allah says: *You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. (Qur'an, 3:110)*. Enjoying what is right and forbidding what is wrong means abiding by the rule of law and code of conduct that does not contravene with Allah's guidance. Are we following this understanding of Islam? Is our community following Allah's guidance of consultation, brotherhood, helping the poor, administering justice, and so on? The answer is simply no!

2) **Misunderstanding the Modern State:** it is an essential prerequisite for the state and non-state organizations to abide by the principles of good governance in order to move forward and attain the goal of public welfare. In the modern world, a clan system cannot be a substitute for a nation. We saw that at first hand in Somalia. It did not work out over the last thirty years. Any government should be founded on citizenship entitlement to all rights, rights of equalities and social justice before the law, and the belief that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Every citizen has the right to be recognized as equals before the law. That is the way both the US and Japan had strived, and Somalia is no exception.

3) **Misuse of Clan Identity:** Many political pundits view that the fundamental cause of Somali civil strife lies in the Somalis' bitter clan rivalries. Although that could be true to a certain extent, I want to challenge that mindset. I believe that even the so-called clan conception, in itself, is absurd. Let me ask you one simple question: why do we give our father's clan a more preferential role or treatment than our mother's? Why do we treat our mother's clan so trivially, instead of respecting them both equally? Clan and clannism are neither bad nor good; rather, it is the individual actions that matter most.

For a people that live in such a compounded misconception of its religion, state, and clan, how can such society thrive and develop? Even so, the core problem with Somalia lies squarely in its leadership and the predatory culture of its political elites. Leaders break or build states and Somalia is not free from this doctrine.