

PDRCTalks Report



June 2019

PDRCTalks II The Road to Multi-party System and Managing Feder- al Dynamics

Guest Speaker:
Sen. Abdirahman Mohamed
Mohamoud Faroole



Background to PDRCTalks

In March 2019, the Puntland Development and Research Centre (PDRC) initiated a monthly event called PDRCTalks. This event is a new initiative to spread ideas, messages, and awareness on issues related to the betterment of Somalia. These issues cover topics ranging from governance, democratization, peace, and development, which are the key focus areas of PDRC.

PDRCTalks is an interactive platform in which prominent Somali scholars, veteran politicians, and retired civil servants are hosted once in every month to serve as guest speakers and to deliver an expert presentation at a uniquely themed talk-event at PDRC. PDRCTalks aim to spark conversation within the Somali community and through this useful dialogue, change the attitudes and lives of Somalis. Social media is utilized to spread the messages throughout Somali communities living in the diaspora and within the country, through live streams. PDRCTalks has been received well and has featured prominent figures in Somali society to bring to the fore a multi-faceted number of topics in politics, economics, social issues as well as cultural themes.

PDRCTalks is a value-addition component to PDRC's vision as a solutions-oriented organization that prides itself on offering useful tools to bring about peaceful coexistence and economic development by all Somalis.

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The second PDRCTalks event themed "The road to Multi-party System and Managing Federal Dynamics" was held in PDRC on the 23rd June 2019 with Former President Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Faroole) as the Guest Speaker.

President Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud Faroole's long career as a state servant and achievements span over a period of more than 50 years, having served in various capacities, including as a Senior Auditor at the Central Bank, General Manager at the Somali Commercial Bank, Veteran Somali Politician, Puntland Minister of Finance, Minister of Planning and Cooperation among others, before serving 5 years as the President of Federal Member State of Puntland Somalia. Mr. Faroole currently sits in the Somali upper house (The Senate), where he actively advocates for the promotion and the implementation of the federal system of governance in Somalia.

Former President Faroole planted the seeds of democratisation in Puntland early in his tenure; he championed the constitution-making process and its ratification through a constitutional assembly in April 2012. Former President Faroole oversaw the completion of the Puntland Election laws (PEC) and the formation of the first independent Transitional electoral commission known as (TPEC- Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission).

Against a backdrop of such achievements and experiences, Puntland Development and Research Centre (PDRC), invited Former President Faroole as a guest speaker to its 2nd PDRC-Talks, to present lecture on Puntland Democratisation process on the night of 28th June 2019, to share his experiences and lessons learned to better inform the current administration and the newly formed Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC).

Organization of the event

The 2nd PDRCTalks was held on the evening of the 23rd June with a spectacular public lecture presented by the former President of Puntland Government of Somalia Senator, Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Faroole). The President's speech featured some authentic historical insights. The event comprised of a public lecture by the guest speaker, subject matter experts (contributors) followed by audience interaction in the form of Q&A. The social and the traditional media were the primary vehicles shuttling live broadcasts to the broader audience, including millions of Somali diaspora around the world.

The event attracted hundreds of participants including, government officials, Policy makers, Parliamentarians, Former TPEC members, including the former TPEC chairman Mohamed Hassan Bare, the Mayor - Garowe District (Puntland capital city) Ahmed Bare, members from the academia, civil society groups, university students, youth and women.

Introductory Remarks

PDRC director Ali Farah Ali in his opening remarks welcomed and thanked Former President Faroole for accepting the centre's invitation to speak to the public. Ali thanked the participants, including government ministries, members of Parliament, former TPEC chairperson, and the media for their presence and taking part in the PDRCTalks. He stated that such platforms were unique and designed to create a

culture of dialogue, give space members of the public to engage in constructive debate with government officials and subject matter experts to amalgamate the views and efforts of state-building.

Ahmed Bare, the mayor of the nation's administrative capital (Garowe), acknowledged the role played by PDRC in advancing democracy and the rule of law through creating platforms and a culture of dialogue. The Mayor briefly summarised the nation's history, describing the phases that the country had gone through from the days of the founding provisional charter through the constitutional making process and his experience as a former MP. He observed that the constitution-making process was a continuous and collective effort that culminated in the adoption of the provisional constitution by the parliament in 2004, which, on the contrary, lacked neither widespread or assembly approval. He praised the former President's courageous commitment to the realization of the nations' dreams, which had brought the process into completion ten years later. The constitution adopted in April 2012 was the "Living Document," which set the foundation for the introduction of the multiparty system in Puntland. He further noted that six political associations had been founded as a result of the guiding principles of TPEC and PEC laws. He surmised that it was crucially important for people to learn from their history to inform them on how to better their future. Bare when inviting the guest speaker, former President Faroole, anticipated that the former president (who was the first president to attempt the introduction of multi-party system in the country) would share with the audience his wisdom, experiences, challenges, and missed opportunities to move the process forward.

Keynote Speech



Former President Faroole, in his hour-long lecture, summarised the significant historical achievements and democratisation milestones reached during his presidency. Senator Faroole

delved in details using the former Transitional Puntland Elections Committee (TPEC) as a reference on how his administration was committed to complete the constitutional quagmire.

The former president expressed his appreciation for being honored to grace such an occasion and for the opportunity for allowing him to use this critical platform, where he believed he could share his experiences as a former president. He noted that PDRC's role as a leading research institution, which has contributed enormously to peace-building and the advancement of democracy. According to him, PDRC has, over the years, preserved and documented the developmental stages of the Puntland State as such; it has become a centre with immense institutional memory and repository of academic literature.

It is important to note that PDRC and Interpeace were the leading institutions that supported the process in terms of creating awareness, public engagement, and voter education. Furthermore, they did extensive work reaching out to and taking the message of democracy to communities that are in hard-to-reach areas.

Former President Faroole stated that the previous administration of President Ade Muse had done tremendous work on re-working the constitutional draft and had submitted it to the then parliament for review and approval. However, by the time he got into office, nothing had been done, and work on the draft constitutional document had stalled, which prompted him to recall it from parliament and handed it over to the cabinet.

Former President Faroole believed that the democratization process during his time in office had real traction and had achieved substantial headways both in technical and legal aspects. According to the former President, his commitment to the democratization process was evident since he had recalled the working draft of the constitution from parliament and appointed a Minister of state for democratization with the exclusive responsibility of foreseeing the completion of the constitution-making

process. The former President is his wisdom, and he saw it fit to establish certain legal entities to support the democratisation process, which led to the establishment of Puntland's first transitional electoral commission (TPEC), July 2011.

Mr. Faroole stated that the beginning of the democratisation process marked the advent of a long-awaited period with prospects of delivering better governance to the people of Puntland. As such, he believed that the subsequent adoption of the constitution through the constituent assembly in April 2012, and the formulation of electoral laws by the then-commission were significant landmarks and stepping-stones towards the establishment of political associations coupled with the execution of local council elections.

The table below shows the key milestones achieved during former President Faroole's administration:

Steps	Activity	Date
1	Appointed State Minister for Democratization and Constitution.	February 2009
2	Recalled the draft constitution from parliament back to the cabinet.	
3	Called for an extraordinary session of Parliament.	April 2009
4	Parliament approves the new constitution	June 2009
5	Parliament approves Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC Law)	January 2011
6	Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) is established	July 2011
7	New Parliament Hall for the upcoming constitutional convention.	
8	Parliament approves Constitutional Convention Referendum Law	November 2011
9	Puntland Constituent Assembly adopts the Puntland Constitution	April 2012
10	The Supreme Court certifies the results of the Convention.	
11	Puntland Political Associations Law came into force	June 2012
12	The President signs and issues official Gazette No. 7 as Law No. 2	July 2012
13	President signs Puntland Local Council Election Law	Sept 2012
14	Puntland Democratization Process is suspended	July 2013

Mr. Faroole stated that achieving democracy in a conflict-ridden society and transitioning from clan-based politics was a daunting task. He, however, prided himself and his administration for having done meticulously, including the drafting of electoral laws, establishment of electoral commissions, and adoption of the final constitution through the constituency assembly.

According to the former president, his dedication, will power, legal mechanisms, and the technical

readiness of the process led to the establishment of six political associations with the potential of growing into future political parties. As a show of support and confidence in the process, the international community and its implementing partners provided financial and technical assistance.

The former president said that in the lead up to the final face of implementing a much-desired democratisation process, self-organised groups with interested in retaining the clan-based system tried to hijack the prerogative rights of the people to embrace democratisation. They distorted the public perception 'with their hyperbolic intentions further disturbing the public order and safety,' as stated by the former president.

As a consequence of these unfortunate events, Former President Faroole decided to halt the activities aimed at the democratization process on July 14th, 2013, to deter widespread electoral violence and anti-election uprisings in Gardo district and parts of Mudug and Bari regions.

The former president confirmed that the decision to halt the process wasn't an easy one considering the collective efforts and the gains that had been made throughout the years, the preparations, enactment of laws, and the establishment of electoral bodies and bringing the international community on board. Nevertheless, in the end, "the public safety and existence of Puntland government were at stake," he had insisted. He also admitted that the 'spoilers' were not a serious threat and could have been met with force, but they had caused a distraction, thus leading to the distortion of the mainstream discourse the gains of democratisation and public order. All in all, "we had to suspend the process on July 14, 2013, to diffuse widespread electoral violence and anti-election uprising," he concluded.

The suspension of the first Puntland local elections, however, did not deter Puntland's democratization aspirations. Instead, it was perceived as a conciliatory gesture and a precursor to successful elections in the future. Since then, Puntland again relapsed to the clan-based political system through which

two successive administrations have come into office since 2013, and former President Faroole added that the democratization aspirations in public remained ingrained in them and as such, they would continue the discourse and would mount pressure on the current nation's leadership.

The former President Faroole believes that his administration had delivered on the tasks stipulated in the charter by their achievement of several milestones in which the previous administrations had failed. Besides, had the democratization process, as an integral component to their efforts materialized, Puntland's last two administrations would have been elected into office through a popular vote and by democratic means.

In conclusion, the former President stated that he had left office peacefully overseeing a smooth transition, leaving behind robust legal frameworks and an Electoral Commission in place for his successor to continue the process and ensure the implementation of the laws.



(From Left) Saido Ahmed , Salim Said Salim, Abdelkarim A. Haji Hassan, Abdirahman M. Faroole and Mohamed Hassan Bare

PDRCTalks invited Senator Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Faroole), in his capacity as the former President of the Puntland government, who had been instrumental in the democratization process, to its 2nd PDRCTalks event as the guest speaker which included a panel discussion with the former Chairman of the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC), and two legal experts. The Former President addressed the audience in his lecture and candidly spoke about Somalia's current political issues, delving deeply into his past experiences

of Puntland's democratization processes. The former President explained the challenges and the lost opportunities on his campaign promise to deliver an end to the clan-based system. In Salim's view, many people believed the process was very tenuous and has been done hastily. Those who opposed the process did so on the premise that the process was flawed and that it had lacked independence. The administration was accused, among other things, of orchestrating strong single-party rule and using government resources and influences to augment their second term strategy. Moreover, Salim stressed that the timing, which was a crucial factor, was disregarded as the process become fully-fledged at a later stage, towards the end of the government's 5-year term, which made people suspicious and later became a norm with the next administration adopting a similar approach, a clear indication of the lack of commitment to the process by the administration.

Faroole, in his response, stated that given the fragile context and the post-war crisis, state-building in Puntland had been limited by the possibility and the state's ability to conduct a large-scale population census. In an ideal democracy, the building blocks, mechanisms, and the developmental stages in a democracy should have followed suit, things that the former president believed that his administration had established throughout the five years he was in office.

According to lawyer Saido Ahmed (Qacle), many developed countries are still working on improving their democratisation process and systems of governance; Italy, she said, is an example where electoral systems are continually being reviewed for further improvements. She was convinced that Puntland's attempt to democratization and the multi-party system was an exercise that could lead to the achievement of perfection in the future.

Salim stated that an issue that fuelled uncertainties and overshadowed the process was the perception of how TPEC was formed with the selection of five out of the nine members by the President and the remaining four members

selected by the Speaker of Parliament. This selection, he stated, was not only based on clan-quota but that the government had enlisted their associates to help in selecting members who would lead the process in their favor. Consequently, due to the apparent lack of procedural independence, the new electoral body was seen as working towards providing a platform for the incumbent for a second term in office.

Salim believed that it wasn't feasible to pursue elections without having prior mechanisms in place, stating that some of the issues that needed to be addressed were: population census, securing of constitutional borders, completion of district demarcations, and conduct of a tenuous public awareness. Devoid of these being done, it was, therefore, foolhardy to expect the elections to be free and fair.

President Faroole, in his response, stated that pursuing an ideal democracy in the context of Puntland required baby steps, and he believed that his administration had employed complementary options to engage the broader scope of the citizens, done extensive public awareness and voter education.

Saido Ahmed ended the panel discussion by saying: ***"Puntland can be a laboratory for Somalia's democratisation process if efforts are well utilised!"***

Open Discussions and Recommendations

As part of the PDRCTalks, after the presentation on a categorized thematic discussion, preliminary questions are directed to the panelists that included the key guest speaker and the two law-



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questions are directed to the panelists that included the key guest speaker and the two lawyers. At this juncture, the audience has an opportunity to comment, contribute, and ask questions. The following are the key recommendations gleaned from everyone's contributions.

- In 1998, Puntland was the first federal member state working towards a federal system of governance for Somalia. The founding charter of Puntland demanded that the first administration transit from clan-based politics within its first three-year term. Unfortunately, after 21 years in existence and with several attempts, Puntland is yet to transition from the clan-based political system. This, therefore, is golden opportunity for the current administration to pursue the democratization process once and for all, as people are more ready and eager than ever before.

- The current administration should make use of the existing laws, infrastructure, and expertise from the previous attempts to avoid similar mistakes.

- From the 2014 and 2019 elections, it is clear that these elections have had a ripple effect on the traditional system and eroded the trust the people had on the clan-based selection process. It is in the best interest of the elders and the current administration to leave a legacy by introducing a system of governance that is based on merit and competence rather than a clan-based one.

- Research shows that 90.9% of men and 91% of women respondents intended to vote if there was a one-person-one-vote system applied in Puntland (PDRC Participatory Poll 2014). The current administration should, therefore, embrace the democratization process by making use of past experiences, public demands, and the mechanisms that are already in place.

- The President and the House of Representatives (HoR) must ensure that there is an independent, competent, and process-oriented Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC).

- The federal government of Somalia's interference in member state's affairs and elec-

tions should be critically addressed without jeopardizing federal integrity and state constitutional legitimacy. As such, federal dynamics and the state interests must be carefully balanced without blurring the line of duties and federal constitutional powers.

- Puntland representatives from the federal upper and lower houses should fully and firmly represent the interest of their constituencies.

Closing Remarks

PDRC's executive director, Ali Farah Ali, in his closing remarks, noted that Faroole's administration had done an enormous amount of work towards the democratization of the nation. He also reminded the public of PDRC's support and involvement in the process, more so, in regards to civic education and public awareness. He thanked the keynote speaker, the panellists, the contributors, and the media for their contribution in making the event a success.

