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Somaliland decides

Domestic election observers' report on the 2017 presidential elections



May 2018

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Acknowledgements

This report was written by Yussuf Ali Hassan, election consultant, with assistance from: Mohamed Ahmed Mohamoud, head of the observation mission; SONSAF's executive director, Ahmed Abdillahi Duale; SONSAF's election project coordinator; and Saferworld's Abdishakur Hassan Kayd, Abdijalil Dahir Afqarshe and Peter Mackenzie.

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Disclaimer: The terms used in this report are based on Somaliland's existing legal framework. The map of Somaliland used is based on Article 2 of the Somaliland constitution. The use of the terms 'national' and 'country' to describe existing institutions and electoral processes in Somaliland are subject to Somaliland's own legal framework, comprising the Somaliland constitution and other national laws.

Contents

Foreword	i
Map of Somaliland	ii
Executive summary	iii
Summary of key findings	iv
Recommendations	vi
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Approach and methodology	2
2. Institutional and legal frameworks	8
2.1. Political system	8
2.2. Legal framework	8
2.3. Institutional framework	13
3. Pre-election period	15
3.1. Voter registration	15
3.2. Training and education	18
4. Presidential election period	20
4.1. Election campaigning	20
4.2. Political parties	22
4.3. Breaches and penalties	22
4.4. The media	23
4.5. Voting operations and election day	24
4.6. Verification of results	26
5. Recommendations	31
6. Appendices and bibliography	35
6.1. Appendices	35
6.2. Bibliography	46

Tables and figures

Table 1: Summary of DEOMs in Somaliland	3
Table 2: Deployment of observers per region	4
Table 3: Signatories to the code of conduct for the political parties in August 2017	12
Table 4: Voters registered per electoral region	16
Table 5: Voters registered and collected voting cards	17
Table 6: List of eligible registered voters per region	17
Table 7: List of electoral staff estimates deployed on 13 November 2017	18
Table 8: Summary of civic education activities	19
Table 9: Turnout of valid voters	27
Table 10: Votes cast in the presidential election on 13 Nov 2017	27
Table 11: Percentage of valid votes received per party per region	28
Table 12: Per cent of valid votes per region	28
Table 13: Total votes cast nationally	28
Table 14: Summary of post election general observations	40
Table 15: Summary of critical incident observations	43
Figure 1: Structure of the Domestic Election Observation Mission	5
Figure 2: Votes received per political party per region	29

Acronyms and abbreviations

AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil society organisations
DEOM	Domestic Election Observation Mission
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DPU	Development Planning Unit
EMB	Electoral Monitoring Board
EU	European Union
HAVOYOCO	Horn of Africa Youth Voluntary Committee
IEOM	International Election Observation Mission
MMC	Media Monitoring Committee
NAGAAD	Network of Women's Organizations in Somaliland
NEC	National Electoral Commission
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
SAYS	Somaliland Association for Youth Salvation
SCSEF	Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum
SOLJA	Somaliland Journalists Association
SONSAF	Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
SOSDO	Somali for Skills Development Organisation
SUNGO	Sool United Non-governmental Organisation
UCL	University College London
UK	United Kingdom

Political parties

Kulmiye	Peace, Unity and Development Party
UCID	Unity and Welfare Party (United Justice Party)
Waddani	Somaliland National Party

Foreword

I AM GRATEFUL TO the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) and the Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum (SCISEF), and extend special thanks to Mohamed Ahmed Mohamoud, SONSAF's executive director, Jaffer Mohamed Gadaweyne, SONSAF's programme coordinator, Ahmed Abdillahi Duale, SONSAF's election project coordinator, Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi, SONSAF's finance manager, Sharmarke Ismail Idiris, SONSAF's advocacy and lobbying officer, and Farah Yusuf Hussein, all of whom gave their time and ideas generously.

Special thanks go to media consultant Mohamed Abdalla Elmi, statistics consultant Emmanuel Oluka, and their teams – the data entry and analysing units – for their hard work in capturing, analysing, and reporting accurate data throughout the presidential election.

I would like to thank civil society organisations, specifically the SCISEF domestic election observers, for their hard work at voter registration centres throughout Somaliland.

Special thanks also to the National Electoral Commission, voter registration stakeholders, political parties, government, media, and citizens, for their role in the third direct presidential election process, which resulted in the election held on 13 November 2017. This has proved an impressive achievement at this time in Somaliland and the East Africa region.

Special thanks are due to the Government of Somaliland for its timely allocation of funds and to Saferworld, the EU and DANIDA for their continued financial and technical support to voter education on voter registration processes, elections and democratisation processes in Somaliland.

Last but not least, I owe great appreciation to Abdishakur Hassan Kayd and Abdijalil Dahir Afqarshe, who managed the Somaliland elections project for Saferworld, for their excellent leadership, contributions, guidance, input and support throughout the process of finalising this report.

Sincerely,



Mustafe Sa'ad Dhimbil
Chairman of SONSAF

Map of Somaliland



Source: Ministry of Planning, Republic of Somaliland. 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

ON 13 NOVEMBER 2017, 565,617 of Somaliland's 704,089 registered voters cast their votes in the third direct presidential election held in Somaliland since the reinstatement of political independence in 1991. Some voters began queuing at polling stations as early as 5.30am.

The incumbent, President Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud (Silaanyo) chose not to seek a second term. Muse Bihi Abdi, the candidate of the ruling Kulmiye party, won the majority of the popular vote in an election considered generally fair and credible by domestic and international observers. This election showed that a genuine political culture of peaceful and democratic transfer of power, rarely seen in African politics, has matured in Somaliland. At his inauguration on 13 December 2017, Somaliland's fifth president and third chosen through direct election shook hands with his predecessor as he took office.

The Republic of Somaliland has successfully completed seven direct elections, including:

- A popular referendum on the ratification of the Somaliland Constitution (2001)
- Two direct local council elections (2002 and 2012)
- One direct election for the House of Representatives (2005)
- Three direct presidential elections (2003, 2010 and 2017)

Despite the extension of the president's term of office for a period of two years and four months due largely to drought and technical issues, this election showed an impressive improvement over past elections in terms of administration and democratisation.

This was an election of firsts. It marked the first time that:

- An incumbent president of Somaliland chose not to seek a second term
- An African country used iris-recognition technology in its biometric voter registration
- An incumbent president of Somaliland prohibited the use of government transport and public resources for campaigning
- An incumbent president of Somaliland produced a decree ordering civil servants not to campaign on behalf of the ruling party
- An incumbent president of Somaliland produced a decision legitimising the equal use of state radio and television by all political parties contesting the election, including the ruling Kulmiye party and the opposition UCID and Waddani parties
- A live television debate took place among the three presidential and three vice presidential candidates, greatly enhancing Somaliland's democratic image
- The two districts of Xudun and Taleex in Somaliland's eastern region were able to vote for the first time since the 2001 constitutional referendum

After declaring the reinstatement of its independence in 1991, Somaliland successfully managed processes of reconciliation, reintegration and reconstruction. On 31 May 2001, Somaliland's constitution was ratified through a public referendum, with the support of 97 per cent of over 1.1 million voters.

Based on the democratic principles stipulated in the constitution, Somaliland enacted electoral legislation and adopted inclusive policies based on a multi-party democratic system in 2002. The emergence of a constitutional democracy and establishment of institutional frameworks continued, and Somaliland created platforms for the progressive development of democratic processes. This democratisation process has matured through the completion of six democratic elections between 2002 and 2017. All six elections were attended by international observers, who recognised them as fair and representative.

This report is the result of a collaboration between the Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) and the Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum (SCISEF), with support from Saferworld's Somaliland team. To present a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the administration of this election, the author conducted a literature review and gathered data before, during and after the election and announcement of results. This report draws upon three main sources of data: the reports returned by 620 domestic election observers; a review of relevant secondary literature; and the DEOM's monitoring of media and political party performance.

This report evaluates the overall presidential election, including the geographic distribution of polling stations, the implementation of election campaigns, the recruitment and training of electoral staff, the distribution of election materials, polling day procedures, security, and the announcement of election results.

This report is part of the European Union's technical assistance to Somaliland's general elections. This report aims to identify and assess electoral gaps in the post-election administrative and planning process. Furthermore, the EU's technical assistance aims to detect challenges to the election process and maximise election transparency and accountability to pave the way for further elections, by producing recommendations to stakeholders that must be addressed before the next polling day.

Summary of key findings

Voter registration: Somaliland successfully completed its voter registration process in 2016 and 2017. The voter registration used iris recognition technology to ensure against multiple or fraudulent registration, the first time any country in Africa has done so. The NEC issued a final voter register comprising 704,089 voters verified to participate in the presidential election.

Election campaigning: The electoral campaign was peaceful in general. The NEC allocated 21 days for campaigning, with an equal schedule of seven days distributed for the campaign of each of the three national political parties. The political parties respected this timeframe. However, during the campaign period observers noted a number of instances in which parties directly addressed each other using hate speech and tribalist wording.¹

Media: This was the first time in Somaliland that the incumbent president issued a presidential decree² establishing equal use of state media, namely Radio Hargeisa and national television, among the three national political parties contesting the election. On 12 November 2017, the NEC announced that access to certain social media platforms would be blocked temporarily, starting on 13 November 2017 at 6pm, until the NEC announced preliminary election results.

¹ The electoral Code of Conduct for political parties prohibits the use of hate speech and tribalist wording, which encourages voters to vote along tribal affiliations.

² Somalilandlaw.com, 'Somaliland Law', (<http://www.somalilandlaw.com/>)

Geographical coverage: The election was conducted in all six electoral regions and 21 electoral districts in Somaliland. This was the first time that voter registration and voting took place in Xudun and Taleex of Sool region.

Voting operations and election day: Observers' findings indicated that the necessary election materials successfully reached all polling stations. Polling stations generally opened on time at 7am and the representatives of political parties, electoral staff and security forces were reported present at all polling stations observed. The closure of polling stations across Somaliland was reported to have taken place in a peaceful and orderly manner. In nearly all polling stations the vote counting process was reported to be very good (86 per cent) or good (13 per cent). Both domestic and international observers noted some irregularities, but none serious enough to undermine the credibility of the election.

Polling stations: 1,642 polling stations were established across Somaliland. Voting operations did not take place in five polling stations in Maroodi Jeex and Togdheer regions, namely Lo'ka Arroor, Illinta Dhexe, Iskgoyska Sheekh Madar, Qori-Lugud A-2 and Qori-Lugud B-2. The election was not held in three polling stations in Sanaag region, namely Damal Cirbiide, Cali Tima Go-go'ane and Sarmaanyo. A ballot box was placed at the Dheriyo #968-1 polling station in Sanaag region, but no votes were cast on election day.

Women and youth: The local observers noted stronger-than-expected participation of women and youth in voting, and that many youth worked effectively as polling station officials.

Complaints and appeals: The Waddani political party made several complaints through the media, but did not file them according to formal procedures or legal channels. This led to post-election tensions and eventually riots led by youth in Hargeisa, Burco and Ceerigaabo. The riots continued for about one hour before police forces quelled them, resulting in casualties including four deaths and five people injured.

Election insights: This was the first election in which the ruling and opposition parties had equal access to state media channels. It also produced the first-ever presidential debate broadcast live on national television, the first use of iris-recognition technology in an African election, and Somaliland's first election in which the incumbent president did not stand for re-election.

Security: Domestic and international observers both concluded on 15 November 2017 that the presidential election had been conducted peacefully.

Election observation: Domestic and international observers both put out press releases that contained positive initial evaluations of the presidential election. The international election observation mission stated that they had not witnessed irregularities on a scale which would undermine the integrity of the result. SONSAF's press release on 15 November 2017 stated that "the presidential election held on 13 November 2017 was peaceful and smooth administratively, and at the same time the presidential election was free and fair."

Recommendations

Parliament

Legal framework: The existing election law³ is not sufficient with regard to cases involving theft of electoral materials, and includes no penalties for offenses committed by political parties. Therefore, we recommend reforming both this law, which governs presidential and local council elections, and the law on House of Representatives elections,⁴ to bring them in line with constitutional principles. The electoral code of conduct should also be reformed and penalties applied to political parties for breaches of the code, including failure to use legal channels for election complaints, and/or use of the media to lodge complaints without properly filing them with the NEC. The election law and electoral code of conduct should also address instances of theft of election materials or propaganda against the electoral process by political parties.

Voter registration: The custody of the voter register and its periodic updates must be established by law, ideally through reform of the Voter Registration Law.⁵ Updates to the register should be completed a minimum of 12 months before the next election. We also recommend the separation of voter registration and the civil registration process, because domestic observers reported that there was confusion about the simultaneous registrations which took place in 2016, especially in Togdheer region where voters confused which ID card was supposed to be used on voting day. The DEOM recommends strengthening measures to prevent underage voters from registering.

IRIS technology: We recommend that the operation of iris technology be standardised and established under the Voter Registration Law.

Government of Somaliland

Planning and implementation: The process of planning and implementing election calendars, budgets and financial plans should be part of the national strategic plan. The elections calendar must be published prior to elections and adhered to by all stakeholders.

Election postponements: Timely elections should be adopted and insisted upon by all stakeholders. Dates for the House of Elders election process should be determined immediately, as the House of Elders has never undergone direct elections. The House of Representatives election was due on 29 September 2010, but has been delayed three times. Local council elections were due in November 2017 but have been delayed to 2019. All of these postponements are unconstitutional and are against the law.

National Electoral Commission

Civic and voter education: The NEC's civic education should use lessons learnt from past interventions in 2016–17. The NEC should improve the content of messages to adequately inform citizens how to participate in elections and pursue complaints through the proper channels established by law rather than violence.

Campaign: The NEC should further improve the campaign process, in particular the code of conduct for political parties and regulation of campaign speeches. The electoral code of conduct should be reformed and sanctions imposed on hate speech, tribalism and inflammatory words directed by one party toward another, which risk undermining democratisation processes.

3 Somalilandlaw.com, 'Law No. 20/2001' (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/electoral_laws.html#PLCLaw17Eng)

4 Somalilandlaw.com, 'Somaliland House of Representatives Election Law' (http://somalilandlaw.com/representatives_election_law.htm)

5 Somalilandlaw.com, 'Somaliland Voters' Registration Law and Regulations' (http://somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Voter_Reg_Law___Regs_2016.pdf)

Blockage of social media: We recommend that NEC impose no further blockages on social media in the future unless the election laws stipulate such actions and permit the NEC to do so.

We recommend that the NEC:

- Reinforce its commitment to the rule of law and make sure that electoral offences are penalised in accordance with the law.
- Strengthen dissemination of timely information to the public to discourage the airing of complaints through media without following formal procedures.
- Consider the consequences of complaints and adopt timely countermeasures before tensions emerge.
- Strengthen responsibility and accountability for electoral materials, safety, protection and inspection upon dispatching and return.
- Ensure that all electoral terms are translated into the Somali language and adopted as standard terminologies for elections.

National political parties

National political parties must show a greater sense of accountability to the rule of law and pursue complaints through the appropriate legal channels established by law. Political parties should recognise that their practices and attitudes can have a rapid and major impact on peace and stability in Somaliland, which can reflect back upon the party itself.

Media

The media should verify all information received from concerned parties, and should not broadcast false information. It should be accountable for the information it disseminates through news outlets, and perform its work in compliance with the relevant laws and codes of conduct.

SONSAF and SCISEF

SONSAF and SCISEF should improve their relationship 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

The international community should consider improving its technical support for elections by investing in theoretical and practical trainings for the government, the NEC and national political parties, in order to decentralise knowledge of elections and their principles in Somaliland.

1

Introduction

SOMALILAND'S 13 NOVEMBER 2017 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION was held peacefully throughout 21 electoral districts, a significant improvement in geographical coverage compared to the 19 districts of previous elections.

The Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF) successfully led the deployment of a Domestic Election Observation Mission (DEOM) through the Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum (SCISEF). This included the selection and training of 620 domestic observers and their deployment to observe election day and post-election processes. By adhering to a code of conduct and ethics, the DEOM committed to neutral and impartial observation of the presidential election. This report presents the findings of the DEOM, and draws upon a literature review, preliminary reports, briefing papers, and press releases issued during the process.

Funding for the DEOM was provided by the European Union through Saferworld, which also provided technical support. This report is intended to inform future policies and decisions of the European Union, Saferworld, the Somaliland National Electoral Commission (NEC), the Somaliland government, Somaliland's political parties, civil society organisations and media, and other donors supporting elections in Somaliland, including DANIDA, DFID and USAID.

In the run-up to the presidential election, crowds of supporters gather at Freedom Park in Hargeisa for a rally in support of the ruling party, Kulmiye.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



1.1. Approach and methodology

Since the inception of domestic election observations in Somaliland, SONSAF, with the financial and technical support of the EU through Saferworld, has adopted a standard and comprehensive long-term election observation methodology, including standardised questionnaires. This methodology, adapted from EU⁶ and AU⁷ observation processes, focuses on objective assessment of all aspects and stages of the electoral cycle. It ensures the consistency, accuracy and comprehensiveness of election information, as well as the thorough analysis of information drawn from the observer questionnaires.

This approach and methodology connects assessment of the electoral cycle to broader issues of democracy, the rule of law and human rights. SONSAF's election observation methods include the long-term field presence of domestic election observers, maximising the engagement of civil society, recruitment and training of domestic observers, impartial and independent assessment, non-interference in the electoral process, and cooperation with the NEC, political parties, government and international community. SONSAF ensures openness among all electoral stakeholders including the public by issuing preliminary statements shortly after the completion of each stage of the electoral cycle or in response to outstanding issues.

1.1.1. Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum (SONSAF)

SONSAF was established in 2008 to represent the voices of Somaliland's CSOs and other non-state actors. SONSAF provides a formal and legitimate structure through which non-state actors can engage more effectively with decision makers in government structures and the international community in support of poverty reduction, democracy, and peacebuilding.⁸

The NEC accredited SONSAF to take part in the domestic election observation mission in accordance with Article 68 of the Somaliland Presidential and Local Council Elections Law (Law No. 20/2001) as amended in 2017.

Supporters of the political party Waddani gather at Freedom Park in Hargeisa in November 2017.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



⁶ Election Observation and Democratic Support (2016), 'Handbook for European Union Election Observation' (https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/handbook_for_eu_eom_2016.pdf)

⁷ African Union Commission, 'African Union Election Observation Manual' (<http://au-elections.org/documents/auob.pdf>)

⁸ SONSAF, 'Organisational structure' (<http://www.sonsaf.org/about/organizational-structure/index.php>)

Supporters of the political party UCID gather at Freedom Park in Hargeisa, where the presidential candidate, Faisal Ali Warabe, addressed the crowd.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



1.1.2. The Somaliland Civil Society Election Forum (SCISEF)

SONSAF's DEOM initiative started in Somaliland as part of the 2010 presidential election, with the support of the EU and technical assistance from Saferworld. SONSAF formed SCISEF in 2012 to increase the engagement of Somaliland's civil society in the monitoring and observation of voter registration and elections at the regional and national levels. SCISEF is an independent, impartial, and non-partisan electoral observation body that works as long-term observers.

Table 1: Summary of DEOMs in Somaliland

2010 presidential election	2012 local council elections	2016/2017 voter registration	2017 presidential election
SONSAF directly deployed 677 trained DEOs. ⁹	SONSAF established SCISEF, which deployed 800 DEOs to approximately 50 per cent of polling stations. ¹⁰	SCISEF deployed 180 DEOs to approximately 65 per cent of voter registration centres (VRCs).	SONSAF/SCISEF trained and deployed 620 DEOs and 47 SCISEF members – 667 in total – covering approximately 41 per cent of all polling stations.

SONSAF established the organisational structure, management and coordination mechanisms of the 620-member DEOM and launched the SCISEF on 25 November 2015, comprising 88 CSOs. Through SCISEF, SONSAF has engaged civil society and increased its role and space in election processes.

SCISEF's scope and mandate as stated in its terms of reference and code of conduct include:

- Providing a long-term domestic election observer mission to assess the pre-election, election and post-election periods¹¹
- Observing, monitoring, and reporting on election procedures through the use of policy briefings, policy dialogue, and mediation where applicable
- Engaging with key stakeholders including the NEC, political parties, the government, the media, civil society, the EU, and other local and international actors
- Assessing the pre-election period, focusing on the legal framework, planning and implementation, training and education and voter registration

⁹ Makokha J and Ali Y (2013), 'Somalilanders speak: lessons from the November 2012 local elections', April, p 2.

¹⁰ Kibble S, Walls M (2013), 'Swerves on the road': Report by International Election Observers on the 2012 local elections in Somaliland' (London: Progressio). Available at: <http://www.progressio.org.uk/sites/progressio.org.uk/files/Swerves-on-the-road-2013.pdf>; also available at <http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Swerves-on-the-road-2013.pdf>

¹¹ Makokha J, Ali Y (2013), 'Somalilanders Speak, Lessons Learned from the November 2012 Local Elections', pp. 4; 11, available at http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somalilanders-speak_-_lessons_from_2012_elections.pdf

- Assessing the extent to which the constitutional and legal frameworks guarantee fundamental freedoms and human rights
- Assessing the NEC's impartiality and independence, as well as its freedom of action
- Ensuring that the electoral system is fairly implemented and that electoral competition is premised on the freedom of association through the existence of political parties
- Assessing the extent to which access to and use of public resources for campaigning purposes are equitable
- Reiterating the clearly defined rules for political party funding, and applying the rules impartially in case of violations or attempted violations
- Checking the extent to which voter education is non-partisan
- Ensuring that an independent media authority is responsible for monitoring and regulating contesting parties' and candidates' equitable access to public media
- Producing preliminary, impartial reporting on the performance of voter registration and electoral processes through the collection of factual information and documentation, in line with the code of conduct and guidelines outlined in SONSAF's Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions.¹²

1.1.3. Domestic election observers

SCISEF convened an 18-member Civil Society National Task Force on Domestic Election Observers to participate in the observer selection process, including setting the recruitment criteria, vetting the selected candidates and monitoring the overall process.

SCISEF assisted SONSAF in recruiting 620 domestic election observers (DEOs) and conducting DEO training in each region, to familiarise trainees with:

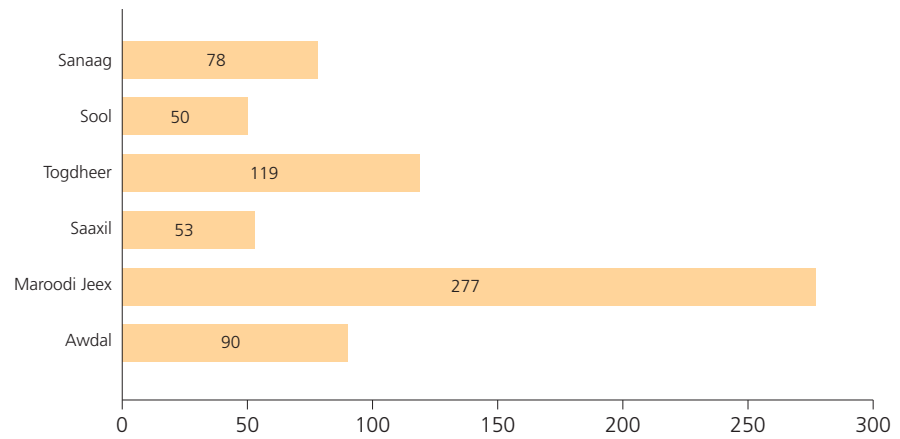
- standard electoral cycle stages and instruments
- the objectives of the DEOM
- the role of DEOs in accordance with laws and regulations
- the code of conduct guiding the performance of DEOs
- the ethics of non-partisan reporting.

SONSAF and SCISEF deployed 667 DEOs in six regions containing 21 electoral districts and 1,642 polling stations across Somaliland, 41 per cent of all polling stations operating on election day. Each observer was expected to file 82 general questions and 10 critical questions; in total each observer was to assess 92 questions at his or her assigned polling station.

Table 2: Deployment of observers per region

No	Region	Final Polling Stations	# of observers trained per region	People with disabilities	SCISEF roving observers	Total observers per region
1	Awdal	234	76	2	12	90
2	Maroodi Jeex	535	232	10	35	277
3	Saaxil	138	53			53
4	Togdheer	319	119			119
5	Sool	207	50			50
6	Sanaag	209	78			78
		1,642	608	12	47	667

¹² SONSAF's mission consisted of SCISEF which hosted domestic observers, regional coordinators, the Media Monitoring Unit, Data Analysing Unit and report writing.



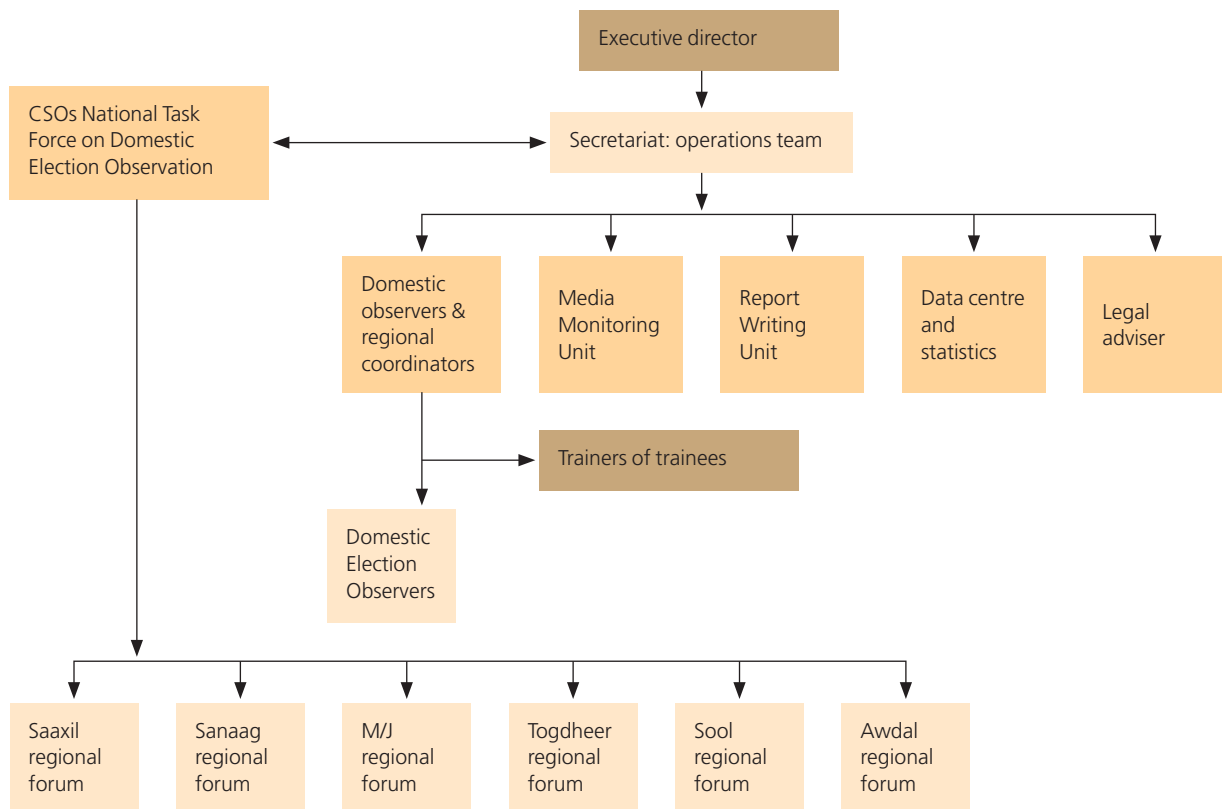
In addition to their standard reporting, the observers submitted special reports related to critical incidents, which were intended to immediately draw attention to and possibly trigger action over violations of election procedures or laws. The numbers and types of critical incidents that were reported by election observers are detailed in table 15 on page 43.

SCISEF trained DEOs before their deployment to the observation mission. During these trainings, DEOs were familiarised with the observation questionnaires, the observers’ code of conduct and the ethics of observation, such as neutrality, impartiality, and non-interference. They were adequately trained not to express any bias or preference in relation to government authorities, political parties, or candidates.

Training of domestic observers

The training of domestic observers was one-day training conducted simultaneously across all the six electoral regions of Somaliland on 8 November 2017.

Figure 1: Structure of the Domestic Election Observation Mission



1.1.4. The Data Unit

SONSAF established an elections data management system and database with external technical support. The system is an open source tool that was tailored to include standard, fact-based, verifiable indicators to gather and analyse election observation data from questionnaires.

SONSAF recruited a team of ten personnel to handle the system's Open Data Kit (ODK). An ODK consultant was placed in the data centre at the SONSAF office and a report writing team participated in sessions held there. The elections data management system supported the standards of open data. Similar data management for observer missions was recently carried out through the Apollo election system in Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia.

The approach was as follows:

- Saferworld and SONSAF trained and deployed 667 short term observers (STOs) on election day, all of whom reported back using coded SMS on opening, polling, closing and counting.
- All observers agreed to send ten messages at set times throughout the day as they observed the critical components of election day operations, including the set up and opening of polling stations, the polling/voting process, and the counting and declaration of results.
- Observers used two checklists: a standard checklist to describe the full process from the opening to the closing of polling stations and a second checklist on incident reporting.
- SMS integration into the election system was complete and functional.
- The system had a messaging feature that enabled sending bulk SMSs to all observers.
- The data unit analysed SMS data sent from polling stations and compiled summaries of results within a short period of time.

The data management system provided a cheap, efficient and effective means of data collection, verification and analysis that met international standards for election data. Little time was required to release reports on election day, since the reports were received in short intervals from all locations where observers were deployed. The security and integrity of the data was of critical importance, and all information was protected by the server. Only trained observers who were issued with observer IDs could submit reports. The checklists developed and used during the process were within the parameters of procedures and guidelines set by NEC.

A capacity building training in Hargeisa, where women campaigners learnt about the electoral cycle, legal structures, communication skills and ethical campaigning practices.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



1.1.5. The Media Monitoring Unit

SONSAF established a two-person Media Monitoring Unit (MMU) headed by a media analyst. The MMU monitored media performance on a daily basis, capturing all relevant information related to the voter registration and election, including press releases made by various stakeholders. It collected all information broadcast and published by TV networks, Radio Hargeisa, BBC, VOA, newspapers and online media outlets. On a monthly basis, it summarised and analysed this information to determine positive and negative aspects of the media's performance, the media's adherence to the code of conduct (signed by the NEC and the media before the commencement of voter registration) and use of the media by specific actors and political parties.

1.1.6. Post-election consultation workshop

SONSAF hosted a one-day consultation workshop on 12 December 2017. Participants included 120 representatives of different electoral stakeholders, including NEC. The objective was to review the post-election environment and gather comments, views and opinions on the election process. Participants were divided into small groups to cover different components of the electoral cycle, and contributed recommendations and lessons learnt.

2

Institutional and legal frameworks

2.1. Political system

SOMALILAND ADOPTED 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. It is divided into six regions and 42 districts.¹³

In 2002, Somaliland introduced a political system based on multiparty democracy.¹⁴ The constitution limits the number of political parties to three at one time, as stated in paragraph 2 of Article 9. In order to uphold the unity of the nation, the constitution prohibits any political party to be based on regionalism or clannism.

2.2. Legal framework

SONSAF conducted an extensive review of the existing electoral laws in Somaliland to evaluate whether the presidential election of 13 November 2017 was conducted in line with international and regional election standards, including the general principles defined in international treaties and other instruments. This section focuses on electoral boundaries, electoral codes of conduct, electoral management bodies, electoral systems and legislation.

2.2.1. International election standards

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.’

¹³ See paragraph 1 of Article 5 of: Somalilandlaw.com, ‘Administrations of Regions and Districts Law No. 23/2002–2007’ (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/local_government_law.htm)

¹⁴ Article 9, paragraph 1 of the Somaliland Constitution reads: “The political system of the Republic of Somaliland shall be based on peace, cooperation, democracy and plurality of political parties.”

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 (17 December 1991).

2.2.2. Regional election standards

SONSAF's assessment looked at 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 8 July 2002 in Durban, South Africa – in particular Provision 1.2, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007).¹⁶

The principles governing democratic elections in Africa, in line with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,¹⁷ state that democratic elections are a fundamental human right:

- 1) Democratic elections are the basis of the authority of any representative government.
- 2) 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.
- 3) The holding of democratic elections is an important dimension in conflict prevention, management, and resolution.
- 4) Democratic elections should be conducted:
 - a) Freely and fairly
 - b) Under democratic constitutions and in compliance with supportive legal instruments
 - c) Under a system of separation of powers that ensures in particular, the independence of the judiciary
 - d) At regular intervals, as provided for in national constitutions
 - e) 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.

2.2.3. 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 system¹⁸ 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

¹⁵ African Union, 'Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observation and Monitoring Missions' (http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/guide-elctions/au_instr_guide_elections_eng.pdf)

¹⁶ See EX.CL/91 (V) Annex II of: African Union (2007), 'African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance' (http://archive.ipu.org/idd-E/afr_charter.pdf)

¹⁷ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'Compilation of documents or texts adopted and used by various intergovernmental, international, regional and subregional organizations aimed at promoting and consolidating democracy' (http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/compilation_democracy/ahg.htm)

¹⁸ Paragraph 2 of the Somaliland constitution reads: "The number of political parties in the Republic of Somaliland shall not exceed three".

Workers at a call centre for the Domestic Election Observers Mission in SONSAF's office, Hargeisa.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



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 freedoms as constitutional duties directed to all levels of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches as well as regional and local governments¹⁹ in a manner consistent with international conventions.²⁰

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. The election laws do not contain provisions discriminating against women.

2.2.4. Election system

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.”²¹ 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.”²²

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

¹⁹ Paragraph 1 of Article 21 of the Somaliland constitution reads: “The legislative, executive and judicial branches of the state and the local government of the regions and the districts of the Republic of Somaliland, of all levels, shall be bound by the provisions of this Part.”

²⁰ Paragraph 2 of Article 21 of the Somaliland constitution reads: “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.”

²¹ *The Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland*, ‘Article 83: Election Procedures’, paragraph 2 (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body_somaliland_constitution.htm)

²² *The Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland*, ‘Article 83: Election Procedures’, paragraph 4 (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body_somaliland_constitution.htm)

2.2.5. Election legislation and boundaries

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.

Law No.20/2001²³

The Presidential and Local Council Elections Law (Law No.20/2001) was enacted in 2001, and established an election system based on proportional representation.²⁴ 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.²⁵ It was first used for the 2002 local council elections and later in the House of Representatives election in September 2005. Since 2001 there have been no combined presidential and local council elections, and there is no clarity in the law about whether these should take place simultaneously, as the title of the law suggests.

Article 10(1) deals with polling stations: “When conducting presidential and vice presidential elections, the country shall be divided into electoral regions and shall be divided into polling stations complying with the regional boundaries²⁶ of the Republic of Somaliland.”

Article 66²⁷ establishes that the Somaliland Supreme Court is the competent court for disputes arising from presidential elections. According to Article 64(3), these disputes should be raised after the NEC declares the preliminary election results for the president and vice president. The results of the presidential elections held in Somaliland on 13 April 2003 and on 26 June 2010 were taken to the Somaliland Supreme Court.

Somaliland Political Parties Law No.14/2000/2011

This law²⁸ 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. This is meant to prevent monopolies in the multiparty system.

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 Voter Registration Law No.37/2007/2014

This law establishes the regulation and administration of the voter registration process. The law was used to regulate the recent voter registration process using iris-recognition technology.

23 Somalilandlaw.com, ‘Somaliland Electoral Laws’, (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/electoral_laws.html)

24 See Somalilandlaw.com (2017), ‘Presidential and local councils elections (amendments & consolidation) law – Law No. 20/2001 [2017]’ (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Pres___LC_2016___Consolidation___Law_2001-17_Eng_300617Fi.pdf) and its six amendments during: 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2017, consolidated text disseminated through the official public gazette published on 4 February 2017.

25 See: Somalilandlaw.com (2017), ‘Presidential and local councils elections (amendments & consolidation) law – Law No. 20/2001 [2017]’ (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Pres___LC_2016___Consolidation___Law_2001-17_Eng_300617Fi.pdf)

26 See in Article 7(1) of Somalilandlaw.com, ‘Somaliland Administration of Regions and Districts Law No. 23/2002/2007’, (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/local_government_law.htm)

27 See presidential and local council elections (Law No. 20/2001 as amended up to January 2017), JSL/M/XERM/249-4518/012017, presidential decree Lr: 0756/012017, dated 28 January 2017.

28 See Somalilandlaw.com, ‘Somaliland Political Parties Law No. 14/2000/2011’ (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body_xeerka_xisbiyadda.htm)

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 1960.²⁹ 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 is responsible for reinforcing boundaries established by law.

2.2.6. Regulations and codes of conduct

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:

- Presidential campaign code of conduct 2017
- Domestic election observers code of conduct 2017
- Media Code of Conduct for the 2017 presidential election³⁰
- Political Parties Code of Conduct for the 2017 presidential election³¹
- Electoral complaint and disputes resolution procedures.³²

Presidential election code of conduct for political parties

This code was signed by the three political parties and the NEC on 26 September 2017. It comprises 28 articles and is more extensive and comprehensive than the previous codes.³³ Paragraph 6, Article 45 states: 'Every party representative must comply with the code of conduct for the political parties and with the registration laws in force.'³⁴ The code contains a complaints mechanism, detailed in Articles 18 and 19.

Table 3: Signatories to the code of conduct for the political parties on August 2017

Name of signatory	Position	Institution
Muse Biihi Abdi	Chair	KULMIYE Party
Eng. Faysal Ali Hussein	Chair	UCID Party
Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi	Chair	WADDANI Party
Eng. Abdiqadir Iman Warsame	Chair	NEC

Source: Somaliland Voters' Registration Law and Regulations, March 2016, p 126.

Voter registration observers code of conduct³⁵

This code was issued by the NEC as part of its powers under Article 45 of the 2014 Voter Registration Law. Moreover, Voter Registration Implementation Regulations (VRIR) No: 01/2015 established in Article 48, paragraph 1 states: "The observers approved by the Commission shall observe voter registration activities being conducted at the voter registration centres. The observers shall abide by the Code of Conduct

²⁹ When Somaliland proclaimed restoration of its sovereignty in 1991, the boundaries of districts returned to the status quo of before 1 July 1960.

³⁰ See Media Code of Conduct for 2017, presidential election, 16 October 2017, Source: Republic of Somaliland National Electoral Commission (2017), 'Media Code of Conduct for Presidential Elections in 2017', 15 October (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Xeerka_Anshaxa_Saxaafada_ee_Doorashada_MXyada_2017F.pdf)

³¹ See Parties Code of Conduct, 15 October 2017, Source: Republic of Somaliland National Electoral Commission (2017), 'Political Parties Code of Conduct, for 2017 Presidential Elections', 26 September (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Xeerka_Habdhaqanka_Xisbiyada_ee_Doorashada_MXyada_ee_2017F.pdf)

³² See Somaliland Presidential election 2017, Source: Republic of Somaliland National Electoral Commission (2017) 'Electoral Complaint and Disputes Resolution Procedures' (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Habraaca_Xalinta_Cabashooyinka_ijo_Muranada_Doorashada_MXyada_ee_2017F.pdf)

³³ Somalilandlaw.com (2017), 'Political Parties Code of Conduct for 2017 Presidential Elections', 26 September (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Xeerka_Habdhaqanka_Xisbiyada_ee_Doorashada_MXyada_ee_2017F.pdf)

³⁴ See Voter Registration Implementation Regulations No: 01/2015

³⁵ See Voter Registration Implementation Regulations No: 01/2015, Ref: GDQ/XK/497/2015, issued 2 January 2016, in 'Somaliland Voters' Registration Law and Regulations', March 2016, p 53. Available at: http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Code_of_Conduct_for_VR_Observers_2015.pdf

(for observers).” The code provides general restrictions as well as the rights and responsibilities of DEO organisations and their representatives.

Media code of conduct for the election period

The media is an integral part of elections and is considered a key electoral stakeholder. This code was issued by the NEC under powers given to it by Article 45 of Voter Registration Law No.37/2014, passed on 4 December 2014.³⁶ Article 49, paragraph 3 states that: “The media shall abide by the Voter Registration Media Code of Conduct and shall always carry an identity card indicating their respective media house.”

2.3. Institutional framework

2.3.1. Somaliland National Electoral Commission

SONSAF and SCISEF monitored the performance of existing electoral institutions and the extent to which they have been established by law and are operating independently and impartially, exercising their powers and performing their functions without fear, favour or prejudice.

In accordance with Article 12, paragraph 2 of Law No.20/2001–2017, the House of Elders selects two NEC members, opposition parties select two members, and the president selects three members. All nominations are approved by a majority vote of the House of Representatives.³⁷ The seven NEC members elect a chairperson and deputy chairperson from among themselves.³⁸ The NEC’s term of office is five years,³⁹ beginning from the date that the House of Representatives approves the appointments.

Article 11 of Law No. 20/2001(2017) establishes the institutional framework of the NEC, including the central office of the commission, the regional electoral offices, the district electoral offices and the polling station electoral offices.

Article 12(7) confirms that the NEC is an independent statutory body established to organise and administer national elections in accordance with the Somaliland constitution and electoral laws.

2.3.2. The Election Monitoring Board

The Election Monitoring Board (EMB), made up of seven members, is selected and appointed by the NEC under Article 17(3) of Regulation No.1-2015.⁴⁰ Article 14(2) states: “The purpose of the establishment of the board is to advance the realisation of the holding of a proper registration in the country and for such registration to be undertaken and concluded without disputes and in accordance with the (*Registration*) Law and the (*other*) laws of the country.” In addition, the “National Electoral Commission and its disciplinary committee on voter registration have jointly issued instructions on 7 March 2016, which they intended for political parties to refrain from any breach of the voter registration code of conduct dated 7 January 2016.”⁴¹ This followed complaints made against political parties, who were accused of using voter registration as a campaigning tool during their visits to the regions for the purposes of monitoring and participating in the voter registration opening ceremonies.

³⁶ See Somalilandlaw.com, ‘Somaliland Voters’ Registration Law and Regulation’ (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Voter_Reg_Law___Regs_2016.pdf)

³⁷ The previous Commission’s term of office lasted from 21 January 2002 to 1 June 2007 and from 2 June 2007 to 23 October 2009, except for the one Commission that resigned.

³⁸ See Article 11(1) provision (a) and (b) of Law No.20/2001.

³⁹ See Article 12(1), paragraph c, of Law No. 20/2001.

⁴⁰ Somalilandlaw.com, ‘Somaliland Voters’ Registration Law and Regulation’ (http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Voter_Reg_Law___Regs_2016.pdf)

⁴¹ See Saaxil, Sheikh, Bali Gubale, Gabiley, ‘Voter Registration Briefing Paper: 3’, p 2.

2.3.3. Associations Registration and Approval Committee

The Associations Registration and Approval Committee (RAC) is responsible for the official registration of political parties and associations in the course of local council elections every ten years. RAC's term was extended by two years in October 2015. There have been disputes among and within political parties regarding RAC's term of office and the need for its existence.

2.3.4. The international community

The European Union has taken the lead in the relationship between the government of Somaliland and the international community. It has provided funds and technical assistance to Somaliland's electoral system and democratisation processes since 2002. In addition, it has extended support to Somaliland's domestic election observation mission and overall civil society engagement on the electoral process. EU support has greatly contributed to the ultimate success of Somaliland's democratisation process.

The British government has also supported election observation missions in Somaliland including the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) that observed approximately 350 polling stations during the 2017 presidential election.

Persistent election postponements have resulted in difficulties between the Somaliland government and donors. Multiple delays of the presidential election resulted in the suspension of donor funds. Election delays past the timeframe established by the constitution and election laws risk disqualifying these elections from donor assistance. Election delays cause the return of funds and raise the need to seek approval for additional funds.

3

Pre-election period

3.1. Voter registration

THE VOTER REGISTRATION LAW was first enacted in 2007 and amended in 2008.⁴² 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.

3.1.1. Voter registration process

The NEC and national political parties signed a voter registration code of conduct for political parties on 7 January 2016. The code stipulated in paragraph 1 of Article 11, the establishment of a voter registration technical committee comprising seven members: two from NEC, two from the Ministry of Interior and one from each of the national political parties.

Polling day in New Hargeisa. International election observers congratulated Somaliland on carrying out a largely well-organised and peaceful polling day.
Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



⁴² Makokha J and Ali Y (2013), 'Somalilanders speak: lessons from the November 2012 local elections', April; Jama I H, Somaliland Electoral Laws 2009, Somaliland law series, pp 119–120.

A man shows identification during polling day in New Hargeisa.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



The NEC planned a total of 1,046 voter registration centres (VRCs), of which 1,004 (96 per cent) ultimately became operational. The voter registration covered 21⁴³ electoral districts, constituting 91 per cent of all districts, compared with the 2008/2009 voter registration, which covered only 19 electoral districts (83 per cent). The NEC announced the conclusion of data collection in Hargeisa on 26 September 2016.

Table 4 below presents region-by-region results of the voter registration.

A total of 873,331 voters were registered in 2016, 196,583 fewer than the 1,069,914 voters registered in 2008–9. This reflects in part the high number of multiple registrants observed in the earlier registration. The 538,246 valid votes cast in the presidential election held on 26 June 2010 represented a turnout of only 50.3 per cent of the total registered voters.

Table 4: Voters registered per electoral region

No	Region	Registered voters	%
1	Awdal	147,031	16.84
2	Maroodi Jeex	312,634	35.80
3	Saaxil	78,842	9.03
4	Togdheer	178,506	20.44
5	Sool	71,096	8.14
6	Sanaag	85,222	9.76
		873,331	100

3.1.2. Distribution of voting cards

The NEC started the process of voter card distribution on 29 April 2017, based on the list of registered voters in each electoral region.

The distribution of voter cards took place in three phases:

- Phase one: Awdal and Sahil Regions commenced on 29 April 2017.
- Phase two: Maroodi Jeex and Togdheer regions commenced on 8 July 2017.
- Phase three: Sool and Sanaag Regions commenced on 12 August 2017.

⁴³ This was compared with 19 electoral districts from past voter registration or polling stations in the country.

There was great confusion during the distribution of voting cards as a result of changes made by the NEC including rearranging voters' names into alphabetical order.

3.1.3. Final voter List

The final voter list was released by the NEC on 10 October 2017, putting the total number of registered voters at 704,089. This showed a decrease of 169,242 voters (19.4 per cent) compared to the 873,331 voters who initially registered during the 2016 voter registration process.

Table 5 below presents a comparison of the voters registered in 2016 and those who collected their voting cards in 2017 and thus became eligible to vote in the presidential election.

Table 5: Voters registered and collected voting cards

Region	Voters registered in 2016	Voter cards collected in 2017	Difference (number)	Difference (%)
Awdal	147,031	102,571	-44,460	26.27
Maroodi Jeex	312,634	249,229	-63,405	37.46
Saaxil	78,842	60,817	-18,025	10.65
Togdheer	178,506	147,440	-31,066	18.36
Sool	71,096	63,698	-7,398	4.37
Sanaag	85,222	80,334	-4,888	2.89
	873,331	704,089	169,242	
Per cent	100	80.62	19.38	

Table 6 below displays the total eligible voters for the November 2017 election.

Table 6: List of eligible registered voters per region:

No	Region	Voters	%
1	Awdal	102,571	14.57
2	Maroodi Jeex	249,229	35.40
3	Saaxil	60,817	8.64
4	Togdheer	147,440	20.94
5	Sool	63,698	9.05
6	Sanaag	80,334	11.41
		704,089	100

The low turnout is linked to the timeframe allocated for the distribution of voting cards, which was 45 days for each electoral region. Additionally, the NEC made changes to voter registration stations, including rearranging voter lists in alphabetical order within a short period of time and without the consent of the voters. In certain cases, voters were removed from the station where they had registered and transferred to another station a considerable distance away from their residence. As a result, some voters could not find the stations where they were supposed to collect their voting cards. Other voters, especially elderly people, could not travel the distances required to collect their voting cards.

The overall processes of voter registration and voter card distribution were peaceful and successful. SONSAF monitored the implementation of voter registration across Somaliland and produced various policy briefings and press releases with recommendations aimed at providing information on the performance of voter registration. These can be accessed on the SONSAF website <http://www.sonsaf.org/index.php/en/>.

3.2. Training and education

3.2.1. Training for electoral staff

The NEC successfully managed schedules for electoral staff trainings and their deployment in all six electoral regions. Though the NEC did not disclose specific information relating to this training, table 7 below presents a rough estimation of electoral staff deployed in the presidential election, calculated from the number of personnel operating at polling stations.

Table 7: List of electoral staff estimates deployed on 13 November 2017:

No	Description	Per polling station	# of polling stations	Total
1	Electoral staff	4	1,642	6,568
2	Political party agents	3	1,642	4,926
3	Police force	2	1,642	3,284
4	Regional electoral staff	1	6	6
5	District electoral staff	1	22	22
				14,806

3.2.2. Civic education

Civic education is an integral part of the electoral process. It is one of the primary rights of citizens and ensures that eligible voters are well-informed as they exercise their rights in accordance with the law.

The NEC is mandated through Article 5 of Law No.37/2007–2016 to carry out civic education on voter registration activities for citizens.⁴⁴ Paragraph 1 of Article 5 states: “The commission shall implement in all regions of the country a widespread awareness raising exercise for informing the public about the importance of voter registration and the ways in which one can register.”

In general, civic education on voter registration has improved upon previous elections in terms of timeframe and budget. Nevertheless, civic education was limited in rural areas, and inadequate in general.

SONSAF examined voter education through the media, namely television and local newspapers, and noted voter education clips showing the NEC logo. Televised broadcasts disseminated information about who was eligible to register, explaining that eligible citizens could register only once and that violators would be punished.

The NEC engaged a number of civil society organisations to provide civic education in various parts of Somaliland during voter registration, which was a departure from the NEC’s original plan to provide all civic education directly. Table 8 below shows which organisations mainly conducted civic education activities in the different regions.

⁴⁴ Somaliland Law (2015), ‘Voters Registration Implementation Regulations – No. 01’, p 7. (www.somalilandlaw.com)

Table 8: Summary of civic education activities

Service providers	Regional level service providers					
	Awdal	Maroodi Jeex	Saaxil	Togdheer	Sool	Sanaag
Civil society organisations	SAYS	Adems Academy Somaliland Y-PEER	SOSDO	HAVOYOCO	SUNGO	HAVOYOCO
Methods used	Posters, billboards, town hall meetings, text messages and audio messages through mobile vehicles.					

Source: Y-PEER.

During the voter registration period there was no civic education relating to the use and validity of the voting card. Later there was information stating that the voting card would be used in the local council and House of Representatives elections, which are planned to take place in 2019. However by that time citizens who were 14-years-old at the time of voter registration in 2016 will reach the age of 16, and have the right to participate in elections in accordance with the law.

4

Presidential election period

4.1. Election campaigning

THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WAS GENERALLY PEACEFUL. The NEC allocated 21 days for the campaign period and produced a schedule in which each of the three national political parties were equitably allocated seven days for campaigning. The campaign period commenced at 6am on 21 October 2017 and ended at 6pm on 10 November 2017.⁴⁵

Political parties respected the campaign schedule and stuck to their allocated days for campaigning. Most campaign activities were conducted in a peaceful and respectful manner. However, observers noted instances in which political parties directly addressed one another using hate speech and tribalist wording, rather than explaining their political visions and agendas. No complaints were filed and no security incidents were reported during the election campaign.

For the first time in a Somaliland election, the incumbent president, H.E Ahmed Mohamoud (Silanyo), issued a presidential decree on 9 September 2017 providing the contesting political parties with equal access to state media, namely Radio Hargeisa and Somaliland National Television. The Ministry of Information implemented this decree and ensured equal airtime during the campaign for all three parties.

Supporters of the ruling party, Kulmiye, drive through the streets of Hargeisa in the run-up to the presidential election.
Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



⁴⁵ As announced by the NEC spokesperson Sa'eed Ali in a press release broadcast on state television at 9pm, 15 November 2017.

Crowds of supporters gather at Freedom Park, Hargeisa, to support the political party Waddani. They sing 'bye bye Kulmiye' and 'bedeluu' – an embellishment of the word 'bedel', or 'change'.
Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



This election also marked the first time that the president produced a decree on 9 September 2017 prohibiting civil servants from taking part in campaigning, and prohibiting the use of government vehicles in campaigning.

This was also the first election campaign to include live television debates among the three candidates and their deputies. The first presidential debate was held in Hargeisa at the Maansoor Hotel on 8 November 2017 and was broadcast live on public and private television networks. A live debate was also held among the three vice presidential candidates on 9 November 2017. These live television debates improved the transparency, cordiality and maturity of Somaliland's democratisation process.

'Freedom square' spaces were established in all electoral regions and districts, and the three political parties enjoyed equal access to these spaces with no observed restrictions.

The campaigning process had many positive aspects, from community interaction to decentralisation of financial resources from cities to rural areas, which provided low income people with some financial 'benefits' during the campaign process. For example, each candidate's 'political funds' are disbursed during campaigning in all electoral districts, including political parties renting offices and hiring vehicles, all of which increases opportunities for short-term employment across electoral districts and regions.

4.1.1. Campaign coordination

Political parties did not file any complaints about campaign timing and procedures as set by NEC. Each party was allocated seven campaigning days, commencing at 6am and ending at 6pm.

It was observed that the parties often started campaign activities after 6pm on the night before their designated days. In these instances, party campaigners frequently moved into the main towns with vehicles broadcasting campaign songs, continuing until midnight. Residents saw this as excessive, noisy and disturbing. The NEC issued a press release on 1 November 2017 limiting nighttime campaigning, stating that: "political parties can start preparing their campaigns up to 10pm, but after this time the police are authorised to stop any vehicles found conducting campaign activities."

Women chanting and singing joyfully as they wait for their leader's address at an UCID rally in Hargeisa, 8 November 2017. The campaign period saw an intense outpouring of expression.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



4.2. Political parties

The three national political parties nominated their candidates in accordance with the law, and the NEC issued certificates of admission confirming their participation in the November presidential election.

Kulmiye and UCID had previous experience participating in the 2003 and 2010 presidential elections, but this was the first presidential election contested by the Waddani party since its official certification after the 2012 local council elections.

4.2.1. Candidate registration

The NEC registered candidates of the three political parties upon their payment of the fee obligated in paragraph A of Article 30 of the Presidential and Local Council Elections Law (Law No. 20/2001). The law obligates presidential candidates to pay a non-refundable deposit of 100 million Somaliland Shillings per candidate, which is equivalent to \$100,000.⁴⁶

The NEC verified the qualifications of each candidate and issued them with certificates of admission on 30 September 2017, in accordance with Article 31(1) of Law no.20/2001/2017.

4.3. Breaches and penalties

SONSAF observed breaches of the electoral law and codes of conduct, and noted whether penalties were applied during the election period. Article 67 of the law on presidential and local council elections (Law no.20/2001/2017) establishes lists of offences and penalties applicable, including imprisonment and fines subject to the gravity of the offence. The NEC assigned the EMB to monitor the conduct of election campaigning, SONSAF to conduct a domestic observation, and the Somaliland Journalists' Association (SOLJA) to conduct media monitoring.

During the campaign, there were instances of supporters announcing on media platforms that they had shifted from one political party to another and criticising their former parties. In some instances, these announcements were characterised by hate speech and inflammatory words directed at specific political parties. Members of particular clans also used the media to declare their support for specific candidates.

⁴⁶ Exchange rate is approximately 1,000 Somaliland shillings to \$1.

This kind of tribalism poses a threat to the democratisation process and breaches paragraph (3) of Article 9 of the Somaliland Constitution.⁴⁷

On 2 October 2017, the Waddani opposition party was fined 50 million Somaliland Shillings by the NEC Ethics Committee for violating the electoral code of conduct during campaigning in Bali-gubadle district on 1 October 2017.⁴⁸

4.4. The media

The media in Somaliland enjoys a relatively high degree of freedom and independence. There are approximately 14 printed newspapers, 11 independent television channels and more than 200 websites operating in Somaliland, all privately owned. There is one state-owned radio station, Radio Hargeisa, and a government-run newspaper, Dawan.

Private media is fully independent and currently provides an open platform for the public and political parties. The constitution and Somaliland Press Law no.27/2004 regulate the conduct of the media and freedom of expression. The Constitution of Somaliland and the media law stipulates that citizens exercising their freedom of expression should not override the rights of other citizens.

The NEC appointed a Media Monitoring Committee, whose responsibilities included supervising the independent press and ensuring that they abided by the NEC's Media Code of Conduct. The committee established a media monitoring centre at the SOLJA office, which monitored and recorded various media, on the basis of an agreement between the NEC and SOLJA. The committee submitted a final report to the NEC.

The presidential order on equal media access for the political parties was implemented by Radio Hargeisa and state television. The Minister of Information instructed staff not to conduct any censorship of the information submitted by the three political parties. The end of the ruling party's monopolisation of state media was an important step toward democratisation.

SONSAF's media monitoring unit and SOLJA were contracted by the NEC to monitor the state media's implementation of this decree during the election campaign. SOLJA installed monitoring equipment in their offices and deployed staff to record and monitor radio, television and print media outlets operating in Somaliland.

Long queues outside a polling centre at sunrise, before opening time in southeast Hargeisa. Voters showed a great deal of enthusiasm, many arriving in the small hours of the morning to make sure of their place in the queue.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



⁴⁷ The Somaliland Constitution prohibits all forms of clannism and tribalism in the political party process.

⁴⁸ See SONSAF Media Report October 2017.

On 23 November 2017, the Media Monitoring Committee released its final report on the presidential election, noting that no complaints had been filed against the media during the presidential election.

Findings from the MMC's state media monitoring:

The MMC reported that the state media consistently allocated equal time for all party campaigning broadcasts. The MMC monitored the following media operated by the government, briefly summarising its findings:

Radio Hargeisa portrayed impartiality in broadcasting the campaign programmes of all three parties.

Somaliland National also demonstrated fairness in fulfilling the Media Code of Conduct and airing opposition parties' election campaign programmes according to allocated schedules. However, the channel allocated more time for Kulmiye's campaign programme. The recorded evidence is available at the SOLJA office.

State media in general was committed to the enforcement of the Media Code of Conduct for the 2017 presidential election. The media demonstrated greater responsibility in broadcasting and publishing factual stories during the campaign, while equally editing sensitive speeches by all political parties in accordance with the law.

In the post-election period, certain media organisations breached the Media Code of Conduct for Somaliland's 2017 presidential election by completely disregarding the article in the code of conduct that prohibits the media to speculate unannounced results of the 13 November 2017 election. Some online newspapers rushed to speculate the results and published false results. The committee monitored the following online newspapers and believed them to have breached the Media Code of Conduct: Hadhwanagnews, Qarannews, Karinnews and Gabileonline.⁴⁹

4.5. Voting operations and election day

SONSAF and SCISEF deployed 620 domestic election observers to 41 per cent of the 1,642 operational polling stations in all six electoral regions and 21 electoral districts of Somaliland. Every polling station also had political party agents present who adhered to a comprehensive set of instructions and duties.

The domestic observers reached all assigned polling stations and reported that voting operations on election day started peacefully and continued calmly throughout the day. These findings are based on an analysis of reports from observers.

The DEOM monitored the presence of campaign material or campaign-related activity on election day, and whether voter operations took place in accordance with the law.

Ninety-nine per cent of DEO reports indicated that the observation environment around the observed polling stations was peaceful, and 95 per cent of stations were free from campaigning and campaign materials.

DEO reports indicated that 99 per cent of the observed polling stations upheld secret voting and the secretary marked each voter against the voter list.

4.5.1. Opening and closing

In general, the opening and closing of observed polling stations on election day were calm and peaceful.

DEO reports stated that 97 per cent of the observed polling stations opened on time at 7am. Three per cent of observed polling stations opened between 7–8am.

⁴⁹ See Media Monitoring Committee (2017), 'report', 23 November.

A young woman waits while a polling station official finds her on the voting register. Somaliland was the first in the world to use an iris-recognition biometric voter registration system to prevent electoral fraud.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



Forty-four per cent of polling station staff at observed stations arrived for duty before 5am, 46 per cent arrived between 5–6am, and 10 per cent arrived between 6–7am. The average reported arrival time of electoral staff at polling stations was 5.40am. At 97 per cent of the observed polling stations, electoral officials were reported present by 7am.

Closing at 97 per cent of the observed polling stations was reported by DEOs to be peaceful and free from disruption and violence. The remaining three per cent are incidents reported in table 15 on page 43. No incidents were reported at the time of closing.

Ninety-one per cent of the observed polling stations closed on time at 6pm, while nine per cent were reported to have closed after 6pm, in part because voters were still queueing for other reasons.

4.5.2. Voting

DEOs' overall assessment of the voting process at polling stations showed that 91 per cent were evaluated as 'very good' and 9 per cent as 'good.' Long queues were seen at all polling stations at 6am, but voting was well organised and no double voting was reported by domestic observers on election day. The list of eligible voters was present at all 1,642 observed polling stations. The voter lists available at polling stations contained photos of all eligible voters.

Though in some instances children were observed in queues at polling stations, these children were always there for one of two reasons: first, they had been asked to secure a place in the queue for their parents; or second, they were assisting elderly people who could not stand in the queue. When elderly voters were able to access the polling stations, the children who assisted them were asked to remain outside the polling station by police.

Seventeen per cent of DEOs reported incidents (see table 15 on page 43 for a generic summary of critical incidents) during voting at their observed stations, while 83 per cent did not observe any incidents. There was a lack of clarity for DEOs as to what constituted incidents of intimidation, harassment or violence during the election period because the presidential election law and codes of conduct did not specify the type of anticipated incidents. However SONSAP developed its own method to identify such incidents reported.

The overall environment during the electoral process was calm and peaceful, as stated by the preliminary announcements made by the DEOM. During election day operations, three polling stations were reported to have been suspended for security purposes.

The law permits the NEC – in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and political parties – to assess security of polling station areas and to suspend operations in the event of insecurity that could directly affect polling station operations.

4.5.3. Vote counting

DEOs observed the following:

- During counting, 74 per cent of observed stations had a Kulmiye party agent present, 72 per cent had a Waddani agent and 68 per cent had an UCID agent.
- Overall, 85 per cent of DEOs assessed the counting process at the polling stations they observed as 'very good,' 12 per cent as 'good,' 1.5 per cent as 'poor' and 1.5 per cent as 'very poor.'

The DEOs' overall assessment of the voting and counting processes of observed polling stations was 87 per cent 'very good' and 13 per cent 'good.'

The Local Council and Presidential Election Law (Law No. 20/2001/2017) stipulates that ballot papers shall be counted as invalid if:

- the ballot paper is marked inappropriately
- the ballot paper is not clearly marked
- the voter has marked or crossed off more than one party's space.

Disputed votes that are not resolved at the electoral district office or regional electoral offices are considered invalid votes.

4.6. Verification of results

Because of a Waddani party request, the NEC agreed to conduct a vote recount at its central office. Around 250 ballot boxes were recounted successfully in the presence of the Waddani party. The result did not reveal any discrepancies.

4.6.1. Official results

The NEC announced the preliminary results of the presidential election on 21 November 2017 at 3.10pm in the presence of the three political parties. NEC chairman Abdulkadir Imaan Warsame said that "the election took place peacefully after taking measures to prevent everything that could disturb the voting process."

A woman casts her vote on polling day in southeast Hargeisa.

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



According to the chairman, a total of 556,042 valid votes were cast at 1,642 polling stations. This was 3.03 per cent more than the total votes in the 2010 presidential election and 11.98 per cent higher than in the 2003 presidential election.

Overall voter turnout was estimated at 78.83 per cent of the 704,089 registered voters. By contrast, in the 2010 presidential election 1,069,914 ballot papers were printed, and 538,246 (50.31 per cent) registered voters voted.

Based on these preliminary results, the NEC chairman declared that the winner of the 13 November presidential election was the candidate of Somaliland's ruling Kulmiye party, Muse Bihi Abdi, with 55.1 per cent of the total votes cast. The second place contender was Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi (Ciro) of the Waddani party with 40.7 per cent, and Eng. Faysal Ali Hussein of the UCID party received 4.7 per cent.

These results were officially published on the NEC website on 6 December 2017. The information published by the NEC included the total number of voters, the total votes cast at polling stations, the total invalid votes, and the total valid votes.

The NEC announced that voting had not been held at eight polling stations, namely Lo'ka Arroor, Illinta Dhexe, Iskgoyska Sheekh Madar, Qori-Lugud A-2, Qori-Lugud B-2, Damal Cirbiide, Cali Tima Go-go'ane and Surmaanyo. A ballot box was placed at Polling Station # 968-1 (Dheriyo) but no one showed up to vote.

Table 10 below presents figures on voter turnout, and tables 11–13 show voting results at the regional level.

Table 9: Turnout of valid voters

Description	Status	Percentage
Total valid voters	704,089	100.00
Total votes cast	565,617	80.33
Total unused ballot papers	138,472	19.67

Table 10: Votes cast in the presidential election on 13 November 2017

No	Region	Total valid voters	Total votes cast	Invalid votes	Valid votes	Votes for UCID	Votes for Kulmiye	Votes of Waddani
1	Awdal	102,571	81,436	1,406	80,030	617	38,454	40,959
2	M. Jeex	249,229	217,230	3,974	213,256	19,795	130,334	63,127
3	Saaxil	60,817	48,535	390	48,145	563	31,183	16,399
4	Togdheer	147,440	120,637	2,501	118,136	1,233	57,499	59,404
5	Sool	63,698	40,298	782	39,516	383	21,707	17,426
6	Sanaag	80,443	57,481	1,422	56,059	550	26,732	28,777
	Total	704,198	565,617	10,475	555,142	23,141	305,909	226,092

Source: NEC Final Polling Station Results, 6 December 2017.

Source: <http://www.slneec.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Final-PollingStation-Results.pdf>.

Table 11: Percentage of valid votes received per party per region

No	Region	UCID Votes	%	Kulmiye votes	%	Waddani votes	%	Total valid votes	Total %
1	Awdal	617	0.77	38,454	48.05	40,959	51.18	80,030	100
2	M. Jeex	19,795	9.28	130,334	61.12	63,127	29.60	213,256	100
3	Saaxil	563	1.17	31,183	64.77	16,399	34.06	48,145	100
4	Togdheer	1,233	1.04	57,499	48.67	59,404	50.28	118,136	100
5	Sool	383	0.97	21,707	54.93	17,426	44.10	39,516	100
6	Sanaag	550	0.98	26,732	47.69	28,777	51.33	56,059	100
Total	Votes/party	23,141		305,909		226,092		555,142	
	% per Party	4.17		55.10		40.73		100.00	

Source: NEC Final Polling Station Results, 6 December 2017.

Source: <http://www.slsec.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Final-PollingStation-Results.pdf>

Table 12: Per cent of valid votes per region

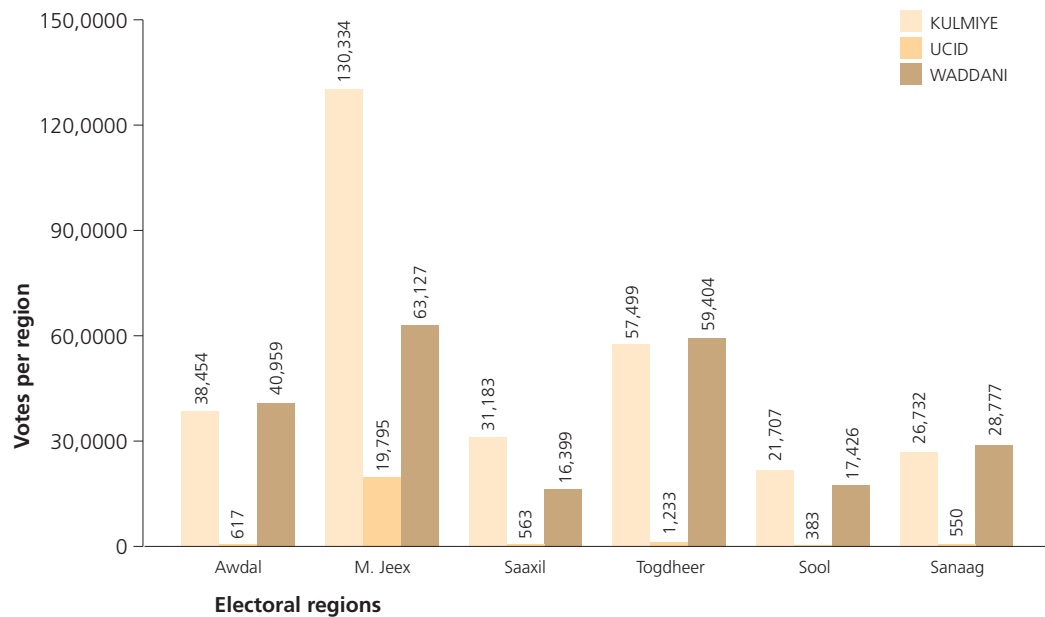
Region	UCID	Kulmiye	Waddani	Total valid votes	%
Awdal	617	38,454	40,959	80,030	14.42
M. Jeex	19,795	130,334	63,127	213,256	38.41
Saaxil	563	31,183	16,399	48,145	8.67
Togdheer	1,233	57,499	59,404	118,136	21.28
Sool	383	21,707	17,426	39,516	7.12
Sanaag	550	26,732	28,777	56,059	10.10
	23,141	305,909	226,092	555,142	100

Source: NEC Final Polling Station Results, 6 December 2017.

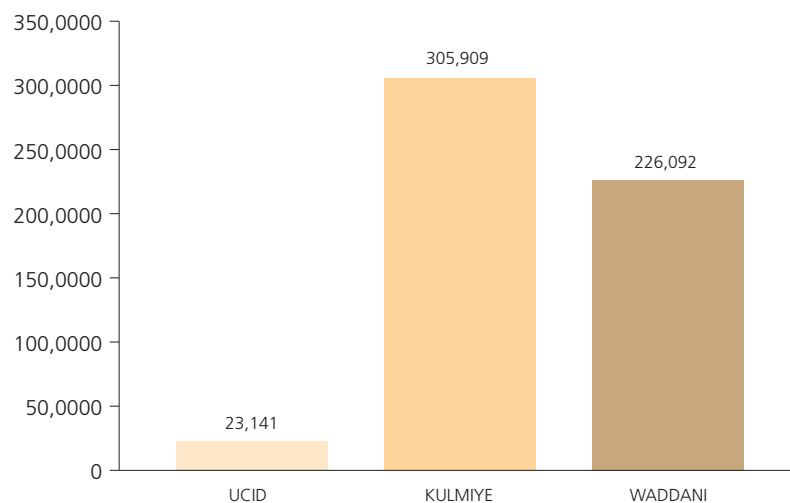
Source: <http://www.slsec.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Final-PollingStation-Results.pdf>

Table 13: Total votes cast nationally

Description	Total number of votes	%
Votes cast	565,617	100.00
Valid votes	555,142	98.15
Invalid votes	10,475	1.85
	565,617	100.00

Figure 2: Votes received per political party per region on 13 November 2017

Valid votes received per political party at the national level:



On 22 November 2017, Radio Hargeisa broadcast the concession speeches of the UCID and Waddani party candidates.

On 25 November 2017, the Supreme Court announced the final results of the presidential election, stating that “the court received from NEC the preliminary results of the presidential election held in Somaliland on 13 November 2017. The court has verified the results, no complaints have reached the Supreme Court within the time given by the law and therefore, the Supreme Court declares that the candidates of Kulmiye party, Mr Muse Bihi Abdi and Mr Abdirahman Abdilahi Ismail, are the winners of the November presidential election.”

The new president and vice president were sworn in on 13 December 2017 at the presidential palace by the chief justice of Somaliland.

4.6.2. Complaints and appeals

The Law on Presidential and Local Council Elections (Law No.20/2001) established legal channels to be followed in the event of and following the declaration of preliminary results. Under this law, there is a period of seven days in which formal complaints can be lodged through the Somaliland Supreme Court. The complaint procedures are established by law and political parties and their representatives are fully aware of

the process. Complaint forms were available at all 1,642 polling stations as an integral part of the electoral materials. Political parties contesting the election could fill out the complaint forms available at the polling stations only during polling operations.

Election complaints properly filed at the polling station had to follow procedures through five stages established by the law: polling station, electoral district office, regional electoral office, central electoral office and Supreme Court, which had the final authority to deal with presidential election disputes. The role of the Supreme Court was to resolve complaints filed at the polling stations, which failed to achieve resolution at the polling station, district, regional and central electoral offices.

Throughout the election period, no formal complaints were filed to the NEC headquarters or district level offices. However, the Waddani party made informal complaints through the media on 15 November 2017, including those claiming discrepancies in Gabiley district. Chairman Abdiqadir Iman Warsame and spokesman Saed Ali Muse of the NEC paid a visit to Gabiley to review the complaints. Upon their return to Hargeisa the two commissioners issued a press release dismissing these complaints.⁵⁰ The NEC chairman told Horn Cable that “the NEC conducted a prompt investigation on the claims of Waddani party in Gabiley, but no evidence was found.”

Meanwhile, Waddani continued to reach out to its supporters through the media, including a press conference at which party representatives displayed a booklet of ballot papers on 17 November 2017, and stated that “This is a false book; it has the official stamp of the NEC and it contains false ballot papers that were filed in the ballot boxes.” The information conveyed to Waddani supporters was false and a breach of the code of conduct, but it did not result in formal charges.

Waddani representatives announced that they had suspended their working relationship with the NEC, based on the unofficial complaints that Waddani representatives had made in the media. They stated that the party had submitted more than three complaints to the NEC, but received no response. The NEC confirmed that it had received no complaints filed by Waddani in accordance with the established procedures and presidential election law. On 17 November, the NEC put out a press release countering Waddani’s complaints and stating that “there were no false book or ballot papers printed; if there were false ballot papers, we would be taken to court.”

Waddani’s complaints to the media created post-election tensions and eventually led to riots on 17 November 2017 by youth in Hargeisa, Burco and Erigavo, in which youth stoned and burnt buildings and confronted police forces. These riots continued for about two hours, until police forces intervened using live bullets, resulting in the death of three people in Burco and one in Hargeisa, and in injuries of four people in Burco and five in Hargeisa, according to the Minister of the Presidency.

On 18 November 2017, Waddani presidential candidate Abdirahman Mohamed Abdilahi (Ciro) and the NEC chairman held a meeting. Afterward, they put out a joint press release stating that “The candidate of Waddani party and the NEC have agreed on their differences and the Waddani party has resumed its previously suspended participation in the work of counting and verification.” In the press release, the NEC chairman announced that the ballot paper book that Waddani had displayed as a false book had actually been stolen from the NEC in Berbera, and there were no false book or ballot papers. In the press release, Waddani’s candidate requested that party supporters remain calm and act peacefully.

An additional request was made by Waddani to recount the ballot boxes from Hargeisa, which NEC officials accepted and thus recounted more than 200 ballot boxes, finding no discrepancies.

⁵⁰ *The National* (2017), ‘National Electoral Commission dismisses claims of poll irregularities’, 15 November (<http://www.thenational-somaliland.com/2017/11/15/national-electoral-commission-dismisses-claims-poll-irregularities/>)

5

Recommendations

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS are based on what was observed during the timeframe of this report, from 1 October to 25 December 2017, including 667 domestic observers' reports and findings during the presidential election. These recommendations aim to improve future elections and democratisation processes in Somaliland, as well as inform the design of future democratisation programmes and priorities for electoral assistance.

The recommendations are grouped into two parts: the first set of recommendations focuses on the electoral legal framework and administration of elections, while the second part focuses on specific stakeholders.

5.1.1. Electoral legal framework and election administration

Legal framework: The existing election laws and regulations, including Law No. 20/2001 (2017), have clear gaps. Therefore, the following reforms are recommended:

- Reform various national electoral laws and bring them up to international standards. Specifically, Article 67 of the Penalties for Offenses in the Presidential and Local Council Elections (Law No. 20/2001/January 2017), has no penalties applicable to cases involving theft of electoral materials.
- Reform the code of conduct for political parties to clarify the role of candidates in communicating to their supporters through media, specifically discouraging the release of misinformation that can fuel violence and threaten stability.
- Establish with laws and regulations the equal use of state media by political parties, including the code of conduct regulating the use of state media.
- Reinforce the rule of law and make sure that offences committed by political parties are penalised in accordance with the law.
- Pass a National Electoral Commission Establishment Act. There is currently no law governing the NEC other than five articles in the Local Council and Presidential Election Administrative Law (Law No.21/2001/2017). Therefore, a separate act should be drafted establishing the NEC, stipulating its governance, clarifying its roles and responsibilities, and setting forth accounting and auditing guidelines.
- Voter registration law no. 37/2014 requires reviewing to integrate the lessons learnt from the 2016–2017 voter registration process to better ensure consistency and clarity for all.
- The government should budget for and finance elections and should not rely on supplementary budgets funded by the international community.

**Voters cast their ballots
on polling day in
New Hargeisa.**

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



- Integrate a quota for women in the electoral process into the House of Representatives election law and local council election law concurrently. This will improve women's political participation and their contribution to decision-making.
- Amend the Somaliland Citizenship Law in order to protect the candidates' rights to run for elections.
- Political parties' funding sources must be defined in electoral laws and codes of conduct.

Planning and implementation: The process of planning and implementing budgets and the elections calendar should be part of the national strategic plan. The elections calendar must be published prior to elections and must be adhered to.

Civic education: The scope of civic education should use lessons learnt and improve the content of messages by informing citizens adequately about how to participate in elections. There is a need for a national voter and civic education strategy. Civic education timeframes and budgets should also be improved.

Campaigning: The NEC should further improve campaign discipline. It should work with stakeholders to revise and reform relevant codes of conduct to regulate the campaign process. There should be a particular focus on codes involving campaign speeches, to place stronger sanctions prohibiting speech with tribalist content or inflammatory language.

Voter registration: The custody of the voter register and its periodic updates must be established by law and the update of the voter register should be done in a timely manner, not less than 12 months before the next election. The accuracy of the eligible voter list must be ensured on election day. Under the voter registration law, strengthening the measures and mechanisms in place is needed to prevent underage registration in future voter registration updates.

Iris recognition: The operation of iris-recognition technology and its use must be standardised and established by law on the basis of periodical updates.

Election postponements: The need for timely elections should be recognised and adopted by all stakeholders as the primary responsibility of the government. In future, the Somaliland parliament should not accept election delays because the incumbent government failed to plan for elections before the end of its term of office. Terms of office for elected institutions should be observed as established by the Somaliland constitution in Article 42(1) for the House of Representatives (five years), in Article 58(2) for the House of Elders (six years), in Article 88(1) for the president and vice

president (five years), and in Article 111 (7) for the local councils (five years). Postponing elections has undermined the democratisation process in Somaliland. It is undeniable that citizens have been widely disappointed with subsequent election postponements.

5.1.2. Stakeholders

The Somaliland Government: The government must commit to reinforcing the rule of law. It must establish a strategic plan for election budgeting in compliance with the term of office stipulated in the constitution and election laws. The government needs to strengthen the role of the NEC and its institutional framework, including allocating an appropriate budget for the recruitment of regular technical and professional personnel. The government should sustain and seek to establish in law the initiatives of equal access to state media by all political parties, prohibiting the use of public resources and government vehicles for the purpose of election campaigns, and prohibition of participation by civil servants in campaigning.

The National Electoral Commission: The NEC should reinforce the rule of law and make sure that electoral offences are penalised in accordance with the law. The NEC should ensure timely information dissemination to the public in response to all claims and complaints. The NEC must ensure that national political parties are held accountable for any breach of codes of conduct and electoral laws during the electoral cycle. The NEC must strengthen responsibility and accountability for electoral materials' safety and protection. Inspection to ensure electoral materials are complete must take place upon their return to the electoral district, region and NEC headquarters. The NEC should ensure timely reporting procedures at all levels and establish effective communication channels to the police to inform them of any loss, theft or missing election materials. The NEC should not change polling station locations in the future, as changes at short notice lower voter turnout and disrupt the voting process, as was seen during the 2017 presidential elections.

The NEC must strengthen its handling of complaints that do not follow formal legal procedures by establishing reasonable fines and penalties. It must ensure that all electoral terms are translated into the Somali language and adopted as standard terminology for elections. The NEC must ensure that all offences committed against electoral processes are dealt with in a timely manner and in accordance with the law and codes of conduct. It must enforce the restriction of transport and movement on election day in accordance with the law. The NEC should improve the accuracy of eligible voter lists, and ensure that voters are effectively checked before they are issued with ballot papers. NEC needs to put in place a standard electoral training manual and ensure clear guidelines are distributed at least three months ahead of the elections because this can improve the knowledge and practices of political parties' agents, domestic and international observers and NEC staff.

The Election Monitoring Board: The role of this board in election monitoring should be strengthened by improving the code of conduct of the EMB and the effectiveness of their directives by placing minimum criteria for selection of the EMB. It must regularly function at national, regional and district levels.

Political parties: Political parties must observe and follow election laws and codes of conduct, and use formal legal procedures for complaints. Political parties must not directly address each other in campaigning but present their policies to influence supporters. Political parties should pursue all claims and complaints through the appropriate NEC forum channels established by law, whereby the complainant fills in the form made available at the polling station. All political parties should strengthen the legal and regulatory frameworks of their leadership and governance. The capacity of political parties should be improved to sustain the democratisation process and improve the parties' legal and institutional frameworks. Any political party members or representatives making mistakes should be adequately orientated and trained to

**A group of women wait
outside a polling centre on
election day.**

Kate Stanworth/Saferworld



follow procedure properly to avoid greater risks and unlawful steps contrary to electoral procedures. The political parties' leadership at national and regional levels need sufficient training in law and electoral procedures prior to the election campaigning. The election code of conduct must also indicate that political parties have adequate regular legal advisory at party level.

The media: Media organisations and individuals should not broadcast any information that is not authentic, and should be held accountable for the information they disseminate. Media must also comply with the laws and election codes of conduct. The media must maximise its role in the election and prioritise the protection of its audiences and viewers at all times, refraining from broadcasting false information.

SONSAF/SCISEF: SONSAF and SCISEF should improve their working relationships with the NEC and access accurate information from the NEC on the administration of elections for domestic election observation reports. The minimum information required from NEC should be clear ahead of time and requested by SONSAF. This includes the number of personnel trained and deployed for the election by NEC, electoral officials and electoral staff across the country, security forces deployed to all polling stations and the distribution and return of electoral materials. SONSAF should work on the standardisation of DEOM instruments and tools that are appropriate to capture factual information for reporting. SONSAF should further improve and raise observation questionnaires to a standard level by clarifying to observers the exact definition of terms such as intimidation, harassment and violence, so as to prevent ambiguity in reporting.

International community: The international community should consider increasing its support to the provision of technical knowledge on elections by investing in theoretical and practical trainings for the government, the NEC and political parties to decentralise knowledge of elections and their principles in Somaliland. Through this support, electoral institutions need to expand their capacity, experiences and knowledge on international matters.

6

Appendices and bibliography

6.1. Appendices

6.1.1. SONSAF press release

ON 15 NOVEMBER 2017 SONSAF released preliminary results of the presidential election: the domestic observers have reached all assigned polling stations and they reported the process that the E-Day started peacefully and continued calmly, the preliminary feedback from domestic observers stated that 90 per cent of the polling stations opened on time at 7.00am morning time.

<http://www.somalilandinformer.com/somaliland/press-release-domestic-observation-mission-on-the-somaliland-presidential-election-held-on-13-november-2017/>

<http://www.horndiplomat.com/2017/10/24/somalilandconclusion-of-the-voter-registration-process-and-election-preparationsbriefing-paper-9/>

6.1.2. IEOM press releases

PRESS RELEASE on 16 November: International observers of Somaliland's presidential election congratulate the Somaliland people on a peaceful poll and look forward to a positive conclusion to the electoral process.

Chief observer, Dr Michael Walls of the Development Planning Unit (DPU) at University College London (UCL) and Somaliland Focus UK, notes: *"We are pleased to have observed an election which has seen Somaliland show its democratic spirit, and we congratulate the National Electoral Commission on a well-run poll. We look forward to the announcement of a credible result. Furthermore we call on all parties to urge their supporters to accept the result, for the sake of Somaliland, and we encourage any who are dissatisfied with that result to pursue complaints through legal channels."*

Full press release can be read in English at its source: <http://somalilandfocus-org-uk.stackstaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EOM-Press-Release-41.pdf>

PRESS RELEASE on 17 November: International observers of Somaliland's presidential election on 13 November 2017 urge all parties to use legal channels to resolve post-election differences. *Full press release can be read in English from its source:* <http://somalilandfocus-org-uk.stackstaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EOM-Press-Release-5.pdf>

PRESS RELEASE on 29 November: International observers of Somaliland presidential election on 13 November 2017 congratulate Somalilanders as Supreme Court announces final results:

Says Dr Michael Walls, chief observer of the EOM: "We congratulate the new president, and are pleased that, after some post-poll tensions, political parties have followed legal channels in confirming the election result, which has now been accepted by all candidates. We applaud political leaders on all sides for their public statements stressing the importance of the gains made by Somaliland to date. Somalilanders have once again shown their strong commitment to peaceful electoral democracy and we look forward to a continuation of that process as we now look toward the much-delayed parliamentary elections, scheduled to be held in tandem with local council polls in 2019."

Full press release can be read in English from its source: <http://somalilandfocus-org-uk.stackstaging.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EOM-Press-Release-6.pdf>

6.1.3. The code of conduct for local observers

Code of conduct for local observers

Part one: general restrictions and purpose

This code of conduct is issued by Somaliland National Electoral Commission to regulate the conduct for the 2017 presidential elections, subject to 68 of Somaliland Presidential and Local Councils Election Act (Act No. 20/2001) as amended in 2017. This code of conduct applies to the activities of observer organisations and their representatives during the elections, before the elections and after the elections.

Observer organisations and their representatives must obey this code of conduct. Violation of it will lead to removing accreditation or serious discipline from NEC. Observer organisations are responsible for any violation by them or their representatives.

Part two: rights and responsibilities of observer organisations and their representatives

1. Observers will comply with national laws, the constitution, and codes of conduct issued by NEC.
2. Observers shall not obstruct, interrupt or willfully create disorder within the polling station.
3. Observers must carry their ID card issued by NEC in a visible place while attending any electoral process, or letter of authorisation issued by NEC.
4. Observers must respect any limitations of time and place imposed by NEC officials to deal with crowding by observers during the election day.
5. Not wear, carry, or display any registered party's symbols or colours.
6. Observers must abstain from the use of language phrases that can cause hatred, or discrimination on the basis of tribe, region, class, disability or can create religious tension during the election process.
7. Observers must cooperate with NEC, the electoral officers, supervisors, or any other authorised stakeholders involved in the electoral process.
8. Be competent and professional in observing the presidential elections.
9. Act in a strictly neutral and unbiased manner.
10. Any information or complaints about intimidation or violation of the law, can be reported by observers to the organisations the observers represent.
11. Implementing organisations should not be part of the electoral observation.
12. Disclose to the commission any relationship that could lead to conflicts of interest regarding the performance of their duties as observers or with the process of observation or assessment of the presidential election.
13. Observers will maintain strict impartiality in the conduct of their duties and will, at no time, publicly express or exhibit any bias or preference in relation to national

authorities, parties, candidates, or with reference to any issues in contention in the election process.

14. Observers will base all conclusions on their personal observations or on clear and convincing facts or evidence.
15. Observers will not make any comments to the media on the electoral process or on the substance of their observations, and any comment to the media will be limited to general information about the observation mission and the role of the observers.
16. Observers will not take any unnecessary or undue risks. Each observer's personal safety overrides all other considerations.
17. Observers will exhibit the highest levels of personal discretion and professional behaviour at all times.
18. Observers will attend all required mission briefings and debriefings and adhere to the deployment plan and all other instructions provided by the National Electoral Commission.
19. Observers must respect the official and valid result of the presidential elections.

I have read, understand and will abide the above code of conduct.

Signed in _____ on _____, 2017 by _____
 _____ Name/Signature

National Electoral Commission

 Name/Title

6.1.4. The Media Monitoring Committee and their responsibilities

The NEC appointed its Media Monitoring Committee (MMC) in October 2017. The committee consists of seven committee members nominated from the Somaliland Ministry of Information and National Guidance (MoING), SOLJA, WIJA, and independent professionals.

These are the names and organisations of the seven MMC members:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| 1) Mohamed Hassan Ali (Weji) | MoING |
| 2) Hussein ali Nur | SOLJA |
| 3) Mawlid Mohamoud Ibrahim | NEC |
| 4) Yasmin Ahmed Yousef | WIJA |
| 5) Abdihakeem Muhumed Abdi | NEC |
| 6) Salma Abdirahman Sheikh | MoING |
| 7) Ahmed Ali Garas | SOLJA |

The committee is responsible for the following areas:

- I. Monitoring public and private media during the 2017 presidential election, including observing if Somaliland media organisations are implementing the Media Code of Conduct for Somaliland's 2017 presidential election
- II. Monitoring if both the public and private media organisations are following the Media Code of Conduct that requires them to allocate publication and broadcasting slots for all parties.
- III. Reporting all developments to the Somaliland NEC

Roles and responsibilities of the MMC

On 28 October, the committee held an induction meeting at SOLJA, where they were granted an operational office by the organisation. The committee elected their chairman, vice chairman, and secretary, while assigning individual roles and responsibilities for the period they were contracted.

Here are the three members elected and their roles:

- 1) Mohamed Hassan Ali (waji) Chairman
- 2) Mowlid Mohamoud Ibrahim Vice chairman
- 3) Yasmin Ahmed Yousef Secretary

The MMC, on their second meeting, met with board members of SOLJA and representatives of Coffey, where they updated each other about the progress the committee had made so far, and to further guide productive collaboration to proceed with the mission assigned. The committee was introduced to the team they would be working with closely in their monitoring and reporting mission of media publications and broadcasts.

MMC met on 1 November 2017 for their third scheduled meeting. At this meeting, members discussed ways to monitor the media effectively and report based on evidence. The media to be monitored was divided into two main categories: 1. state media and 2. private media. Together, both categories divide into three mediums: 1. radio and TV channels, 2. print media (newspapers), and 3. digital media such as online newspapers and social media owned or controlled by the running parties.

The MMC shortlisted the most influential media organisations and selected the following to be monitored:

State media:

- a) Radio Hargeisa, Somaliland National Television, and Dawan newspaper.

Privately-owned media:

- a) **TV Channels:** Horn Cable, Star TV, Kalsan TV, Bulsho TV, Saab TV, RTN TV, Universal TV, Somali Cable, Eryal, True TV, SCC TV, Rayo and Goobjoog TV.
- b) **Newspapers:** Jamhuuriya, Waaheen, Geeska, Saxansaxo, Saxafi, Warsugan, Sahan, Hubaal, Himilo, Ogaal, Foore, Yool, Somaliland Today
- c) **Digital news (websites):** Hadhwanaag, Caynabo, Gabiley, Ramaas, Togdheer, Qaran, Booramanews, Wajaale, Oodweyne, Salaxley

6.1.5. SONSAF publications

SONSAF has published information, policy papers and press releases on democratisation and election processes in Somaliland, including various pre-election and post-election reports with recommendations for the improvement of elections.

During the voter registration implementation period from 16 January 2016 until 21 November 2017 SONSAF published nine policy briefing papers on the voter registration process. All published papers and press releases can be accessed on SONSAF's website: <http://www.sonsaf.org>

Previous reports produced and published by SONSAF with the support of the EU and Saferworld, include:

- Ali Y Hasan (2016–2017), ‘Somaliland Pre-election Report February 2017 (SONSAF)
- Makokha J, Ali Y (2013), ‘Somalilanders speak, Lessons from the November 2012 local elections’, (SONSAF)
- SONSAF (2013), ‘Democratisation policy brief on Somaliland’s 2012 post-election challenges and priorities’
- Yusuf H (2012), ‘Somaliland Pre-Election Consultation Report’ (SONSAF)
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http://www.somalilandlaw.com/SOMALILAND_ELECTIONS_REVIEW_2011.pdf

6.1.6. Observation questions summary

Table 14: Summary of post-election general observation

Code	No	Questions and responses	Yes	No
	1	What time did you arrive at the polling station? 44% arrived before 5am, 46% arrived 5–6am and 10% arrived between 6–7am	5.40am	
	2	Were all polling officials present by 5.30am? 74% arrived at 5.30am, 26% not arrived at 5.30am.	74%	26%
	3	Did the polling station chairperson conduct a briefing for the polling officials?	53%	47%
	4	Is the environment around the polling centre peaceful?	99%	1%
	5	Is the polling centre accessible to all voters including the disabled?	94%	6%
	6	Is the polling center free from campaigning and campaign materials?	95%	5%
	7	Were all polling officials present at 7am at your assigned polling station?	93%	7%
	8	Who were the security officials assigned to your polling station?	5%	95%
	9	Were all polling materials available at your assigned polling center?	5%	95%
	10	Strategic materials were missing? 93% were available, 2% official stamp and ink, 1% ballot papers 1% voter list, 1% Tabulation form D1 and 2% tamper evident tags.	93%	7%
	11	Did the chairperson confirm in the presence of all polling officials and party agents that the packets containing the polling station stamp and ballot papers are sealed?	95%	5%
	12	Did the chairperson complete form D2?	96%	4%
	13	Did the other polling officials and political party agents sign form 2?	94%	6%
	14	Did the chairperson stamp each ballot paper in appropriate spaces using the official stamp provided by NEC?	99%	1%
	15	Was the polling station arranged according to the layout determined by NEC?	99%	1%
	16	Did the polling station allow for secret voting?	94%	6%
	17	Were all polling officials present at 7am for opening?	97%	3%
	18	Was the polling process free from interference?	97%	3%
CE	19	Did the chairperson present the ballot box as empty to all present, including party agents, candidates and observers?	99%	1%
CF	20	Was the ballot box sealed by the chairperson with the official numbered seals after it was shown to be empty?	99%	1%
CG	21	Were the serial numbers on the seals used recorded on the official form?	99%	1%
DA	22	What time did the polling station open for voting to commence? 97% at 7am, 3% at 7–8am	97%	3%
DB	23	Were party agents present during opening of the polling stations?	88%	12%
DC	24	Which party agent was present during the opening? Kulmiye 60%, 56% UCID, 58% Waddani and 26% none	0%	0%
DE	25	Which election observers were at the opening station? 82% domestic, 6% international and 12% both.	0%	0%
DF	26	Was the opening process free from official complaints made to the chairperson?	0%	0%
DG	27	Were the party agents deployed at the polling station allowed to vote?	98%	2%
DH	28	Were party agents deployed at polling stations allowed to vote?	92%	8%
DJ	29	Were political officials assigned to the polling stations allowed to vote?	92%	8%

Code	No	Questions and responses	Yes	No
DK	30	Did the chairperson record the details of security officials deployed, polling officials assigned and party agents deployed and allowed to vote at the polling station?	96%	4%
DM	31	How many voters were in the queue waiting to vote?	0%	0%
DN	32	Is the environment inside the polling station peaceful?	97%	3%
DP	33	Is the security officer(s) performing his/her duties of crowd control and directing voters to the appropriate polling station at your assigned polling center?	98%	2%
DQ	34	What is your overall assessment of the pre-voting process?	0%	0%
EA	35	Is the environment inside the polling station peaceful?	99%	1%
EB	36	Is the chairperson requesting each voter to present his or her card or duplicates voters card or validation card?	98%	2%
EC	37	Did the chairperson cross check the fingers of every voter to ensure he/she has not already voted?	94%	6%
ED	38	Were there incidents when voters' eligibility to vote was challenged?	0%	0%
EF	39	Did the secretary direct every voter to put his/her left thumb print mark at the appropriate place on the voters lists?	99%	1%
EG	40	Did the polling station secretary mark against each voter's details on the voters list?	99%	1%
EH	41	Did the secretary issue a validation ticket to each voter to take to the chairperson to be issued with a ballot paper?	98%	2%
FA	42	Did the chairperson explain to voters how to cast their vote?	95%	5%
FB	43	Were all voters able to vote secretly?	93%	7%
FC	44	Was every voter's right hand finger marked with indelible ink after voting?	98%	2%
FD	45	Were any of the following unauthorised persons present inside your assigned polling station?	0%	0%
FE	46	Were there any incidents of intimidation/harassment/violence against any of the following during voting?	17%	83%
FG	47	Were safeguards designed to prevent duplicate voting followed?	99%	1%
FH	48	Did the polling officials appear to be adequately doing their respective roles?	94%	6%
FJ	49	Was any voter who was in the queue after 6.00pm permitted to vote?	89%	11%
FK	50	Was a security official stationed at the end of the queue so that any voter who comes after 6.00pm does not join the queue?	85%	15%
FM	51	Were you sufficiently able to observe all aspects of the voting process?	99%	1%
FN	52	Was the procedure free from duplicate voting?	97%	3%
FP	53	Was the procedure free from ballot box stuffing?	97%	3%
FQ	54	Was the procedure free from confusion of correct polling station?	83%	17%
FR	55	Was the procedure free from interruption of voting?	97%	3%
FS	56	Was the procedure free from issuance of more than one ballot paper to a voter?	98%	2%
FT	57	Were voters free from pressure to reveal how they voted?	21%	0%
GA	58	What time did the polling station close for voting? 91% closed at 6.00pm, 9% closed after 6.00pm	91%	9%
GB	59	Did the Chairperson seal the ballot box after close of voting at your polling station?	99%	1%

Code	No	Questions and responses	Yes	No
GF	60	What is your overall assessment of the voting process in your polling station? 91% very good and 9% good.	91%	9%
HA	61	Did the chairperson supervise the rearrangement of the polling station for counting after voting ended?	98%	2%
HB	62	Did the chairperson conduct a post voting reconciliation of ballot papers issued to the polling station and complete part A and B of Form D1?	92%	8%
HC	63	Was the precounting period at your assigned polling station peaceful and free from disruptive or violent incidents?	92%	8%
JA	64	Did the chairperson open the ballot box(es) in the presence of agents, observers and polling officials before counting commenced?	99%	1%
JB	65	Did the polling officials sort out the voter per candidate according to NEC's counting procedures in full view of the party agents/observers/polling officials?	99%	1%
JC	66	Was the validity or invalidity of a vote determined according to NEC's procedures?	98%	2%
JD	67	Did the chairperson complete the Declaration of Results Section of Form D1?	98%	2%
JE	68	Which of the following party agents were present during counting? KULMIYE 74%, UCID 68% and WADDANI 72%	0%	0%
JF	69	Were any unauthorised person(s) present during the counting and closing?	15%	85%
JG	70	Were there any incidents, harassment or violence against any of the following during counting? 91% polling, 6% and 3% party agents.	91%	9%
JH	71	Which party agents signed the Declaration for Results section of Form D1? Kulmiye 72%, Ucid 64% and 71% Waddani.	0%	0%
JK	72	Did any party agent record the reasons for refusal or failure to sign the declaration of results section of Form D1?	16%	84%
JM	73	Did the chairperson announce the election results to those present?	98%	2%
JN	74	Did the chairperson issue a copy of Declaration for Results sections of Form D1 to each of the party or candidate agents?	99%	1%
JP	75	Did the chairperson display declaration of results section of Form D1 at the polling station?	99%	1%
JY	76	Was the counting process at your assigned polling station peaceful and free from disruptive or violent incidents?	94%	6%
JZ	77	What is your overall assessment of the counting process at your polling station? 85% very good, 12% good, 1.5% poor and 1.5% very poor.	0%	0%
KA	78	Did the chairperson complete the post counting procedures?	99%	1%
KB	79	Did the chairperson pack and seal all sensitive material in C2 envelope?	98%	2%
KC	80	Did the chairperson allow all polling station officials and political party agents present to sign across the seal of the C2 envelope?	97%	3%
KD	81	Was the closing of the polling station peaceful and free from disruptive or violent incidents?	97%	3%
KE	82	What is your general assessment of the voting and counting process in your polling station? 87% very good and 13% good.	87%	13%

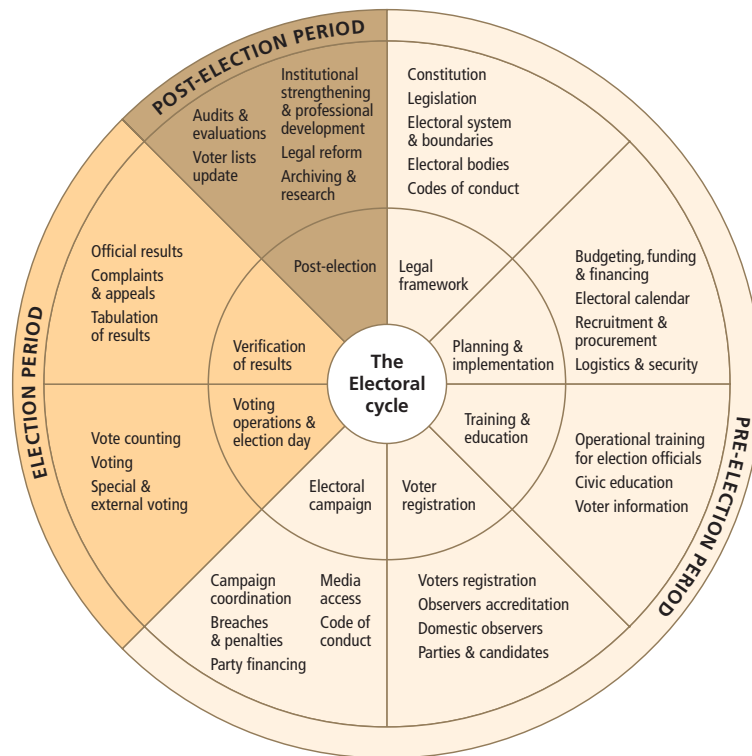
Table 15: Summary of responses returned on the critical incidence

Code	Critical questions	Type	Responses
ZA	At what time did the critical incident occur?	Morning	49
		Afternoon	17
		Evening	13
Sub total			79
ZB	What was the alleged incident about [Report all that apply]	Electoral violence (1)	16
		Arrest/detention (2)	7
		Harassment of candidate (3)	3
		Election officials misconduct (4)	22
		Harassment of journalists/media/observers (5)	6
		Harassment/intimidation of voters (6)	7
		Harassment/ intimidation of polling officials (7)	5
		Harassment/intimidation by security officials (8)	2
Sub total			68
ZC	Was a fundamental right violated?	Yes	49
		No	19
Sub total			68
ZD	If yes, what right was violated?	1	32
		2	5
		3	6
		4	7
		5	1
Sub total			51
ZE	Who was the complainant?	Candidate (1)	32
		Voter (2)	5
		Party/candidate agents (3)	6
		Polling official (4)	7
		Other (5)	1
Sub total			51
ZF	What is the gender of the complainant?	Male (1):	21
		Female (2):	24
		Mostly male (3):	11
		Mostly female (4):	6
Sub total			62

Code	Critical questions	Type	Responses
ZG	Who was/were the defendant/accused?	Candidate(s) (1):	6
		Party/candidates agent (2):	11
		Voter (3):	10
		Polling station official (4):	31
		Security official (5):	4
		Other (6):	6
Sub total			68
ZH	What is the gender of the accused?	Male (1):	32
		Female (2):	12
		Mostly male (3):	12
		Mostly female (4):	5
Sub total			61
ZJ	What is the status/outcome of complaint?:	Solved using NEC's procedures (1):	22
		Amicably resolved using other dispute resolution mechanism (2):	12
		Complaint was not resolved and recorded in the polling station field book (3):	9
		Complaint was ignored (4):	17
Sub total			60
ZK	Was a follow up required?	Yes (1):	33
		No (2):	29
Sub total			62

6.1.7. Election cycle chart

SONSAF/SCISEF's work of DEOM focused on each stage of the election cycle chart below.



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Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity.

We are a not-for-profit organisation with programmes in nearly 20 countries and territories across Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

The Somaliland Non State Actors Forum (SONSAF) aims to strengthen non-state actors in Somaliland to engage in domestic and international policy dialogue and decision making to bring about a secure and peaceful future for the people of Somaliland. We speak on behalf of a broader Somaliland constituency on issues such as poverty reduction, development, good governance, democracy, peace and security.

COVER PHOTO: A woman holds her voter identification outside a polling station during the Somaliland 2017 presidential elections. © KATE STANWORTH/SAFERWORLD

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