

IESG Newsletter

SOMALIA ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT

UNDP/UNSOM (INTEGRATED ELECTORAL SUPPORT GROUP)

APRIL - JUNE
2023

FEDERAL ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

The National Consultative Council (NCC) met in Mogadishu from 24 to 27 May in the absence of Puntland. The communiqué issued on 28 May includes an annex on the *“Agreement on the electoral model of the Federal Republic of Somalia”*.

Among the key points mentioned in the proposal are: (i) One-Person, One-Vote (OPOV) elections with a Proportional Representation (PR) - Closed List system; a single constituency for the elections

of the House of the People; a Presidential system to replace the parliamentary system, including a double ticket for president and vice president and the abolition of the prime minister position; two-political party system; Federal and State level elections will be held together every five years; and an Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission with 15 commissioners and the abolishment of state level electoral commissions.

Highlights

- TPEC conducts elections in 30 districts on 25 May 2023; results were handed over to the Supreme Court for final certification.
- Galmudug electoral law was passed by the Galmudug State Assembly in June 2023.
- NCC held a meeting on 24 to 27 May and issues a communiqué including an electoral roadmap with a timeline for local elections for all Federal Member States, in June 2024 and presidential election in November 2024.

PUNTLAND LOCAL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

On 25 May, the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) conducted local council elections in Puntland in 30 districts with the participation of seven out of nine registered political associations. TPEC did not hold elections in three districts of Nugaal region (Garowe, Dangorayo, and Godobjiiran) due to security issues.

Following the elections, the international partners commended the people of Puntland for their determination to deliver on their democratic aspirations and their strong determination to hold the local government elections.

On 3 June, TPEC announced the provisional results of the Local Council elections. The 774 seats contested in 30 districts were won by 645 men (83%) and 129 women (17%). The percentage of elected women, 17 per cent, falls short of the targeted 30 per cent and decreased significantly from the percentage of women councilors elected during the pilot local elections held in 2021.

According to the figures announced by TPEC: 186,181

voters voted. Of the counted votes, 177,445 were valid votes (95.3%) and 8,736 (4.7%) ballots were declared invalid. Political associations won seats as follows: Kaah 286 seats (68,165 votes), Mideeye 211 seats (48,398 votes), Sincad (Justice and Equality) 133 seats (28,793 votes), Ifiye 78 seats (12,930 votes), Mustaqbal 57 seats (15,187 votes), Labor 7 seats (3,053 votes), Runcad (Truth and Justice) 2 seats (919 votes). On 3 June, the TPEC Chairperson held a press briefing during which he stated that the elections for the three districts remaining districts of Nugal region remain suspended until further notice. At the same press briefing, he announced the Voter Turnout in the elections was 72%. The UN Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG) team deployed to Garowe from Mogadishu during the election to support the UNSOM Field Office and to witness the process.

The official results of the Puntland elections will be announced by the Supreme Court at a date yet to be confirmed.



A woman voter with her baby casting her vote in Bossaso, Puntland, 25 May 2023. (Photo: TPEC)

In line with the provision of article 114 of the Puntland Constitution and with the Complaint and Dispute Resolution Procedure (2021), on 22 May, the TPEC appointed seven members, two women, and five men, to the Electoral Dispute Resolution Committee (EDRC). The EDRC received five official complaints: one of these complaints was resolved by EDRC through its procedure. The four remaining complaints from Midnimo Women’s Association and three candidates were not acted on by EDRC as TPEC had already announced the election result. EDRC advised that these four remaining complaints should be filed with the Supreme Court, as results were already announced by TPEC. None of the complaints resulted in changes of electoral results.

On 20 June, Puntland’s Parliament passed a motion that would allow the amendment of the Constitution. The amendments concern articles 112 and 113 of the Puntland Constitution to modify the current composition and appointment procedures of the TPEC board of commissioners and proposes increasing the number of political associations to become political parties, from three to five.

GALMUDUG GIEC COMMISSIONERS VISIT TO PUNTLAND DURING LOCAL ELECTIONS

During the direct local council elections, with the support of the IESG a delegation of Galmudug Independent Electoral Commission (GIEC) Commissioners led by Chairperson Halima Ismail visited Puntland to observe the historic universal suffrage election that took place in Puntland on 25 May. GIEC commissioners had the opportunity to visit polling stations and the TPEC situation room. The support provided to GIEC is part of IESG’s a comprehensive approach of the UN electoral assistance in Somalia that aims at supporting electoral administrations in cooperating and exchanging on their experiences. This cooperation ultimately aims for Somali Electoral Management Bodies such as TPEC and GIEC to develop and build a harmonized technical approach to electoral processes, key to the conduct of federal elections.



GIEC Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and TPEC Secretary General at the TPEC Situation Room on 25 May in Garowe. (Photo: GIEC Twitter)



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GALMUDUG: IESG TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO GALMUDUG INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (GIEC)

During the reporting period, IESG worked with Commissioners and the Secretary-General from the GIEC to develop an operational outline to identify key actives and timeline for local elections in 2024. IESG also provided support for the drafting and review of two pieces of legislation, the electoral law and the political party law. IESG also provided inputs for the review of the Galmudug Constitution, specifically on harmonizing provisions on elections to the proportional representation system. The constitutional amendments and the electoral law were adopted by the Galmudug State Assembly in June 2023. IESG also supported GIEC in organizing consultations ahead of the adoption of the electoral law. Within the context of institution building of the GIEC, operational support was provided to set up GIEC office in Dhusamareb.



IESG assisting GIEC with the drafting of the Galmudug State electoral law. (Photo: IESG)

Hirshabelle

Within the work stream of women political participation, one of the strategic areas of support of IESG, the Field Office in Jowar, participated in a two-day workshop on gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding missions, organized by the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) Police Unit on 4-5 May in Jowhar UNSOS-Camp. IESG briefed on the main challenges related to the participation of women and incidents involving women during the last 2022 indirect elections in Hirshabelle state.

Jubaland

On 19 May, IESG Field Office in Kismayo, together with the UNSOM Head of Office, met the Jubaland Minister of Interior. During the meeting, the minister informed of the intention of reconstituting the Jubaland Independent Boundaries and Electoral Commission (JIBEC) will be reconstituted with new commissioners to boost confidence in the electoral process in Jubaland. The minister also shared details of a six-month plan to set up local councils in Jubaland, starting with Dhobley district followed by districts of Elwak and Badhaadhe.



Training on Gender Mainstreaming in Peacebuilding Missions. (Photo: IESG)

On 28 May, IESG Field Office, jointly with the UNSOM Integrated Gender Office held a virtual consultative meeting with Women Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Jubaland with the aim of providing an opportunity for the leaders to share their concerns and recommendations in enhancing CSOs' participation in politics and peace-building processes.



Jubaland UNSOM HoO, IESG Jubaland and UNDP meeting with Jubaland Minister of Interior on 19 May. (Photo: IESG)



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On 4 June, in the framework of UN electoral assistance, UNSOM Field Office including IESG held a meeting with the Jubaland State Assembly sub-committee on Justice, Constitution, Religious Affairs, and Human Rights in Kismayo. The chairperson of the committee informed that Jubaland does not have a Ministry of Constitution but requested for support from UNSOM in the areas of training for the women members of parliament, in the establishment of woman caucus and advocacy for more women as commissioners to the electoral commission and more women candidates to be part of the decision-making process.



Meeting on 4 June between UNSOM and the Jubaland State Assembly sub-committee on Justice, Constitution, Religious Affairs and Human Rights in Kismayo. (Photo: IESG)

On 7 June, during a UNSOM Political Affairs and Mediation Group workshop for CSOs in Jubaland on peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution. The IESG Field Office made a presentation on “Sources of Election violence and mitigating measures with emphasis on the role of CSOs in contributing to the credibility of electoral processes”.



Training on 7 June for CSOs. (Photo: IESG)

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT TO TPEC AND GIEC

During April to June 2023, IESG continued supporting TPEC with the administration of the Letter of Agreement (LOA). This included payments for the training of polling staff and procurement of polling material. The United Nations, through the Somalia Joint Fund (SJF) mechanism, filled the Joint Electoral Support Programme budget gap of 1.5 Million. In parallel, IESG also supported GIEC in the implementation of its LOA and provided direct financial support for trainings and consultations.



TPEC and IESG staff during the Budget monitoring and LOA management training conducted for TPEC in May. (Photo: IESG)

Gender and Inclusion

IESG contributed to the review of the Terms of Reference for the Somalia Women Members of Parliament (MPs)/UN Leadership Forum. The Forum is a platform for UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNSOM, to work with senior Somali Women MPs from both houses of the federal parliament to strengthen women political participation. IESG contributed to

the discussion on two of the four strategic priorities identified by the Forum: (i) early action to implement the 30 per cent quota for women and (ii) capacity building for women Members of Parliament. Moving forward, IESG is collaborating with UN Women and the UNSOM Integrated Gender Office (IGO) a training on Temporary Special Measures (TSM) for the members of the Forum and other women parliamentarians to take place in August 2023. The training is part of a comprehensive approach to strengthen the capacity



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of women in politics well in advance of the federal elections planned for 2026.

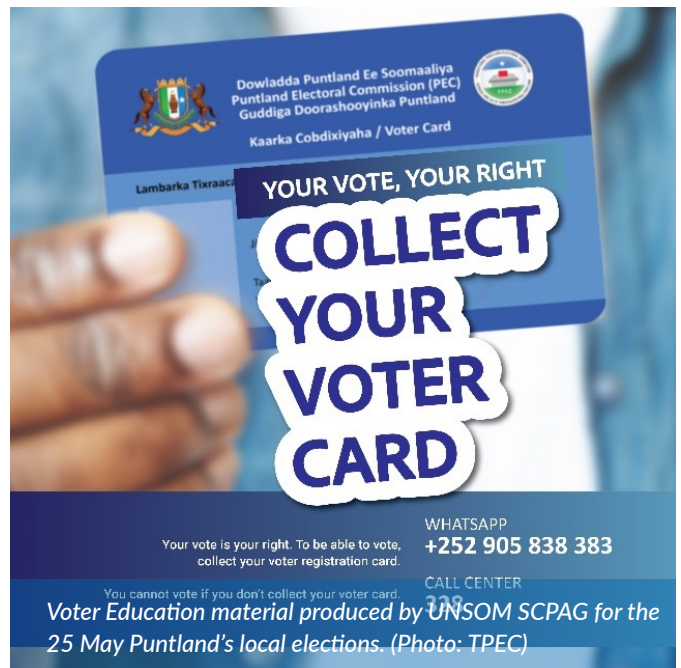
Within the context of the support that IESG provides to the Galmudug electoral process, the team assisted Galmudug authorities with the drafting of provisions for 30 per cent quota included in the Galmudug regional state electoral law. As mentioned earlier, the law was passed by the Galmudug state assembly in June 2023. IESG also assisted with the review of the Galmudug political party law. The drafted amended law, which is currently being reviewed by the Cabinet of Ministers, includes new provisions for women representations in the executive bodies of political parties.



Women voters waiting to cast their vote. (Photo: TPEC)

Voter Education and Outreach

In preparation of the 25 May local elections, at the request of TPEC. IESG supported with the development of messages and materials for its voter education campaign related to the distribution of voters' cards. In collaboration with the UNSOM Strategic Communications and Public Affairs Group (SCPAG), IESG developed key messages in Somali and English to encourage voters to collect their cards so that they can vote on 25 May. The tools developed by TPEC with the support of IESG and SCPAG were specifically designed for the TPEC social media campaign.



IESG also supported TPEC's voter education campaign with the printing of 2,500 posters on how to mark the ballot paper. The posters were part of the voter education material for the polling stations.

During April and May 2023 the IESG's Public Outreach Unit supported the GIEC with the development of the Public Outreach Strategy, for the Inception Phase of GIEC. The strategy was adopted by the Board of commissioners in May 2023.

The primary objective of the Public Outreach Strategy is to enhance public awareness and understanding of the newly established electoral commission and its mandate. The strategy focuses on generating awareness on the independence of the institution and familiarize the general public on the role and responsibilities of GIEC as well as the specific commitment to hold transparent, fair and inclusive elections in Galmudug.

