



Nov. 30, 2012

## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **Local Council Election Held on Nov. 28, 2012**

SONSAF has been following closely issues concerning the local council elections in Somaliland whether it is from the electoral laws point of view or whether it was matters related to election campaigning. In addition, SONAF has been working with NEC and RAC. Moreover, SONSAF has coordinated civil society/NSAs actors who had contributed to the possibility of holding fair and free election will take place.

SONSAF deployed 800 non-partisan and impartial domestic election observers consisting of all sectors of the civil society/NSA including 16 mobile teams, who had observed 925 polling centers across Somaliland. SONSAF observers reported that – except for Huddun Distirct- local council elections were held peacefully.

SONSAF would like to thank all election observers (domestic and international), RAC as well as the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and its staff in all polling stations. SONSAF can't forget the great service and dedication of the security forces who maintained law and order during the entire period of the election. SONSAF also thanks those who assisted Somaliland financially and technically. Finally we must thank the people of Somaliland for voting peacefully and orderly.

SONSAF has used SM mobile message system, which allowed it to receive the latest information from polling stations across the country be it during opening, voting, closing, and tabulation activity. As a result of this mechanism, SONSAF received 6500 messages from different polling stations. We thank SHAQADOON for assisting us in this matter.

SONSAF observers reported following:

- Voters were eager to cast their votes although at times there were shoving, pushing and arguments.
- The police, who were to keep order, were also reported to have used unnecessary force to push back voters who were in the queue. The worst places where such incidents took place include Sahil Region especially Berbera District where two persons were injured.
- There have been multiple voting incidents due to lack of voter registration system
- Children below the voting age were seen voting



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- Some polling stations were opened late.
- The voter turnout was high as a result of which there was shortage of ballot papers in many polling stations.
- Candidates were reported to have been transporting voters from one place to another. This situation created tension between the previous voters who were in queues for extended periods and the new ones brought by candidates. As a result, there were instances of shouting and pushing during which many voters lost their tempers.
- The election ink was not as effective as it was expected to be as many voters were reported to have deleted the ink- a situation that allowed such voters to cast their votes again.
- The observers didn't notice any intimidation or harassment against NEC employees or voters.
- The observers also reported that they didn't notice any vote-rigging.
- Polling stations were closed on time and that observers remained in polling stations until counting and tabulation were completed.
- SONSAF observers were told leave at least four different polling stations.
- Overall, SONSAF observers were able to observe 60% of the polling stations.
- That the election took place in a peaceful and orderly manner

### **Conclusion:**

SONSAF declares that the Local Council Elections in Somaliland were peaceful, fair and free.

In light of this, SONSAF recommends that:-

- Votes for candidates and political parties/associations be counted accurately and methodically;
- Political parties/associations should accept the result of the election, and complaints and petitions should be pursued through legitimate means.

*To find a copy of this press release, please visit [www.sonsaf.org](http://www.sonsaf.org)*