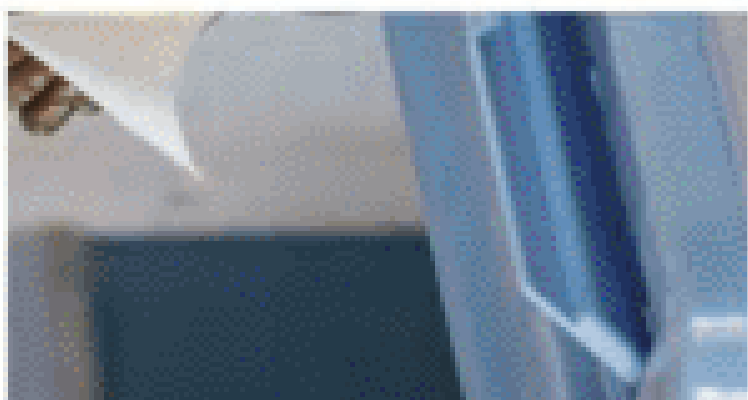




# SOMALILAND PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT REPORT

April 2021



## Table Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	V
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	VIII
<b>1.BACKGROUND: .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.Politics and Governance.....	1
<b>2.ELECTION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1.Electoral laws and legal instruments .....	3
2.1.1. Regional Election Standards.....	4
2.1.2. National Election Standards .....	4
2.1.3. Election legislation and boundaries.....	6
<b>3.THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1.Voter registration process and schedule .....	7
3.2.Key Challenges, Lessons and Achievements .....	9
Conclusions on voter registration process.....	9
<b>4.PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT PROCESS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1.Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) .....	10
4.2.Support Peaceful Elections (PEACE) in Somaliland Programme .....	11
4.3.Objectives of the pre-election assessment .....	12
4.3.1. The specific objectives.....	12
<b>5.METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....</b>	<b>12</b>
5.1.Introduction.....	12
5.2. Methods of data collection .....	12
5.3.Respondent characteristics .....	13
5.4.Scope of the study .....	14
<b>6.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
6.1.Qualitative Discussions.....	14
6.1.1. Electoral Processes .....	14
6.1.2. Community Representation .....	15
6.1.3. Youth and Women Participation.....	15
6.1.4. Legal Framework.....	16
6.1.5. Clan dimension .....	17
6.1.6. Election Potential Risks .....	17
6.1.7. Clan Conflicts/Insecurity.....	20
6.1.8. Voter's Registration .....	20
6.1.9. Roles of NGOs during elections.....	21
6.2.Quantitative Data Results .....	22
RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION.....	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES.....	28

## Table

Table 2.1 A Summary of key related legal instrument .....	6
Table 3.1 Indicating the voter registration process and duration .....	8
Table 5.1 Showing total KIIs, FGDs and participants reached.....	13
Table: 5.2 Shows the number of towns surveyed in each region.....	14
Figure 6.1 Depicting Polling Station.....	23
Figure 6.2 Drought in Somaliland regions.....	23
Figure 6.3 Indicating voter registration.....	24
Figure 6.4 Indicating potential insecurities .....	25
Figure 6.5 Suitability of nearest polling station.....	25
Figure 6.6 Indicating The clan conflicts in six regions in Somaliland.....	25
Figure 6.7 Clan conflict and Elections.....	26

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil society organisation's
CSD	Central Statistics Department
EEP	Enhancing Election Process
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
AD	Alliance for Development
HIDS	Horn Institute of Development Studies (HIDS)
KII	Key Informant Interview
MP	Member of Parliament
Mol	Ministry of Interior
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NGOs	Non-governmental organisation's
OAU	Organization of African Unity
SONYO	Somaliland Network for Youth Organisation
ESR	Election Situation Room
SOLJA	Somaliland Journalists Association
WIJA	Women Journalist Association
SNM	Somali National Movement
SONSAF	Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This pre-election report was authored by Osman Hussein Warsama, Senior Consultant, with assistance from MAAN Consulting; SONSAF's Executive Director, Ayan Hussein Hassan; SONSAF's Programme Manager, Ahmed Mohamed, Program Team Hassan Shukri, Iman Omar, Mahdi Ali and Shukri Abdullahi. Further, the author would like to acknowledge SONSAF and European Union (EU) for their input and technical assistance through the PEACE project which is supported by the European Commission.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this report are those of the research participants and do not reflect the views or opinions of the EU and SONSAF.

Sincerely,

Anwar Abdirahman Warsame

SONSAF Chairman

## FORWARD

The Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) extends special thanks to Ayan Hussein Hassan, SONSAF's Executive Director, Ahmed Mohamed, SONSAF's Programme Manager and Hassan Shukri, SONSAF's Project Coordinator for their excellent leadership, contributions, guidance, input and support throughout the process of finalizing this report.

Special thanks go to the research lead and author Osman Hussein Warsama and his team for their hard work in capturing, analysing, and reporting accurate data from NEC officials, Government regional and District officials, Political Parties, CBOs, Media, Traditional and Religious leaders and Communities across all regions of Somaliland.

I would like to thank civil society organizations for their hard work at voter registration centres throughout Somaliland. Special thanks also go to the National Electoral Commission, Voter registration stakeholders, Political parties, Government, Media, and Citizens, for their role in the preparation process of parliamentary and municipality election process due to be held on the 31st of May 2021.

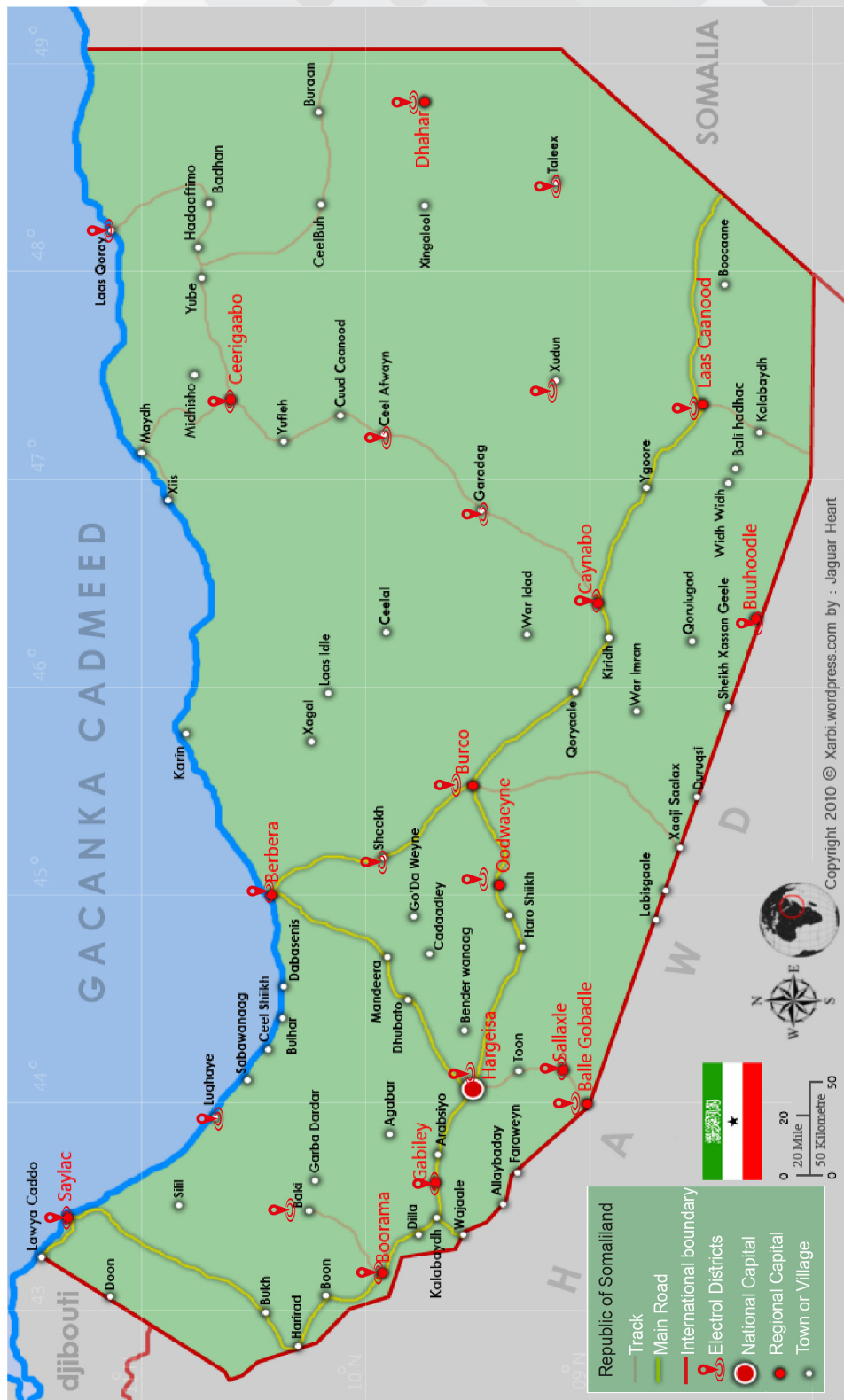
This has proved an impressive achievement at this time in Somaliland and the East Africa region. Additionally, we are indebted to the Government of Somaliland for its timely allocation of funds and to the EU for their continued financial and technical support to voter education on voter registration processes, elections and democratization processes in Somaliland. Last but not least I would like to extend my gratitude to all of the citizens who have participated in this study.

Sincerely,

Anwar Abdirahman Warsame

SONSAF Chairman

MAP OF SOMALILND



Source: The Office of the solicitor General, This map is based on international treaties and boundaries inherited by the State of Somaliland upon attainment of independence on 26 June 1960.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An election process requires significant efforts and resources to be able to successfully implement free and fair elections. The Pre-election assessment is part of the EU funded Support Peaceful Elections (PEACE) in Somaliland Programme led by the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF). The main purpose of the assessment is to identify and assess possible electoral gaps that could potentially cause delays, risks and problems. The assessment also aims to assist with the election planning, and administrative process. The EU has been a long-term partner of Somaliland on development and democratization.

This report is an integral part of the EU's support on Somaliland elections, which is in two folds' technical assistance through the National Election Commission (NEC) and community engagement particularly women and youth to contribute to peaceful election process and outcomes through SONSAF. The report specifically focuses on the later part, considering the voter registration, civil society engagement, and peace monitoring through establishing community networks. It also highlights and presents ways in which the electoral procedures can be improved in time for the local and parliamentary elections.

The report presents key findings and recommendations for relevant actors from government, political parties, CSOs, Media, with the objective that lessons learnt from previous elections coupled with the findings, changes can be implemented leading to a more free, fair and peaceful election process.

**Legal Framework:** The findings indicated that there was some understanding of the legal instruments by stakeholders but there were gaps in the election law and electoral code of conduct which does not sufficiently address for instances of theft of election materials or propaganda against the electoral process by political parties. Participants agreed that election code of conduct is key to successful elections. Thus, the obligation is on the election stakeholders to adhere and implement these instruments with the NEC being the custodial of the legal documents.

**Electoral Process:** The report highlighted the importance of ensuring election planning and preparation is done with plenty of time and resources to ensure the election is transparent. The polling station distance is important for maximizing coverage and providing opportunities to every citizen to cast their votes.

**Voter registration:** The process of voter registration was peaceful and successful. The assessment showed that the voter registration coverage increased compared to last efforts according to NEC. It has reached all electoral districts, where in some instances there were no prior voting or registration systems taking place. This was due to recent peace conferences held in various locations particularly in Elafwein, Shidan, Fadhiqab, Buhodle and Boo'ame.

**Civic and voter education:** There was some knowledge of the election process among citizens particularly in urban centres but a number of people in rural areas have little or no understanding of their rights and electoral process. Civic engagement is arguably one of the most important aspects within the electoral process. As lessons from previous endeavours where there were gaps in civic awareness existed. There must be effective and sufficient



election awareness campaigns particularly in rural and nomadic areas where most people are not exposed to media platforms.

The findings showed that there were enough materials, but the distributions and dissemination is still low and knowledge on electoral rights remain low.

**Drought:** The findings showed that there are major concerns of drought and its likelihood in threatening the election process. During the voter registration period some regions such as Togdheer, Sanaag and parts of Sool have experienced moderate drought conditions, which forced the population living there to migrate elsewhere. This will undoubtedly affect the presence of the voters in their locations as well as movement and population dynamics where most nomads will seek to search for greener pastures for their animals and might cross borders into the neighbouring countries thus losing their democratic rights.

**Security:** An effective electoral system begins with proper risk and security planning through a transparent process with all stakeholders involved in both the design, plan and implementation. If this is not achieved, it could threaten the peace and security of the election. The research findings showed that there are potential clashes in some areas such as Shidan in Sanaag, Qorilugud and Buhoodle in Togdheer region, thus NEC, government and community need to work closely to mitigate all electoral tensions in order to ensure a peaceful election.

**Election Campaigning:** The stakeholders have echoed that election campaigns and voter education is an important component for the electoral process for a more successful election outcome. Thus, the electoral campaign must be handled with care and in a peaceful manner. If this is not handled well it can cause potential clashes and insecurities. The political parties must respect the proposed time frame and avoid using inflammatory clan defaming words.

**Clan Dimensions:** The study has confirmed that clan and particularly clan elders have a major input in terms of candidate selections for their districts or regions for both parliamentary and local municipality members. Somaliland consists of a number of clans that are interrelated and reside in the different regions. As this election is the representative and local council election, the stakes are high for clan dignity as most would like to see their candidates succeed over their neighbours for being part in the house and local council and partake in the decision processes. Therefore, care must be taken to ensure it is transparent, free and fair processes where all are content with or it could lead to clashes and skirmishes which could derail the democratization efforts.

**Complaints and appeals:** There were some concerns of the lack of clear complaints channel during the election period and election participants, or candidates and parties must be advised not to share their complaints through the media according to formal procedures or legal channels. This can lead to during and post-election tensions as experienced in previous elections.

**Partnership and Stakeholders:** The findings show the importance of ensuring cross partner collaborative working relationships to ensure smooth information flow which would in turn ensure safe and peaceful election. Partners and stakeholders that particularly are

encouraged to work closely during elections are the Political Parties, the National Electoral Commission and Government departments.

**SONSAF/CSOs:** The role of CSOs was clear and their inputs and efforts in assisting the relevant stakeholders in the previous election. Thus, SONSAF and CSOs are encouraged to work closely to assist the electoral process and need to ensure they have a great partnership with the NEC to improve access to accurate information on election administration. The minimum information required from the NEC should be clarified ahead of time and requested by SONSAF, including the number of NEC personnel, officials and electoral staff trained and deployed across Somaliland for the election, the number of security forces deployed to all polling stations, and the distribution and return of electoral materials. SONSAF should work on standardising the domestic observation mission's instruments and tools to ensure that factual information is captured for reporting.

**International Community:** Compared to previous undertakings, a lack of the international community presence was felt during the voter registration period. Given the shortage of funds and resource available for this electoral process, the international community is encouraged to consider increasing its technical support for future elections by investing in theoretical and practical capacity building trainings for the government, the NEC and national political parties, in order to decentralize knowledge of elections and their principles in Somaliland.

## **1.BACKGROUND:**

Geographically, the Republic of Somaliland is located in the Horn of Africa. It is bordered by Djibouti to the west, Ethiopia to the South, and Somalia to the east. Somaliland has an area of 176,119.2 square kilometres and 850 kilometres of coastline with the majority lying along the Gulf of Aden. The country's climate is a mixture of wet and dry conditions. The northern part of the region is hilly, and in many places the altitude ranges between 1,800 and 2,100 meters above sea level. Awdal, Marodijeh and parts of Sahil regions are fertile and mountainous, while Togdheer, Sanaag and Sool are semi-arid with average daily temperatures ranging between 250C to 350C (NDPII, 2017).

Demographically, the Somaliland population was estimated at 4.2 million in 2020 by Central Statistics Department (CSD) based on previous estimates from the UNFPA population Estimation Survey of Somaliland (PESS). Somaliland has a young population with 37.8 percent of the population being less than 15 years old, and roughly 72 percent of the population being under 30 years (PESS, 2014).

After the collapse of the Central Government of Somalia in 1991, the leaders of the Somali National Movement (SNM) organised a grand community conference for the Northern Somalis in Buroa. The 18th of May 1991, the union with Somalia was revoked and the territory of the State of Somaliland (based on the borders of the former British Somaliland Protectorate) became the Republic of Somaliland. Despite unilateral claims for sovereignty, Somaliland has not received any international recognition. However, since the proclamations of statehood Somaliland has managed to secure peace and stability for almost 30 years (Mark, 2008).

### **1.1. Politics and Governance**

During the transitional government, Somaliland has held a series of peace and reconciliation conferences among its various clans held in a number of locations covering all regions. In 1993 a nationwide government was formed and subsequently the government drafted a constitution to establish and implement a functioning system of governance and began the process of democratization by conducting elections and a multiparty legislative system. The governance system consists of an executive, with a president, vice president, and legislative government; a bicameral legislature; and an independent judiciary. The traditional Somali elders (Guurti) are incorporated into the governance structure and formed the upper house responsible for managing internal conflicts while the lower house is in charge of the legislature. Somaliland transitioned to democracy in 2002, the first presidential democratic elections were held in 2003 (Abokor, 2003).

Currently, with thirty years of governance and institutional building and over twenty years of performing a multiparty democratic system, Somaliland is now one of the role models for many countries in the Horn of African region and Africa as a whole as it practices one of the most advanced voter registration systems in the world, implementing free and fair elections and with fairly moderate freedom of expression compared to the other nations in the region. Additionally, there is a unique governance structure within Somaliland, which is a hybrid system that is dual practice of traditional system with western constitutionally based democracy. The Upper House

(Guurti) of the Parliament represents the traditional system, while the Lower House is directly elected by the people. For the last 30 years, Somaliland has held a constitutional referendum, three presidential Elections, two local council elections and one Parliamentary Election (Fadal, 2011).

Although Somaliland has conducted three voter registrations processes, the Somaliland democratization process has not been smooth as there are fair flaws which ought to be fixed as for instance it has experienced a constant delay of election periods resulting in unlawful extensions. Other democratic shortcomings are that the current house of representatives or members of parliament (MPs) extended terms as they were elected in September 2005 for a five years' term, but their elections were delayed numerous times up until now 2021 before these upcoming elections scheduled to take place at the end of May 2021. On the other hand, women have the least representation in the house, with only one woman out of the 82 members. For the last ten years, the people of Somaliland were expecting to elect their representatives, particularly women, the young generation and minority groups. Likewise, the voters were expecting to elect their local councillors for the last three years, since the original five years' term of the current local councils expired in December 2017. That is why it is important to have elections this coming May of 2021 to enhance governance and democratisation process.

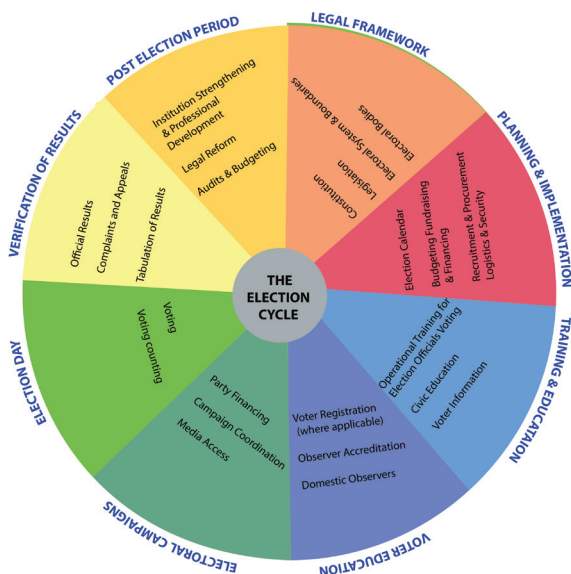
## 2.ELECTION PROCESS

In 2002, Somaliland introduced a political system based on multiparty democracy, principally adopting a presidential system in its constitution, which was ratified in 2001. The state is divided into legislative, executive and judicial branches, each of which is independent from the others.

Somaliland has local and central governments that are divided into six regions and 42 districts.

Furthermore, the successful staging of multiple elections since 2002 was a significant milestone for the people of Somaliland in their endeavours to establish a democratic state. It also had important implications for the political entity (or entities) that emerged from the wreckage of the Somali state, and for the Somaliland region in general. The introduction of universal suffrage and the creation of political parties that are not based on clans marks a significant attempt to move away

from kinship-based politics (APD, 2017). In Somaliland elections follows following steps (Figure 2.1 Election Cycle)



The Above Diagram focused on the SONSAF work on each cycle of the election pre, during and post-election period.

The last election of district councils in 2012 helped to consolidate Somaliland as a territorially defined political entity, with all the regions within its borders having elected representatives in government. The election of parliament in 2005 established the potential for representative and accountable politics and a more equitable balance of political authority. The second cycle of democratic elections for district councils and the presidency became more difficult to realise. However, elections were not always smooth as there was repeated postponement of presidential elections in 2008 due to a problematic voter registration process, National Election Commission (NEC), and intransigence among the political parties which led to the president's term of office repeatedly being extended by the Upper House of Elders (Walls, 2008; Ali et al., 2008).

## **2.1. Electoral laws and legal instruments**

Article 21, paragraph two of the Somaliland Constitution states: 'The articles which relate to fundamental rights and freedoms shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the international conventions on human rights and also with the international laws referred to in this constitution.' The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) establishes key democratic principles including the central role of genuine elections in conferring legitimacy on the authority of government. It states: 'The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures' (Somaliland Constitution 2002).

Other legal instruments adopted within the UN system that are relevant to Somaliland's electoral laws include: Article 25 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Articles 1 and 3 of the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women; Article 5 (c) of the 1965 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and Article 7 of the 1979 Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and The General Assembly Resolution on Enhancing the Effectiveness of the Principle of Periodic and Genuine Elections ( SONSAF, 2017).

### 2.1.1. Regional Election Standards

SONSAF studied instruments adopted by regional organisations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and its successor, the African Union (AU). These include the AU's principles governing democratic elections in Africa, 15 which were adopted by heads of state and governments at the 38th Ordinary Session of the OAU on 8th July 2002 in Durban, South Africa in particular Provision 1.2, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007). The principles governing democratic elections in Africa, in line with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, state that democratic elections are a fundamental human right:

Democratic elections are the basis of the authority of any representative government.

1. Regular elections constitute a key element of the democratisation process, and therefore are essential ingredients for good governance, the rule of law, the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, stability, and development.
2. The holding of democratic elections is an important dimension in conflict prevention, management, and resolution.
3. Democratic elections should be conducted:
  - Freely and fairly.
  - Under democratic constitutions and in compliance with supportive legal instruments.
  - Under a system of separation of powers that ensures in particular, the independence of the judiciary.
  - At regular intervals, as provided for in national constitutions.
  - By impartial, all-inclusive competent accountable electoral institutions, staffed by well-trained personnel and equipped with adequate logistics. These democratic principles are applicable to elections across the African continent, and researchers assessed and observed the extent to which the process of election planning and preparation in Somaliland was in line with the core areas highlighted above. (Voter Registration Law, 2016)

### 2.1.2. National Election Standards

The Somaliland Constitution (2001) is the main 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 recognises 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 21 provides for the implementation and interpretation of fundamental rights and





Figure 2.1.1.1. Somaliland Civil Society Organizations participating the Validation of the pre-election assessment report.

freedoms as constitutional duties directed to all levels of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches as well as regional and local governments in a manner consistent with international conventions. Article 22 establishes the right to stand for election and the right to vote, Article 32(3) establishes freedom of expression and Article 23 establishes freedom of association, assembly, movement, and non-discrimination. Paragraph 1, Article 22, states: “Every citizen shall have the right to participate in political, economic, social and cultural affairs in accordance with the laws and the constitution.” Article 36 stipulates the rights of women, stating in paragraph 1: “The rights, freedoms and duties laid down in the constitution are to be enjoyed equally by men and women save for matters which are specifically ordained in Islamic Sharia.” These equal rights include the right of both men and women to participate in elections and voting (Voter Registration Law).

The election laws do not contain provisions discriminating against women Article 83(2) of the Somaliland constitution enshrines periodic joint elections for the president and vice president: “The joint election of the president and the vice president shall be based on the list system and shall take place a month before the end of the term of office of the outgoing president.” Article 83(4) adds: “The two candidates in the list which obtains the highest number of votes cast in the presidential and vice-presidential election shall be recognised as the successful candidates.” The Presidential and Local Council Elections Law (Law No. 20/2001(2017)) stipulates in Article 10(8) and in Article 24 that “the process of the election of president and vice president shall be the system in Article 83 of the Somaliland constitution in paragraph (1, 2, 3 and 4) and shall be a majority system. “Article 4 (1) stipulates the term of office for the president and vice president as five years, and Article 7 (3) establishes voting rights. Below Tables 2.1 Summarises varies existing legal instruments.

### 2.1.3.Election legislation and boundaries

Table 2.1 A Summary of key related legal instrument

Law or legal instrument	Description
Law No.20/2001	This law has been amended six times since its enactment, the latest of which was in January 2017 to reflect the introduction of the iris voter registration system and to consolidate all amendments into a single document.
Somaliland Citizenship Law No. 22/2002	This law regulates participation in elections, based on the principles of Article 4 of the Somaliland constitution. The law establishes conditions for the possession and loss of Somaliland citizenship
Somaliland Political Parties Law No.14/2000/2011	This law establishes a time limit of ten years on the official recognition of the three political parties stipulated by the constitution, after which political parties must receive a new mandate by receiving the highest numbers of votes in local council elections. The is meant to prevent monopolies in the multiparty System
SomalilandVoter Registration Law No.37/2007/2014	This law was used to regulate the recent voter registration process using iris-recognition technology.
Administration of Regions and Districts Law (Law No.23/2002/2007)	This law establishes the boundaries of the six regions on the basis of the boundaries of the six districts that existed on the date of Somaliland's political independence on 26 June 1960. The law stipulates that the six regions and 42 districts, in Article 5(1) and Article 5(6) respectively, are the only regions and districts established by law. The existing electoral law clarifies electoral boundaries, and the Ministry of Interior (MoI) is responsible for reinforcing boundaries established by law.
Election law 9 1 / 2 0 2 0	This is the latest election law amended recently by the Parliament.
<p>Regulations and codes of conduct</p> <p>During the pre-election period, various codes of conduct applicable to the elections were revised and updated through a consensus approach led by NEC, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Parliamentary and Local Election campaign code of conduct</li> <li>2. Domestic election observers code of conduct</li> <li>3. Media Code of Conduct for the 2021 election</li> <li>4. Political Parties Code of Conduct for the 2021 election</li> <li>5. Electoral complaint and disputes resolution procedures</li> </ol>	



### 3.THE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

#### 3.1. Voter registration process and schedule

The voter registration was first enacted in 2007 and amended in 2008. It regulates the administration of voter registration and sets conditions of eligibility. Somaliland's first voter registration exercise began in October 2009 and was completed in January 2010, in time for the 26 June 2010 presidential election.

However, that register was marred by complaints that numerous voters were allowed to register more than once. The fingerprint technology used was ineffective in deterring multiple registration. In 2011 the House of Representatives nullified this flawed voter register and the 2012 local council elections were held without valid voter registration.

The experience of the 2012 local council elections convinced political actors that developing a new voter register was essential and a fundamental principle of free and fair elections. Accordingly, Somaliland launched a new biometric voter registration process in January 2016 covering all six regions. The process of providing opportunities for those who did not register in 2016 had begun in early 2021. The process was completed in February 2021.

The voter registration process for the presidential election was a highly controversial process. The strengths and weaknesses of the process and its use in the recent election needs to be reviewed before the next elections.

In November 2020, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) Released the timetable of the Voter Registration process with the official 23 electoral districts and scheduled to begin on November 29th, 2020 and to complete on January 13th, 2021. NEC divided the voter registration process into four main clusters (NEC 2021, CPA 2021)

SONSAF and other independent bodies have played a critical role in monitoring the registration to ensure that if it is conducted with the agreed principles and protocols and if it is conducted in a free and fair manner. As NEC planned, the voter registration was kicked off on November 29th, 2020 in four clusters and it was concluded on time on January 13th, 2021. Below is the voter registration schedule on Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Indicating the voter registration process and duration

Cluster	Region/District	Duration
Cluster 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Awadal region</li> <li>- Gabiley District</li> <li>- Baligubadle District</li> <li>- Salahley District</li> </ul>	November 29th December 2nd 2020
Cluster 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hargeisa District</li> <li>- Sahil Region</li> </ul>	December 13th December 16th 2020
Cluster 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Togdheer region</li> <li>- Aynabo District</li> <li>- Gar-adag District</li> </ul>	December 27th December 20th 2020
Cluster 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Erigabo District</li> <li>- Badhan District</li> <li>- Dhahar District</li> <li>- Las-Koray District</li> <li>- Las-Anod District</li> <li>- Hudun District</li> <li>- Taleh District</li> </ul>	January 10- January 13, 2021

### 3.2. Key Challenges, Lessons and Achievements

- There were few challenges recorded by NEC including one voter registration centre in eastern Sanaag was cancelled. The other 22 districts successfully completed the voter registration with no security incidents reported.
- In Buuhoodle, there were few registration centres that were cancelled but a number of Buhoodle centres operated as normal.
- In Sool Region, the voter registration took place in all the designated electoral districts including Laas- caanood, Xudun, Taleex and Caynaba.
- The local communities complained about the four days' period allocated for the registration of the voter registration were not sufficient, and they were requesting from NEC to extend the time. In that request, NEC extended voter registration time in some registration centres of every region/cluster from three to seven days, based on the needs in each area.
- There were some minor technical errors were recorded in some areas, related to the Electricity or the Generators, the Laptops, printers, etc. particularly the first days of the voter registration, that delayed the work of the first day, but NEC area representatives and NEC trouble-shooter addressed and responded to those complaints
- Shortage of government support and the limited funding of the international partners meant that it was difficult to observe Somaliland's Democratization Process
- The voter registration turnout was high in the urban areas and the registration centres of the border areas.
- Overall, the process was smooth and took place peacefully. The voter registration process was one of the most peaceful voter registrations conducted in Somaliland. There were no big security incidents recorded during the voter registration process. Except a Bomb thrown to a closed voter registration centre in Las'anod of Sool region.

### 3.3. Conclusions on voter registration process

i.The international communities: played significant role in the previous voter registration processes and past elections.

ii.Role of traditional elders: The role of clan elder has increased during the voter registration Awareness and Preparation of the upcoming elections. The Traditional System is the main body that is now pre-selecting the candidates of the House of Representatives and the Local Councils.

iii.COVID-19 health safety protocols: Most of the Voter Registration we collected Data from, were not fully following the COVID-19 health safety Protocols including the Social Distancing, Masking, etc. NEC put signs and instructions in most of those registration centres, telling both the NEC Polling Station team and the Voters going to register to follow the COVID19 Health Safety Protocols.

iv. Droughts in Eastern Regions: During the Preparation of the Voter Registration, the local communities in eastern regions particularly Togdheer region, complained about droughts in their areas, while they mentioned that the eligible voters in rural areas crossed the border between Somaliland and Ethiopia to seek water and grass for their animals. The Traditional leaders from the Togdheer region requested from the government and

election stakeholders to postpone the voter registration. But, the Election stakeholders including the government, political parties, and NEC, decided that the voter registration will happen as scheduled in every region. The traditional leaders of Togdheer region, then called their eligible voters in their region to register and to carry out voter registration awareness.

v. Voter education: was not as effective as before due to limited resources: Most of the regions complained about the limited voter education awareness and the methods used for the awareness-raising. Nonetheless there were self-organized committees from the clans and candidates who were conducting voter education awareness.

vi Partnership role: NEC officials, Political Parties and Government Officials were also taking part in the awareness-raising of the voter education, through visiting the voter registration centres and meeting the local communities. The Voters going to register to follow the COVID19 Health Safety Protocols.

iv. Droughts in Eastern Regions: During the Preparation of the Voter Registration, the local communities in eastern regions particularly Togdheer region, complained about droughts in their areas, while they mentioned that the eligible voters in rural areas crossed the border between Somaliland and Ethiopia to seek water and grass for their animals. The Traditional leaders from the Togdheer region requested from the government and election stakeholders to postpone the voter registration. But, the Election stakeholders including the government, political parties, and NEC, decided that the voter registration to happen as scheduled in every region. The traditional leaders of Togdheer region, then called their eligible voters in their region to register and to carry out voter registration awareness.

v. Voter education: was not as effective as before due to limited resources: Most of the regions complained about the limited voter education awareness and the methods used for the awareness-raising. Nonetheless there were self-organized committees from the clans and candidates who were conducting voter education awareness.

vi. Partnership role: NEC officials, Political Parties and Government Officials were also taking part in the awareness-raising of the voter education, through visiting the voter registration centres and meeting the local communities.

## 4. PRE-ELECTION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

### 4.1. Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF)

The Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) has played a significant role in Somaliland's democratization process over the past ten years, observing, reviewing and engaging in election processes. Over the years SONSAF has contributed to enhancing the democratisation process of Somaliland with its unique ability in enabling non-state actors to complement the work of the state during electoral processes, and the forum's own development.

In June 2010, SONSAF carried out the only coordinated Somaliland-wide domestic observation

campaign for the Presidential election. After initial training, over 700 local volunteer observers were deployed to 500 polling stations across the six regions of Somaliland. Over 40 per cent of the trained observers were women. In a report on its domestic observation role, SONSAF noted that its observers helped to promote confidence in the electoral process and deter the efforts of people trying to subvert the will of voters. The report also included recommendations on how to consolidate and improve the electoral process. Based on experience gained during the election, the non-state actor forum offered recommendations on the legal framework, civic and voter education, women's participation, and security management to the Somaliland authorities and international community.

SONSAF's involvement in the 2010 election helped to build the capacity of the platform but also of local volunteers and elections officials on the issue of election observation. The domestic observation campaign also provided the opportunity for civil society oversight of the government's preparations for and handling of the election. An important precedent has now been established for future civil society involvement in elections in Somaliland. The release of SONSAF's independent post-election report, which echoed international observers' positive assessment of the election, also increased public confidence in the result and encouraged the peaceful transfer of power.

#### **4.2. Support Peaceful Elections (PEACE) in Somaliland Programme**

SONSAF is a leading civil society platform that aims to engage all Somaliland Non-State actors by improving their capacity and position. Since its establishment in 2008, SONSAF has led the civil society engagement and enhanced non-state actor's voice through better coordination and networking as well as contributed in helping to create a vibrant space in policy dialogue arena especially, peace-building, security, democratization, development sustainability and have concrete influence in formulating policies that address the needs of all citizens. SONSAF is currently implementing the PEACE programme in Somaliland funded by the EU with two main objectives:

1. Monitoring and reducing electoral tensions through Election Situation Room (ESR) across Somaliland and
2. Increasing Women's, youth and minorities participation in Somaliland's electoral and governance processes in the pre-election, election and post-election periods

The local and parliamentary elections are set for 31st of May 2021 which prompts the pre-election assessment to understand the current political landscape and to shed some light into the enablers and hinders of the upcoming elections in Somaliland. The SONSAF embarked upon a pre-election assessment to produce an in-depth analysis of the current dynamics and the enabling environment that will allow for the elections to proceed, in addition to mapping stakeholders' conflicts. The Pre-Election Assessment and analysis report focused on the inter-clan conflict, border tensions, current measures for reconciliations between clan related violence, Political parties' preparedness and National Electoral Commission election road map. Operationalizing CSOs regional committees- at regional/national level to advocate for election processes, monitor and report disputes/conflict, human right violation to the ESR, to facilitate reconciliation, mitigation processes.

As part of this pre-election assessment, a comprehensive stakeholder consultation and survey on vital data in relation to the upcoming elections was carried out.

### 4.3. Objectives of the pre-election assessment

The overall objective was to assess and understand the different factors that could impact the local and parliamentary elections.

#### 4.3.1. The specific objectives

- Assess the pre-conditions for a free and fair credible local election process.
- Assess the pre-conditions for a free and fair credible local election process.
- Engage in dialogue with key stakeholders on the process – the NEC, MoI, political parties/associations, civil society – as part of an assessment of progress towards the elections.
- Assess women's likely participation in the electoral and democratic process and the possibility of establishing a baseline to measure changing participation rates in successive elections.
- Assess capacity building already being undertaken with local civil society organisations/NGOs/umbrella groups in order for them to observe and contribute to a transparent and peaceful election process, including public awareness and voter education programmes.
- Assess the impact of droughts and COVID-19 on the election process
- Assess opportunities for the successful establishment of the ESR
- Evaluate any potential risks and conflicts that may jeopardize the elections

## 5. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### 5.1. Introduction

The study adopted qualitative and quantitative approaches in which descriptive information was collected from the study participants. The reason for adopting these approaches was that the study aimed to gather rich information from participants on their perceptions and lived experiences which was critical in understanding the topic, thus the study aimed to construct the community perceptions, knowledge, beliefs, practices and experiences on election processes and expectation.

### 5.2. Methods of data collection

#### a. Survey questionnaires

A brief survey was conducted on the election hotspot or potential clash points in Somaliland. The focus was to ensure that potential risks are assessed, identified, quantified and propose measures for remedy to ensure it does not affect the upcoming elections.

#### b. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A focus group discussion was utilised as part of tools of data collection and participants involved gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. Participants were encouraged and allowed to talk freely with other group members. It generally involved interviewing a small group of usually 8-12 people led by a moderator (interviewer) in a loosely structured discussion of various topics of interest (HERD, 2016).

### c. Key informant Interviews (KII)

Another method of data collection used was key informant interview (KII). Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were also used to collect information on election processes and practices from individuals who have in-depth knowledge and information about the subject matter.

### 5.3. Respondent characteristics

Respondents who participated in the interviews consisted of the following:

- Ministry of Interior officials
- Members of Parliament
- Political Parties
- Cultural leaders
- Religious leaders
- Representative from Women groups
- Representation Youth Organisations
- Regional NGOs and National NGOs
- Academia
- Community members

Table 5.1 Showing total KIIs, FGDs and participants reached

No.	City/ region	KII's	FGD	Survey	Total population reached
1	Hargeisa	4	6	100	110
2	Borama	4	6	100	110
3	Las anod	4	6	100	110
4	ceerigaabo	4	6	100	110
5	Burco	4	6	100	110
6	Berbera	4	6	100	110
		24	36	600	660



Table: 5.2 Shows the number of towns surveyed in each region

No.	M/Jeeh region	Sahil region	Awdal region	Togdheer region	Sanaag region	Sool region
1	Bali- mataan	Lafa rug	Xariirad	Qori-lugud	Dayaxa,	Tuko-raq
2	Ceel-Sheikh	xamaas	Magaalo cad	Oodwayne	Yufle	Adhi-cadeeye
3		Xabaalo tumaale	Juffo-galiilay	Ceel xume	Shidan	Sahan gaba
4		Biyoolay	Dilla	Ceel -bilcinle	Fadhigab	Las anood

#### 5.4. Scope of the study

The pre-elections study covered the six regions in Somaliland. It has also covered and specifically identified hot spots or potential election flashpoints or polling stations in M/Jeeh, Sanaag, Togdheer, Awdal, Sahil and Sool in which the surveyed data were collected.

### 6.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

As previously mentioned, there were two methodological approaches which were adopted. Firstly, the qualitative approach findings are discussed followed by the findings of the quantitative study.

#### 6.1. Qualitative Discussions

The upcoming election is historically important for Somaliland communities. It represents peace, governance, and dignity to different communities and clan members in Somaliland. This upcoming election will restore and reignite the democratization process as both the house of parliament and local councillor's election were delayed numerous times and will rejuvenate the hopes of so many young aspiring politicians to be on the candidates list. The findings are organised in thematic areas of the Election process.

##### 6.1.1.Electoral Processes

One Proper planning and execution of electoral processes are vital thus understanding of the probable issues that may aid or hinder Electoral process is critical.

*"Somaliland is well versed and experience in electoral processes, so I do not doubt the capacity of the National Election Commission as they are well trained and ready"*

(Political party member, Participant).

Another participant echoed the same feeling and said:

*"I do not think there should be no technical and implementation problems during this election"*

(NGO member, Participant)



As discussed earlier, Somaliland is one of the few countries in Africa that has successfully held successive elections in consecutive manner thus the relevant institutions have demonstrated their competency and experience.

### 6.1.2. Community Representation

One of the regional representatives responded when asked about what the parliament and local councillors means:

*“Each clan aspires to elect candidates from their own clan to ensure representation in the parliament and local councils”*

(Regional official, Participants).

This is particularly important as the parliament members legislates laws, authorizes the government expenditure of public finance, scrutinizes government activities, and is a forum for debate on national issues. Those parliament members symbolize beyond the work they do, they symbolize dignity and security for clan members. Thus, for this upcoming election, different communities are questioning the work ethic of the parliament and city council. According to the FGD discussion, different members of the parliament and city council should be replaced due to:

*“Unhelpful councillors and parliamentarians will hinder the progress of Somaliland as the previous councils and parliamentarians were not doing their job faithfully and should be replaced by new members who are educated and energetic.”*

(Community, Participant)

On the contrary, the new parliament members are required to have a degree to participate in this upcoming parliamentary and local elections which is seen as a progressive move by many in Somaliland. Prior to this election, parliaments were not required to have a degree as one of the criteria or conditions for membership. During the study questions on the election process participants were asked how they see the process:

*“It means that we are slowly realising that education is important for new members to ensure that they can deliver for the country.”*

(Community, Participant)

### 6.1.3. Youth and Women Participation

The incumbent members of parliament and local election councillors are not gratifying the communities particularly the young and women. They have not delivered and have outlasted a number of administrations and presidential elections.

*“It is evident that the whole community wants to see a change over the current parliament and council members, who have not delivered satisfactorily and the country is crying for young and educated people to develop their districts and regions.”*

(Community, participant)

There are vast community members who do not understand or grasp the election system and what leaders bring, perturbed for some communities. As the study explored opinions towards the parliament election.

“Parts of the population do not understand the meaning of this upcoming election. They did not take part in the voter registration process because they did not understand its importance and meaning.”

(Community, Participant)

It was evident that in the last election both the councillor and parliament election in 2005 and 2012 women and youth did not participate due to low aspiration and inability to partake in candidacy and this election purports to be more inclusive.

*“Women have demanded and requested to be part of the political elite of this nation and sadly clan leaders are one of the obstacles they still are not being represented.”*

(Community Participant)

The government has waived the fee and tax dues for women and minority groups and this is a clear intention that it wants a more inclusive process, but despite these efforts the selection of candidates still remains difficult.

#### 6.1.4. Legal Framework

Understanding the right to vote varies completely. In terms of the rights of voters, the following questions were considered; Whose citizens have the right to vote and what are the categories that require them to vote? How can an individual know if she/he has the right to vote? Understanding these questions is necessary for every citizen.

*“Voters understanding of their rights is essential and there must be awareness and education”*

(NEC, Official)

Thus, what are the voter’s rights? In Somaliland consolidated electoral voter registration law Article (6) emphasizes the right of the voters. The Article 6: states that rights of the voters, every voter who fulfils the conditions set out in the law shall have the right to:

- Cast his/her vote at the districts in which he is at and where the election is being held.
- 2. A voter who is away from the territory of the Republic of Somaliland shall cast his/her vote at the nearest diplomatic office of the Republic of Somaliland, but the Commission shall decide whether that is available or feasible.
- Voting shall be personal, free, direct, confidential and all votes shall be given equal weighting.
- Each voter shall have only one vote for each election.
- The member of the Elections Commission shall not be entitled to vote whilst in office.

Those points are very significant for any voter and it’s crucial to raise awareness and campaign that voters have those rights. Understanding the right of the voter, it raises another question, who has the right to vote? One of the interviewees claim that it is important for all citizens to understand their right to vote:

*“Voters must understand their rights, but there is a lot of awareness and many are beginning to understand their right to vote.”*

*(NEC, Participant)*

The voter awareness is key for the democratization process improvements in different communities and the voters have received different awareness and it upgraded the level of fairness between the candidates.

### 6.1.5. Clan dimension

Clan leaders have been found to play a significant role in the selection of candidates and are important figures in advocating for democracy as they dictate choice of candidates before party selection. Additionally, they direct the way of thinking of the voter through inter-clan campaigning as a traditional way in which they are influencing their clan members in voting for a particular candidate:

*“If you don’t select the candidate of our clan, we will lose the dignity of our clan.”*

*(Community leader participant)*

As another member follow-up with statement that:

*“Some people say we are obliged to vote for our clan because we want our clan to be represented.”*

*(Community member, Participant)*

It is evident that clan elders and traditional leaders have a big stake in the candidate selection and democratisation process as a whole. It seems that the only incentive to vote is for voting for clan members. So, raising awareness for rural communities, training and seminars are needed for different communities in separate areas. One of the community organisation members mentioned that:

*“The voters need more seminars to improve their understanding and their rights of voting.”*

*(Community, Participant)*

*“The voters have some knowledge and understanding of their rights but need more training on what democracy is.”*

*(Community, Participant)*

### 6.1.6. Election Potential Risks

Although there is an existing efficient and robust governance system in place for the upcoming Somaliland election, no election comes without any incident risks or problems. Report findings showed that the upcoming elections has the potential for incidents of disputes in particular when it comes to election results. As well as the potential for misunderstanding of guidelines, contender’s arguments and other outside threats.

One of the key issues emerged from the discussions of the study were;

*“Candidates that lost may not accept the final results and may lead to problems but this is not new and we learnt to deal with it.”*

(Election officials, Participant)

**Other issues reported included:**

*“There is a potential for insecurity to happen during the election that could potentially cause a risk to the election. An example of this is the recent community tensions between Buhodle and Qoriligud towns. There are also new incidents of tensions recently reported in Shidan area of Sanaag region.”*

(Community organisation, Participant)

*“During the recent concluded voter registration process, there were some security concerns at Gal area which is near Buhodle, where there were disruptions at the polling stations.”*

(NEC official, Participant)

This among other minor incidents were reported by NEC to be prepared for any major cases. Government understands that violence occurs and that the severity of violence varies in different regions. Security members inform in his/her report

*“NEC officials did not pursue to reopen the affected polling stations which would have potentially led to more violence in the region. These types of restricted areas were expected to cause some violence.”*

(Security Official, Participant)

However, that does not stop the election from occurring in non-restricted regions. As members of regional EEPs (Enhancing Election Process) mentioned in their interviews when asked about the violence occurring during the election process many reported:

*“There was a limited violence occurred for the last voter registration.”*

(NEC, regional team, Participant)

Therefore, to prevent any future electoral tensions, voters and contenders are required to understand democratic process, final yield's denouement should not cause any ambiguities, both political parties agree who should execute the counting of voters. When communities understand the rights to vote and voter's rights, the danger of conflicts is very limited and the degree of creating one is insubstantial. However, if there was a conflict what would the potential risk be? Three major categories could be the trigger of potential risk.

*“In this election conflicts and potential risk may come from within families because it is very local.”*

(NEC, Participant)

Concerns of conflict may not end, since Somaliland is a clan centred or base community, but

preparing how to subdue is vital. Preparing how to manage any potential risks is the next step for any governmental leaders to execute. It's inevitable that the perpetrator will come but limiting their executing tasks is the ultimate achievement. As a security monitoring official reported:

*"Elections are always sensitive and we are expecting minor risks, as we have placed all the necessary preparation to curb any unpleasant events that may come up."*

(Government Participants )

*"As the elections are to some extent based on clan concerns, I think that the losing clans may ignite problems."*

(Traditional Leader, Participant)

*"Lack of understanding of the importance of election raises violence within communities."*

(NEC volunteer, participant)

An unavoidable question raised, what could be done to mitigate the potential risks? Three variables are the potential mitigation for any concerns of conflicts. Further, clan elders are the most influential individuals and to mitigate any risks, it should be issued by the tribe elders.

*"Mitigation can be done through the clan elders" in the FGD paper one of the regional leaders strongly stated.*

*"The government should secure the security of the borders and restricted areas." Security has played a significant role in mitigating any risks on prior elections. When asked the role of security one of responses was*

*"General security must be maximized. Deployment of clan elders, religions elders, and government forces should maximize security and contender's overall fairness"*

(Community, Participant)

There is always an abundance of security personnel presence during election days at the polling stations and districts, so increasing polling stations, increasing security thus leads to decrease in the violence that occur in polling stations.

However, it is also important that responsible agencies have a comprehensive plan to mitigate any potential risks that may arise.

*"We should also organize awareness campaigns on the importance of the election and meet the community and youth leaders in order to make the whole community take part in the security of the election day and prevent anything which is violent that can restrict the election process."*

(District Mayor, Participants)

Who should participate in raising awareness is also as important. The participants should be *"The community leaders including sheikhs, clan elders, and candidates should participate in*

*security protection through awareness raising*” and “Civil society organizations and community leaders should make awareness” too. Those are an essential step of improving the awareness process. Awareness brings different methods of solving conflicts and establishes the process of political negotiation.

### 6.1.7. Clan Conflicts/Insecurity

Clashes of clan or sometimes tensions created because campaigns may sometimes lead to misunderstandings and problems during elections. The recent upgrading of the general security within different clan systems has also shown drastic improvements which limited the effects of clan violence.

*“There had been some tensions in parts of Sanaag such as the Shidan area and parts of Sool, however, it seems that the major issues have been resolved.”*

(Community, Participant)

Another area which historically has experienced some tensions during elections is the Buuhodle district, and one interviewee mentioned;

*“Most inter clan conflicts do not depend on the elections. During the election process inter clan conflicts are decreased because all people are busy on the voting process and campaigning. Even in villages under Buuhodle districts tensions decreases because of the presence of security forces.”*

(Traditional Leader, Participant)

### 6.1.8. Voter's Registration

Voting registration occurred in the most effective manner which shows the volume of awareness different communities have received. During the voter registration process, a limited number of areas has shown to be potential risks. In M/Jeeh and Awdal there are potential risks due to disagreement of the 6 polling stations which are not operational now.

*“Six polling stations at the Lughaya area are considered flash points” and another concerning area is “Biyo Macaane area was once categorized as a flashpoint but no major security risks have been identified.”*

(Community, Participant)

Most voter registration occurred in a peaceful manner due to awareness of different community members and community led organisations. Although in certain regions such as Togdheer was experiencing severe drought which limited the number of people participating in the process.

*“Drought has had tremendous impact on the voter registration process because most of the nomadic population in Togdheer has moved deeper into Ethiopian territory and parts of Somalia.”*

(Community, Participant)



During the interview of study participants:

*“In Togdheer district, the timing of the voter registration occurred was not ideal as the region was experiencing drought. There were places where no one was registered. The registration process was organized for the best way but it was not the ideal time due to the drought season.”*

(Regional elder, Participants)

Another concerning issue was campaigning challenges. Campaigning and awareness about the election was not sufficient which raises not enough voters to be registered.

*“I don’t think it occurred in the best manner because the awareness campaigns were not enough”*

(Community, Participants)

Most of the voter registration disruptions were observed in Buhodle which is located on the borders of Ethiopia and Somaliland.

*“Buhodle is a flashpoint there are often disagreements between the different residents or groups in town, but this year we were successful in enabling the largest voters’ turnout during voter registration process.”*

(District official, participants)

### 6.1.9.Roles of NGOs during elections

Most of the NGO do not participate in any related election process. Multiple interviewees at the FGD report said;

*“Although part of civil society organizations is to conduct awareness raising activities and inform our community of the importance of elections, however we have not yet engaged in election activities.”*

(NGOs Member, participant).

Those interviewees illustrated that the role of NGOs is critical in raising awareness to communities and educating them about the voting process, which perpetuates the expansion of the electoral process and assists the election system. Further, it was observed from the previous elections that the key interventions by NGOs include, preventing violence through prompt problem solving methods, increasing voter eagerness, and solving any technical problems that could interrupt. As one interviewee put it:

*“We expect that NGOs will play an important role in solving any potential conflicts and also assist voters to take part in the election best way they can.”*

(Community, Participant)

When asked about the potential role that the community election monitoring (which consists of prominent community members) will play during the election on the 31st of May 2021 an

interviewee mentioned that:

*“While elders are the main problem solvers of this region, the NGOs will contribute to the participation of elders in the election process through solving problems and being aware of any challenges faced in the election.”*

(NGO member, Participant)

Therefore, the ESR will help the civil society organization in the region take part in problems solving processes on election day. It will also increase the trust between civil society and the electoral commission and allow them to collaborate.



Figure 6.1.9 Director General Contributing the Validation workshop of the Pre-Election assessment.

## 6.2. Quantitative Data Results

This section reports that quantitative information from the public in the six regions at purposely selected areas. The questions of polling stations, drought impact, voter registration participation, security threats and distance of polling station.

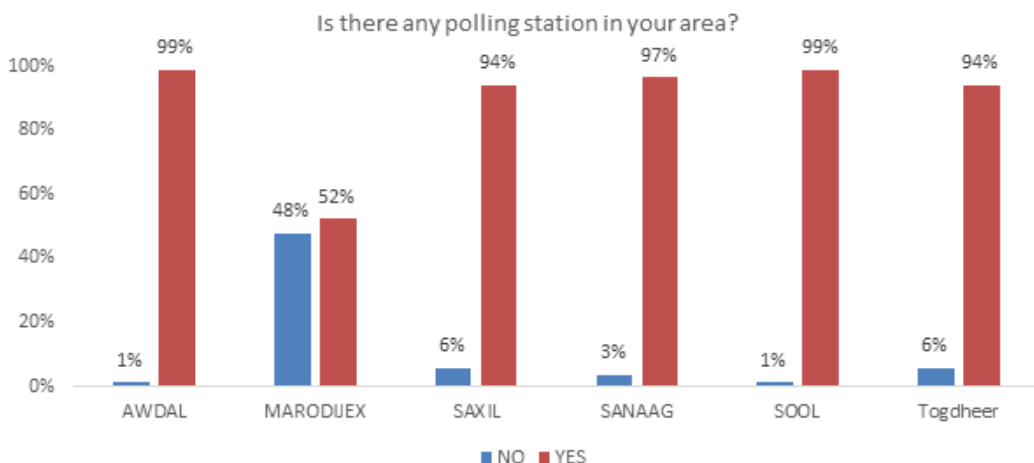




Figure 6.1 Depicting Polling Station

The above figure shows that the general population of Somaliland living in all six regions have access to nearby polling stations on election day. Data collected from all six regions showed that the vast majority of respondents reported that they have access to polling stations. The Marodijeh region, the region where the capital city Hargeisa is located, and the region with the largest population, has surprisingly a large percentage of people that responded to not have access to a polling station. When further probed, a survey found that there are six villages within North of the Maroodi Jeex region that had their polling stations suspended by the government due to inter-clan conflicts.



Figure 1.10 .6 Opposition parties contributing on their side of the Pre-Election Assessment

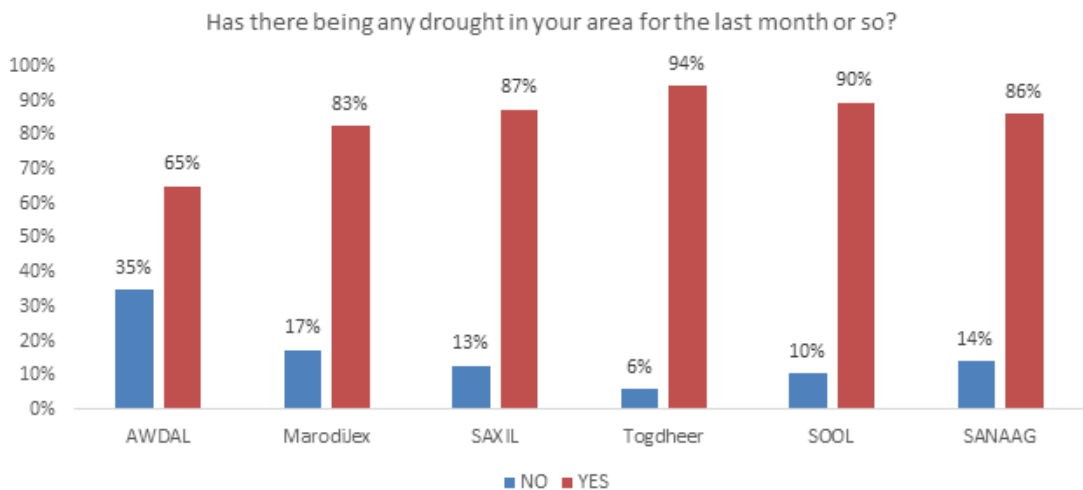
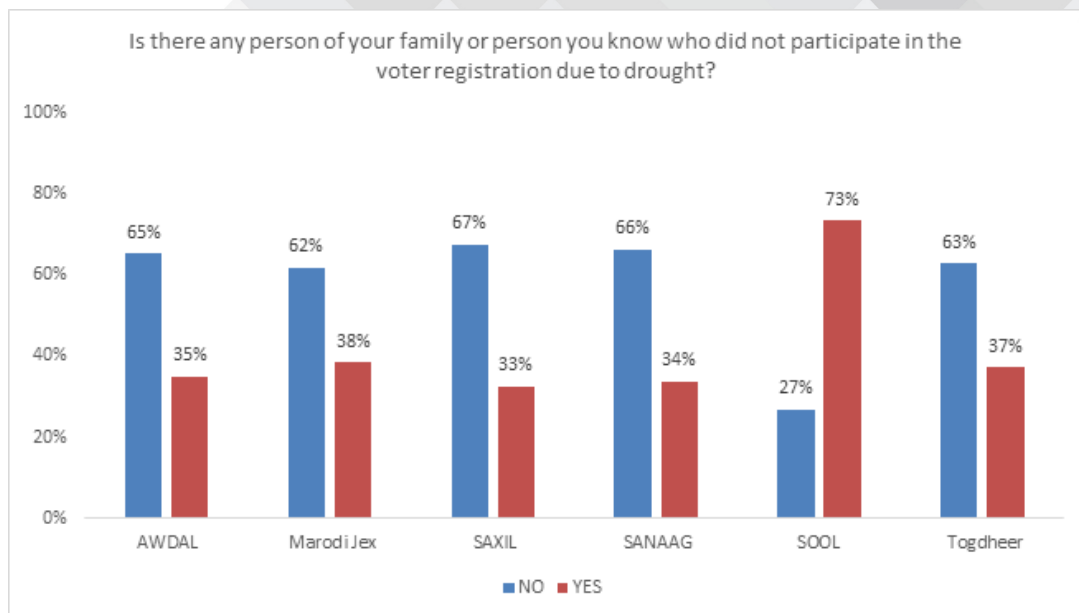


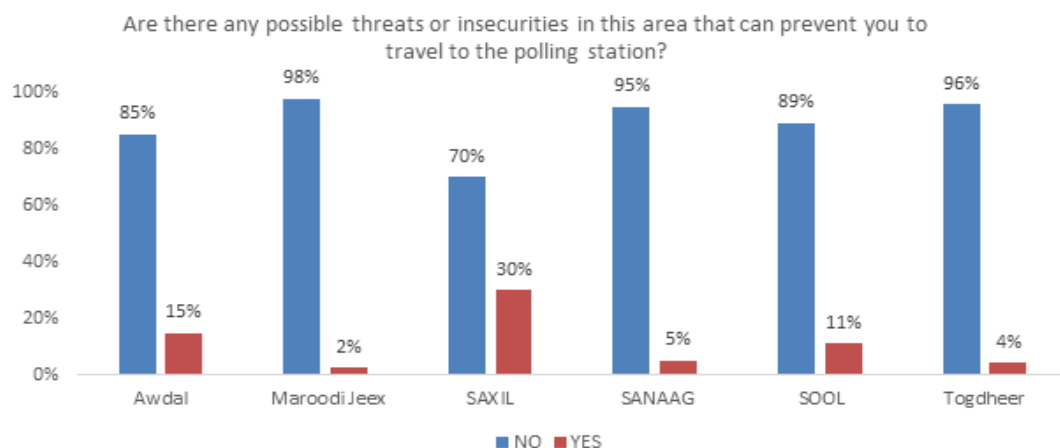
Figure 6.2 Drought in Somaliland regions

As shown in the figure above, respondents were asked if there had been a drought in their area in recent months. People in all six regions of Somaliland agreed that there was widespread drought affecting the people and livestock, which caused people to potentially migrate or move from their official constituencies. Figure 6.2 also indicates that respondents from the Togdheer region reported to have the highest number of drought experiences. It is clear that if the drought continues, many people will not be able to reach the areas where they received their cards and be displaced, which would potentially cause a low number of voter card registration, collection and as a result low voter turnout during the upcoming election.



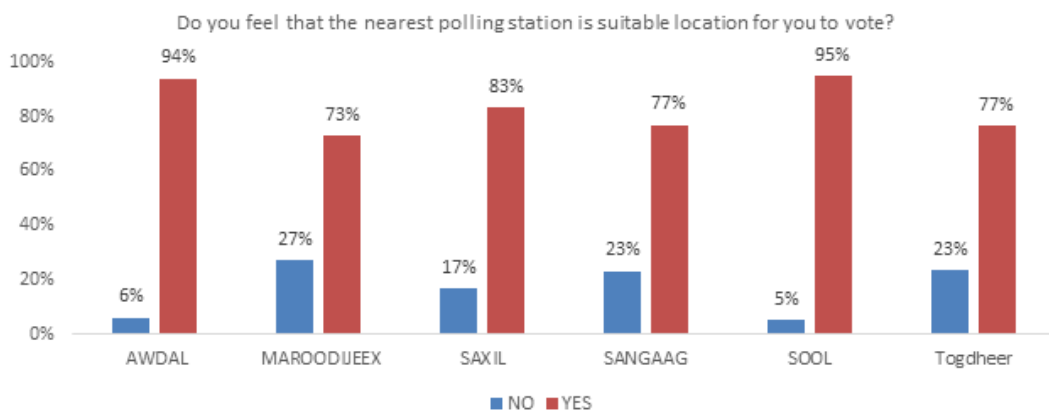
**Figure 6.3 Indicating voter registration**

Following on from the previous question regarding the effect of drought, respondents were further probed whether the drought had a significant effect on voter registration. Figure 6.3 shows that although more than half the population of five of the six regions in Somaliland were able to successfully register to vote, there is still a significant number of potential voters unsuccessful in registering to vote due to the drought. A staggering 63% of respondents in the Sool region reported to have a family member who was unable to participate in the voter registration due to drought. This could potentially cause a low voter turnout in the Sool region for the upcoming local and parliamentary elections.



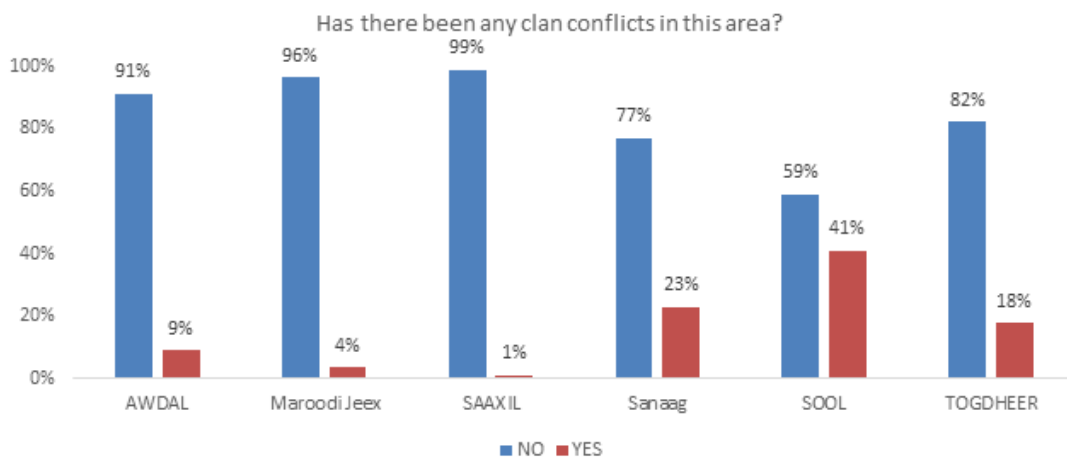
**Figure 6.4 Indicating potential insecurities**

When survey respondents were asked whether there are any potential threats or insecurities in their area that could prevent them from travelling to polling stations, the majority of respondents reported that there was none. This is a positive sign as it shows that in most regions respondents feel relatively safe and felt no threat that could hinder their travel on election day.



**Figure 6.5 Suitability of nearest polling station**

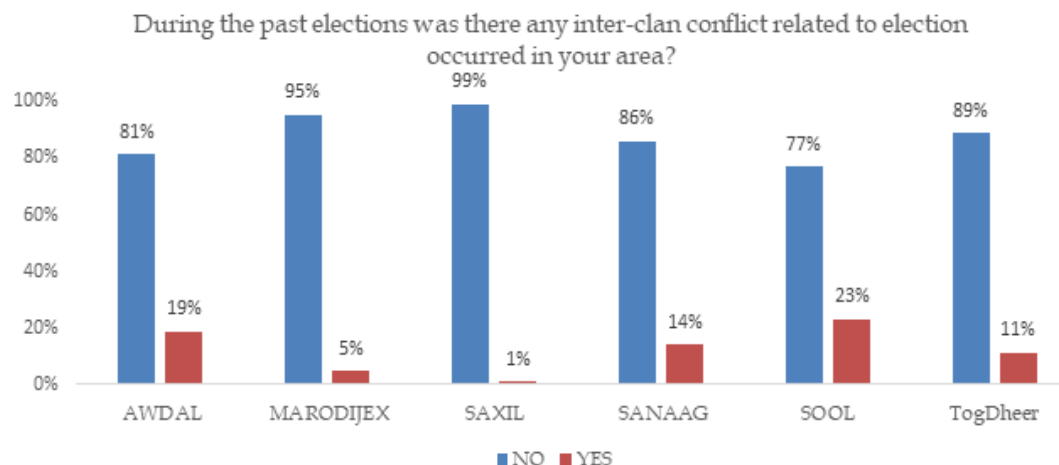
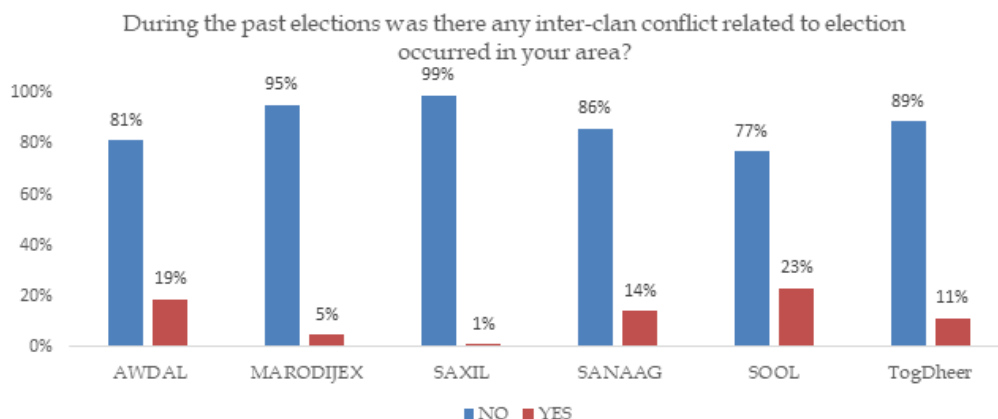
When it comes to the suitability of their nearest polling station, the vast majority of all survey respondents reported to find their nearest polling station to be suitable for them to vote.



**Figure 6.6 Indicating The clan conflicts in six regions in Somaliland.**

Many of the factors that drive armed clan conflicts revolve around grazing land, water points, land ownership, livestock, and politics which are being converted into gains for their clan. When it comes to clan conflicts, the regions vary from east to west. The above figure shows the possibility of clan conflicts within the six regions. The percentage of clan conflicts of the three eastern regions of Somaliland (Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer) is higher than three western regions. The highest clan conflicts according to survey respondents occur in the Sool region with 41% reported yes and 59% said no.

Awdal will be the highest clan conflict for the three western regions then Maroodi Jeex and Sahil is the lowest expected clan conflict.



**Figure 6.7 Clan conflict and Elections**

During the elections the clan conflicts whether armed or unarmed are inevitable and certain. The upcoming elections are composed of parliament and local council elections with a total of 993 candidates from 23 districts running for candidacy. This will touch each and every clan and sub clan. With this knowledge, law enforcements and the peace keeping institutions should add to the account and put procedures in place to mitigate possible clan conflicts. Although previous elections have largely remained peaceful, the above figure does reflect that clan conflicts are inevitable and have occurred in the past. The percentage inter-clan conflicts of three eastern regions are higher than three western regions. Survey respondents from the Awdal region reported to have experienced (19%) inter-clan conflicts in previous elections.

## RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

Below are the main recommendations that has emerged from the study

### National Election Commission

- The NEC should continue to work closely with civil society on issues of women's and youth participation and on how to ensure effective and inclusive systems for voting, counting and announcement of results.

### Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

- The civil society Civil society should continue with increasing the level of campaigns and programmes that are currently underway (eg. on voter awareness) etc. This should be allied to a greater voter/civic awareness programme
- Use the lessons from the 2017 elections that are in the SONSAF assessment booklet. With the NEC, civil society should undertake the tasks assigned to it using the SONSAF process to enlighten government, Parliament and the public, especially on the thorny questions of clan and party relationships. This could be done on the presumed basis that the politicization of clans cannot be good for democratisation, in that wider political, social, and welfare considerations need to be taken into account (including electing and monitoring competent candidates and other politicians).
- Civil society should liaise with political parties on ensuring good quotas for women and youth and making these positive campaign points for the parties to attract greater support. Regular monitoring of this would be useful.
- Existing parliamentarians should ensure a rigorous separation between parties and political associations until registration is finally completed and approved. The process needs to be transparent and constitutional.
- CSOs should lobby on behave of people with disability to ensure access to polling stations

### Political Parties

- Parties should ensure good quotas for women (we were going to add youth, but this now appears a completed task) and make these positive campaign points which would fit with their rhetoric.

### International Community

- International community supporters of a free and fair election should be aware of the current problems outlined in the sections above and seek dialogue with relevant players (especially but not exclusively government) on the issues of complaints on free and fair electoral process.

### Government

- 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. Adhere to the provisions of the Media Act, illegal harassment of journalists:
- Ensure a secure environment for all those involved in electorally-related work, including party agents, youth helpers, and domestic and international observers, and provide sufficient security.
- Ensure the necessary measures are in place to ensure the mitigation steps are installed to .

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

Abokor, A, et al (2003) ‘Very much a Somaliland-run election’: A report of the Somaliland local elections of December 2002, CIIR , London.

Academy for peace and Development <https://apd-ipp.com/apd-somaliland/programs/democratization-and-elections/> Cited March 2021

Bradbury, M. – Becoming Somaliland. Oxford, James Currey (“African Issues”), 2008, 271 p., bibl., index Somaliland: Facing the Challenges of Free and Fair Elections.v

Economic outlook report, Ministry of Planning and National Development ( MoPND) 2020

### **Prevent COVID19- during the election**



Figure 7.0 Maan Consulting Lead consultant presenting the findings of the pre-election assessment validation workshop.



Fadal, M.O (2009) Institutionalizing Democracy in Somaliland. Hargeisa, Somaliland. Social Research and Development Institute (SORA DI)

Law no 20 refers to the 2001 'Presidential & Local Elections Law', plus its amendments relating to each subsequent election. A new amendment relates to the forthcoming local election.

Lewis, I.M. 1988. A Modern History of Somalia: Colorado: Westview Press.

Michael Walls (2008) The Search for Peace: An Indigenous Approach to State-building , APD/Interpeace, pp 35

NEC election reports; 2005;2010;2017

Somaliland non-state actors forum 2010 (SONSAF) post presidential report 2010.

Somalilandlaw.com, 'Somaliland Voters' Registration Law and Regulation' ([http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland\\_Voter\\_Reg\\_Law\\_Regs\\_2016.pdf](http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Voter_Reg_Law_Regs_2016.pdf))

SONSAF Post-Election December 2017 report

Walls, M and Kibble, S (2011) 'Briefing – Somaliland: progress, state and outsiders', Review of African Political Economy, 38 (128): 338.

**APPENDICES**

**Voters challenge Questionnaire:**

Region: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the respondent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the nominator: \_\_\_\_\_

**The impact of drought on voters**

1. Are you registered to vote?
2. Is this your usual residential area?
  - a. Yes (if yes, skip to question 3)
  - b. No
3. Are you displaced for reasons related to droughts?
  - a. Yes.
  - b. No
4. Has there being any drought in your area for the last month or so?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (if no, skip to 6)
5. Did the drought caused you not to register to vote?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. If yes, please explain the difficulties that you have experience to take part in voter registration process

---

---

---

---



---

---

**16. Do you feel that the nearest polling station is suitable location for you to vote?**

- a. Yes                      b. No

**17. If no, what would you recommend to the authorities?**

---

---

---

---

**THE IMPACT OF INTER CLAN CONFLICTS ON VOTERS**

**18. Has there been any clan conflict in this area in recent times?**

- a. Yes                      b. No (if no, skip the 20 Q.)

**19. If yes, what was the main reasons of this clan conflict?**

---

---

---

**20. During the past elections was there any inter clan violence related to  
Election in this area?**

- a. Yes                      b. No

**21. If yes, did that inter clan violence restricted from you to vote/register?**

- a. Yes                      b. No

**22. Do you feel fear for a potential inter clan conflict which might happen in the coming local and  
parliamentary elections?**

- a. Yes                      b. No

**23. If yes give reason what might be happen?**

---

---

---

**24. Are there any security forces permanently present in this area?**

7. Is there any person of your family or person you know who did not participated voter registration for the reason due to drought?
- a. Yes                      b. No
8. Do you expect any drought which might cause you or someone in your family, which is not vote in the coming elections local and parliamentary?
- a. Yes                      b. No

**IMPACT OF POLLING STATION DISTANCE ON VOTER**

9. Is there any polling station in your area?

a. Yes                      b. No

10. If no what is the reason?

---



---

11. How long does it take you to travel to the nearest polling station? (Circle)

- a) 5mins – 30mins  
b) 31mins – 1hr  
c) 1:1hr – 1 1/2hr  
d) 1 1/2hr – 2hrs  
e) 2hrs and above

12. Are there any difficulties that prevent you in reaching or travelling to the polling station?

a. Yes                      b. No (if no, skip to 14)

13. If yes, please describe these difficulties

---



---



---

14. Are there any possible threats or insecurities in this area that can prevent you to travel to the polling station?

a. Yes                      b. No (Skip to 13)

15. If yes, please describe the kind of threat that you experienced or likely to happen?

---



---

## FGD Guide Questions

Region: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

---

### Introduction

The purpose of these guide questions is to probe in order to obtain rich information from key stakeholders for the pre-election study to assist in identifying potential challenges and opportunities and develop mitigation mechanism.

### Importance of election

1. In your opinion what does the upcoming election mean to the community in your region?

### Legal framework

2. To what level do the voters understand their rights for these coming local and parliamentary elections?

### Potential Risk

3. During the last elections/voter registration was there any violence related to the election occurred in the area? If yes, where it occurred?
4. If there was conflict, what were the possible reasons of those conflicts?
5. What do you think will be potential risks?
6. Was there any violence or any incident that has occurred in the last elections?
7. What would you like to see done to mitigate any potential risks of the elections?
8. What type of community conflicts occurred during election or pre-election period?

- a. Yes b. No

**25. Who do you rely on for insecurity**

**26. If yes, please select the specific type of security forces**

- a) Police
- b) Coast guard
- c) Immigration
- d) Military forces

**27. Where is your nearest low enforcement force? Name place or tell us a distance?**

**28. When is most likely for any inter clan conflict to accrue?** Please, select the three most risk ranking them (1 highest risk, 2 medium risk, 3 lowest risk)

		Rank as they are big each
A	During election campaign	
B	During voting in the polling station	
C	During election results	

**29. Does any member of your family or someone that you know have been prevented from voting due to clan conflict during the last election?**

- a. Yes                      b. No

**KII Guides**

Region: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Title of the interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Importance of election**

1. In your opinion what does the coming election mean to the community in your region?

---

---

---

**Role**

2. What role would you play in the coming elections?

---

---

---

**Legal framework**

3. To what level do voters understands their rights election right for these upcoming local and parliamentary elections?

---

---

---

**Potential Risk**

### **Clan conflicts**

9. Is there any inter clan conflict that happened in the region last election or recently?
10. What were the underlying causes of those conflicts?
11. What is the best means of eliminating or limiting those occurrences during elections?

### **Voter registration**

12. Do you think that the voter registration occurred in the most effective manner?
13. Are there any flashpoints or areas of potential conflict in this region?

### **Voter education**

14. Has there been sufficient voter registration campaigns in place during the voter registration stage?
15. what is most effective sort mitigations mechanism of any conflicts for the coming election

### **Role of NGOs during elections (only for NGOs)**

16. In terms of your organisation, what is your role of solving conflicts related to elections?
17. Do you think the electoral situation room will assist the elections?
18. If yes, please describe what do you expect it will help you
19. Are there any mechanisms that your office receives elections related conflict occurring in the region?
20. Is there any collaboration with CSO during elections period, If yes what type of collaboration?
21. What are the major sources of receiving information related to the conflicts that happen in your regional areas? Please list the main sources.
22. Is there any collaboration with CSO during elections period, If yes what type of collaboration?



10. What is the best means of eliminating or limiting those occurrences during elections?

---

---

---

**Voter registration**

11. Do you think that the voter registration occurred in the most effective manner?

---

---

---

12. Where there any flashpoints or areas of potential conflict?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Voter education**

13. Has there been sufficient voter registration campaigns in place during the voter registration stage?

---

---

---

4. During the last elections/voter registration was there any violence related to the election occurred in the area? If yes, where it occurred? remove

---

---

---

\_\_\_\_\_prob\_\_\_\_\_

5. If there was conflicts, what were the possible reasons of those conflicts?

---

---

---

6. What do you think will be potential risks?

---

---

---

---

---

---

7. What more could be done to mitigate or prevent potential risks of the coming election

---

---

---

#### **Clan conflicts**

8. Is there any inter clan conflict that happened in the region last election or recently?

---

---

---

9. What were the underlying causes of those conflicts?

---

---

---



