IESG Newsletter
SOMALIA ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT

UNDP/UNSOM (INTEGRATED ELECTORAL SUPPORT GROUP)
October-December 2023

FEDERAL ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

IESG has been requested by the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) to assist with reviewing draft laws pertaining to the legal framework on elections, and in this regard met with the Minister on 6 November.

In October and November 2023, IESG and MoIFAR’s inclusive politics team have held working sessions on the draft bills for the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Law, and the draft bill for the Electoral Law.

Technical advice provided by the IESG on the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission Law, covers crucial aspects such as the independence of the Electoral Management Body (EMB), procedures for the gender quota, selection, dismissal and the powers and functions of EMB members.

Simultaneously, IESG is in the process of providing comments on the draft Electoral Law. In providing advice to the MoIFAR legal team, IESG consistently takes into account the National Consultative Council (NCC) Communiqué issued on 27 May 2023, to ensure alignment with national priorities and the Constitution, as well as international commitments and best practices in electoral affairs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- IESG collaborates with Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) to review legal framework on elections.
- Puntland President Deni cancels direct elections for Puntland State Assembly.

PUNTLAND STATE ASSEMBLY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

ON 23 OCTOBER, the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) issued a timeline to hold direct elections for the President and State Assembly on 25 February 2024. This date goes beyond the current mandate expiration of President Deni and Puntland State Assembly members. Since October 2023, Puntland State has been dealing with growing controversies over state elections.

The Puntland Opposition Council, which includes the Puntland Political Forum and the Mideeye and Horseed political parties, expressed their strong opposition to the PEC’s election timetable, mandate extensions, and the holding of direct elections. Following the PEC’s announcement, several mediation initiatives were launched by...
Amid rising tensions in Garowe, on 6 December, President Deni agreed to cancel direct State Assembly and presidential elections and revert to the previous nomination process. On 12 December, the President appointed an eight-member election dispute resolution and vetting committee to oversee the appointment of 66 State Assembly members and a seven-member election security committee. The vetting committee announced the requirements for State Assembly candidates and asked all eligible candidates to submit their documents from 17 to 25 December 2023 (the deadline when then extended until 26 December). Shortly after the vetting committee’s announcement, on 23 December, the SSC-Khatumo elders confirmed their decision to abstain from the upcoming Puntland elections. (Despite this decision, the 17 State Assembly Members “belonging” to SSC-Khatumo elders were nominated by an “SSC-Khatumo faction”).

**HIRSHABELLE**

**Jowhar City Administration formed through a Nomination Process held in Jowhar**

**ON 22 OCTOBER**, the Hirshabelle Ministry of Interior and Local Government launched the nomination process of the district council members for Jowhar district. From 24 to 28 October, 26 members of the Jowhar district council, including three women, were nominated and sworn in on 28 October. One more member remains to be nominated to complete the formation of the council’s 27 members. The establishment of Jowhar district council was held despite the discontent of some State Assembly members and clan elders who criticized the unfairness of the process and claimed a fair power-sharing agreement with representation from all clans.

**ON 29 OCTOBER**, the former Jowhar District Commissioner Osman Mohamed Muqtar Barey was elected as the new mayor of Jowhar; Jabril Harare was elected as the first deputy mayor, and Mohamed Amin as the second deputy mayor.
Following the Temporary Special Measures (TSM) training in Mogadishu on 21 to 23 August 2023, attended by 87 members of the Federal Parliament, Somali Women MPs requested additional training on Electoral Systems at both federal and state levels. This request aligns with the ‘Work Plan for one year (June 2023-May 2024)’ agreed upon by the ‘Somalia Women Members of Parliament/UN Leadership Forum’.

The first objective of the training is to share information and raise awareness about different types of Electoral Systems, strengthening technical knowledge that will help MPs when drafting and reviewing relevant legislation. Another key focus is to analyze international electoral systems, enhancing participants’ capacity to contribute to the development of an electoral system suitable for Somalia. Additionally, the training will cover the impact of electoral systems on women’s representation, with clear examples of how different systems influence and accommodate women in politics, including the need and use of quotas in majoritarian and proportional systems.

IESG is prepared to provide the additional training, however, due to funding constraints, the training has been postponed.

ON 17 DECEMBER, IESG participated in a National Forum on Youth, Elections, and Democratization that was co-hosted by the Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in close collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS).

This forum was the final event of a series of youth forums on the same subject held in all the capitals of the Federal Member States. During this forum, the youth presented their findings from the previous forums, which focused on the challenges they face regarding democracy and electoral participation and recommendations for key stakeholders. Abdiiwahab Bilal, representing the Jubaland Youth Association, emphasized the necessity for Somali leaders to heed the voices of the youth and implement one-person, one-vote elections, which would notably enhance youth representation.

Participating in a panel discussion during the forum, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, Catriona Laing, underscored the UN’s commitment to supporting initiatives that aim to secure the full and meaningful participation of Somali youth in the democratization and electoral process by providing good offices for intergenerational dialogue and advocacy.

The ‘Joint Programme for Support to Universal Suffrage Elections in the Federal Republic of Somalia’ was extended until 30 June 2024 at no cost. The extension should provide sufficient time to formulate the required amendments to the Project in accordance with progress and achievements of the electoral process.

The National Forum on Youth, Elections, and Democratization.

Source: UNSOM
IESG has taken proactive steps to ensure the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) compound construction project reaches full completion by the end of 2023. IESG, UNSOS Engineering and the NIEC have developed a comprehensive interoffice memorandum outlining the remaining construction works and a timeline to optimize the utilization of the remaining UNSOM funds allocated to the construction project.

Construction of the NIEC compound. Source: IESG