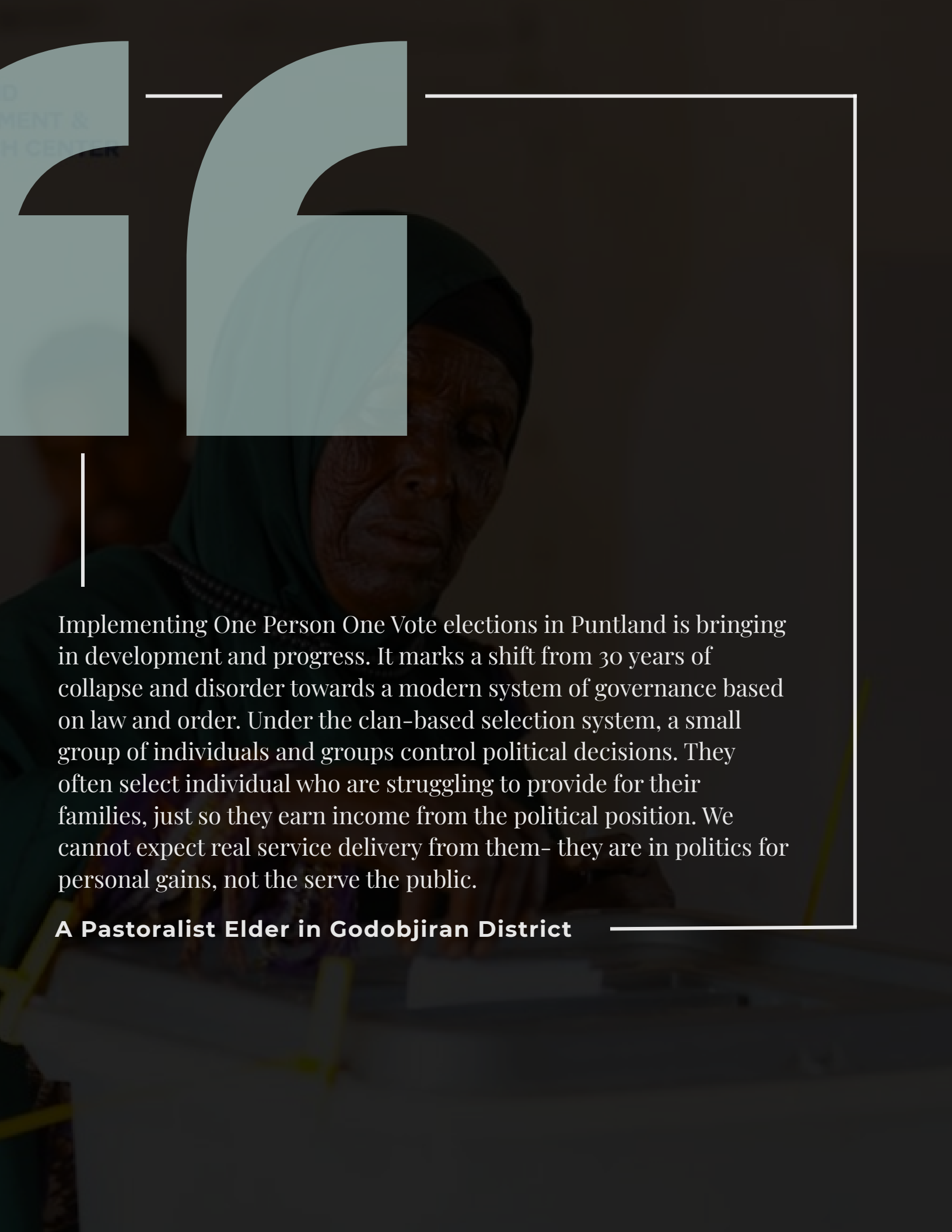


SHAPING PUNTLAND'S DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

2019
-
2024

A Close Look at Political, Security, & Social Developments





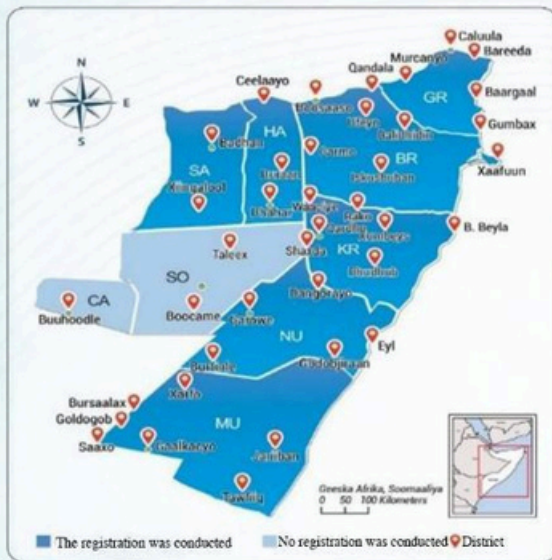
Implementing One Person One Vote elections in Puntland is bringing in development and progress. It marks a shift from 30 years of collapse and disorder towards a modern system of governance based on law and order. Under the clan-based selection system, a small group of individuals and groups control political decisions. They often select individual who are struggling to provide for their families, just so they earn income from the political position. We cannot expect real service delivery from them- they are in politics for personal gains, not the serve the public.

A Pastoralist Elder in Godobjiran District



The General Data Table of the Official Voter Registration in Puntland

General information



37 District

7 Region

The total number of districts where registration took place The total number of region where registration took place

Number of voters **401,120 · 100%**

Total number of voters voter

Valid voters **387,094 · 96.5%**

Number of valid voters voter

Attempted to registered twice **9,733 · 2.4%**

Voters who attempted to register twice voter

Incomplete voters **4,293 · 1.1%**

Incomplete voters voter

Gender of the voters.

Male voters 201,704 · 50.3%
Male voters who registered voter

Female voters 199,416 · 49.7%
Female voters who registered voter



info@tpec.pl.so

www.tpec.pl.so

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TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED CITIZENS IN 37 DISTRICTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Puntland Development and Research Centre (PDRC) is an independent, non-partisan, nonprofit research institution based in Garowe, Puntland state of Somalia. Promoting democratic principles and strengthening good governance structures are among its core focus areas. While democratization has long been a priority for Puntland, successive governments have each made incremental progress towards this goal, often with sustained technical support from PDRC. However, the government of President Said Abdullahi ‘Deni’ has notably succeeded in translating this dream into a reality.

This report has been compiled by PDRC to document the complex and often challenging journey of the democratization process between 2019 and 2024, culminating in the successful holding of local government elections in 36 districts of Puntland. It is worth noting that this publication builds on earlier work, particularly the 2014 report titled “Puntland’s Political Transformation.”

PDRC extends its sincere gratitude to its Senior Researcher, Prof. Abdulkadir Sh. Mohamoud, for leading the compilation of this report, with the invaluable support of the entire PDRC Research and Management team, whose contributions enriched the various chapters. Appreciation is also extended to all individuals and institutions whose insights and experiences informed the content of this report, particularly Dr. Ahmed Muse who edited this report. Special thanks go to those involved in the editing, design, and layout, whose efforts brought this publication to life.

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ACRONYMS

FGS	Federal Government of Somalia Local
LCE	Councils Election Local Government
OPOV	Elections One-Person-One-Vote
PAP	Political Association Puntland
PDRC	Development and Research Center
PEC	Puntland Electoral Commission
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
TPEC	Transitional Electoral Commission

III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report captures the political, security, and development trajectory of Puntland State of Somalia over the past six years. Specifically, it highlights the key milestones and challenges experienced during the previous term of President Said Abdullahi ‘Deni’ and early phase of his current second term. This period has been marked by noteworthy progress and achievements. For years, the people of Puntland—both the public and the political elite—have long aspired to transition from a clan-based political selection system to a one-person, one-vote electoral process. While five successive governments were unable to realize this vision, the sixth government under President Deni (2019–2023) made a concerted and successful effort to turn this long-held aspiration into reality.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

A range of complex hindered the full execution of this mandate. Nevertheless, the Government remained resolute in its commitment to fulfilling the long-awaited aspiration of the Puntland people. It succeeded in organizing local government elections across 36 districts, where citizens elected their local councils through a democratic One-Person-One-Vote (OPOV) system. These elections were conducted in three successive phases: the first in three districts on 25th October 2021; the second, as the main phase, in 30 districts on 25th May 2023; and the final phase on 23rd July 2024 in three districts of the Nugal region—areas where earlier elections had been obstructed by armed opposition militia. Despite this progress, the Government was unable to proceed with direct parliamentary and presidential elections at the end of its first term due to strong resistance from opposition groups. The following sections examine the key developments and turning points in this complex and evolving process.

VOTER REGISTRATION

The Puntland voter registration process was conducted in two phases. The first phase took place in 2021 during the early local government elections in the three districts of Eyl, Gardho, and Uffayn, where a total of 46,839 eligible citizens were registered. Subsequently, TPEC conducted a second, more extensive registration exercise across 34 districts in seven of Puntland’s nine regions. The remaining two regions of —Sool and Ayn— were excluded due to persistent security challenges arising from the unresolved territorial dispute between Puntland and Somaliland. In total, 401,120 citizens were registered across both cycles¹(see figure 1), comprising 201,704 males (50.29%) and 199,416 females (49.71%). However, on exhaustive scrutiny, only 387,094 (96.5%) turned out valid, while the rest divided between double entries and incomplete ballots.

¹ Including the 46,839 citizens, who registered in the early LG elections of 2021

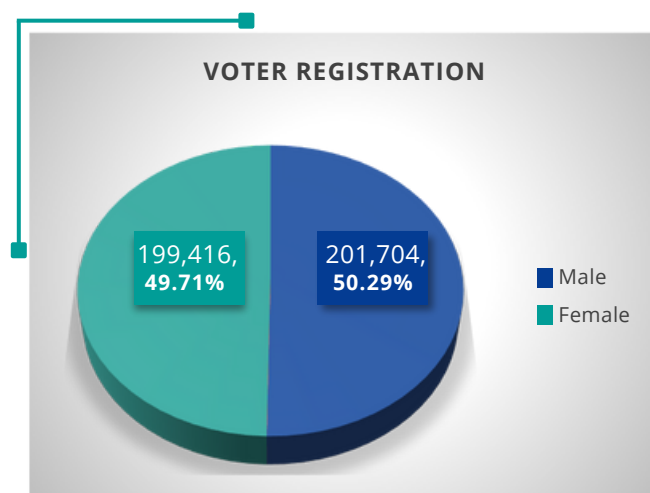


Figure 1: Voter registration

CARD DISTRIBUTION

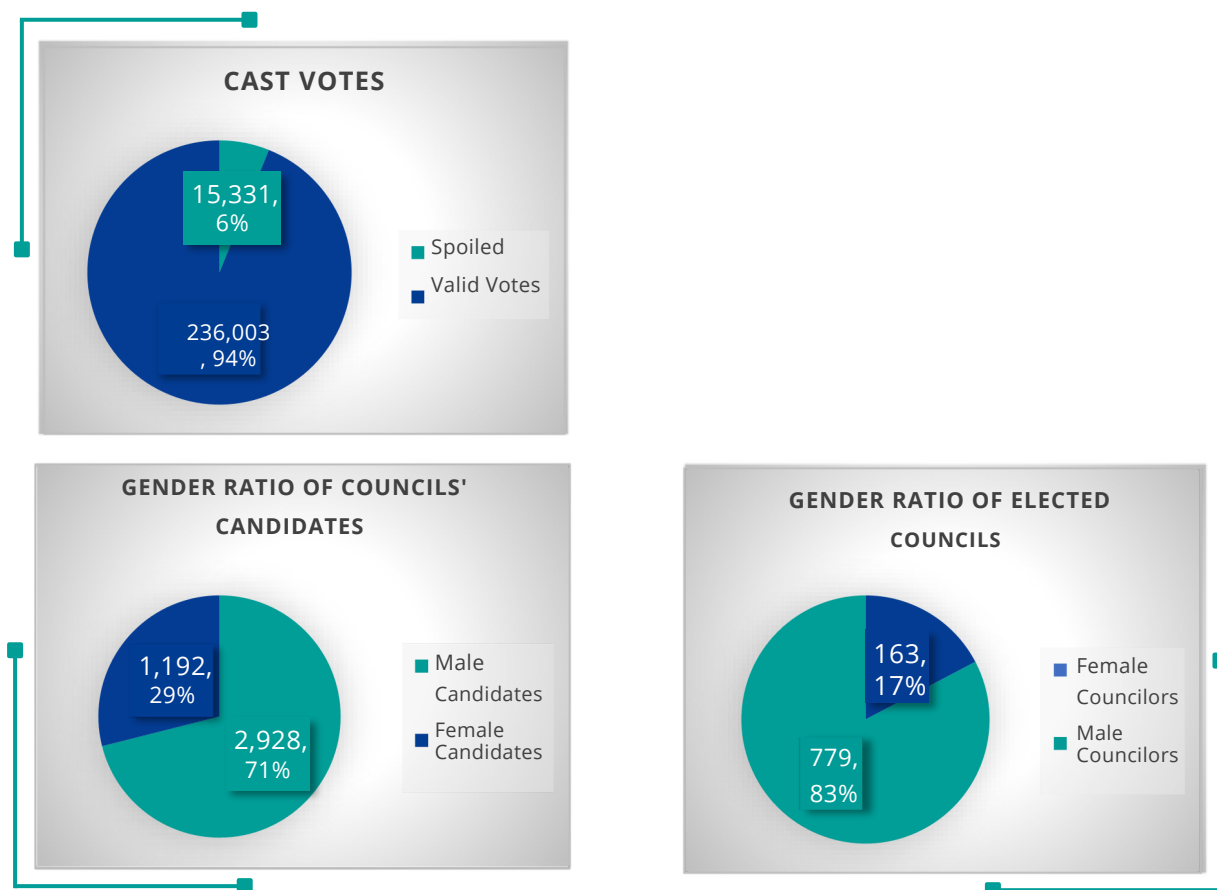
Based on the registration figures, TPEC conducted voter card distribution in two successive phases. During the early elections in October 2021, it printed 46,839 voter cards, of which 37,578 were collected. In the second phase in May 2023, TPEC prepared 342,216 voter cards and successfully distributed 319,507 of them across 33 districts -including the three Nugal districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo and Godobjiran. A total of 22,709 cards remained uncollected.² Additionally, card distribution could not take place in the intended district of Las Qoray due to the continued threat posed by the presence of Al-Shabaab. This threat had already disrupted the initial voter registration exercise, during which an attack involving roadside explosives led to injuries and the destruction of some of the team's vehicles as they approached the district.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTION RESULTS

The Puntland local government elections were conducted in three consecutive phases: October 2021, May 2023, and July 2024. In the initial phase held in three districts, nine political associations accredited by TPEC participated. In the subsequent two phases, covering 33 districts, eight political associations contested.³ A total of 251,334 citizens cast their votes across all three elections. Of these, approximately 6% of the ballots were declared spoiled (see figure) (See figure). The overall voter turnout—measured as the proportion of registered citizens who voted—stood at 65%. These multiparty elections featured 4,120 candidates competing for 942 local council seats across 36 districts in Puntland. Among the candidates, 2,928 (71%) were male and 1,192 (29%) were female. Male candidates won 779 seats (83%), while women secured 163 seats (17%) (see charts below). (see charts below).

² Source: TPEC 2023 The Youth Political Association had opted out

³ when it could not acquire seats



ATTEMPT TO TRANSIT TO DIRECT PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

The Puntland government, encouraged by the success of the local government elections, decided to hold direct elections for the remaining parts of the state's parliament and presidency. They began preparing for a combined one-person, one-vote (OPOV) election for both. However, this caused strong reactions from the opposition groups, who had already opposed the earlier local government elections. Since the 2023 local elections, the opposition has been accusing President Deni and his government of using the OPOV process as an excuse to extend their time in power. They argued that there was not enough time left in the government's term to organize the OPOV elections.

Despite the opposition's efforts to resist and disrupt the process, the Puntland Legislature quickly began reviewing the constitution. The goal was to amend two key points: a) the system of indirectly electing parliament members through clan-based selection, and b) the rule that limited the number of political parties allowed to contest in the elections to just three.

On 20 June 2023, while the legislature was discussing these constitutional changes, militias from an armed opposition group attacked the parliamentary premises. This resulted in severe casualties, injuries, the displacement of people, and damage to property.

Still, on 25 July 2023, the legislature went ahead and passed amendments to 11 Articles of the Constitution. These changes allowed all registered political associations to compete in the upcoming parliamentary elections. Shortly after, on 31 July 2023, the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) announced that eight political associations had qualified to participate in the planned Puntland parliamentary and presidential elections. The amendments also stated that the people of Puntland would directly elect both the President and the Vice President.

To move the process forward, the legislature approved a new 14-member permanent Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) on 5 September 2023. This new commission took immediate action and, on 23 October 2023, announced that the combined parliamentary and presidential elections would be held on 25 February 2024. They also released a detailed election schedule to guide the process.

While the Puntland Government aimed to hold direct parliamentary and presidential elections, the opposition strongly resisted this plan between August and December 2023. They launched a major campaign against the government's agenda and deployed armed militias around Garowe, the capital, to block further progress. Traditional leaders also played a significant role in the conflict. Some sided with the opposition and became involved in opposing the direct elections. As a result of lobbying by both the government and the opposition, Puntland's traditional leaders became divided into two camps.

By the end of October 2023, the opposition brought together a group of titled traditional leaders in Garowe. After several days of discussions, they released an 11-point statement. This declaration called for postponing the democratic process and urged a return to the clan-based system. They proposed that a parliament selected by clans should elect the president and vice president on January 8, 2024, in line with earlier traditions.

RETURN TO THE CLAN-BASED INDIRECT ELECTORAL SYSTEM

On November 14, 2023, the opposition issued a resolution threatening to form a parallel parliament and cabinet if President Deni refused to revert to the traditional clan-based selection system. As part of this move, the opposition released its own electoral timetable based on the clan selection of members of the House of Representatives, who would then elect a president and vice president. This action was taken in open defiance of the Puntland Electoral Commission's announcement, which had set a fixed date and schedule for the parliamentary and presidential elections, as well as the issuance of a related schedule. The opposition also warned that if Deni continued with plans to hold direct elections, they would immediately appoint a Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee to proceed with the clan-based selection of new parliamentarians.

Alongside the ongoing disputes between the Puntland government and the opposition, other stakeholders also intervened to mediate.

These included two former Somali prime ministers with political roots in Puntland, as well as religious and business delegations from both Puntland and Kenya, and a delegation led by the highest-ranking traditional leader from the Sade (Marehan/Darood) clan. Additionally, a group of Dhulbahante traditional leaders from Las Anod participated in reconciliation efforts between the Puntland government and the opposition. After holding meetings with both sides and engaging with various civil society groups, the Dhulbahante traditional leaders issued a controversial six-point proposal on December 6, 2023.

The Dhulbahante declaration recommended a one-year extension for the Puntland House of Representatives, whose term was set to expire one month after the declaration. While calling for this extension, the proposal also requested that the House elect a new president and vice president immediately after the incumbent government's term ended on January 8, 2024. The newly formed government would then be responsible for organizing and holding One Person One Vote (OPOV) parliamentary elections within 12 months. However, the Dhulbahante proposal fell short of resolving the ongoing political deadlock in Puntland.

Despite these developments, by the end of December 2023, Puntland remained in a complex political deadlock. The risk of direct armed confrontation between the government and armed opposition grew increasingly imminent, particularly if the government proceeded with One Person One Vote (OPOV) parliamentary and presidential elections. In response to mounting pressure from various stakeholders, including traditional leaders and senior politicians, President Said Abdullahi Deni reconsidered his position. In a public address delivered on 7 December 2023, he announced the provisional suspension of the planned OPOV elections. He further declared that Puntland would return to the indirect traditional election system, with members of the upcoming legislative body to be selected through the previously used clan-based nomination process.

In addition to postponing the OPOV elections, the Puntland President successfully persuaded the House of Representatives to approve the long-awaited establishment of the Constitution Court. On 8 December 2023, the Legislature voted to establish a nine-member Constitutional Court. Just two days after its formation, the Court convened to hear a case concerning the legality of the one-year term extension that the House had granted itself on December 7, 2023. After thorough deliberation, the Constitutional Court nullified the extension and ordered the election of a new House of Representatives in line with the Puntland Constitution.

PUNTLAND'S 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL DYNAMICS

Following President Deni's announcement on 7 December 2024 to postpone the planned direct parliamentary and presidential elections, the state moved forward with the implementation of the traditional clan-based selection system for members of the House of Representatives. On January 1, 2024, the nominated Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee released the final list of 66 successful candidates nominated by Puntland's clans and sub-clans. On 4 January 2024, the newly formed House of Representatives elected its Speaker and two Deputy Speakers. The following day, the newly elected Speaker, Abdirizak Ahmed Said, appointed a seven-member committee to oversee the presidential election scheduled for 8 January 2024.

On 8 January 2024, the Puntland House of Representatives convened to elect a president and a Deputy President. Eleven candidates contested for the presidency, and another eleven for the deputy position. The members of parliament voted for the presidential candidates with the incumbent, President Said Abdullahi Deni, winning by a significant margin—securing 45 out of 66 votes. The election for the Deputy President followed, where H.E. Ilyas Osman Lugator emerged victorious in the second round of voting.

CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN ADVANCING DEMOCRACY IN PUNTLAND

Civil society, defined as “groups and organizations that operate outside of the government and the market to pursue shared interests, values, and purposes” represent the third sector- alongside government and business- that plays an influential role in Puntland's governance. The civil society plays a crucial role in promoting accountability of elected politicians and public institutions, as well as raising public awareness on key issues, including civic and voter education. According to the World Bank, “Civil society ... refers to a wide array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations [NGOs], labour unions, Indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations.” Although civil society remains in a formative stage at both the Puntland and federal levels, it contributes meaningfully to various public domains such as community development, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and civic education. In Puntland, civil society organizations are coordinated under the Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA).

SUPPORT FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ONE PERSON ONE VOTE (OPOV) ELECTIONS

Since the start of the early elections in Puntland 2021, PUNSAA supported the government-led transition to a multiparty system and, with the support of the international community, led extensive civic and voter education programmes. First, a huge portion of the Somali/Puntland population leads a nomadic pastoral lifestyle and remains illiterate, making it difficult for many to understand and effectively participate in the voting process.

Second, the introduction of a multiparty political system and democratic elections was a new and unfamiliar experience for the people of Puntland and Somalia, as 53 years had passed since the last One Person One Vote (OPOV) elections in 1968. These challenges highlighted the need for widespread civic and voter education to promote informed participation and support a smooth democratic transition.

Thus, PUNSAA members, in regular consultation with TPEC, took the lead in fulfilling this critical task. While many civil society organizations participated in the civic and voter education programmes, PDRC, the Media, the PUNSAA Umbrella network, and KAALO emerged as key actors and led the initiative. Although TPEC provided some financial support in certain, its primary role was to offer guidance and supervise the implementation of the programmes by civil society. Donors and international organizations also contributed funding to support these efforts. The civic and voter education programmes employed various strategies and formats, including mobile teams, MAVU teams, media broadcasts, video shows, public debates, focus groups discussions aired through media, mobile messaging campaigns. The outcome of the civic and voter education proved captivating. In the initial early local government elections held in the 3 districts., a total of 3,366 ballots spoiled out of 28,854 votes cast, representing 12 % of total. Comparatively, at the end of the 36 districts' elections (including early elections), out of 251,334 votes cast, only 15,331 votes equivalent to just 6% of total were spoiled. This notable reduction reflects the tireless efforts of Puntland's civil society, which consistently implemented extensive civic and voter education campaigns throughout the electoral process.

DE-ESCALATION OF POLITICAL CONFLICTS AND SECURITY THREATS

Acting as a neutral platform, the leadership of PDRC and PUNSAA played a vital role in defusing political tensions by bringing together opposing political stakeholders and facilitating constructive dialogue. During the intense political confrontations in Puntland in 2022 and 2023, the PDRC, in collaboration with PUNSAA, actively engaged both the government and the opposition groups, as well as the commanders of the mutinying Puntland Darawish forces. Civil society actors not only reached out to the armed militias and their leaders but also engaged opposition politicians and respected elders. These efforts were instrumental in easing political tensions, restoring public confidence, and alleviating widespread fears and security concerns over potential instability.

PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The reinstatement of an incumbent government carries important implications for the political and administrative developments of the state affairs. Obviously, it presents both opportunities and challenges that can influence the government's performance. of the re-instated government. The following sections will explore the potential prospects as well as the key obstacles that may affect state-building efforts over the next five years.

PROSPECTS

The incumbent government has implemented extensive programmes aimed at strengthening basic services and governance systems. As a result, there are several promising prospects for consolidating these and other achievements, including:

- The successful conduct of local council elections paves the way for the continuation and consolidation of the democratization process. During its current term, the government can build on these achievements by advancing state-building efforts and promoting sustainable social development.
- The early commencement of the democratization process will facilitate a smooth and credible political election at the end of the government's term in 2029.
- The Puntland Electoral Commission is fully established and enjoys the support of the government, the public and the political parties. Additionally, some of its members have demonstrated the skill and capacity required to carry out their responsibilities, as evidenced by their successful management of the delayed elections in the Nugal region districts of Garowe, Godobjiran and Dangoroyo.

The establishment of the Puntland Constitutional Court (PCC) provides a legal mechanism to address any potential constitutional or legal disputes that may arise in the future during political and administrative processes.

KEY CHALLENGES

Path toward implementing One Person One Vote (OPOV) elections in Puntland has been challenging, with the government facing numerous complexities. During the early elections in the three districts of Eyl, Gardho and Uffayn there was widespread enthusiasm and motivation. Many politicians embraced the process, formed political associations, and actively participated in the elections. Once the results were announced, vested political interests began to emerge—some stakeholders celebrated victory, while others felt marginalized or defeated. As a result, opposition to the widely supported democratization process began to take shape. The following is a summary of the major challenges facing democratic progress in Puntland:

- The deliberate delay by the Puntland President in seating the elected councils dampened the enthusiasm of both the electorate and the elected representatives, discouraging the voters of the remaining 33 districts.
- In December 2021, a devastating conflict broke out in Bossaso among elite government troops, resulting in loss of life, destruction of property, and the mass displacement of Bossaso residents. This conflict also contributed to delays in seating the elected councils and deepened public disenchantment with the democratization process.

- The resignation of the TPEC leadership following disagreements with the government
- The parliamentary and presidential elections of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) diverted the attention of the Puntland leadership from seating the new elected councils
- In early 2023, heavy fighting broke out in Las Anod, Sool region, between militias of Sool, Sanaag and Ayn, referred to as SSC-Khatumo and the occupying Somaliland forces. This conflict significantly slowed the progress of the of the democratization process
- Sharp divisions and discord among members of Puntland traditional leaders, driven by political affiliations, posed another major challenge to Puntland state building and overall stability.
- The contracting term expiry of the incumbent government, which created suspicions of term extension.
- The adverse interference of the Federal Government of Somalia in Puntland's affairs, aimed at undermining Puntland's democratic efforts by employing all means, including funding those Puntland politicians, intent on disrupting the election process.
- The traditional nomadic pastoralist lifestyle, combined with recurrent droughts that force communities to follow erratic rainfall patterns, has hindered their ability to participate in elections or to remain near their designated polling stations
- During the second and third elections cycles, many opposition groups, anticipating insufficient public support to realize their political ambitions, sought to undermine the democratic process by discouraging their supporters from registering to vote or participating in the elections

LESSONS LEARNED

Following are lessons learned:

- Overwhelming public support to transitioning away from the clan-based system of governance, enabled the democratic process to proceed, despite strong resistance from interest groups
- The democratization process can only be achieved through a combination of strong public determination and committed government leadership.
- Illiteracy remains high among the Somali population. During the elections, the number of people requiring assistance exceeded acceptable levels, highlighting the critical importance of intensive public awareness and civic education programmes to achieve meaningful voter registration and turnout.
- Conducting early elections in a few districts proved v effective, as lessons learned were successfully applied to the subsequent elections.
- The formation of the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) was the result of a carefully negotiated political compromise. It is therefore important to consider inclusivity, supported by continuous political outreach and effective compromise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide analytical framework for addressing key gaps and advancing sustainable democratization.

1. STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- Conduct continuous training and capacity-building programs for PEC staffs to strengthen their technical and administrative capabilities. Provide sufficient financial and logistical support to enable timely and credible elections.
- Establish and operationalize a functional constitutional court to effectively address constitutional disputes and ensure the impartial resolution of political and administrative issues, particularly during transitions.
- Develop and implement a broadly agreed-upon administrative transition framework to minimize uncertainty and conflict during the transfer of power.

2. ENHANCE SECURITY AND STABILITY

- Prioritize conflict-resolution mechanisms that address the root causes of violence, including clan-based rivalries and political interference. Actively engage traditional leaders and community stakeholders in mediation and peacebuilding efforts
- Deploy dedicated security forces to safeguard the electoral processes, with established mechanisms to de-escalate tensions in conflict-prone areas

3. INVIGORATE PUBLIC TRUST IN DEMOCRATIZATION

- Expedite the formalization and empowerment of elected councils to demonstrate tangible progress and restore public confidence and enthusiasm in democratic governance.
- Conduct targeted civic education campaigns to raise voter awareness about democratic processes and their benefits. Tailor outreach efforts to engage youth and marginalized groups, maximizing inclusivity and participation.

4. PROMOTE POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND CONSENSUS

- Enhance dialogue among political stakeholders such as political parties, civil society, and traditional leaders to foster collective ownership of the democratization process.
- Develop robust mechanisms to prevent undue political interference from federal and external actors.
- Discourage traditional leaders from direct involvement in partisan politics, while leveraging their cultural influence on support dispute resolution and consensus-building efforts.

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

- Conduct phased elections strategically, incorporating lessons from previous electoral processes to improve efficiency of the subsequent phases
- Establish channels for citizens to provide feedback on the democratization process, promoting government responsiveness and accountability.

6. FOSTER RESILIENCE IN GOVERNANCE

- Develop robust contingency plans to address disruptions such as security threats, natural disasters, and political crises, which could derail democratization efforts.



The traditional leaders used to select and propose old men, who drank tea with them at their houses. But under this OPOV system, educated and young councillors will be elected by the universal suffrage. These will be responsive to people's needs and development.

An Educated Lady Living in Bossaso

PDRC 122

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights the objectives and methodology of the study. It also provides a brief background on the establishment of Puntland, its aspirations, the subsequent multifaceted challenges of the state building, and the persistent impediments to democratization. The study underlines the rough and uneven path toward the eventual achievement of Puntland's current democratization success. The chapter presents a detailed and well-organized timeline that illustrates how, over a period of more than 25 years and through six administrative and political transitions, this objective was gradually realized.

1.1 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY:

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The aim of the study is to document and analyse the uneven trajectory that the State of Puntland had projected to eventually pioneer one-person-one- vote elections during 2021 and 2023. It focusses on identifying existing opportunities and challenges pertinent in the aftermath of the collapse of Somali state in 1991 and the ensuing post-conflict Somali context. The overall objective of the study is to infer lessons learned from the Puntland experience to benefit and guide Puntland future elections as well as the peoples of the rest of the country, who are striving for implementation of a democratization process.

METHODOLOGY

The study work started with an extensive literature review of related existing data and information, where the consultant extracted relevant information. Next, a field work followed which utilized the principle of Participatory Action Research (PAR) enabling involvement of all stakeholders in the process. key informant interviews and focus group discussions were organized to capture the stakeholders' views and opinions and gather primary data. These included: National and state level politicians, engaged civil society actors, the electorate, successive electoral commission (TPEC and PEC), which led the democratic process and the one-person-one-vote elections, operational political associations, all societal groups such as youth groups, women groups, LNGOs, professionals, and academia

The report divides into the following chapters, which delve in more detail on the progress of Puntland democratization:

Chapters 2,3 & 4: Local government Elections in three successive stages during 2021-2024

Chapter 5: Opposition to the OPOV local government elections

Chapter 6: Attempts to transit to direct parliamentary and presidential elections

Chapter 7: Return to indirect parliamentary clan selection modus operandi.

Chapter 8: Prospects And Challenges

Lessons learned

Recommendations

1.2 TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF PUNTLAND'S QUEST FOR DEMOCRATIZATION

A quarter of a century has passed since the establishment of the Puntland State of Somalia established (1998-2023). Puntland became the first Federal State and a cornerstone for an emergence of a new Federal system in Somalia. Following several failed attempts to restore a central government for the Somali Republic, the Garowe Community Consultation Conference (GCCC) convened in Garowe had established the Puntland State of Somalia on 1st of August 1998. was driven by an urgent need to transition from chaos of prolonged civil strife and statelessness.

The Puntland political structure was initially based on a "Transitional Charter," which mandated the first Government for a three-year term. Despite operating amid widespread anarchy, Article 34 of the Charter outlined ambitious milestones for the new government to achieve within its mandated: **a)** conduct population census, **b)** draft a new constitution, **c)** conduct a public referendum on this constitution, **d)** establish a Transitional Electoral Commission, to register political associations, and **e)** ultimately hold a one-person-one-vote multiparty elections. Achieving these objectives represented an enormous challenge, one that far exceeded the capacity of the fledgling regional Government.

Consequently, in June 2001, at the end of the government's three-year term and the expiry of the Transitional Charter, the legislature extended government's mandate by an additional two years to allow for the completion of unfinished tasks. However, the opposition rejected the extension, plunging Puntland into a three-year constitutional crisis that escalated into armed conflict between rival political factions. In effect, the attempt to extend the government's term triggered the infamous Puntland Constitutional Crisis of 2001-2003. The conflict paralyzed the entire system with sporadic fighting continuing until, after three tumultuous years, mediation by traditional leaders, led to an agreement between the feuding parties. On 17 May 2003, the agreement was signed in Bossaso, resulting in the reinstatement of Col. Abdullahi Yussuf as President.

The May 2003 agreement motivated public aspirations to chart new plans and strategies aimed at resuming the stalled local state-building process and initiating democratization efforts. However, these aspirations were soon sidelined. Following the resolution of the local conflict, President Abdullahi Yusuf shifted his focus to national-level state-building efforts in Somalia. He actively participated in the Somali National Reconciliation Conferences held in Eldoret and Mbagathi, in Kenya, during 2002-2005. He ran for the Somalia Presidential office and on 10 October 2004, then Puntland president, Col. Abdullahi Yousuf, was elected President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) (FRS).

Following Abdullahi Yusuf's departure from the Puntland presidency, the traditional leaders authorized the incumbent Vice-President, H.E. Mohmed Abdi Hashi, to establish a new legislature within two months using the existing clan-based nomination system. Consequently, a new House of Representatives was formed, and on 8 Jan 2005, it elected Gen. Mohamoud Mussa Hersi (Adde) as the third president of Puntland. During Gen. Adde's tenure (2005-2008) a semblance of democratic political process began to emerge, marked by the review of the de facto Puntland Provisional Constitution. He also secured legislative approval for a Draft Local Councils Law. Although several districts formed their local councils during his administration- electing their respective Mayors and Deputy Mayors- these

councils were not formed through citizens direct election. Instead, they continued to be based on clan-based selection modality.

This post-conflict period, however, was marred by a range of political, economic and security challenges. The emergence of piracy, the kidnapping of humanitarian workers, and the rise of religious extremism significantly undermined the government's ability to focus on developmental and state-building initiatives. Insecurity escalated when the so-called Islamic Courts, consolidating control over much of southern Somalia, advanced to the northern Regions. Fortunately, Puntland Security Forces repelled them before they could reach Galkayo, a city at the southern edge of Puntland's territory. Nevertheless, the threat persisted. Al-Shabaab Units, affiliated with the Islamic Courts, and supported by local sympathizers, established operational bases in the Al-Madow area within Puntland's Golis Range mountains.

From these mountainous terrain, Al-Shabaab insurgents conducted subversive operations that undermined the overall security and stability of Puntland. Although Al-Shabaab insurgents continue to use these mountains as strategic hideouts and to wage their insurgency, Puntland Security Forces have consistently countered their activities and demonstrated the ability to suppress their effectiveness. However, it is important to note that during that period, Puntland was preoccupied with managing these security threats, and as a result, little progress was made in advancing democratization or community development initiatives.

Between 2009-2013 an augmented democratization process was undertaken under the leadership of President Abdurahman Sh. Mohamed (Farole). In 2009, he appointed a Constitution Review Commission, which revised and finalized a Puntland Provisional Constitution. The Cabinet and the legislature endorsed the revised constitution on June 15, 2009, and the President signed it into effect shortly thereafter.⁴

On 11 April 2011, President Farole formed the first Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC - I). In April 2012, he convened a 480-member Constituent Assembly Convention (CAC), in Garowe, which overwhelmingly endorsed the Provisional Constitution, with 472 out of 480 delegates voting in favour. TPEC-I subsequently laid the groundwork for one-person-one vote elections, and on December 31, 2012, it vetted and ratified six political Associations to contest the elections.⁵

Despite these preparations, a political conflict erupted between President Farole's government and the competing political associations. On 14 April 2013, just one day before the scheduled elections, the entire process was aborted due to opposition-led political violence. Analysts and researchers have attributed these setbacks to several factors: including a lack of political outreach, insufficient financial and material resources, a constrained timeline, and deep-seated mistrust among the competing political stakeholders.

⁴ Puntland Political Transformation Research Report, PDRC, Nov 2014, p. 19,20,25

⁵ Participatory Poll on Prospects on Democratization in Puntland, PDRC, March 2014



FIGURE 2: VOTERS ARRIVE EARLY AT THE POLLING STATION TO CAST VOTE, IDP CAMP, GAROWE, NUGAL REGION

Between 2014-2018, the democratization process in Puntland remained at a low ebb, experiencing a prolonged stall that discouraged the public and political stakeholders hoping for its revival. It was not until late 2016 that President Abdiwali Mohamed Ali (Gaas) attempted to rejuvenate the process by appointing the second Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC - II). However, shortly after its establishment, the chair of TPEC-II passed away in August 2017, dealing a major setback to the Commission, which remained dormant until the expiry of the administration in Jan 2019. Consequently, the clan-based selection system resumed, with the traditional leaders nominating members of the legislative body, who then elected a President and a Vice President on 8 Jan 2019. President Said Abdullahi Deni was elected as the sixth president, alongside H.E. Ahmed Elmi Osman (Karaash) as Vice President.

The new Government of President Deni pledged to advance the democratization process in Puntland. On 16 November 2019, the President inaugurated the third Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC-III), marking a renewed take-off for the Puntland democratization process. A committed team selected and based on merit and experience, alongside a government dedicated to the cause led, and steered the process through a pragmatic Election roadmap. The following chapters provide a detailed account of the progress of Puntland's democratization efforts.

1.3 PUNTLAND POLITICAL JOURNEY TO DEMOCRATIZATION

After eight years of chaos and statelessness, following the collapse of the Somalia state in 1991, the following timeline outlines Puntland's pathway to a democratic system of governance.

TIMELINE - EVENTS

1

- A preparatory meeting was held in Garowe, attended by representatives selected from the regions of Bari, Nugal and North Mudug (at that time these regions were known as "Northeastern Regions (NER)).
- The Garowe Consultative Conference, attended by communities of Northeastern Somalia, was convened with the objective of establishing a shared Government in response to the growing insecurity and continued political turmoil in the Somalia Republic.

MAY 15, 1998 – AUGUST 1, 1998

FEB. 25, 1998 – MARCH 12, 1998

2

- The Garowe Constitutional Convention was attended by titled traditional elders and 480 convention delegates representing five administrative regions (Bari, Nugal, Mudug, Sool, and Sanaag) and the district of Buhodle.
- The Convention establishes the Puntland State of Somalia and designated Garowe as its capital city.
- The Convention ratified a Provisional Charter (August 1998 – June 2001), which stipulated the establishment of an independent Judiciary and a 66-member clan-based legislative body, nominated by Puntland traditional elders and tasked with electing a President and Vice President for a three-year interim period.

AUGUST 1, 1998 – JUNE 30, 2001

3

The first President of Puntland H.E. Abdullahi Yussuf Ahmed and Vice President H.E. Mohamed Abdi Hashi were elected to serve a three-year interim term. This Government laid the foundational structures a governance and restored law and order

JULY 1, 2001 – MAY 17, 2003

4

Upon the expiry of the Charter, President Abdullahi Yussuf term officially ended; however, his government unilaterally extended its mandate by two years. The opposition rejected this move, plunging Puntland into a constitutional crisis that escalated into an armed conflict between rival political factions.

5

The two feuding political factions, one led by Abdullahi Yussuf and the other by Gen Adde Muse, signed a peace agreement in Bossaso, with H.E. Abdullahi Yussuf remaining the President of Puntland

ON MAY 17, 2003

TIMELINE - EVENTS

6

- H.E. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed continued to serve as President of Puntland until October 10, 2004, when he was elected President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia
- Puntland entered a leadership vacuum, with no formal constitution or charter in force.

OCT 2004

MAY 17, 2003 – OCT 10, 2004

7

To address the leadership vacuum, Puntland's traditional leaders convened an emergency conference at PDRC Conference Hall in Garowe. The conference authorized the incumbent Vice- President, H.E. Mohamed Abdi Hashi, to lead the government and to organize, within two months, the reconstitution of a new legislature selected according to the established clan-based criteria. The newly formed legislature would then elect a President and Vice President.

8

H. E. Mohamed Abdi Hashi, serving as interim president, dissolved the existing legislative body and announced the selection of a new house, which would elect a President Vice President under a temporary arrangement.

OCT 31, 2004

NOV 15, 2004

9

The interim president a Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee to oversee the selection of Puntland's Members of Parliament.

10

The Puntland MPs' Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee announced the list of new Puntland Legislature members

DEC 31, 2004

JAN 8, 2005

11

The Puntland Legislature elected H.E. Mohamud Muse Hersi (Adde Muse) as President and H.E. Hassan Dahir Mohamud (Afqurac) Vice President of Puntland, respectively

12

Puntland President H.E. Mohamoud Muse Hirsi (Adde), issued a five-point presidential decree, addressing: a) the constitutional review process; b) the nomination of an electoral commission; c) public dissemination on the constitution; d) a referendum on the constitution; and e) the direct elections of local councils and the legislative body

DEC, 2006

FEB, 2007

13

Puntland President H.E. Mohamoud Muse appointed a 14-member Constitution Review Committee, which engaged with local and international partners, including PDRC and Interpeace, for technical and financial support. The Constitution Review Committee reviewed the existing draft constitution, conducted public consultations, and subsequently disseminated the revised draft to the public.

TIMELINE - EVENTS

14

The Constitution Review Committee presented a draft Puntland Constitution to Council of Ministers, which approved and submitted it to the Puntland Legislature.

NOV 2008

JUNE 2, 2008

15

- President Adde's government appointed an MPs Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee to set out criteria for selection of new Members of Legislative body by traditional elders and civil society representatives.
- A new legislative organ is installed in late December 2008

16

H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Farole) and H.E. Abdisamad Ali Shire were elected as President and Vice President of Puntland, respectively.

FEB, 2009

JAN 8, 2009

17

- President Farole appointed Prof. Abdi Hassan Jumale as Puntland's State Minister of the Presidency for the Democratization Process and Federal Affairs.
- Farole's government requested the Puntland Legislative body to return the draft constitution to the executive for further review and additional public consultations.

18

Puntland Legislative organ approved a revised draft of the Puntland Constitution, following its submission by President Farole's Council of Ministers.

JAN 2, 2011

JUNE 15, 2009

19

President Farole's administration establishes the first Transitional Electoral Commission (TPEC-I)

20

President Farole's administration establishes the first Transitional Electoral Commission (TPEC-I)

APRIL 11, 2011

NOV 29, 2011

21

Puntland legislature approved the Puntland Referendum Law

22

The Puntland legislature passed Local Councils Elections law

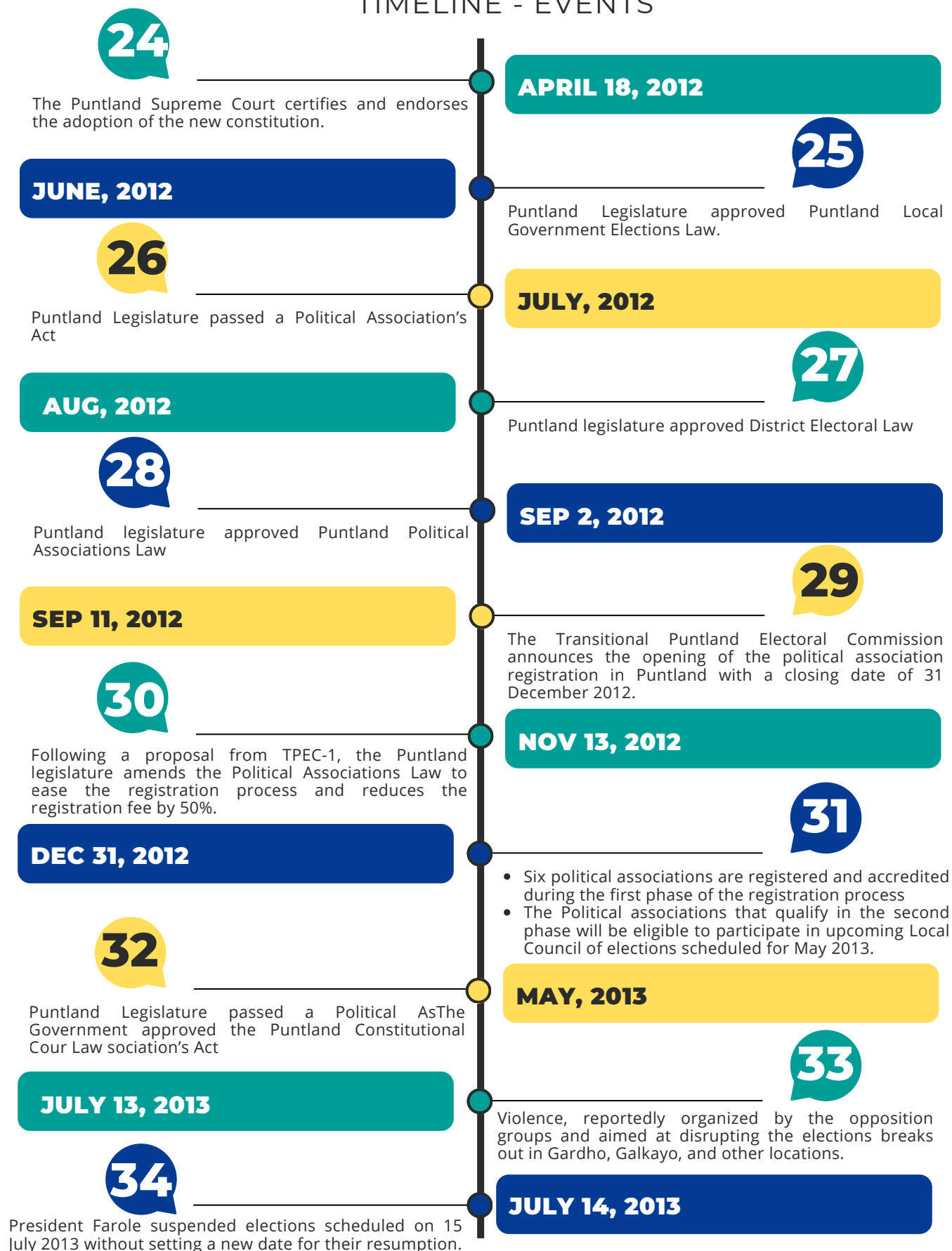
APRIL 9, 2012

APRIL 15-18, 2012

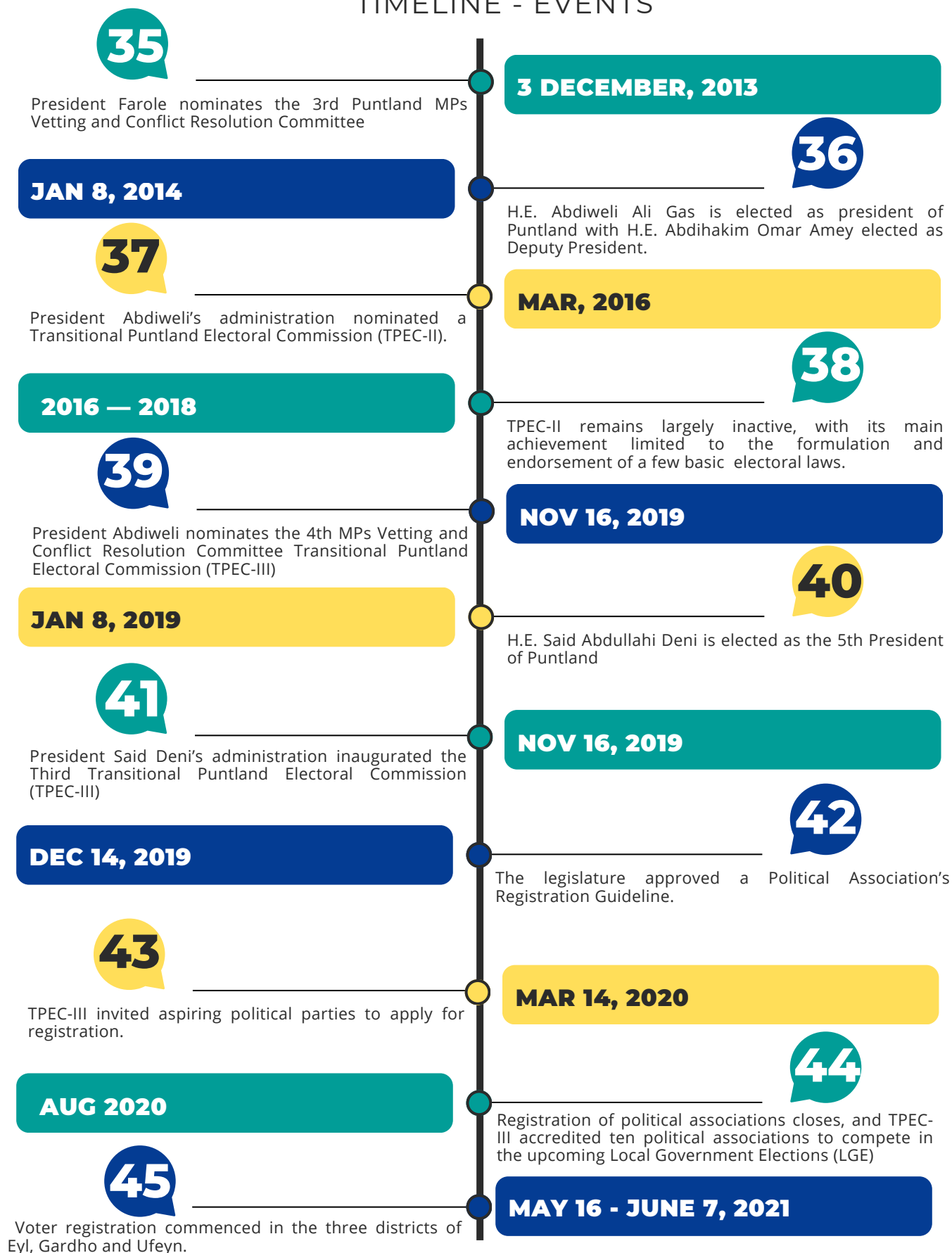
23

A 480-member Puntland Constituent Assembly convenes in Garowe and endorses the Puntland Constitution in the presence of titled traditional elders, civil society, TFG ministers, international diplomats and members of the donor community members, UN representatives, and both local and international media.

TIMELINE - EVENTS



TIMELINE - EVENTS



TIMELINE - EVENTS

46

Distribution of voting cards started in Eyl, Gardho and Ufeyn.

SEPT 20, 2021

47

OCT 25, 2021

Election Day in the three districts of Eyl, Gardho and Ufeyn.

48

TPEC-III announced the preliminary election results, which were subject to endorsement or rejection by the Puntland Supreme Court within 30 days. Later in 2021, the Supreme Court certified the results

OCT 27, 2021

49

FEB 6, 2023

Dhulbahante traditional leaders and politicians declared establishment of an independent state named "Khatumo State." They also announced that they withdrawal from Puntland State and that their regions of Sool and Cayn will constitute the new entity.

50

The Puntland Cabinet submitted a proposal to the legislature to amend Article 46 and 64, which limit the number of national political parties to only three

MAY 5, 2023

51

MAY 8, 2023

Eight members of the legislature submitted a petition to the Constitutional Court challenging their conviction and dismissal. This follows the house's decision to lift their parliamentary immunity and allow the Attorney General to charge them with grave offences.

52

Local government elections were held in 30 districts across Puntland

MAY 25, 2023

53

JUNE 12, 2023

In accordance with the Puntland Constitution, TPEC-III submitted the list of the newly elected local council members from thirty districts to the Puntland Supreme Court for ratification. The Court subsequently certifies the results.

54

The Puntland legislature passed Local Councils Elections law Puntland.

APRIL 9, 2012

55

JUNE 12, 2023

In accordance with the Puntland Constitution, TPEC-III submitted the list of the newly elected local council members from thirty districts to the Puntland Supreme Court for ratification. The Court subsequently certifies the results.

TIMELINE - EVENTS

55

The Puntland legislature opens debate on proposed constitutional amendments aimed at introducing the direct election of members of the legislature, the president, and the vice president, as well as the increasing the number of emerging political parties

JUNE 15, 2023

56

JUNE 20, 2023

- Armed opposition forces launch an attack on the legislature premises while the house was in session deliberating constitutional amendments. Although the attackers failed to seize control, the assault resulted in over thirty deaths and numerous injuries.
- On the same day, Puntland traditional leaders, religious leaders, and other civil society groups - including women and Youth- called for an immediate ceasefire and urged both sides to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue.

57

Two former prime ministers of Somalia, both from Puntland, arrived in region to mediate the conflict between President Deni's government and the opposition groups over the proposed constitutional amendments and the modalities of upcoming parliamentary and presidential election. However, their mediation efforts prove unsuccessful

JULY 2, 2023

58

JULY 13, 2023

Opposition political organizations and other stakeholder groups submitted a petition to the Puntland Constitutional Court, challenging the legitimacy of the political steps being taken by the Deni administration

59

The Puntland legislature voted votes to amend several articles of Constitution. Key amendments included: a) allowing all existing political organizations to participate in the upcoming elections, and b) introducing direct popular elections for both the President and the Vice President

JULY 25, 2023

60

AUG 6, 2023

TPEC submitted the list of newly elected council members for thirty districts to the Ministry of Interior

61

TPEC-III registered and granted political party status to the eight existing political organizations, having met the required criteria.

AUG 19, 2023

62

AUG 31, 2023

The first session of an elected local council was launched in Badhan, Sanaag Region, with other districts expected to follow suit

TIMELINE - EVENTS

63

Puntland legislature approved the new members of Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) and on September 28, the newly appointed commission officially assumes office during a widely attended ceremony

SEP 5, 2023

64

NOV 17, 2023

President Deni signed a decree pardoning all individuals involved in the armed confrontations against the democratization process, including the Darawish soldiers. However, he affirms that the democratic process and the planned parliamentary and presidential elections will proceed as scheduled.

65

A group of Dhulbahante titled traditional leaders who travelled to Garowe to mediate the ongoing political stalemate in Puntland put forward a controversial six-point proposal. The proposal was criticized for failing to support either the democratic movement or the traditional clan-based political position.

DEC 6, 2023

66

DEC 7, 2023

Following intense political pressure, President Deni announces the suspension of the anticipated one-person-one-vote elections and a return to traditional clan-based political system. The upcoming members of legislature will be selected on the previous clan-distribution formula

67

The Puntland MPs Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee has released the official list of the sixty-six members of the newly constituted Puntland legislative body.

JAN 1, 2024

68

JAN 8, 2024

The Puntland Legislative Council re-elected Said Abdullahi Deni as the 6th president of Puntland for another 5-year term, following a landslide vote.

69

The Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) has announced that local government elections will be held on July 23, 2024, in the remaining three districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo, and Godobjiran.

JUNE 2, 2024

70

JULY 23, 2024

One-person-one-vote (OPOV) Local government elections were conducted in the districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo and Godobjiran district

CHAPTER TWO: 2021 EARLY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The sixth President of Puntland, His Excellency Said Abdullahi Deni, who served from January 2019 to January 2024, was committed to fulfilling the long-standing aspirations of the Puntland people —specifically, the transition from a deeply rooted clan-based political representation system to a direct One-Person-One-Vote (OPOV) multiparty system. In his first cabinet he re-structured the Ministry of Interior by adding a portfolio focused on democratization, renaming it: the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization (MOIFAD). In his first year in office, he also established a new Transitional Electoral Commission (TPEC-III), which was subsequently endorsed by the Puntland legislature 16 Nov 2019⁶. Acknowledging that the Puntland government lacked the financial and technical capacity to implement this democratic transition on its own, President Deni sought support from international donors and agencies. Key stakeholders—the EU, Swiss Embassy, Sahan, and SSF— responded positively, providing financing and technical support to TPEC-III and supporting local civil society organizations engaged in the democratization process.

2.1 INITIAL PREPARATORY STEPS: ROADMAP AND TARGET DISTRICTS

To fulfil its mandate, TPEC-III promptly started operations. One of its first initiatives was a public outreach mission across 16 districts spread across Puntland’s nine regions. During this tour, the Commission organized public forums to gather citizens’ views on transitioning from the entrenched clan-based political representation system to a One-Person-One-Vote (OPOV) electoral model. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with 91% of participants expressing support for the shift to a multiparty democratic system⁷. Inspired by the absolute public support, the Commission engaged in planning OPOV elections. Encouraged by this strong public endorsement, TPEC-III moved forward with plans for OPOV elections. On 16 December 2019, the Commission presented a comprehensive electoral framework during a high-profile launch event at the Puntland Development and Research Centre (PDRC) Hall, which was endorsed by the President. TPEC-III also developed a strategic plan outlining a phased roadmap, beginning with early elections in three districts—Eyl, Gardho, and Uffayn—selected for their socio-economic diversity and alignment with predefined criteria (see illustration next page).

⁶ Ibid, p.22

⁷ Ibid



EARLY THREE DISTRICT LGE: (Qardho, Ufayn & Eyl)



NO.	ACTIVITY	TIME
1	Publish FVL	02 August, 2021
2	Submission list of LGE candidates	20 Aug – Sun 19 Sept, 2021
3	Final resignation day of government employees interested in participating LGE	25 Aug, 2021
4	Establishment of Election Security committee	01 Sept, 2021
5	Certification and publishing of LGE candidates	20-24 Sept, 2021
6	Submission of political association representatives list for LGE	20-29 Sept. 2021
7	Submission of observers list for LGE	20-29 Sept. 2021
8	Distributing Voter cards	20 Sept-10 Oct, 2021
9	LGE Campaign period Opens and Closes	24 Sept-23 Oct, 2021
10	Vetting and approval of Observers and Political Association Representatives list for LGE	01-5 Oct, 2021
11	Final Campaign period (mid-night)	23 Oct, 2021 (Mid-night)
12	E-day	Mon, 25 October, 2021

SOURCE: PUNTLAND DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS, CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD, SPA, P.9

2.1 INITIAL PREPARATORY STEPS: ROADMAP AND TARGET DISTRICTS

In addition, after assessing the existing electoral legal framework, TPEC-III identified gaps and areas requiring revision. The Commission subsequently drafted, revised, and submitted the necessary electoral laws, codes, and regulations to the legislative body, which were then reviewed and approved. These included:

I. REVIEWED PRE-EXISTING DOCUMENTS:

- Puntland Electoral Commission Law, Jan 2011
- TPEC Establishment Act 2012
- Political Associations Act, July 2012
- Local Council's Elections Law, 9 April 2013
- Amended TPEC Establishment Act, 5 Jan 2015
- Amended Political Associations Act, 19 Aug 2017

II. NEWLY FORMULATED LEGAL ACTS

- Political Associations Registration Guideline, 14 Dec 2019
- Voter Registration Bill, 1st March 2020
- Electoral Dispute Resolution Guideline, 2020
- Election Observer Guideline (PUNSAA)
- Women's Political Participation Policy, 2021 (Gender Policy)
- A Guideline for Women and Vulnerable Participation
- Political Associations' Financing Regulation, 14 Aug 2021

2.3 VETTING OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Next, following a public announcement of the registration criteria for political associations, TPEC-III proceeded with the registration, vetting, and certification of eligible applicants. Out of 17 political associations that applied, 10 met the established criteria and were officially accredited on 15 August 2020 during a high-profile ceremony held in Garowe. The accredited political associations were as follows:

1. Truth and Justice Political Association (RUNCAD)
2. Labour Political Association, (SHAQAALAHA)
3. Youth Political Association (URUR-SIYAASADEEDKA DHALLINYARADA)
4. Justice and Equity Political Association (SINCAD)
5. Kaah Political Association (KAAH)
6. Mideeye Political Association (MIDEEYE)
7. Mustaqbal Political Association (MUSTAQBAL)
8. Horseed Political Association (HORSEED)
9. Ifiye Political Association (IFIYE)
10. Himilo Political Association (HIMILO)

In the subsequent stages of the electoral process, TPEC-III coordinated extensive civic and voter education campaign, conducted voter registration, and distributed voter cards. Civil society organizations played a vital role in delivering civic and voter education, with leading contributions from PUNSAA, PDRC, KAALO, MAP, as well as women and youth organizations.

During the exercise, the political organizations competed in these elections and conducted fierce political campaigns across the three designated districts. Ultimately, on 25 Oct 2021, Gardho, Eyl and Uffayn TPEC succeeded in organizing early local government elections at 54 polling stations in Gardho, Eyl and Uffayn. These districts were selected for their representation of Puntland's socio-economic diversity.

2.4 OUTCOME OF THE EARLY LOCAL COUNCILS ELECTIONS

The early local councils' elections held in the three districts of Eyl, Gardho and Uffayn in Oct 2021 marked a significant milestone in the Puntland democratisation journey. A key objective of these early elections was to implement democratic electoral process, generate practical lessons and apply those lessons to inform the planning and implementation of future statewide local council election. In these early elections, nine political associations ^[8] contested for 87 elective seats in 54 ^[9] polling stations. Out of a total of 46,839 registered voters, 37,578 collected their voter cards, and 28,854 ^[10] cast their votes or participated in the elections.



Figure 3: Voters line up to cast vote, Uffayn

Despite strong public support for direct elections, participation among eligible citizens fell short of expectations, as reflected in the figures above. Plausible explanations of what lower turn out included: a) droughts hindered the full participation of pastoral communities who migrated outside their voting locations assigned/registered voting locations, b) insufficient civic education programmes, c) public doubts on feasibility and integrity of elections, and d) limited number of polling sites, confined to villages, and e) inadequate time allocated for voter cards' distribution. ^[11]

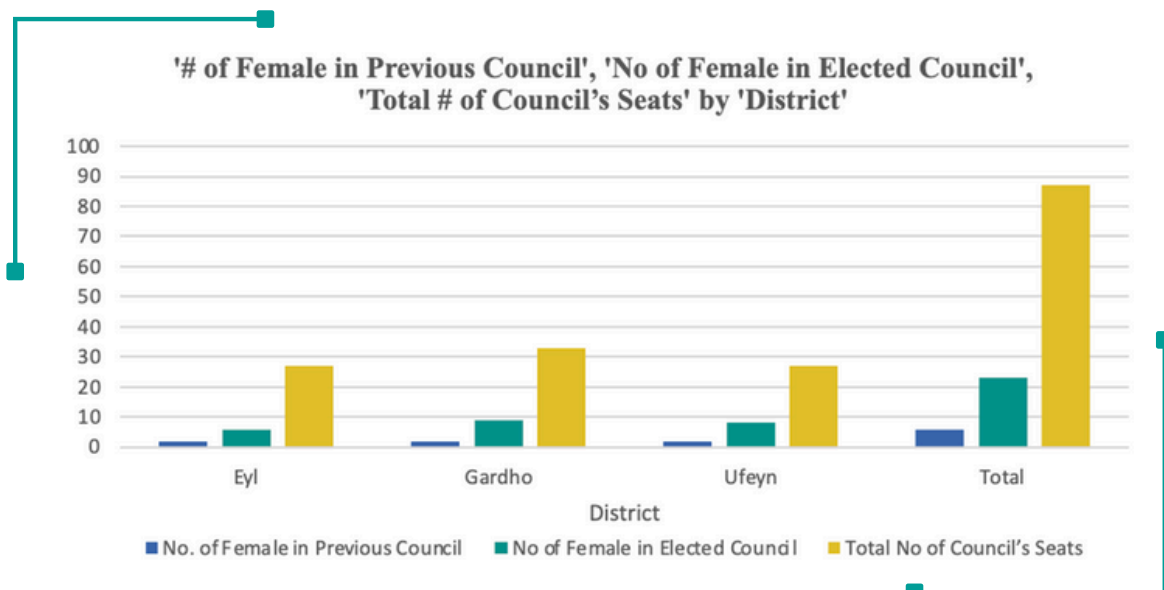
The composition of the 87 elected councilors across the three districts marked a significant departure from the previous typology and character. Men won 64 seats while women succeeded in collecting the remaining 23 seats.

⁸ The tenth Himilo Political Association had, before elections, merged with President's Political Association of KAAH

⁹

¹⁰ Democratization in Puntland, Policy Brief, PDRC, May 2022, p.2

Although the 26% gender representation falls short of the aspired women's quota, it nonetheless marks a significant improvement compared to the previous clan-nominated district councils, where women held only two seats in each council—just six seats across the three districts. In contrast to the former clan-based councils, which were composed of elderly members, the newly elected councils consisted of at least 80% youth—both male and female—under the age of 30. Furthermore, IDPs from the rest of Somalia had participated in the new council elections. In contrast to the traditional clan-based selection system, which reserved district council seats for members of the host clans in Puntland, Article 5 of the newly passed Puntland Voter Registration Act granted voting and candidacy rights to any Somali who had resided in Puntland for at least ten years. As a result, an internally displaced person (IDP), Muhsin Abdullahi Haji, who had been living in Gardho district, secured a seat on the Gardho District Council



Source: A Post-Election Study on Puntland Early Local Government Elections, May 2022, p.43

On the other hand, in the aftermath of elections, three political organizations—KAAH, Mideeye and SINCAD— emerged decisively victorious, collectively securing over 82% of all votes cast and winning 80 out of the 87 contested seats. These political associations positioned themselves as the leading contenders in the upcoming statewide local government, parliamentary, and presidential elections. Accordingly, the results of the early elections in these three districts could not definitively determine which victorious political associations would be recognized as the state's official political parties. These associations still needed to compete in the remaining districts of Puntland.

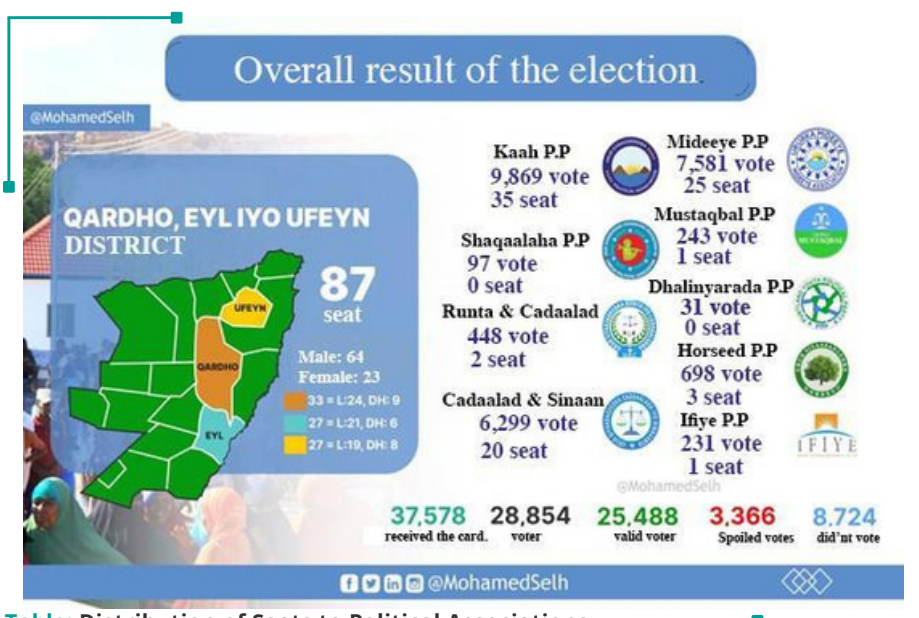


Table: Distribution of Seats to Political Associations

Name of Association	Eyl District	Gardho	Ufeyn	Total # of Seats
Kaah Political Association	13	12	10	35
Mideeye Political Association	6	11	8	25
Justice & Equity Political Association	4	9	7	20
Horseed Political Association	2	-	1	3
Truth & Justice Political Association	2	-	-	2
Ifiye Political Association	-	1	-	1
Mustaqbal Political Association	1	-	1	1
Youth Political Association	-	-	-	-
Labour Political Association	-	-	-	-
Total	27	33	27	87

2.5 DELAYED SEATING OF ELECTED COUNCILS

After the successful conclusion of the early local council elections in Puntland, President Deni—who was campaigning for the Somalia presidential office—shifted his focus away from consolidating the achievements of the recent local council elections. This shift had dire consequences, dampening the enthusiasm and confidence of both the voters and the elected councilors. Article 43 of the Puntland Local Government Law specifies that within 30 days, the new councils must be operationalized by convening their first sessions to elect Mayors and Deputy Mayors. Instead, the government put this process on hold. Some argue that the President was not personally happy with the results of the LCE out which he expected a landslide victory. Others believe this was the main source of conflict between the President and the electoral commission, leading to the marginalization of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the then-transitional electoral commission, which resulted in their abrupt resignation on January 2, 2022. Lastly, some politicians argued that the President lacked genuine commitment to convening the new councils for two main reasons.^[12]

- a)** While the President's KAAH Political organization succeeded in acquiring the highest number of councillors in each of the three councils, yet this was a simple majority that could not guarantee the mayorship. Already the second and third-placed opposition political associations had forged an alliance to gain mayorship of Uffayn and Gardho Council and were together trying in the third Eyl council.
- b)** The President was focused on his bid for the Somali presidency, dedicating his efforts to campaigning. This included lobbying Puntland's members of the Federal Parliament for support and launching his campaign by establishing offices in Mogadishu, the capital.

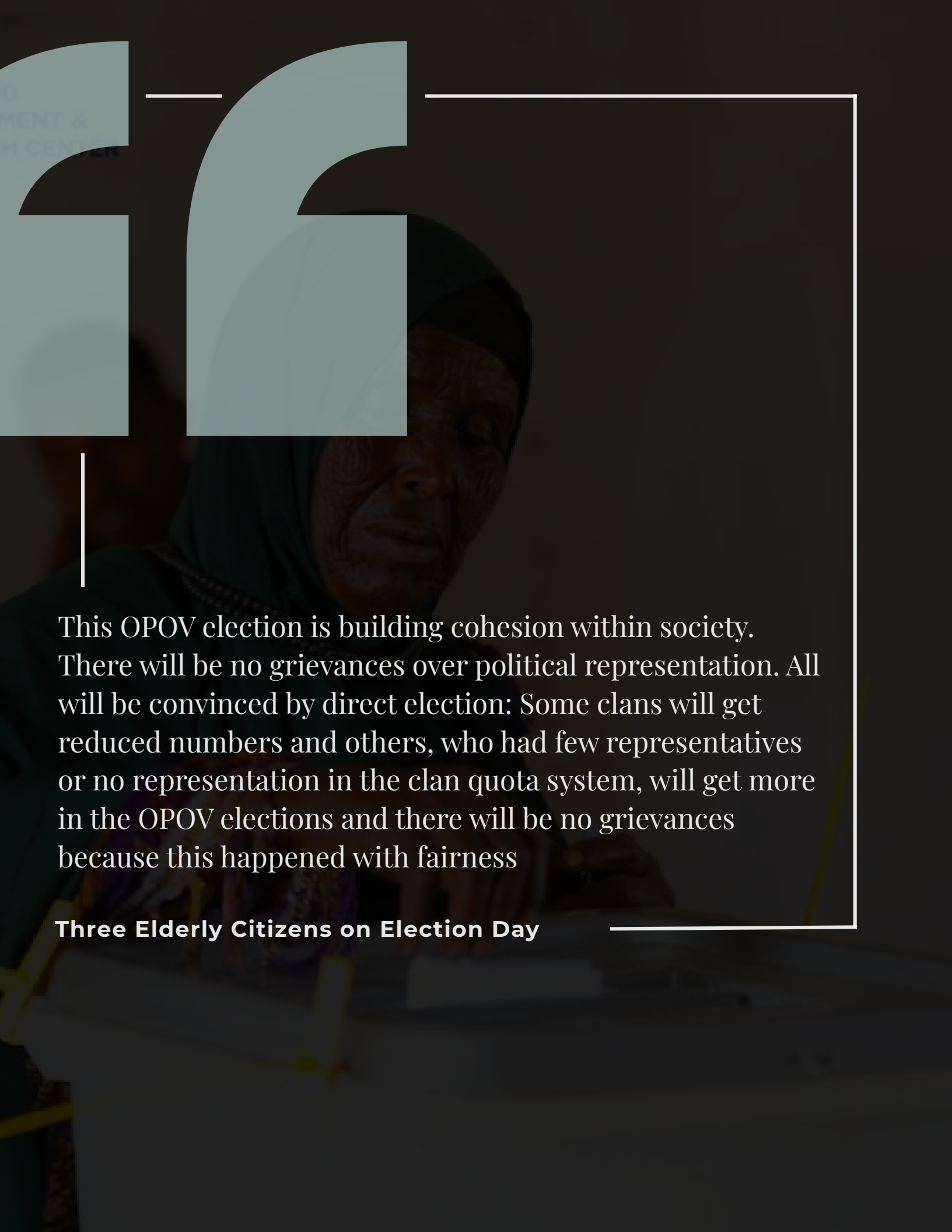
The term of Somalia's incumbent President, Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo's government expired on 8 Feb 2021. However, before a new president could be elected, the bicameral Federal Parliament had to be established. Following several delays and extensions, the formation of the new parliament was completed on 31 March 2022. H.E. Said Abdullahi Deni contested the presidency, and despite a vigorous campaign and securing substantial support from parliamentarians, he failed to reach the required threshold to win the presidential election held in Mogadishu on 15 May 2022. Key informants attribute Deni's failure to the withdrawal of support by his zealous Puntland allies from the Aaran-Jan faction and President Ahmed Madoobe of Jubbaland State. Both had initially backed Deni but distanced themselves during the Mogadishu presidential contest. These two influential groups, who commanded the loyalty of many parliamentarians, shifted their support to Hassan Sheikh's camp, contributing to his victory.

On his return from the federal elections in Mogadishu, President Deni resumed the democratization process, which he had earlier pioneered in Puntland. However, the democratization process lost momentum due, among other factors, to the unexplained delay in operationalizing the newly elected councils.

¹² Democratization in Puntland, Policy Brief, PDRC, May 2022, p.2

¹³ Puntland Elected District Councils: Achievements and Perspectives, PDRC Report, Oct 2022, P.5

Nevertheless, the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization (MOIFAD) organized the inaugural sessions of the elected councils in Gardho and Uffayn in April 2022, while Eyl's council held its first session in September 2022—representing delays of approximately 5 and 11 months, respectively.^[13] In the ensuing contest, as anticipated, the opposition alliance of MIDEYE and SINCAD decisively secured the mayoral and deputy mayoral positions in the two districts of Uffayn and Gardho. In the third district council of Eyl, KAAH had 13 members out of 27 councilors and needed to secure support of one or two councilors from the opposition to win the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. However, the opposition put up a fierce contest, exploiting an internal rivalry within the KAAH's council members. Initially, KAAH was unable to win the Mayor until the President personally travelled to Eyl and facilitated its success. On 3 September, KAAH finally collected enough and won the Mayorship of Eyl District.

A woman wearing a blue headscarf and a blue garment is looking down at a document. The background is dark and out of focus. There are white lines and shapes in the top left corner, possibly part of a logo or design element.

This OPOV election is building cohesion within society. There will be no grievances over political representation. All will be convinced by direct election: Some clans will get reduced numbers and others, who had few representatives or no representation in the clan quota system, will get more in the OPOV elections and there will be no grievances because this happened with fairness

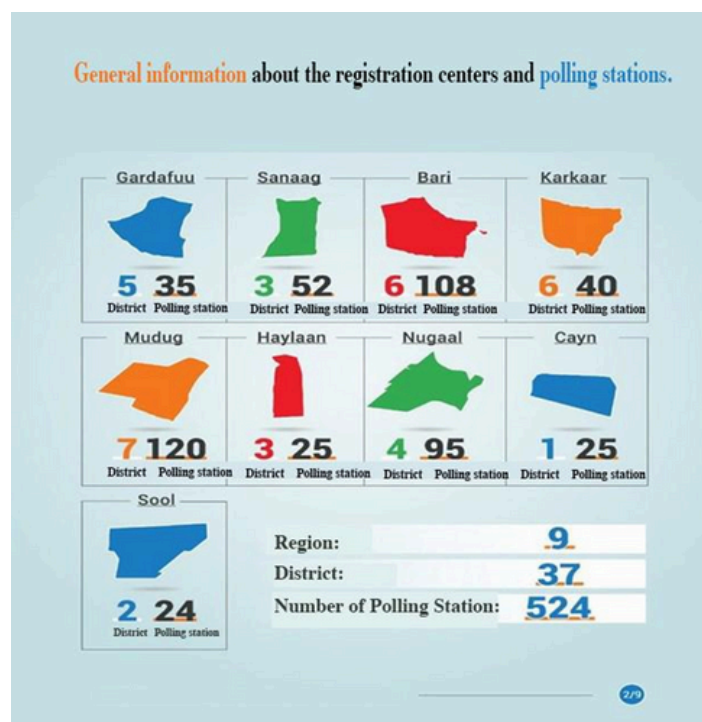
Three Elderly Citizens on Election Day

CHAPTER THREE: 2023 STATEWIDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Following the success of the early elections, the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC), now equipped with experience and knowledge gained from the early elections and backed by a renewed commitment from President Deni's government, turned to the formidable task ahead. The commission maintained regular consultations with key stakeholders, beginning with the registered political associations.

While Puntland comprises 54 districts categorized as A, B, C, and D, TPEC, considering security conditions and local contexts, planned in its second phase to hold local government elections in 37 additional districts across the state's nine regions. However, it soon became evident that security challenges would prevent elections from being held in three districts—Buhodle, Bocame, and Taleh—which were excluded from the process.

On 17 November 2022, TPEC announced the election schedule for the remaining 34 districts. On 27 December 2022, TPEC dispatched its first teams to the regions of Bari, Karkaar, and Ras-Asayr to conduct public consultations and identify the locations of polling stations in each district. The process was subsequently rolled out in other regions. In total, TPEC identified 470 polling stations.



Source: Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC)

3.1 REGISTRATION PHASE

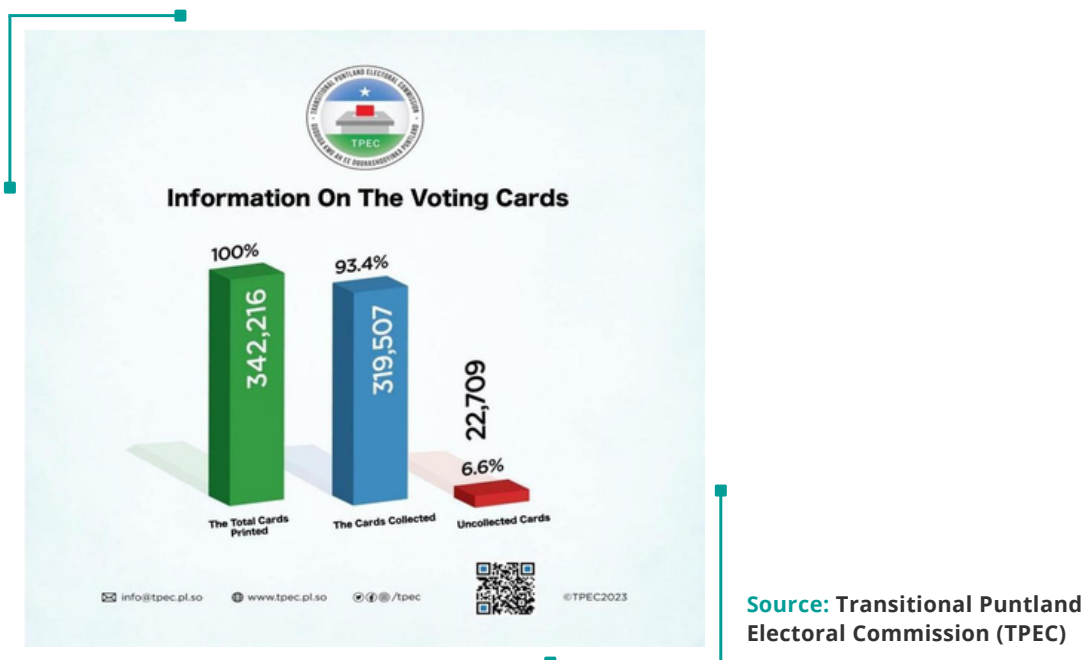
In accordance with the developed plan, TPEC-III set out the voter registration exercise in three stages targeting the regions of Puntland, with 12 days allocated for each region. The first stage covered the regions of Bari, Karkaar, and Ras Asayr, the Second phase targeted Sanaag, Haylan and Nugal, and the third-Mudug, Sool and Ayn. This first stage kicked off on 5 January 2023 in Bossaso and concluded on 25 January 2023. The second and third stages followed suit and, in the process, a total of 354, 281 citizens registered in 33 targeted districts in 7 regions. The registration process concluded. However, the endeavour was not smooth, as various opposition groups attempted to obstruct the process for differing motives. First, in Las Korey district, TPEC had to suspend the registration after commencement due to Al-Shabaab threat to the security of the TPEC staff. The registration staff abandoned their work after Al-Shabaab terrorists planted a mine on their route to the district capital, destroying the security escort vehicle. Several security personnel were killed or injured in the attack. As a result, Las Korey district was excluded from the registration process and the entire election exercise. Additionally, some Puntland political opposition groups orchestrated two armed clashes that further disrupted the process.

The first incident occurred on 27 Dec 2022, when a private militia allegedly organized by the former Minister of Finance, set up an illegal checkpoint at Karin-dhig, which lies on tarmac road 15 kms from Dangoroyo towards Garowe. The operation targeted obstructing a TPEC team travelling from Garowe to map electoral districts and identify polling stations in the districts of the Puntland's eastern regions of Bari, Karkaar and Ras-Asayr. The other one, which the opposition groups also initiated (including the former Minister of Finance) raided to disrupt a training for the registration staff proceeding at Puntland State University (PSU) Campus in Garowe on 6 February 2023. The government security forces in the location repelled the attack, however 2 members of the security forces were killed and three others injured.

3.2 VOTER CARD DISTRIBUTION PHASE

Upon concluding the registration stage, TPEC immediately began distributing voter cards. On 24 May 2023, TPEC announced that its teams distributed 319,507 cards to citizens in 33 districts (including the three Nugal districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo and Godobjiran, which would subsequently fail to organize elections) with 22,709 cards remaining not collected^[14]. However, card distribution could not take place in Las Qoray district, as teams refrained from traveling there due to the threat posed by Al-Shabaab and the risks encountered during the registration stage.

¹⁴ Source: TPEC 20023



3.3 PRELUDE TO THE ELECTIONS

During the voter registration and card distribution phases, political opposition groups in Puntland relentlessly campaigned to disrupt the electoral process using various tactics. Although they failed to halt the process, they succeeded in spreading propaganda that discouraged a huge portion of the electorate from registering, collecting voter cards, and showing up at polling stations on election day. As the elections approached, opposition influence was felt across all electoral districts and regions, with the Nagal region serving as their strongest stronghold. There, they mobilized private militias in the districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo, and Godobjiran to block election workers from reaching their designated polling stations.

Furthermore, starting in early May 2023, the opposition besieged the Puntland capital, Garowe, with private militias and heavily armed mutinous Darawish government forces. Their goal was to prevent the delivery of election materials and ballot boxes from the Garowe TPEC headquarters to regional polling stations, effectively aiming to stop the elections. Despite this, the government and TPEC covertly transported election materials to most Puntland districts. However, between the nights of 16 and 24 May, opposition forces intercepted and attempted to loot election materials enroute to the polling sites in the three Nugal districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo, and Godobjiran. Although the opposition failed in this attempt, the clashes resulted in four deaths: two police officers escorting the ballot boxes and two members of the attacking militia.^[15]

On 24 May, one day before the scheduled voting day, after a thorough assessment of the security situation and potential risks, TPEC and the Puntland government formally suspended elections in three districts. This decision was due to the opposition's accumulation of militias in the Nugal districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo, and Godobjiran, which posed a significant threat of using force to disrupt the elections.

¹⁵ Briefing- V_PL_Elections_Implications-and-prospects-final-pdrc, July 2023, page

Warsaxaafadeed

Ujeedo: Hakin Degmo Doorashooyin

Guddiga KMG ah ee Doorashooyinka Puntland, oo ah Hay'adda ugu saraysa ee Puntland u qaabilsan qabashada Doorashada Dawladaha hoose, Guddigu isagoo ka duulaya xeerka Guddiga KMG ah ee Doorashooyinka LR9, qodobka 8-aad faqada 14-aad oo dhehaysa "guddiga wuxuu awood u leeyahay joojinta qayb ahaan ama dhamaan Doorasho degmo ama gobol markasta oo ay dhacaan dhacdooyin lama filaan ah ama ay dhacaan is bedelo la xiriira nadaamka guud oo sababa in la hirgalinwaayo", hadaba:

- Guddiga Markuu arkay xaalada amni iyo dhacdooyinka amniga la xiriiray ee ka dhacay degmada **Garowe**
 - Markuu fursad siiyey Isimada dhaqanka, Odayaasha, waxgaradka iyo Dowladda in wadahal lagu xaliyo kala duwanaanshaha
 - Guddiga markii uu qilmayn ku sameeyey xaalka guud ee shaqadda Doorashadda degmooyinka hoos ku qoran
 - Markii uu qiray mihiimada ay leedahay deganaanshaha iyo in wada-hadal lagu xalliyo wax kasta oo lagu kala duwanyahay.
- Guddiga wuxuu hakiyey Doorashada **25 May 2023** ee degmooyinka kala ah:
- Degmada Garowe
 - Degmada Dangorayo
 - Degmada Godobjiraan

Guddiga doorashooyinka Puntland ayaa go'aaminaya maalinta sii waddida hawlihii Doorashada ee hakaday kadib marka uu la tashado hay'adaha Dowladda ee ay khasayso iyo Ururadda/Xisbiyada siyaasadda sida uu qabo isla qodobka kor ku xusan ee xeerka Guddiga Doorashooyinka.

Doorashooyinka golaha degaanka waxay Maalinta Berri ah **25/5/2023** ka dhacaysaa dhamaan degmooyinka kale ee horay loo qorsheeyey kuwaas oo gaaraya 30 degmo.

Guul baan u rajaynaynaa dhamaan shacab waynaha Berri codkooda dhiibanaya.

Afhayeenka Guddiga

Cabdinuur Sheekh Maxamed

"Your Vote, Your Right, Your Future"

Source: Transitional Puntland
Electoral Commission (TPEC)

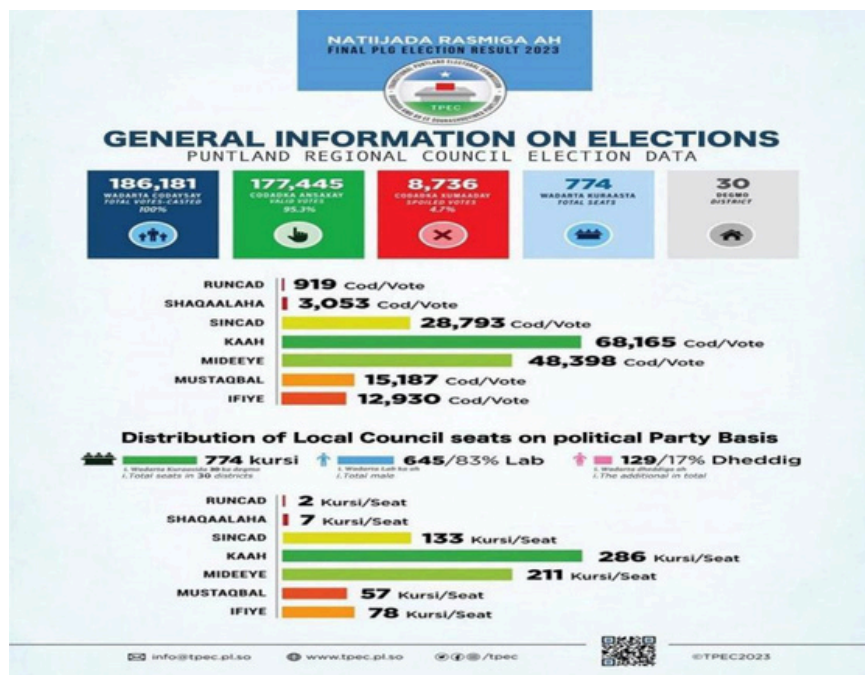
3.4 2023 ELECTION RESULTS

On 25 May 2023, as planned TPEC organized local government elections in 30 out of the targeted districts situated in in 7 regions of Puntland ^[16]. Elections could not realize, as mentioned in the preceding section, in the remaining 4 districts. However, elections in the other districts took place smoothly and in a peaceful environment with no violent incidents reported. On June 3rd, 2023, nine days after the scheduled election day, the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission announced the preliminary results of the May 25th local elections. A total of 186,181 votes were cast across 30 districts. The chart below illustrates the election results.



Figure 4 An elderly woman casts vote, Godobjiran

¹⁶ Puntland comprises of 9 regions



CAPTION CAPTION

In total, eight political associations contested the May elections for 774 local council seats. The three leading political associations from the earlier local government elections again dominated, collectively securing 81% of the total seats. Specifically, KAAH, the ruling political association, won 286 seats; MIDEEYE secured 211 seats; and SINCAD obtained 133 seats. Women won 129 seats, representing 17% of the total.

Associations	Association	Votes	%	Seats
1 - Kaah Political Association	KAAH	68,165	38.41	286
2 - Mideeye Political Association	MIDEEYE	48,398	27.27	211
3 - Justice & Equity Political Association	SINCAD	28,793	16.23	133
4 - Mustaqbal Political Association	MUSAQBAL	15,187	8.56	57
5 - Ifiye Political Association	IFIYE	12,930	7.29	78
6 - Labour Political Association	SHAQALAH	3,053	1.72	7
7 - Truth and Justice Political Association	RUNCAD	919	0.52	2
Total		177,445	100.00	774



This OPOV is free, fair, and transparent. People will make their own choices, which are based on the candidates individual merit in terms of religion, trustworthiness, education, etc. The previous clan system operated solely on the wishes of a few individuals who chose their preferences. Incompetent people used to be selected. In other instances, the Puntland government nominated mayors who did not care about the citizens but regarded only the wishes of those who nominated them.

Two Elderly Ladies, after having voted, explained

PDRCL

The turnout was below expectations, with only 186,181 individuals participating in the elections, indicating low voter turnout at the polling stations. Experts attributed this low participation to two major factors.

1. *Droughts, which prevented nomadic pastoralists—who often lead a mobile lifestyle—from remaining in their designated polling districts, causing them to migrate to distant locations.*
2. *Agitators from various political opposition groups discouraged their supporters from registering, collecting voter cards, or casting their votes. They propagated allegations that the elections were neither free nor fair, accused the process of rigging, and claimed it served the interests of President Said Deni and his government, whose goal, they argued, was to orchestrate a term extension. Additionally, some political associations that had participated in the early elections but performed poorly joined this opposition coalition, further hindering the OPOV elections out of hopelessness.*

Despite the low turnout, the Somali people widely welcomed the Puntland elections, considering them a landmark in the nation's contemporary history. It had been 54 years since the last nationwide democratic elections took place in Somalia. This endeavour revived the aspirations of both the Somali public and intellectual class, who believe in democratic principles and good governance. For other Federal Member States, the process served as a model and heralded a new era of hope. For the international community, the Puntland elections constituted a positive indicator, demonstrating that OPOV elections are feasible in Somalia.

From another perspective, the OPOV elections marked a remarkable change in the pattern of the social composition of the emergent district councils, which were previously selected on the traditional selection arrangement. Whereas women councillors numbered 79 members in the former clan-based councils of the 33 subject districts, in this OPOV elections, 152 female councillors won seats out of the 861 ^[17] seats contested in these districts. This denotes a 48% increase of women councillors. Key informants attributed this achievement to the relentless efforts of PDRC civic and voter programmes including the inclusivity public programmes as well as PDRC's forums targeted to women agenda advancement, in general, and particularly to women candidates and women advocacy CSOs. ^[18]



TPEC training elections staff between 19 and 22 May 2023

¹⁷ Including the 87 seats for the three districts where elections took place in 2021

¹⁸ R2P Annual Report, March 2024



Swearing of the elections' staff in Galkayo district, Mudug Region.

Finally, with successful conclusion of statewide local government elections in 33 districts, on 7 August 2023, the TPEC Chair, Mr. Abdirizak Ahmed Said, presented to the Puntland Minister of MOIFAD, Hon. Abdi Farah Juha the list of elected councillors. Complementing the process, the Ministry had, on 28 August 2023, circulated a decree declaring that the Ministry will organize and oversee the seating of the elected councils to enable them to establish their respective governance structures and requested all stakeholders to prepare for this undertaking. The decree also identified the launching ceremony of the seating exercise to commence on 30 August 2023 in Baran District of Sanaag region, while the seating of elected councils in all other districts will take place in their respective districts on 5 September 2023. Within the next two months all elected councils executed their first seating electing their executive organs.



TPEC Chairman's handover of Final Election Results to the Minister of Interior

DAWLADDA PUNTLAND EE
SOOMAALIYEED
Wasaaradda Arrimaha Gudaha,
Federaalka iyo Dimuqraadiyeynta



حكومة بونتلاند الصومال
وزارة الداخلية، شؤون القدراتية
و الديمقراطية

Puntland Government of Somalia
Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization

Ku: Dhammaan Xubnaha Goleyaasha Deegaanka Degmooyinka ee la soo doortay
Ku: Guddoomiyaasha Degmooyinka Puntland.
Ku: Guddoomiyaasha Goboladda Puntland.
Ku: Xisbiyada Siyaasadda Puntland
Ku: Taliyaha Booliiska Dowladda Puntland
Ku: Wasaaradda Amniga iyo DDT Dowladda Puntland
Ku: Wasaaradda Haweenka Dowladda Puntland
Ku: Wasaaradda Cadaaladda Dowladda Puntland
Og: Madaxweynaha Dowladda Puntland.

Ujeedo: Wargalin shaacinta Jadwalka Fariisinta Goleyaasha Deegaanka Degmooyinka Puntland.

Maanta oo taatiikhdu tahay **28/08/2023**, waxaa shir wadatashi ah oo ku aadan Fariisinta Goleyaasha Deegaanka ee la soo doortay isugu yimi Wasaaradda Arrimaha Gudaha, Federaalka iyo Dimuqraadiyeynta Dowladda Puntland iyo Xisbiyada Siyaasadda DPL.

Wadatashi dheer kadib, Waxaa la isla qaatay in fariisinta Goleyaasha Deegaanka guud ahaan Gobolada oo dhan laga bilaabo **05/09/2023**, markii laga reebo Degmada Baran oo ah Meesha laga daahfurayo fariisinta Goleyaasha Deegaanka ee la soo doortay.

Sidaa darteed, Wasaaradda Arrimaha Gudaha, Federaalka iyo Dimuqraadiyeynta Dowladda Puntland, waxay idin ogaysiinaysaa in maalinta daahfurka Fariisinta Goleyaasha ay tahay **30/08/2023** lagana daahfurayo Degmada Baran ee Gobolka Sanaag.

Haddaba, Wasaaraddu waxay markale ku wargelinaysaa dhammaan Guddoomiyaasha Gobolada, Degmooyinka, Xubnaha Goleesha Deegaanka ee la doortay iyo Xisbiyada siyaasada qodobadan soo socda oo ah qodobada asaas u ah fariisinta Goleyaasha Deegaanka:-

1. Waa in dhammaan xubnaha goleyaasha deegaanka ee la soo doortay ay u diyaar garoobaan fariisinta, dhaarinta iyo doorashada Guddoomiyaha iyo Guddoomiye kuxigeenka Goleyaash Deegaanka.

2. Waxaa Guddoomiyaasha Gobolada lagu wargalinayaa in ay ka qeyb-qaataan Fudeynta iyo Fariisinta Goleyaash Deegaanka.

3. Waa in xisbiyada siyaasadu soo gudbiyaan liisaska kama danbeysta ah ee xubnaha ugu sharraxan Guddoomiyaha iyo Guddoomiye Kuxigeenka Goleyaasha Deegaanka, sida ugu dhakhsaha badan.

4. Waa In Xisbiyada siyaasadu ku wargaliyaan xubnaha Goleyaasha deegaanka in ay u diyaar garoobaan fariisinta Goleyaasha Deegaanka.

Ugu danbeyn, Waxaan rajaynayaa in aad si mug leh uga qeyb-qaadataan dhameystirka fariisinta Goleyaasha deegaanka si ay u gutaan waajibadkii ay bulshadu u soo doortay oo ah in ay si hufan ugu adeegaan.

Dhammad...

Source: Puntland Ministry of Interior

CHAPTER FOUR: ELECTIONS IN THE REMAINING NUGAAL DISTRICTS

To finalize the planned local government elections, the new Puntland government, which took office in January 2024, decided, in consultation with the traditional leaders, politicians, and intellectuals of the Nugal Region, to resume elections in the remaining three districts of Garowe, Dangoroyo, and Godobjiran. The Nugal region comprises five districts: Garowe, the Capital of the region and Puntland, Eyl, Burtinle, Dangoroyo and Godobjiran. Eyl and Burtinle districts were among the 33 districts, where elections took place during 2021 and 2023, respectively. The Puntland Electoral Commission, tasked with conducting elections in the three outstanding districts, promptly began preparations and scheduled the elections for 23 July 2024. As political parties launched their campaigns tailored to the local context, the Puntland Development and Research Centre (PDRC) and other civil society organizations—who had heavily invested in the democratization process—also mobilized. These organizations had previously conducted extensive civic and voter education programs in these districts.

Markuu Arkay: Qodobka 8-aad farqadiisa 11-aad ee Xeerka Guddiga Doorashooyinka Xeer Lr. 9. ee 2015. PL, oo dhigaya "Go'aaminta wakhtiga doorshada.

Markuu la tashaday: Xisbiyada siyaasadda, Bulshada Rayidka ah iyo Daneeyayaasha kale.

Markuu tixgeliyey: Muhiimadda ay leedahay dhamaystirka Doorashooyinka Golayaasha Deegaanka ee 3-da Degmo.

Guddiga Madaxabannaan ee Doorashooyinka DPL wuxuu go'aamiyey:

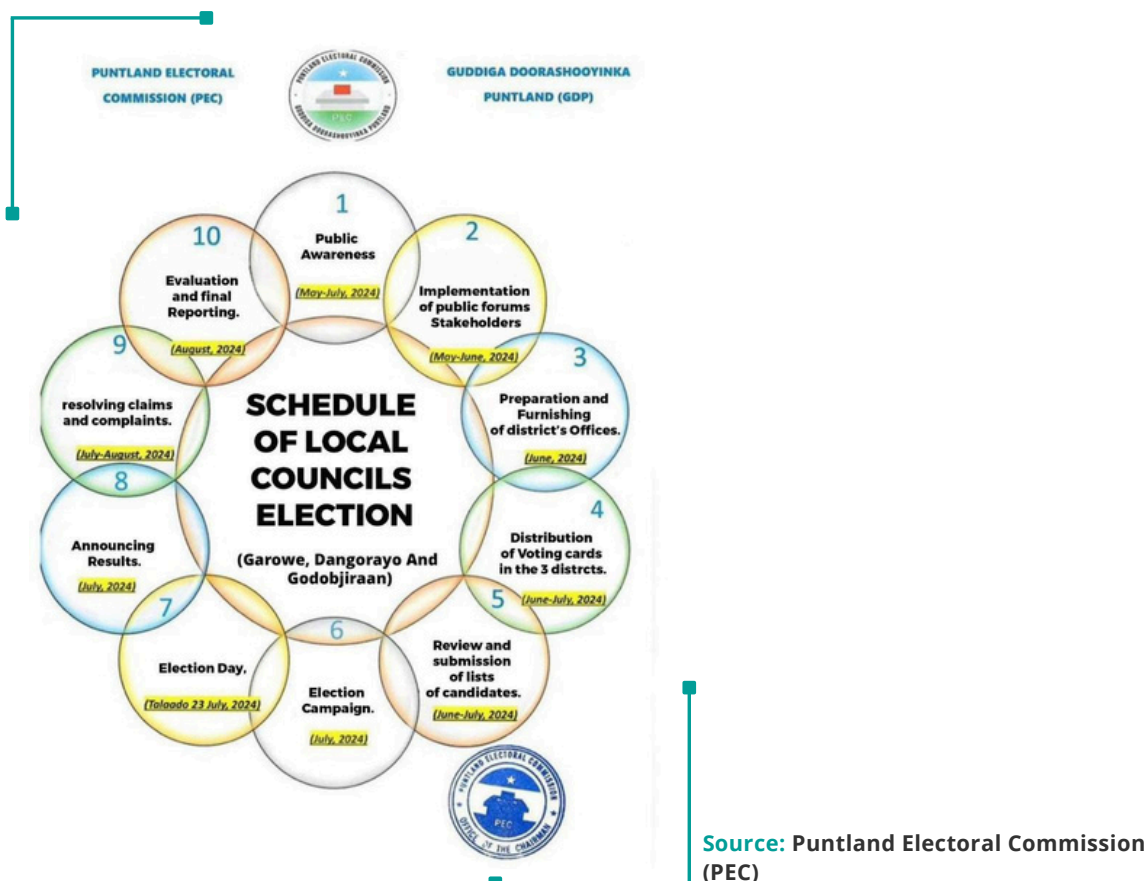
1. Guddigu wuxuu soo saaray Jadwalka hir-gelinta iyo qabashada Doorashooyinka Golayaasha Deegaanka ee 3-da Degmo ee Garowe, Dangoroyo iyo Godob-jiraan oo ku lifaaqan go'aankan.
2. Guddigu waxuu xisbiyada siyaasadda ku dhiirrigelinayaa inay u howlgalaan sidii ay ugu diyaargarooobi lahaayeen doorashada.
3. Guddigu waxuu ka codsanayaa ururrada bulshada rayidka ah ee Puntland inay kala shaqeeyaan wacyigelinta dadweynaha ee ku aaddan doorashooyinka.
4. Sidoo kale, Guddigu wuxuu ka codsanayaa dhammaan daneeyayaasha kale ee doorashooyinka in ay kala shaqeeyaan fududeynta wixii farsamo ah ee la xiriira hirgelinta doorashooyinka.

ALLAA MAHAD LEH

Axmed Maxamuud Cumar (kk)
Guddoomiye K/X-ka ahna siihayaha Xilka Guddoomiyaha Guddiga



Source: Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC)



As the election approached, PDRC began its routine preparations and, in the days leading up to election day, deployed four teams, comprising researchers and mobile audio-visual technicians, to observe and visually document the electoral process in the three designated districts. Upon arrival, the teams organized public meetings and forums aimed at raising voter awareness about the importance of participating in the One Person One Vote (OPOV) elections and seizing this democratic opportunity. A key objective of these deployments was to monitor and assess the implementation of the elections on polling day. Specifically, the teams evaluated voter turnout—including women, youth, the elderly, and persons with special needs—the public's level of enthusiasm for OPOV elections, the overall performance of the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC), security conditions, logistical challenges, queuing and congestion at polling stations, and key lessons learned. This chapter presents the outcome of the elections in the above-mentioned three districts.

4.1 GENERAL CONTEXT ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTION

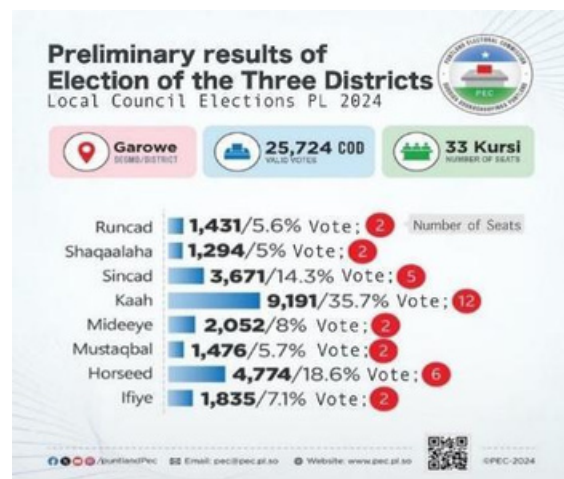
Despite earlier delays, the election generated significant enthusiasm among voters. In most polling stations, large crowds formed long queues early in the morning to cast their votes. This elevated level of interest and participation reflected the public's strong engagement and commitment to the democratization process and the One Person One Vote (OPOV) elections. Much of this momentum can be credited to the sustained voter awareness campaigns conducted by PDRC, the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC), and the political parties. All political parties were visibly represented at the polling stations.

To ensure accessibility, with the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) making concerted efforts to place them within comfortable reach of voters. The PEC effectively managed the election process, including the provision of adequate health and security services. Trained health workers were stationed at the polling stations to provide prompt assistance for any health-related needs that arose during voting. Overall, the security situation was stable. In Dangoroyo and Godobjiran districts, polling stations remained secure throughout the day. However, in Garowe, an incident occurred when armed militias affiliated with certain political parties entered the ENJI polling station, briefly disrupting the peace. The situation was quickly contained and resolved without further escalation.

Furthermore, in contrast to the other two districts, voter turnout in many polling stations was low, with less than 50% of registered voters showing up. While turnout was relatively high during morning hours, but ebbed after 12:00 PM, and most stations were almost vacant till the closure time. Some argued that the delay in opening the polling stations could have caused inconveniences and frustration of voters, potentially impacting on their engagement or attendance.

4.2 GAROWE DISTRICT

The residents of Garowe district welcomed the OPOV elections, viewing them as the beginning of a new chapter of progress, development, and democratic system of governance for the people of Puntland. They expressed great satisfaction at witnessing such a significant democratic milestone, achieved after more than twenty-five years of persistent effort. Many residents also voiced regret that the elections in their district had been delayed due to political disagreements and rivalries among politicians and interest groups.



Source: Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC)

4.3 VOTER TURNOUT

In Garowe district, a total of **50,866** citizens were registered to vote at 66 polling stations. Garowe city, being the capital of Puntland state with a larger number of registered voters, extended the number of polling stations to accommodate the election process in various demographic settings, including urban, rural, and internally displaced people's camps. Initially, 66 polling stations were designated, but later the number was reduced due to essential rearrangements. On election day, a total of **25,724** valid votes verified, with **1,938** votes rendered invalid, which accounted for a 54.38% turnout out of the total registered voters. Eight political parties competed for 33 local council seats. Following the vote count, the elected council consisted of 27 male and 6 female councillors.



Figure 5 PDRC Executive Director, Ali Farah, casts vote

A Case of Delayed Rights:

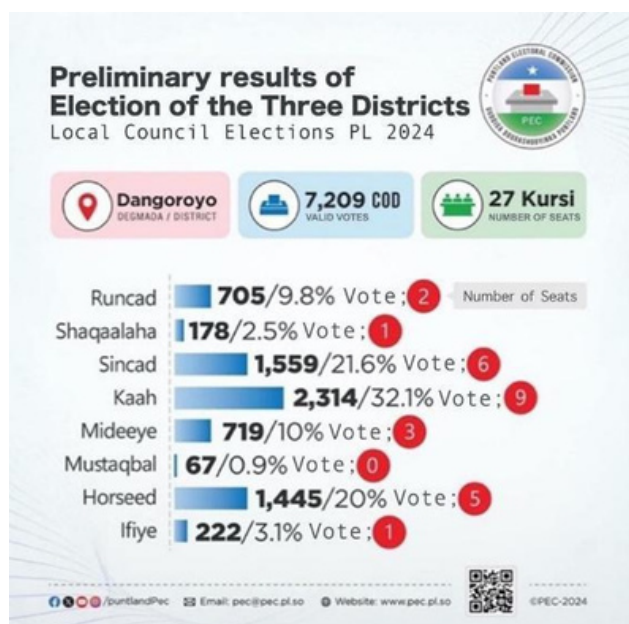
Ali Farah, the Executive Director of PDRC, made a statement after casting his vote: *"I cast my vote, and it is for me a celebrated day to participate in direct elections after an elapse of fifty-five years and to choose the political party that I believe to be working for the development of the country and the interest of the region. I urge the other leaders of Somalia, to follow suit and transit from the traditional clan system to a one-person one-vote election, which promotes citizens' participation in state and nation-building as well as practice of good governance."*

No major irregularities were reported during election day in Garowe district. However, some voters complained about losing their voting cards, and the PEC did not issue replacements. Others attempted to vote at polling stations where they had not registered. Additionally, a few individuals tried to vote multiple times using different voter cards, but polling staff identified and prevented them from casting their votes.

4.4 DANGORAYO DISTRICT

In Dangoroyo, the public demonstrated a solid commitment to democratic participation. The level of voter participation and engagement was notably high. There were no registered and encamped internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Dangoroyo District; however, other marginalized groups—though not identifiable as a distinct category—were certainly among the voters. Participation from the nomadic community and gender representation was exceptionally high, reflecting a broad voter turnout. A total of **10,847** citizens had registered to vote in Dangoroyo District, and **10,827** collected their voter cards, demonstrating strong readiness to participate in the electoral process. Only **20 voter cards**, representing 0.2% were not collected. The district had **12 polling stations** strategically located to accommodate the voters. Four stations were within the Dangoroyo district capital, and eight in surrounding areas—ensuring accessibility for all registered voters.

4.5 VOTER TURNOUT



Although eligible citizens began queuing as early as 5:00 a.m., voting officially commenced at 6:30 a.m. Nonetheless, the management of voter lines, including waiting times, was efficient. Most voters had cast their ballots before 6:00 p.m. at the polling stations. This success was substantiated by the voters' compliance with the instructions of the police and the PEC teams. Health workers were actively present at all polling stations, and security arrangements were effectively managed. This ensured that voters received necessary medical assistance and that the safety and order of the election process were maintained. Of the **10,827** citizens who collected their voter cards, **7,410 (68.4%)** casted their votes, while **3,417 (31.6%)** did not vote.

201 votes, representing 2.7% were deemed invalid and wasted votes. In Dangoroyo District, 27 local council seats were contested, 25 of which were won by men and only 2 by women.

During the Election Day, on 23rd July 2024, observers noted several cases in Dangoroyo district. At some polling stations with a larger number of voters, some party campaigners resorted to vote-buying, while some polling staff members were noticed lobbying for and urging electorates to vote for political parties. In addition, in Xaji-Khayr village, about 30 kms north of Dangoroyo town, confusion developed when some voters refused to comply with queue up protocols. Eventually, the PEC team resolved the issue.

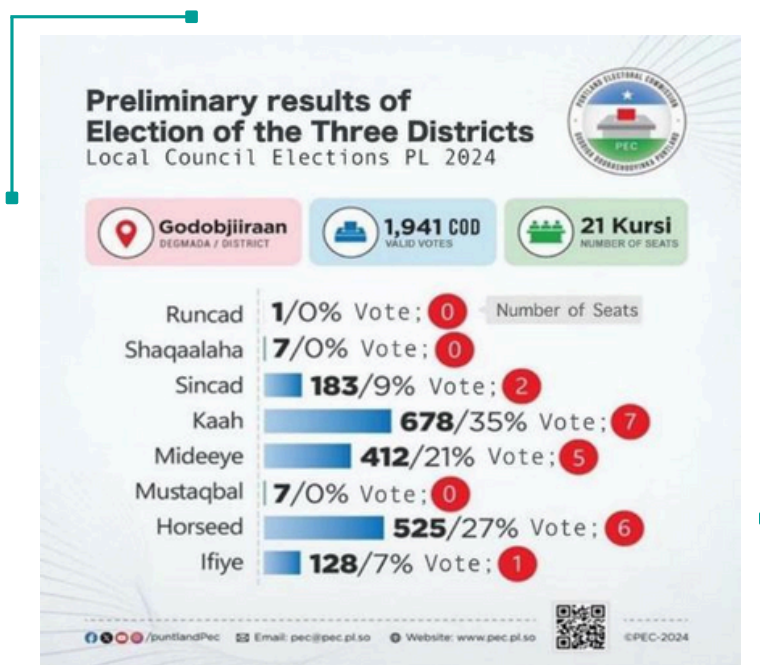


Women with their children waiting to cast their, Godobjiran

4.6 GODOBJIRAN DISTRICTS

The Godobjiran public showed eagerness and enthusiasm to participate in the OPOV elections, which were taking place for the first time in half a century. Those who did not cast their votes were pastoralists who migrated away outside the district due to drought. In interviews, people were expecting much from the forthcoming elected council. They believed that the elected councils would be more transparent, effective and would provide better services to the community that had elected them. Voters expressed hope that the newly elected council would prioritize the district's development, particularly in education and health services. In terms of infrastructure, there was strong public desire for the construction of a tarmac road linking Godobjiran district to Garowe city. Overall, the public held lofty expectations for the new council.

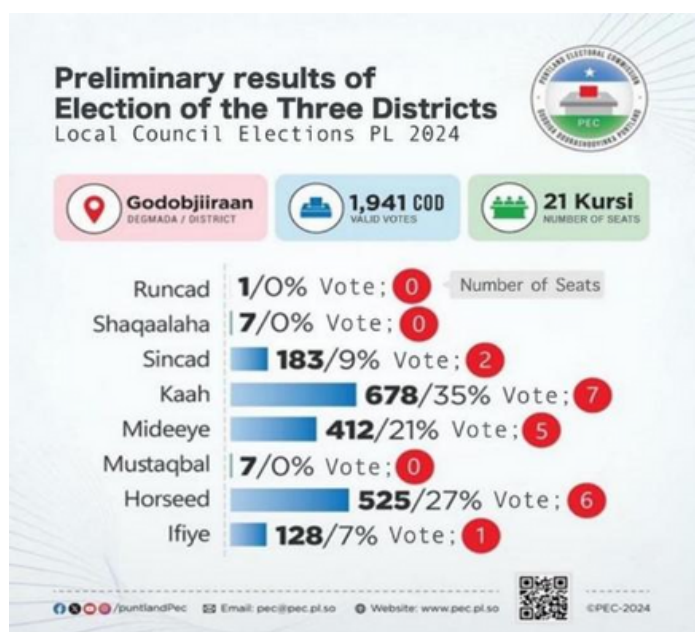
was no congestion in the queuing, and citizens respectfully observed order. Both citizens and security forces considered and gave precedence to vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, those with children, the aged, and the physically disabled. The Puntland security forces (both police and paramilitary forces) maintained security in the polling stations as well as the villages and rural locations of the districts. These forces managed the security of the polling stations effectively, treated voters with respect, and ensured the smooth conduct of the election. No security incidents were reported in Godobjiran district during the election day. The Puntland Electoral Commission, local authorities, and security forces had jointly conducted the election process and the polling stations, perfectly. These institutions managed the operations effectively and demonstrated professionalism. PEC officers and security personnel assisted illiterate voters in marking their ballot papers, adhering to established procedures and in coordination with representatives of the political parties.



4. 7 VOTER TURNOUT

A total of 3,033 voters were registered in Godobjiran district, which had seven polling stations— three of them located within the town. Half of the registered voters were assigned to vote in the town. On election day, all polling stations opened at 6:00 a.m. and closed at 6:00 p.m. Vote counting commenced immediately afterward and proceeded smoothly without any major challenges. The representation of different social groups was well-balanced—women, youth, and men all turned out in comparable numbers, unlike previous elections where women and youth had dominated participation. Elderly people and individuals with special needs were also visibly present and received appropriate assistance. There were no internally displaced communities in the district. By midday, most polling sites were clear and quiet, although a small number of voters continued to arrive until the official closing time at 6:00 p.m. The Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) permitted political parties to transport their supporters from rural areas of the district, a measure that was accepted and appreciated by all stakeholders, including the political parties.

The vote counting process was transparent and conducted in the presence of political party representatives. No complaints or petitions were raised regarding the results. Out of the total registered voters in the district, 1,941 valid votes were cast, 19 ballots were spoiled, and 1,073 registered voters did not turn out to vote. That shows that 65% of the legible electorate had cast their votes in the district. The minimal number of spoiled ballots (19) can be attributed to the success of voter education programs implemented by civil society organizations. In Godobjiran district, five political parties led the contest, namely Kaah, Horseed, Mideeye, Ifiye, and Sincad. Out of the 21 district Council's seats, respective political parties scored the following: Kaah-7, Horseed-6, Mideeye-5, Sincad- 2, Ifiye-1, Mustaqbal- 0, Runcad-0, and Shaqalaha-0.



4. 8 ELECTION RESULTS IN THE THREE DISTRICTS

Overall, the elections progressed smoothly with no major challenges, despite some instances of long queues. All eligible voters who turned out were able to vote. Although women formed the longest and most enthusiastic participants in all polling stations, the election outcome showed different results. Women candidates won only 10 seats out of the 81 seats in the three districts, which is a mere 8% representation. However, this meagre representation of women still surpasses that of previous local council selection processes. The small number of successful female candidates did not reflect the substantial number of women voters, as many women tended to vote for men due to personal relationships rather than supporting a gender-focused agenda. Despite numerous awareness-raising efforts and mock elections, some voters encountered difficulties with the ballot paper and took a long time to understand it. A few individuals misunderstood the voting procedure. For instance, instead of ticking for only one party, they had ticked for three or two political parties on the provided ballot paper. These challenges often delayed the timely progress of the voting exercise. Despite minor difficulties, work at the polling stations went smoothly and managed to accommodate the increasing voter turnouts. The elderly and people with special needs were given special attention and seated until their turn came to vote.



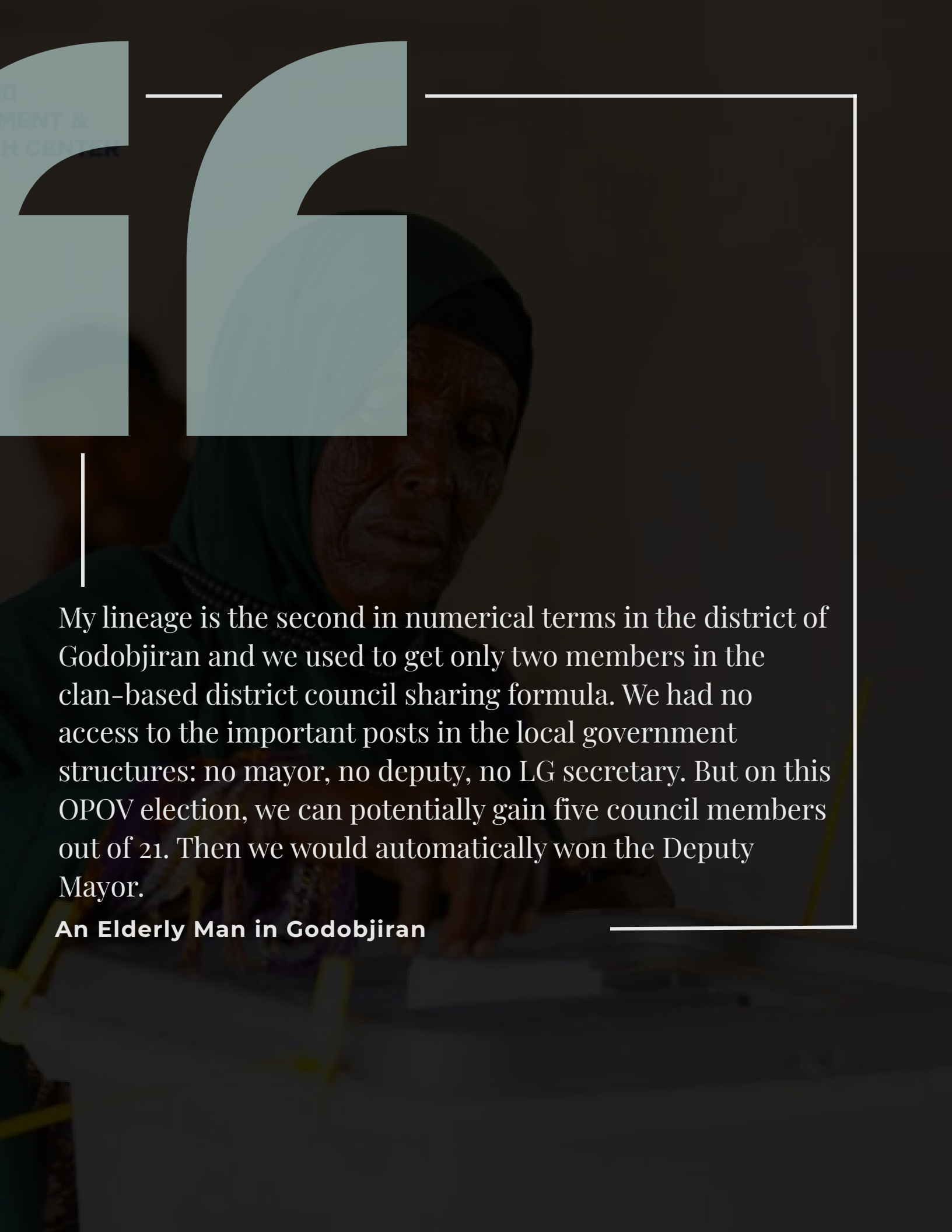
Figure 6: The election staff help an elderly lady cast vote,

4. 9 CHALLENGES

The election period took place during a dry season that constituted a major constraint to nomadic voters in the 3 districts. In search of pasture for their livestock, pastoralists, including registered voters, were compelled to migrate to distant locations outside their districts, and many could not afford to trek back to their designated polling stations. For example, almost one-third of the registered voters could not show up in their registered polling sites in Godobjiran districts.

To respond to the dilemma, the political parties had to incur extra costs by engaging transport vehicles to ferry some voters from distant locations within the district to their requisite polling stations. This at least addressed part of the problem.

Some voters were illiterate and could neither read nor recognize the names or symbols of the political parties they wished to support. Others included elderly individuals and mothers carrying young children who found it difficult to stand in long queues for extended periods. Additionally, a portion of the electorate lacked a clear understanding of the purpose and benefits of the One Person One Vote (OPOV) elections.

A woman wearing a light blue headscarf and a dark top is looking down at a document or a set of papers. The background is dark and out of focus. There are some white lines and shapes in the upper left corner of the image, possibly part of a logo or design.

My lineage is the second in numerical terms in the district of Godobjiran and we used to get only two members in the clan-based district council sharing formula. We had no access to the important posts in the local government structures: no mayor, no deputy, no LG secretary. But on this OPOV election, we can potentially gain five council members out of 21. Then we would automatically won the Deputy Mayor.

An Elderly Man in Godobjiran

CHAPTER FIVE: OPPOSITION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

5.1 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE EARLY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

The people of Puntland passionately advocated for the abolition of the clan-based political selection system and supported the transition to direct elections. They fervently participated in the OPOV early local government elections held during 2021 in the three districts of Eyl, Gardho and Uffayn, which showed transparency and fairness. One of the indicators for this fact was that no political association had filed up any petition to the Puntland courts against election results or expressed concerns regarding election rigging or its lack of transparency. Nevertheless, the results of the Puntland LGEs did not befit many local stakeholders' interests. These included political associations, which failed to garner sufficient votes and felt that they would be eventually defeated and disqualified in the ensuing elections, individual interests of many politicians vying for top political posts as well as a considerable section of Puntland sub-clans and other stakeholders. Reasons for these grievances varied in nature and degree.

First, a common public concern emerged regarding the three leading political associations in the early local government elections of 2021, which projected to graduate to future Puntland political parties, lacked broad-based community representation and clan inclusivity in their management echelons. These three organizations' chairpersons hailed all from the same clan. Thus, many sub-clans found themselves having no adequate space and stake in these winning political associations. They envisioned that they would have no opportunity in accessing top Puntland political posts or political power in the unfolding OPOV political contests of the state.

Second, some sub-clans realized that transitioning to the OPOV political system would result in them winning fewer political seats than under the traditional clan quota distribution. This was due to their smaller numbers in the one person, one vote election system.

Third, a group representing a significant number of titled traditional leaders, who often sanctioned or nominated their respective sub-clan's political representatives; and singled out their favourites, deemed that transition to direct elections undermined their individual interests and their uncontested privilege of sub-clan domination, which they often wielded in the operation of the clan political system.

Fourth, a lobby group opposed the OPOV elections due to an intense political conflict between this group and President Deni. The group had been dominant and held considerable influence in Puntland's political spheres since President Abdirahman Faroole's term. Initially allied with Deni during his early presidential campaign, they played a pivotal role in his rise to power and held significant authority and key positions in his government during the first three years of his tenure.

However, this group eventually turned against him during President Deni's bid for the presidency of the Somali Federal Republic. They persuaded a sizeable number of Deni's supportive Puntland parliamentarians to defect to his rivals—first to Khayre and later to President Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud. This shift led to Deni's elimination from the presidential race in the second round. Upon returning to Puntland, Deni removed them from the top government positions they had previously held, and since then, they have remained his staunch enemies. Taking advantage of this, President Hassan allegedly supported Deni's rival group to sow discord within the Puntland community and undermine Deni's government democratization efforts and the OPOV elections.

A fifth group constituted the politicians and political associations, who felt frustrated after suffering defeat in the elections and eventually losing opportunity to access their aspired political power. In addition, amid widespread concerns over the lack of transparency in the management of public funds, they suspected that the ruling political association, KAAH—which secured the highest number of votes in the local government elections—would exploit public resources to dominate the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections, should the OPOV elections proceed as planned later that same year (2023), approximately 6–8 months after the LGE.

5.2 OPPOSITION TO THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

All dissenting forces mentioned in the preceding section joined ranks and formed an alliance named: "Puntland Salvation Forum/ Puntland Political Forum/." Their main objective was to obstruct the continuation of the democratization process in Puntland and hinder the advancement of OPOV local government, parliamentary, and presidential elections—an agenda on which the Deni Government had heavily invested. On 29 November 2022, following the announcement of the results of the early local government elections held in October 2021, seven political associations—Youth, Horseed, Ifiye, Mideeye, Mustaqbal, Runcad, and Sincad^[19] demanded constitutional amendments to limitation of the number of political parties prevailing after the local government elections.

Since then, opposition to the implementation of local government elections intensified. To achieve its objectives, the opposition employed various strategies and tools. For instance, it repeatedly capitalized on President Deni's declining popularity and diminished credibility, particularly regarding his controversial role in selecting the 48 Puntland representatives to the Somali national parliament. In this process, he hand-picked candidates with little regard for the preferences of the relevant clans and their traditional leaders. Furthermore, critics pointed to his neglect of Puntland's interests during his political campaign for Somalia's presidency.

¹⁹Source: Briefing- V_PL_Elections_Implications-and-prospects-final-pdrc, July 2023, page 2

Beginning with the start of voter registration for the second-phase local-government elections in early 2023, opposition groups organized to counter the process, campaigning vigorously in key districts and urging citizens not to register or vote. Although droughts had already limited pastoralist participation, these efforts further discouraged many Puntland voters—from registering in the first place and, for those who did register, from casting their ballots. As a result, only 401,120 citizens were registered, and just 251,334 voted. Observers argue that, without the opposition’s intervention, voter turnout could have been as much as three times higher.

In addition to launching public campaigns against voter registration and participation, the opposition escalated its actions to include armed confrontation and destabilization efforts. Rather than channelling their grievances through legal and institutional mechanisms, they resorted to disinformation and propaganda, portraying the local government elections as illegitimate, vulnerable to rigging and corruption, and intended to extend the current administration’s term. Moreover, they mobilized dissident forces composed of clan and private militias, allegedly funded by the Federal Government of Somalia. The opposition also enticed segments of the Puntland paramilitary forces to defect, leading some to abandon frontlines in the Sool region and redeploy to the outskirts of Garowe, threatening President Deni’s administration and attempting to obstruct the democratization process. The table below outlines the chronology of major armed confrontations initiated by the opposition in Puntland.

No.	Timeframe	Event
1	27 Dec 2022	Private militia allegedly loyal to the former Minister of Finance, established an illegal checkpoint on the tarmac road at Karin-Dhig point, located 15km from Dangoroyo district towards Garowe. The operation targeted obstructing a TPEC team travelling from Garowe to map electoral districts and identify polling stations in the districts of the Puntland’s eastern regions of Bari, Karkaar and Gardafui
2	6 Feb 2023	Opposition private militias attacked a venue, where voter registration staff were being trained at PSU ^[20] campus. 2 defending soldiers were killed and 3 others injured in the incident
3	11 April 2023	Dissenting Darawish forces supporting the opposition ambushed, at the eastern outskirts of Garowe near the Airport, a TPEC team with ballot papers and boxes, who were heading to the Regions of Karkaar, Bari, Gardafui and Sanaag. The attempt failed as the police forces accompanying the team defended the mission. Out of the muting Darawish forces, 1 was killed and 3 injured.

²⁰ Puntland State University in Garowe

No.	Timeframe	Event
4	16—24 May 2023	Opposition forces sieged Garowe capital city forcefully blocking transportation of election materials and ballot boxes to Nugal districts. They seized Ballots boxes and other election materials destined to Dangoroyo and Godobjiran districts. This resulted in the deaths of 2 police officers escorting the ballot boxes. However, Ballot boxes bound to Burtinle District passed by taking a detour.
5	24 May 2023	TPEC suspended the election exercise in the three districts of Nugal region —Garowe, Dangoroyo and Godobjiran due to the forceful obstruction of opposition militias. Furthermore, TPEC decreed that, due to Al-Shabaab threat, elections would also not be conducted at a fourth district, which was Lasqoray District
6	25 May 2023	Despite fierce opposition, Puntland government succeeded in holding LG elections in 30 of the 34 targeted districts, where 186, 181 citizens voted peacefully at 398 polling stations

Furthermore, individual interests of rivalling politicians coupled with the SFG's disdain of President Deni scuttled the completion of the targeted goals of holding local government, parliamentary and presidential elections in Puntland. The deterioration of relations between the Puntland State and the Somali Federal Government had multi-dimensional repercussions and proved detrimental to the Puntland security, political and economic realms. Due to this opposition, the SFG actively contributed to Puntland's instability and obstructed the democratic process. The SFG covertly funded opposition political groups and mutinous Darawish forces. Furthermore, in retaliation, the SFG suspended all development projects, basic services, and emergency humanitarian aid destined for Puntland. This had a severe impact on livelihoods, the local economy's vitality, employment opportunities, and business activities.

5.2 OPPOSITION TO THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS

The Puntland civil society had, since its inception, guided the democratization process in Puntland. PDRC as a neutral platform often forged the programme to sustain. This sponsorship materialized in various forms and approaches. PDRC acted at multilayered dimensions. These included:

a) PDRC was at the forefront of the civic and voter education campaigns conducted in the electoral districts. It employed multiple tools and techniques. Teams toured the rural areas and nomadic communities organizing public forums using MAVU ^[21] films. The media aired messages, scripts and focus group discussions,

b) As a resource centre, it steadfastly provided technical support in all aspects of the democratization agenda.

c) Being a neutral space, the Centre continuously diffused evolving political tensions by bringing together disputing political stakeholders and facilitated positive and meaningful discussions.

d) In the 2022 and 2023 strained violent political confrontations, PDRC had, in collaboration with other civil society actors, strenuously shuttled between the government and the opposition groups as well as the commanders of the mutinying Puntland Darawish forces.

PDRC not only reached out to the mutinying militias commanders, but also the various opposition politicians and elders. This endeavour did not only defuse the political tensions but also restored the confidence of public concerns by removing the widespread anxieties and security worries.

5.3 THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S SPONSORSHIP

The international community has supported the democratization process in Puntland since the establishment of Puntland State in 1998. From that point onward, they provided essential technical and financial support to the effort. When President Deni, during his first term, revitalized the process, the international community fully supported and praised the early local government elections held in October 2021. On 18 Oct 2022, a large high-level delegation led by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General visited Garowe, the capital city of Puntland. The delegation consisted of representatives from most of Somalia's main international partners Acting Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of the African Union Transition Mission to Somalia, the United Kingdom's Ambassador to Somalia

²¹ Mobile Audiovisual units

Sweden's Ambassador to Somalia, the US Ambassador to Somalia, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Head of Mission in Somalia, Norway's Chargé d'affaires in Somalia, and the European Union Delegation to Somalia's Team Leader

The objective of this large delegation was to celebrate the initial achievements, reaffirm their dedicated support for the democratization mission, and commit to facilitating direct local elections in the remaining parts of Puntland. The delegation met in addition to the Puntland government, the Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) and the civil society organizations. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative for Somalia, James Swan, said on behalf of the delegation in Garowe:

"We exchanged ideas and had a fruitful discussion on how best to advance Puntland's ambition to organize direct local elections in the first half of 2023. We hope that Puntland's efforts can also inspire the broader process of 'one-person-one-vote' elections across Somalia, at the federal and the member state levels."



The International Community's visit to diffuse tensions between Puntland government and opposition parties

Notwithstanding, During the whole span of 2023, a tense political conflict developed and protracted in Puntland. Deni's government and an allied diverse opposition grouping with assorted political goals fought against the agenda of holding direct OPOV elections. Whereas the government pushed for direct elections at all three levels of district, parliamentary and presidential stages, the opposition countered the move for its preferential purposes. In addition to the relentless effort of the Puntland civil society mentioned above, the international community did not spare any stone unturned. it met with both the government and the opposition, listened their concerns to de-escalate the political stalemate. The international community intervened at various climaxes. Representatives from the UN, EU and other countries repeatedly visited Garowe to intervene to mediate on up-and-coming political predicaments.

CHAPTER SIX: ATTEMPTS TO TRANSIT TO DIRECT PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

During the 1960's, popular direct elections were held several times. At the time, the people elected legislative bodies, which in turn elected the presidents. The late President H.E. Adan Abdulle Osman was the only president re-elected by popular vote for two consecutive terms. After the assassination of president Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke, in 1969, Gen. Mohamed Siyad Barre ruled the country for 21 years through a militaristic regime. The military junta that governed did not hold democratic elections. In early 1991, chaos erupted when the regime lost power to numerous disorganized, clan- based movements led by warlords.

At the start of the new century, in 2000, an attempt to restore Somali statehood in Djibouti produced a weak Transitional National Government (TNG). Four years later, in Nairobi, Kenya, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) replaced the Djibouti-based TNG.

6.1 PREPARATION FOR DIRECT PARLIAMENTARY AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Encouraged by the success of local government elections, the Puntland government decided to complete the remaining state organs, namely the parliament and presidency, through direct elections. It began organizing combined one-person-one-vote (OPOV) parliamentary and presidential elections. This move sparked uproar from opposition groups who had been stubbornly resisting the recent, hard- won local government elections. Since the 2023 local elections, the opposition accused President Deni and his administration of insincerity regarding the OPOV elections, alleging they aimed to extend their term for personal gain. They argued that the government could not realistically hold OPOV elections within the limited remaining time of its tenure.

Despite partially succeeding in blocking elections in three districts of the Nugal Region, the opposition failed to stop the popularly supported local government elections. In practice, elections were effectively conducted in 33 districts across Puntland state.

Thus, intent on proceeding with direct parliamentary and presidential elections, the Puntland government set out to resolve the hurdles in its way. To address the issue of inclusivity concerning the three foreseen graduating political associations, the government decided to consider a petition submitted by six Puntland political associations on 29 November 2022.

Later, KAAH, the government's political association, joined the appeal, bringing the total appellants to seven political associations.

As discussed earlier, the petition requested the government to review the constitution and amend the provisions that limit the number of political associations qualifying as permanent political parties to only three. The petition proposed extending this ceiling to five political parties.

Article 139 of the Puntland Constitution states that constitutional amendments can be considered on the proposal of one-fifth of the House of Representatives, the Cabinet, or at least 5,000 citizens. Accordingly, the Cabinet submitted a proposal to the legislature to amend the constitution to increase the number of emerging political parties from three to five.

While the House began processing the proposal, opposition groups—including some participating political associations—disapproved of the move. Besides their respective motives, the opposition put forward new arguments. They contended that, first, President Deni's government and legislature were set to expire in six months and therefore had no legal authority to amend the constitution. Second, they argued that the timing and manner of the proposal were an attempt to extend the government's term. The opposition also reasoned that parliamentary and presidential elections could not be realistically held within such a brief six-month period.

Despite the opposition's efforts to block the process, the legislature promptly commenced the constitutional review by nominating a five-member committee to advise the House on the executive's proposal. On 20 June 2023, while the legislature was in session deliberating on the committee's report regarding the amendments, armed opposition militias attacked the parliamentary premises in Garowe.

Government security forces repelled the attack, but it resulted in significant casualties, injuries, displacement, and property damage. At least 26 people died, including 16 soldiers, and 30 others were wounded. Despite this violent attempt to halt the process, the legislators found the proposed amendments plausible and recommended further debate and a vote according to procedure.

On 25 July 2023, after constitutionally required dissemination of the proposed amendments to the Puntland public via media and field teams for one month, the legislators held an extraordinary session. Given the political circumstances, they amended 11 articles of the constitution.

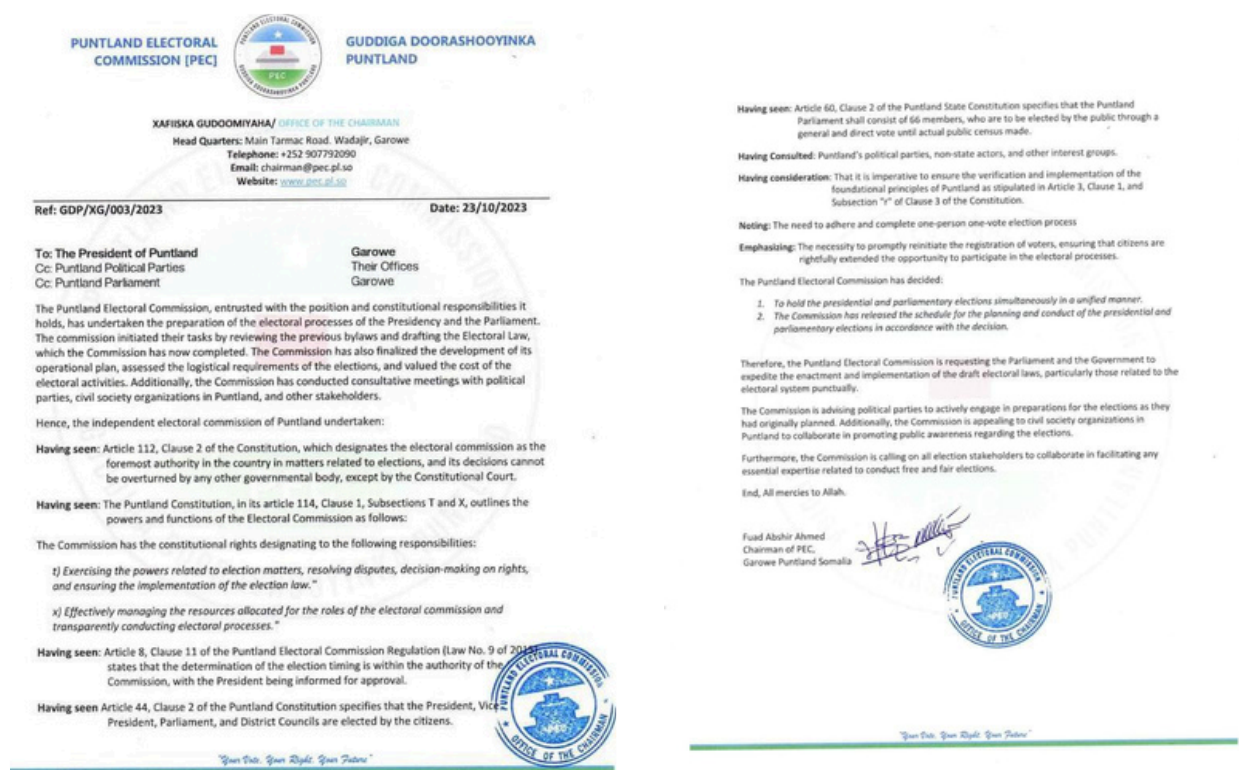
Among these revisions was Section 3 of Article 46, which originally limited political party status to only three political associations that won in the local government elections. The amendment granted political party status to all existing political organizations.

Later, on 31 July 2023, the Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) declared that eight political associations met the electoral law requirements and would qualify to participate in the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections. These included the following:

No.	Political Party
1	Truth and Justice Political Association (RUNCAD)
2	Labour Political Association, (SHAQAALAHA)
3	Justice and Equity Political Association (SINCAD)
4	Kaah Political Association (KAAH)
5	Mideeye Political Association (MIDEEYE)
6	Mustaqbal Political Association (MUSTAQBAL)
7	Horseed Political Association (HORSEED)
8	Ifiye Political Association (IFIYE)

TPEC further explained that the 9th political association, the Youth Political Association, did not compete in the preceding state level local government elections and thus could not qualify for graduation; b) “Section 8, Article 64” of the Constitution stipulates that the Puntland Legislature organ shall elect the president and Vice president. This newly amended article stipulates that the Puntland public shall directly elect both the President and the Vice President

To further prepare the ground the legislative organ had, on 5 September 2023, endorsed a new 14-member permanent Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC). The commission instantly elected its leadership and took over office on 28 September. The new PEC went straight to business and on 23 Oct 2023 PEC had a) proclaimed holding of combined direct parliamentary and presidential elections within a four-month period, designating the election day on 25 February 2024, and b) put out a detailed plan and schedule for conduct of these elections (see below).



Source: Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC)



Source: Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC)

6.2 REACTION OF THE OPPOSITION AND SOME TRADITIONAL LEADERS

Contrary to the Puntland Government goals of holding direct parliamentary and presidential elections, the opposition had, during the months between August and December 2023, engaged in intense campaign against the government's agenda. The opposition waged rigorous campaigns and fights along two fronts—military and political. Militarily, the opposition, in addition to strengthening its hold on the entry/exit points of Garowe, which it secured during the first half of the year, called for more forces to strangle the Deni Government in Garowe. It withdrew heavily armed Puntland Darawish contingents loyal to them from the Las-Anod defensive lines, while one of the presidential candidates brought strong mechanized PIS units from Bossaso to Garowe to coerce the government. In response, the government summoned loyal security forces from both Bossaso and Galkayo to defend itself and the presidential palace, which was experiencing practical threats from the opposition.

As the political conflict intensified, the opposition gained momentum by forming an umbrella coalition and taking coordinated actions. It unleashed a fierce political campaign through various media channels, discrediting President Deni and his government for lacking sincerity about democratic values and elections, accusing them instead of pursuing a concealed agenda of term extension. It accused the government of planning to declare a term extension at the last moment, using the unfinished OPOV elections as a pretext.



Main Opposition Leaders meeting at "Arlo Park", 7Kms west of Garowe.

Traditional leaders played a key role in this conflict. Some supported the opposition and were critical in opposing the holding of direct elections. As a result of lobbying by both the government and opposition, the traditional leaders in Puntland became divided into two groups.

The highest-ranking Puntland traditional leader, Boqor Burhan Boqor Muse, along with most titled leaders from the Bari, Ras-Asayr, and Karkaar regions, and one of the two principal traditional from the Nugal region, allied with and supported the opposition. They often endorsed the opposition's proclamations.

Because the public holds traditional leaders in high regard, the opposition argued that their endorsement gave legitimacy and realism to their political positions.

However, that argument lacked legal standing due to the existence of another equally influential group of traditional leaders, who also endorsed government decisions and supported the continuation of the OPOV elections. This group was led by the highest-ranking traditional leaders from the Nugal and Mudug regions. In fact, it can be argued that this latter group represented the choice and will of the Puntland people, who favoured the OPOV system. The public, meanwhile, grew frustrated with the endless clan-based political system that confined citizens' destinies to the hands of a few traditional leaders, who were ineffective in political management. Even more problematic, the involvement of traditional leaders in politics caused divisions within their core group, further weakening their effectiveness and undermining their traditionally pivotal role in resolving emerging political conflicts in Puntland.



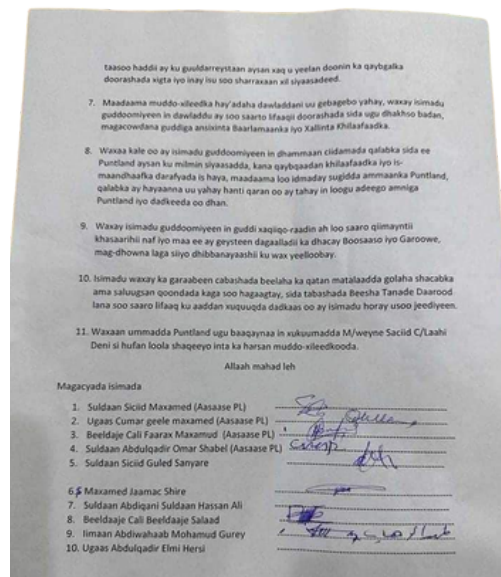
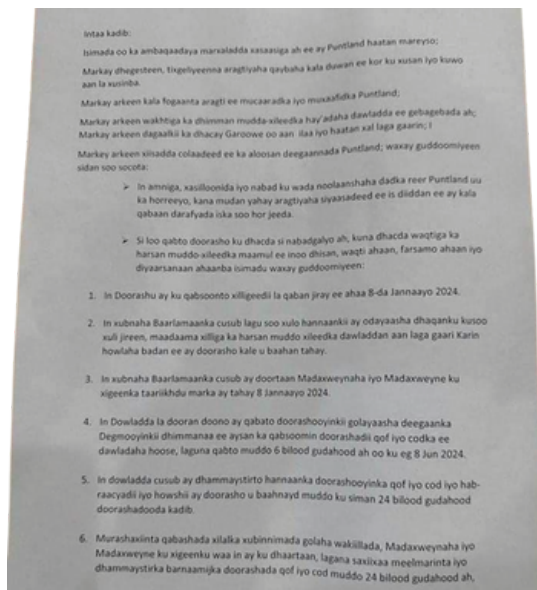
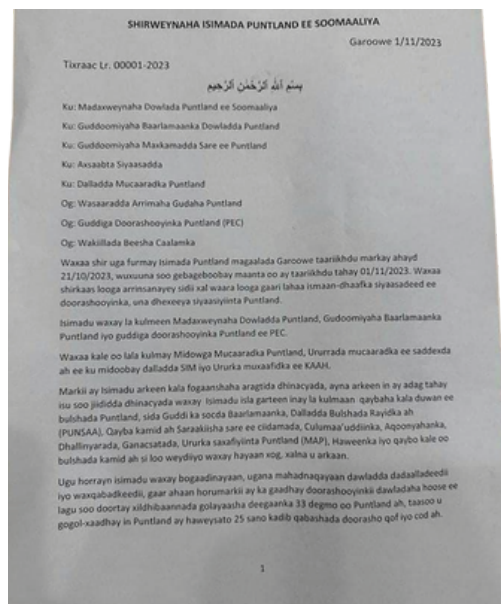
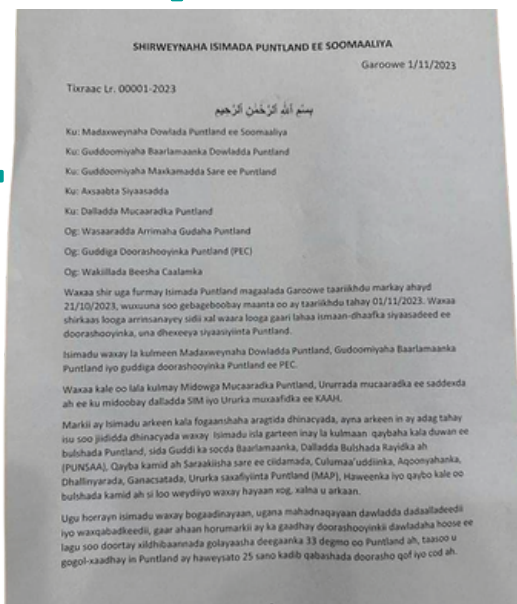
Puntland Traditional Elders in session to mediate between Government and opposition parties

Accordingly, at the end of October 2023, the opposition mobilized a group of titled traditional leaders who supported their position, including some of Puntland's most prominent elders. After several days of deliberations in Garowe, the group issued an 11-point declaration on 1st November 2023, calling for the postponement of the democratic process. They argued that, with President Deni's term set to expire in two months, there was insufficient time to organize direct OPOV parliamentary and presidential elections. As a result, they advocated for a return to the clan-based selection system for parliamentarians, proposing that the newly selected House of Representatives elect the president and vice president on 8th January 2024, in line with previous practice.

These traditional elders further urged the Puntland President to 1) immediately release and submit for approval to the house of representatives the customary Appendix bill to the Puntland Constitution which allowed provisional use of the clan selection system; and 2) appoint promptly the Puntland Parliamentarians' Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee. The following are the deliberations of the titled Traditional Leaders.



Suldaan Qorane reading the declaration of some of the Puntland titled traditional elders (Issimo)



The Traditional Elders Declaration

CHAPTER SEVEN: RETURN TO INDIRECT PARLIAMENTARY CLAN SELECTION MODUS OPERANDO.

7.1 POLITICAL STANDOFF BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION

On November 14, 2023, the opposition declared a resolution threatening to form a parallel parliament and cabinet if Deni refused to adopt the traditional clan selection system. Taking a further step, the opposition released an electoral timetable based on the clan selection of members of the House of Representatives, who would, in turn, elect a president and vice president. The opposition took this step in defiance to the new Puntland Electoral Commission's announcement of a fixed date^[1] for holding parliamentary and presidential elections and issuance of a related schedule. The opposition further warned that if President Deni insisted on proceeding with the popular elections, it would instead move swiftly to appoint its own Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee to facilitate the clan-based selection of new parliamentarian.

Amid the growing tensions between the Puntland government and the opposition, stakeholders—both political and non-political—at the Puntland and national levels expressed concern, with many taking steps to avert a potential crisis. On 3 July 2023, two former Somali prime ministers, both of whom hail from Puntland, intervened, and arrived in Garowe to help defuse the crisis. Although the former prime ministers attempted to mediate the crisis, both opposing parties remained adamant and showed little interest in dialogue or compromise. A delegation of religious and business leaders from Nairobi, Kenya, also intervened—without success. Similarly, local religious and business groups had been actively engaging both sides since the onset of the conflict, but they failed to broker an agreement or even prevent the situation from further deteriorating.

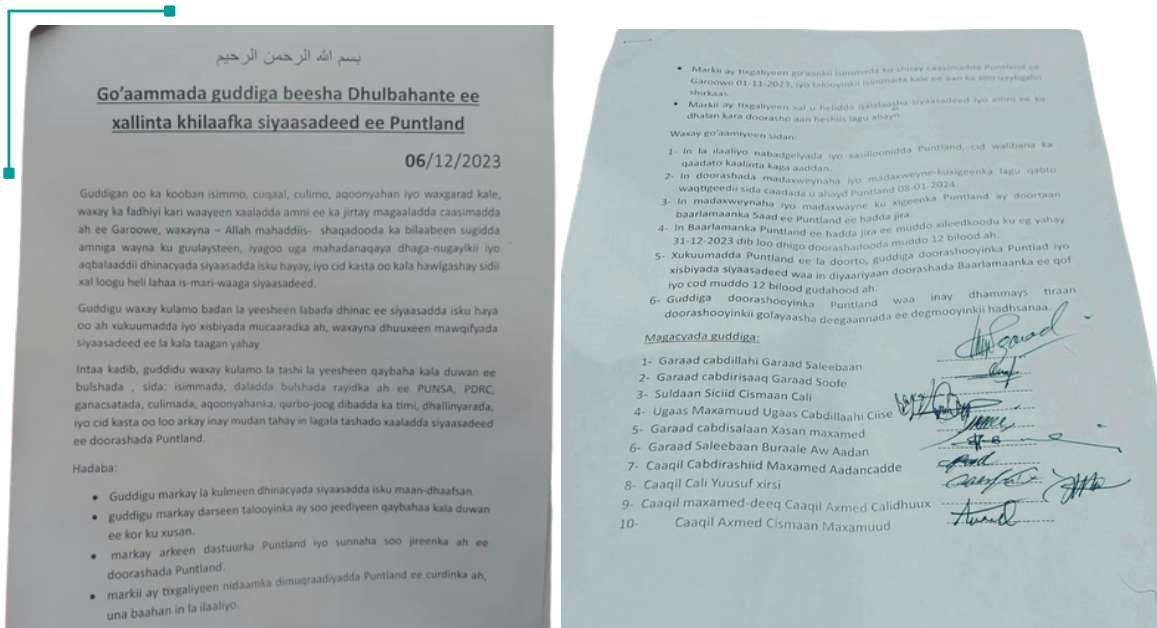
On Nov 29, 2023, the highest titled traditional leader leading a delegation from Sade clan (Marehan) arrived Garowe city from the southern regions with the same aim of resolving the political quagmire in Puntland. Despite a two-week effort, he was unable to achieve any tangible results. Similarly, a group of Dhulbahante traditional leaders—who initially claimed to have been mandated by the supreme Dhulbahante leadership, though this was later denied—travelled from Las-Anod to Garowe to mediate between the Puntland government and the opposition.

After meeting with the sides, various civil society groups as well as the civil society groups, the Dhulbahante traditional leaders declared on 6 December 2023 a controversial 6-point proposal. The declaration recommended extending the current Puntland House of Representatives' term—set to expire one month after the declaration—by one year. Additionally, while calling for this extension, the proposal advised that the House immediately elect a president and vice president one month later, upon the expiry of the incumbent government's term on 8 January 2024. The newly formed government would then be tasked with preparing for and holding OPOV parliamentary elections within 12 months of its establishment.

The Dhulbahante ruling fell short of expectations or resolution of the prevailing Puntland political impasse. Some political observers believed that the Dhulbahante delegation pursued a narrow end to safeguard their own clan interest, rather than adjudicating between the two conflicting Puntland political camps. Objectively, both the Puntland government and the opposition were not happy with Dhulbahante mediation verdict because it neither satisfy their respective aspirations, nor did it propose a satisfactory compromise. However, in case this option prevails and hence does not miss/forgo the votes of the 17 Dhulbahante members of in the Puntland parliament, the two conflicting groups avowed noncommittal responses to the Dhulbahante proposal.



Some of the Dhulbahante Traditional Leaders mediating Puntland Government & Opposition



Dhulbahante Traditional Leader's official declaration

Despite the above, at end of December 2023, the intricate political deadlock continued in Puntland. An unequivocal direct armed conflict between the armed opposition and the government seemed imminent if the government proceeded to OPOV parliamentary and presidential elections. In due course, the Puntland President, H.E. Deni finally listened to the advice from various stakeholders including traditional leaders and politicians.

On 7 December 2023, he delivered a public speech declaring that he provisionally postponed the anticipated OPOV parliamentary and presidential elections. He stated also that Puntland will revert to the indirect traditional election mode and, therefore, the forthcoming legislative organ will be selected on the formerly utilized clan nomination procedure.

7.2 SETTING UP A PUNTLAND CONSTITUTIONAL COURT

In addition to deferring the OPOV elections, President Deni successfully persuaded the House of Representatives to endorse the long-awaited Constitutional Court. On 8 December 2023, the Puntland Legislature voted to establish a nine-member Constitutional Court. It is important to note that the absence of such a court had been a significant barrier to Puntland's transition toward democratization. Without a Constitutional Court, many constitutional violations went without legal recourse and were instead handled by the traditional system, which was used primarily to prevent violent conflict. However, this imperfect traditional system often produced unfair resolutions that favoured certain politicians or sub-clans over others. After 24 years, Puntland finally installed its Constitutional Court—marking the first time in the history of the Somali judiciary that such a court has been established.

In response to the President's decision to establish a new clan-selected legislature after the current term expired, the incumbent members of the House of Representatives took a different stance.



President Said Deni declaring establishment of Puntland Constitutional Court

Influenced by the late Dhulbahante elders' proposal, they convened a parliamentary session on 7 December 2023—the same day as the President's announcement—and passed a resolution extending their own term by one year. Due to widespread public outcry, the Puntland Constitutional Court, in only its second session since its establishment, convened on 10 December 2023 to hear the case challenging the legality of this self-granted extension. After thorough deliberation, the Court annulled the legislature's decision and ordered new elections for the House of Representatives in accordance with the Puntland Constitution.

In another significant political development, the Dhulbahante Traditional Council declared through the BBC in Las-Anod on 23 December 2023 that, representing the Dhulbahante sub-clan and the SSC-Khatumo Government, they would not participate in the Puntland government to be formed after the current government's term expired on 8 January 2024. The council affirmed that Dhulbahante representatives would neither join the new House of Representatives nor the cabinet of the forthcoming Puntland administration. Furthermore, the traditional leaders stated they would neither endorse nor support any Dhulbahante individual for selection or participation in the Puntland government.



Dhulbahante Titled Traditional Leaders declaring establishment of SSC-Khatumo State in LaasAnod on 23 December 2023

This political development caused a new predicament to the already heated Puntland political landscape. It created a constitutional crisis on what would be the structure of the Puntland parliamentary and executive organs after abdication of the Dhulbahante clan. Some argued that the 17 Dhulbahante seats of the House of Representatives should cease, and the new house should consist of the 49 remaining members (out of the total of 66 members). Others thought otherwise. Eventually, it was agreed that the 17 Dhulbahante parliamentary and cabinet seats should remain valid.

After the President Deni announced postponement of the combined direct parliamentary and presidential on 7 December 2024, the state headed towards implementation of the practiced clan selection system of the members of its House of Representatives. He, in accordance with the established procedure, nominated, on 12 Dec 2023, an 8-member Vetting and Conflict Resolution Committee to process selection of the Puntland members of House Representatives. Although initially the opposition rejected the committee accusing it of composing of Deni loyalists, nevertheless, the committee became operational and soon commenced screening of the parliamentarian candidates that the respective sub-clans submitted. On 1st Jan 2024 the vetting committee declared the list of the successful candidates of all the 66 members of Puntland House of Representatives including 17 members from Dhulbahante sub-clan, whose leadership insisted on its non-participation.

Since the term of the reigning government was expiring in the first week of January, the new house accelerated the processing of election of the leadership of the house and the presidency of the state. On 4 January 2024, the new Puntland House of Representatives elected its chairperson and two deputies and on the next day, the new Chairperson, Abdirizak Chairperson Ahmed Said, nominated a 7-member Committee to guide the presidential election to take place on 8 January 2024.

7.3 2024 PUNTLAND PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST

On 8 January 2024, the Puntland House of Representatives convened to elect a president and a deputy President. 11 candidates contested for the post of the President of Puntland and 11 others for the Deputy President. First the parliamentarians voted for the competing candidates to the post of the President of Puntland which the incumbent President Said Abdullahi Deni had won. The table below illustrates the landslide victory of President Deni over his opponents. President Deni scored 35 votes, or 53%, out of the total 66 MPs. In the second round He went higher by scoring 40 votes or 60% of the total votes. His closest opponents in this round, Mr. Guled Salah and Abshir Omar, scored 17 and 9 votes, or 25.75% and 13.63%, respectively. In the third determinant round, the two contestants of President Deni Said Deni and Guuleed Salah. This resulted in Guuleed Salah securing 21 votes, whereas Deni scored more than double of that number (or 45 votes) in his favour. At the end of this round Candidate Guled conceded victory and warmly congratulated the re-elected president Dr Said Abdullahi Mohamed (Deni). Not only congratulated but also pledged to collaborate with him and support his planned programmes.

In contrast, his presidential election in 2019, H.E. Said Abdullaahi (Deni) experienced tough contest. At the 3rd round of the election, he was elected with a narrow margin over his opponent, Gen. Asad Osman Abdullahi.

However, During the first 3 years of his first 5 year term, President Said Abdullahi cultivated strong public acknowledgement and reputation as his government had realized a number of successes in: a) the security sector, b) advancement of democratization process, c) apparent growth of the economic sector, d) the rehabilitation of the main lifeline tarmac road connecting Galkayo to Bossaso and above all, e) the liberation of Sool region from the occupying Somaliland forces.

All contestants publicly congratulated the re-elected president. After that jubilation broke out both inside and outside the House of Representatives. A previously tense and apprehensive atmosphere throughout Puntland and, particularly in the capital, melted away and turned into relaxation, festivity, and celebrations. Throughout this chaotic period that Somalia endured in recent decades, the power alternated among politicians and re-election of a particular incumbent president was almost impossible as the line-up for power was too long and marred with flaws. The Current president of Federal Republic of Somalia, H. E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamed, is an exception, and is serving his second term in office, but in separate periods. Otherwise, it is only President Said Abdullahi Deni who set a record of being elected president for two successive terms. Although his re-election emerged from a tough competition, the margin of his victory over his opponent at the 3rd round was quite extensive (See table below).

After election of the president, the House then immediately proceeded to election the Vice President. It took only two rounds to declare that H.E. Ilyas Osman Lugator triumphed as New Vice President of Puntland. Out of 11 candidates, Vice President Ilyas scored high in both the 1st and 2nd rounds, which subsequently led to his victory. The new Vice President is the former minister of Aviation and Airports during the previous term of President Deni's government. He was also the Secretary General of KAAH Political Party.

7.4 ELECTION OF PUNTLAND PRESIDENT

Candidate	1st	2nd	Final 3rd
Said Abdullahi Deni	35	40	45
Abshir Omar Huruuse	8	9	0
Guuleed Salah Barre	9	17	21
Hassan Shire Abgal	5	0	0
Ahmed Said Nur	0	0	0
Asad Abdullahi Osman	3	0	0
Mohamed Abdirahman Farole	2	0	0
Ahmed Awad	4	0	0
Adam Shikhdon Ali	0	0	0
Mursal Adan Sheikhdon	0	0	0
TOTAL	66	66	66

7.5 ELECTION OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Candidate	1st	2nd	Final 3rd
Cali Cumar Caarshe	2	0	
Eng. Maxamed Axmed	3	0	
Abdifatah Omar Ganey	2	0	
Farah Abdi Dhala'	14	15	
Jama Abdullahi (Aydiid)	7	0	
Jama Farah Hassan	1	0	
Dahir Mohamed Muse	9	11	
Ilyas Osman Lugator	16	40	Ilyaas is elected for vice President
Farah Awad Jama	2	0	
Abdirahman Mohamed (Dhorre)	2	0	
Abdisalan Bashir Abdisalan	7	0	
TOTAL	66	66	

CHAPTER EIGHT: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

The significance and the demean of a re-instated incumbent government have its implications in the politico-administrative developments of the state affairs. Obviously, there are prospects as well as challenges that simultaneously affect the performance of the re-instated government. The following sub-heads will analyse both the prospects and the possible hurdles that may hinder progression of the state-building in the coming five years.

8.1 PROSPECTS

The incumbent government had undertaken huge programmes consisting of the stemming basic services and governance systems. Hence, there are several encouraging prospects for the consolidation of these and other achievements, such as:

- The realization of the local councils' election paves the way to continuation and consolidation of the democratization process. At its current term, the government can exploit its achievements and initiate state building as well as adequate social developments.
- The early commencement of the democratization process will facilitate a flawless political election at the end of the term in 2029.
- The Puntland Electoral Commission is in place and has all the necessary support of the government, the public and the political parties. Additionally, some of its members have the skill and capacity, proven by holding the delayed elections of the Nugal region districts of Garowe, Godobjiran and Dangoroyo, to accomplish their tasks during this term.
- The establishment of the Puntland Constitutional Court (PCC) will solve any would be legal and constitutional faults that may arise in future and during political and administrative engagements.

8.2 KEY CHALLENGES

The road to implementation of the Puntland OPOV elections was tumultuous and the government had to contend with manifold intricacies. In the early elections in the three districts of Eyl, Gardho and Uffayn everyone was enthusiastic and motivated. Interested politicians joined the trend, formed their political associations, and competed. Nevertheless, after declaration of election results, political stakeholders' vested interests surfaced when some appeared victorious while others sensed defeat. Hence, opposition to the all-cherished democratization process emerged. Following is a summary of major challenges to the Puntland Democratic progress:

- A deliberate delay of seating the elected councils on the part of Puntland President disheartened and subsided the enthusiasm of both the electorate and the elected discouraging the voters of the remaining 33 districts.

- In December 2021, a devastating conflict erupted in Bossaso within government elite troops. That incident caused loss of life and property as well as huge displacement of the Bossaso residents. This conflict was also among the reasons for the delay in seating the elected councils as well as the disenchantment to the democratization process.
- The resignation of the TPEC leadership due to a disagreement with the government
- The parliamentary and presidential elections of the FGS substantially distracted the attention of the Puntland leadership from seating the new councils.
- In early 2023 heavy fighting erupted in Las Anod, Sool region, between militias of Sool, Sanaag and Ayn, dubbed as SSC-Khatumo and the occupying Somaliland troops. That conflict has tremendously decelerated the smooth advancement of the democratization process
- The sharp division and discord among members of Puntland traditional leaders along political interests of politicians constituted another major challenge to Puntland state building and stability.
- The contracting term expiry of the incumbent government, which created suspicions of term extension.
- The adverse interference of the Federal Government of Somalia into the Puntland affairs to foil the Puntland democratic endeavour by employing all means, including funding those Puntland politicians, who were bent on thwarting the election process.
- The habitual fluid nomadic pastoralists' pattern of life as well as recurrent droughts, which forces pastoralists to emulate the erratic rain patterns, preventing them from participation in elections or to remain in the vicinity of their respective polling stations
- During the second and third cycles of elections, many opposition groups, who foresaw that they would not gather sufficient public support to achieve their political aspirations, undermined the democratic process, and discouraged their supporters from neither voter register nor vote casting

8.3 LESSONS LEARNED

The following can be considered as lessons learned:

- The overwhelming public support to transition from the clan-based system of governance, enabled the democratic process to proceed despite tremendous resistance from interest groups
- The democratization process can be achieved only through strong public determination coupled with government commitment and will.
- Illiteracy is quite high in the Somali people. During the elections, the number of people seeking assistance exceeded the acceptable levels. Thus, intensive public awareness and civic education programmes attested paramount to tangible voter registration and turnout.
- Holding early elections in a few districts proved viable as lessons learned were applied to the successive elections that were held later
- The formation of the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) was established through a meticulous political compromise. It is there important to consider inclusivity, and a well-thought combination of continuous political outreach and effective compromise

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations offer an analytical approach to addressing key gaps and promoting sustainable democratization progress.

STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS

- Conduct continuous training and capacity-building programs for PEC staffs to enhance their technical and administrative capabilities. Provide sufficient financial and logistical support to ensure timely and credible elections.
- Establish and accelerate the court's functionality to address constitutional disputes effectively, ensuring impartial resolution of political and administrative issues, especially during transitions.
- Establish a widely agreed-upon administrative transition framework that minimizes uncertainty and conflict during power transfers.

ENHANCE SECURITY AND STABILITY

- Prioritize conflict-resolution mechanisms that tackle the underlying drivers of violence, such as clan-based rivalries and political interference. Engage traditional leaders and community stakeholders in mediation efforts
- Deploy dedicated security forces to safeguard the electoral processes, with mechanisms to de-escalate tensions in conflict-prone areas

INVIGORATE PUBLIC TRUST IN DEMOCRATIZATION

- Expedite the formalization and empowerment of elected councils to demonstrate tangible progress and rekindle public enthusiasm for democratic governance.
- Conduct Targeted Civic Education to raise voter awareness on the democratic processes and their benefits. Tailor outreach efforts to youth and marginalized groups to maximize inclusivity and participation.

ANNEXES

1. VALIDATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

TRANSITIONAL PUNTLAND
ELECTORAL COMMISSION
(TPEC)



GUDDIGA KUMEEGAARKA
EE DOORASHOYINKA
PUNTLAND

Xafiiska Guddomiyah
Head Quarters: Main Tarmac Road, Wadajir, Garowe
Website: www.tpec.pl.so
Email: chairman@tpec.pl.so

Tixrac: GDP/45/2023

Taariikh: 31/07/2023

Warsaxaafaded

Ujeedo: Ansixinta Xisbiyadda siyaasaded ee Puntland

Guddiga KMG ah ee Doorashooyinka Puntland, oo ah hay'ada ugu saraysa ee Puntland u qaabilsan qabashada Doorashada golayaasha degaanka, diiwangelinta ururadda siyaasadda, ansixinta & sharciyeynta xisbiyadda siyaasaded markii uu arkay:

a) Guddiga Markuu arkay dastuurka Puntland qodobka 114aad farqada sadexaad

b) Guddiga markuu arkay xeerka doorashooyinka golayasha degaanka xeer LR3 2013 qodobka 12aad farqada 7aad.

c) Guddiga markii uu arkay xeerka ururadda & xisbiyadda xeer LR2 2017 qodobkiisa 8aad farqada 2aad.

d) Markii uu arkay natiijada doorashadda hordhaca ahayd ee 25/10/2021 iyo natiijada doorashadda 25/05/2023 iyo qaraarka ayidaada natiijada ee maxkamadda sare 31/MS/DPL/2023.

e) Guddiga markii uu arkay waxka bedelka dastuurka Puntland Qodobka 46aad farqada 3aad.

Guddiga wuxuu maanta oo taarikhadda tahay **31 July 2023** cod Aqlibiyad ah ku ansixiyey xisbiyadda rasmiga ah ee Puntland oo kala ah :

1. Xisbiga Kaah

2. Xisbiga Mideeye

3. Xisbiga Sincad

4. Xisbiga Ifiye

5. Xisbiga Mustaqbal

6. Xisbiga Shaqaalaha

7. Xisbiga Runcad

8. Xisbiga Horseed

Guddiga KMG ah doorashooyinka Puntland ayaa shahaadada rasmiga ah Gudonsiin doona xisbi kasta.

Guddomiyaha Guddiga
Abdirisak Ahmed said


Your Vote, Your Right, Your Future



SHAPING PUNTLAND'S DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

78

2. PUNTLAND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT LAW.

DOWLADDA PUNTLAND
EE SOOMAALIYA
XAFIISKA
GARYAQAANKA GUUD



ولاية بونت لاند
الصومالية
مكتب
المحامي العام للدولة

PUNTLAND STATE OF SOMALIA
OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

SANADKA 23^{AAD} CADADKA 7^{AAD} TAARIKH: 27/07/23 Lam. 02

FAAFINTA RASMIGA AH
OFFICIAL GAZETTE

الجريدة الرسمية

SHARCIGA WAX-KA-BADALKA 1-AAD EE DASTUURKA DOWLADDA
PUNTLAND

TUSMADA	
Qeybta 1 ^{aad}	Xeerarka Baarlamaanka iyo Heshiisyada Caalamiga ah Sharciga Wax-ka-badalka 1-aad ee Dastuurka Dowladda Puntland
Qeybta 2 ^{aad}	Xeerarka iyo Digreetooyinka Madaxweynaha. WAXBA MALEH
Qeybta 3 ^{aad}	Xeer Nidaamiyayaasha Wasaaradaha, Xeerarka Goleyaasha Deegaanka iyo Barnaamijyada Dowladda. WAXBA MALEH
Qeybta 4 ^{aad}	Go'aanmada Maamulada iyo Qaraarada Maxkamadaha. WAXBA MALEH
Qeybta 5 ^{aad}	Amarada, Ogeysiisyada iyo Qandaraasyada Dowladda. WAXBA MALEH



Xafiiska Garvagaanka Guud ee Puntland Address: Madaxtoovada Puntland, Garowe Email: ee.ol@olstate.so

**DOWLADDA PUNTLAND EE
SOOMAALIYA**



GOLAHA WAKIILLADA DPL

**XEERKA WAX-KABEDELKA DASTUURKA
DAWLADDA PUNTLAND 2023 OO AH SOO
JEEDIN KA TIMI GOLAHA XUKUUMMADDA
DAWLADDA PUNTLAND
WAX KA BEDELKA 1-AAD
LUULIYO, 2023.**



**Xeerkan waxaa lagu magacaabaa "Xeerka wax-ka
bedelka Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland, 2023.**

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 113-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 113-aad ee Nidaamka Doorashada Guddiga waxaa wax ka beddel lagu sameeyey faqradda 1-aad iyo xarafkeeda (b) iyo faqradda 2-aad, waxaana loo bedelay sidan:

1. Guddoomiyaha Golaha Wakiillada ayaa bil ka hor ku dhawaaqaya waqtiga loo muddeeyey ansixinta xubnaha guddiga doorashada, waxaana loo kala magacaabayaa sida soo socota:

B. Xisbi walba hal (1) xubin ayuu soo magacaabayaa;

2. Habka waayista ama xil-ka-qaadista xubinta Guddiga doorashada wuxuu la mid yahay kan xubinta Maxkamadda Dastuuriga ah sida ku cad qodobka 98-aad.

==DHAMMAAD==

● PAGE-6 ●

MAGACA XEERKA

**Xeerkan waxaa lagu magacaabaa "Xeerka wax-ka
bedelka Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland, 2023.**

● Wax ka bedelka qodobka 7-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 7-aad faqradiisa 1-aad waxaa loo bedelay sidan "Dhulka Puntland waxa uu ka kooban yahay gobollada Bari, Nugaal, Sool, Cayn, Karkaar, Mudug, Haylaan, Sanaag iyo Raas Casayr".

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 44-aad ee Dastuurka.

Qodobka 44-aad faqradiisa 2-aad waxaa loo bedelay sidan "Madaxweynaha, Madaxweyne ku-xigeenka, Xubnaha Golaha Wakiillada iyo Golayaasha degmooyinku waa mansabyada ay dadweynuhu tooska usoo dooranayaan".

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 46-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 46-aad faqradiisa 3-aad waxaa loo bedelay sidan "Ururada siyaasadeed ee doorashada kowaad ee golayaasha deegaanka ka hela xubno ayaa noqonaya xisbiyada siyaasadeed ee rasmiga ah". Sidoo kale isla qodobkan faqradiisa 4-aad waxaa loo bedelay sidan "Doorashooyinka xiga ee xisbiyadu waxay noqonayaan shantii sanaba mar, waxaana xisbi rasmi ah noqonaya urur siyaasadeedka hela boqolkiiba shan (5%) tirada guud ee cod-bixiyayaasha golayaasha deegaanka Puntland".

● PAGE-1 ●

**Xeerkan waxaa lagu magacaabaa "Xeerka wax-ka
bedelka Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland, 2023.**

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 57-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 57-aad xarfka (j) waxaa loo bedelay sidan Qaybta Garsoorka (Golaha Garsoorka).

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 62-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 62-aad faqradiisa 1-aad waxaa lagu kaabay labo xaraf oo cusub kuwaas oo kala noqonaya "Xarfka (kh): Ay caddaato in xubintu si badheedh ah ugu xadgudubtey Shareecada Islaamka, Dastuurka, Xeer-hoosaadka Golaha iyo Qawaaniinta kale ee dalka" iyo "Xarfka (d): Markii Xubinta xildhibaan kamid ah Golaha Wakiillada laga qaadayo xasanadda waa inay oggolaadaan xasaanad ka qaadiiisa saddex meelood laba (2/3) tirada guud ee xubnaha Golaha Wakiillada".

● PAGE-3 ●

Xeerkan waxaa lagu magacaabaa "Xeerka wax-ka bedelka Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland, 2023.

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 64-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 64-aad faqradiisa 1-aad waxaa loo bedelay sidan "Curinta, dib-u-eegidda, oggolaanshaha, diidmada, wax-ka-beddelidda iyo burinta Xeerarka Puntland". Sidoo kale waxaa gebi ahaanba laga saaray faqradda 8-aad ee qodobka 64-aad. Waxaa iyana qodobkan lagu kaabay faqrad cusub oo noqonaysa faqradda 8-aad taas oo u dhigan "Xasaanadsiinta Garsoorayaasha Maxkamadda Sare, Maxkamada Dastuuriga ah, Xeer-ilaaliyaha Guud, Hantidhowrka Guud iyo Gudoomiyaha Bangiga, Goluhu wuxuu ku ansixinayaa cod kala bar iyo hal (1/2+1) tirada guud ee xubnaha Golaha Wakiillada mid mid, ka badan ama dhammaantood". Waxaa kale oo qodobkan lagu daray Faqrad cusub oo noqonaysa faqradda 23-aad taas oo ka hadlaysa Xil-waayista Guddoonka Golaha Wakiillada waxayna u dhigan tahay sidan:-

23) Gudoomiyaha iyo Gudoomiye ku-xigenada Golaha Wakiilladu waxay xilka ku waayi karaan;

B: Geeri

T: Istaqaalo qoraal ah oo uu u soo gudbiyey Golaha, Goluhuna ka aqbalo.

J: Maqnaansho cudurdaar la'aan ah oo gaaraysa 60 beri oo isku xiga.

X: Ku xadgudub Shareecada Islaamka, Dastuurka, Xeer-hoosaadka iyo shuruucda kale ee dalka.

Kh: Xil gudasho la'aan joogto ah sida: - dhimirkiisa oo wax u dhinmaan (waalli), ayna caddeeyaan guddi takhaatiir ah oo la aqoonsan yahay, laguna kalsoon yahay.

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Xeerkan waxaa lagu magacaabaa "Xeerka wax-ka bedelka Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland, 2023.

D: Mar kasta oo ay muddada xilhayntu ka dhammaato.

R: Xukun kama dambays ah oo ay ku riddey Maxkamad awood u leh uuna ku mutaysanayo ciqaab.

S: Haddii ay dhacaan arrimaha faqradan xarfaheeda ku xusan midkood ama dhammaantood, waxay ku waayayaan xilkooda seddex meelood laba meelood (2/3) tirada guud ee xubnaha Golaha Wakiillada.

● Wax-kabedelka Ciwaanka Qaybta Afraad ee Dastuurka

Qaybta Afraad Ciwaankeeda waxaa loo bedelay "Golaha Garsoorka".

● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 90-aad ee Dastuurka

Waxaa gebi ahaanba Dastuurka laga saaray faqradda 3-aad ee Qodobka 90-aad.

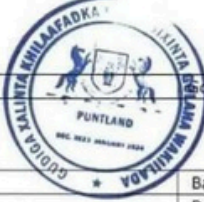
● Wax-kabedelka Qodobka 112-aad ee Dastuurka

Qodobka 112-aad faqradiisa 3-aad waxaa loo bedelay sidan "Guddiga doorashada Puntland wuxuu ka kooban yahay tirada xisbiyada rasmiga ah oo midkiiba hal xubin ka imaanayso iyo lix (6) xubnood oo golaha wakiillada iyo golaha xukuumadda midkiiba saddex xubnood ka imaanayso oo muddo 6 sano ah la dooranayo, dibna loo soo dooran karo".

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3. LIST OF NEW PARLIAMENT MEMBERS

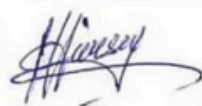
List of Approved New Members of Puntland House of Representatives

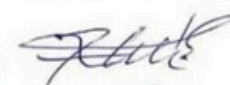
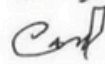
	Magaca		Saboolka
BARI			
1.	Faarax Salaad Nuux	Bari	
2.	Cabdirisaaq Cumar Ismaaciil	Bari	
3.	Faarax Jaamac Yusuf	Bari	
4.	Maxamad Baari Shire	Bari	
5.	Axmad Bile Siciid	Bari	
6.	Axmad Xaaji Maxmuud Axmad	Bari	
7.	Maxamad Maxamuud Cabdi (shendi)	Bari	
8.	Maxamuud Cali Maxamuud	Bari	
9.	Maxamuud Dhakuul Xirsi	Bari	
10.	Xasan Cabdale Xasan	Bari	
11.	Abuubakar Maxamd Cumar	Bari	
12.	Cabdikhaaliq Maxamad Maxamuud	Bari	
13.	Bashiir Mire Axmad Adan	Bari	
14.	Mustafe Bile Maxamuud	Bari	
15.	Maxamuud Shire Cismaan	Bari	
16.	Axmad Siciid Yuusuf	Bari	
17.	Nasiib Muuse Cali	Bari	
18.	Cabdiqaadir xasan Siciid	Bari	
19.	Maxamad Salaad Cabdi	Bari	
20.	Maxamad Maxamuud Cumar	Bari	
21.	Maxamad Siciid Cali	Bari	
SOOL IYO CAYN			
22.	Farax Maxamad Cabdi Xaashi	Sool	
23.	Maxamad Mursal Maxamd	Sool	
24.	Ismaaciil Saleebaan Geele	Sool	
25.	Maxamuud Adanwli Maxamad	Sool	
26.	Faysal Maxmad Dalmar	Sool	
27.	Qaalib Xassan Maxamuud	Sool	
28.	Xasan Yuusuf Majabe	Sool	
29.	Mukhtar Cumar Cali	Sool	

List of Approved New Members of Puntland House of Representatives



30.	Jacafar Maxamed Gaadawayne	Cayn
31.	Khadar Farax Maxamad	Cayn
32.	Cabdiraxmaan Xaji Axmad Aadan	Cayn
33.	Mowliid Abokar Caafi	Cayn
34.	Cabdirisaaq Shariif Axmad	Cayn
35.	Xasan Ducaale Cali	Cayn
36.	Maxamuud Cabdiraxmaan Maaxamuud	Cayn
SANAAG		
37.	Cabdirashiid Yuusuf Jibriil Cawl	Sanaag
38.	Cabdicasiis Axmad Salax	Sanaag
39.	Maxamad Faarax Maxamad	Sanaag
40.	Cabdiqaadir saalax cali Guuleed	Sanaag
41.	Mursal Maxamuud Cabdi Cali	Sanaag
42.	Axmed Cabdiraxmaan Jamac (kuluc)	Sanaag
43.	Cali Axmad Maxamuud samatar	Sanaag
44.	Cabdirisaaq Axmad Saciid Faarax	Sanaag
45.	Maxamad Cawil Cali Dalaf	Sanaag
46.	Maxamuud Axmad Xasan	Sanaag
47.	Jamac Maxamad Farax	Sanaag
NUGAAL		
48.	Maxamed Cali Subeyr	Nugaal
49.	Cabdimahad Cali Liibaan	Nugaal
50.	Cabdirisaaq Jaamac Aadan	Nugaal
51.	Yuusuf Cali Siciid	Nugaal
52.	Cabdirishiid Axmed Maxamed	Nugaal
53.	Mukhtaar Cabdiraxmaan Axmad	Nugaal
54.	Ibrahin Casayr Guraase	Nugaal
55.	Cabdiqani faarax dhaashane	Nugaal
56.	Yaasin jaamac cumar	Nugaal
MUDUG		
57.	Xuseen Axmad Nuur Maxamad	Mudug
58.	Liibaan Bedel Shikh Maxamuud	Mudug
59.	Maxamad Maxamuud Ciise	Mudug
60.	Cismaan Ysuf Xaraare	Mudug
61.	Xareed Xasan Cali	Mudug
62.	Muno Axme Cabdale Diyano	Mudug
63.	Cabdiwali Yusuf Warsame	Mudug
64.	Axmad Jamal Xangule	Mudug
65.	Abdiraxmaan shiikh xasan	Mudug
66.	Cabdikafti cabdi abshir	Mudug






4. POWERS OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COURT.

www.puntlandes.com/?p=102133

www.puntlandpost.net/2022/10/26/madaxweynaha-puntland-oo-magacaabay-xubnaha-maxkamadda-sare/

Powers of the Constitutional Court:

- The Constitutional Court shall have the power to annul any law, regulation, or executive decree, totally or partially, on the grounds that it violates the constitution.
- The Constitutional Court shall rule on cases in which a citizen alleges the violation of his or her constitutional rights
- The Constitutional Court shall resolve disputes among the different organs of the Puntland State

5. PRESS RELEASE-POLITICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Press Release: Seven Political Associations Demand for Solution to 13 Outstanding Challenges to the Local Council Election.

WAR MURTIYEED KA SOO BAXAY URURADA SIYAASADDA PUNTLAND



Garowe 29/11/2022; Shir ay isugu yimaadeen ururada siyaasadda ee kala ah Dhalinyarada, Horseed, Ifiye, Mideeye, Mustaqbal, Runcad iyo Sincad mudadii u dhaxasey 27 ilaa 29 Nofeembar 2022 kaas oo ka qabsomay caasimadda Puntland ee Garowe, ayaa looga dooday doorashada iyo caqabadaha hor yaala.

Ururada siyaasadda Puntland waxay si mug iyo miisaan leh uga qayb-qaateen doorashadii saddexda degmo ee (Eyl Ufeyn iyo Qardho) taas oo ujeedku ahaa in dadka Puntland dib loogu celiyo talada, oo ay iyagu doortaan ciddii ku meteli lahayd fagaarayaasha siyaasadda.

Ururada siyaasadda ee Puntland, waxay isla qaateen in ay diyaar u yihiin in ay ka qaybgalaan doorashada oo ku dhacda si xor iyo xalaal ah. Balse waxay isla garteen in qodobada hoos ku xusan ay muhiim u yihiin in la fuliyo ka hor diwaan-gelinta iyo doorashada.

1. in la dhamaystiro xubnaha ka dhiman maxkamadda dastuuriga ah
2. in la beddelo nidaamka liistada xiran ee doorashooyinka xildhibaanada golaha deegaanka, lagana dhigo liistada furan.
3. in la dhimo tirada xildhibaanada golaha deegaanka ee degmooyinka.
4. in ururada siyaasadda fursad loo siiyo in ay u diyaar garobaan diwaan-gelinta cod-bixiyaasha.
5. in diwaan-gelinta iyo doorashadu si siman hal mar uga wada dhacdo dhamaan deegaanada Puntland.

6. in deegaanada doorashadu aysan ka dhici karin heshiis siyaasadeed laga gaaro ka hor inta aysan diwaan gelintu bilaaban.
7. in xuduudaha degmooyinka ee la soo bandhigey la waafajiyo dastuurka iyo xeerka gobolada iyo degmooyinka qodobkiisa 21aad faqradiisa labaad.
8. in nidaamka ku xadidaya saddex xisbi in dalku yeesho muddo 10 sano ah, meesha laga saaro oo la beddelo.
9. in ururkasta oo hela aqlabiyadda xildhibaanada golaha deegaan degmo doorasho ama isbahaysi ururo dhexmara ay ku helaan aqlabiyadda ay soo dhisaan maamulka degmada faro-gelin la'aan.
10. in xubinkasta oo ku soo baxda magac urur siyaasadeed ee baal-marta xeerka ururkaas u degsan ay dhumeyso xasaanadda xildhibaanimo, ururkuna soo beddalaayo booskisa.
11. in shaqaalaha loo qaadanaayo doorashada loo maro nidaam daah-furan ururada siyaasaddu la socdaan.
12. in ururada siyaasadda ay qayb ka helaan dakhliga dowladda iyo taageerada deeq-bixiyaasha maadaama nidaamka dimoqraadiyaddu yahay bilow.
13. in la diyaariyo guddi madax-banaan oo ka hortiaga musuqa doorashada.

Waxaa saxiixay:

Guddoomiyeaasha ururada siyaasadda Puntland

Dhalinyarada

Horseed

Ifiye

Mideeye

Mustaqbal

Runcad

Sincad

6. PARLIAMENT NOMINATE PEC MEMBERS

DAWLADDA PUNTLAND
EE SOOMAALIYA
GOLAHA WAKIILADA

ولاية بونت لاند الصومال
مجلس النواب


Xafiiska Guddoomiyaha
Office of the Speaker

Tix:- XGGW/DPL/45/2023 Garoowe, Axmed Taariikh:- 31/07/2023

Ku:- Xubnaha Magacyadoodu Hoos Ku Qoran Yihiin Garoowe
Og:- Madaxweynaha DPL Garoowe

Ujeedo:- Magacaabid Guddiga Doorashada Puntland (PEC)

GUDDOOMIYAHA GOLAHA WAKIILLADU:-

MARKUU ARKAY:- Qodobka 113-aad farqadda 1-aad xarafka (j) Ee Dastuurka Dawladda Puntland.

MARKUU LA-TASHADAY: Guddoomiye ku-xigeennada Golaha Wakiillada Dawladda Puntland.

MARKUU ARKAY:- Aqoonta iyo waayo- aragnimadooda shaqo.

MARKUU TIX-GELIYEY: Baahida loo qabo dhismaha Guddiga Doorashada Puntland (PEC).

WUXUU MAGACAABAY:-

Xubnaha Guddiga Doorashada Puntland (PEC) ee hoos ku qoran:-

1. Fu'aad Abshir Axmed
2. Axmed Jaamac Maxamed
3. Axmed Maxamuud Cumar (KK)

Wada Shaqayn Wacan



Md. Cabdirashiid Yuusuf Jibriil
Guddoomiyaha Golaha Wakiillada DPL.



Tell:+252907799484 email: puntlandparliament@gmail.com, website, www.Puntlandparliament.com





III. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

RETURN TO THE CLAN-BASED INDIRECT

PROSPECTS



DAWLADDA PUNTLAND
EE SOOMAALIYA
GOLAH WAKIILADA



ولاية بونت لاند الصومال

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Guddoomiyaha Golaha Wakiillada DPL.



SHAPING PUNTLAND'S DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

2019
-
2024

A Close Look at Political, Security, & Social Developments

