

Somaliland Peace and State- building Experience

Somaliland Protectorate



HORN OF AFRICA MAP – AROUND 1900



Historical context

- Somaliland British Protectorate 1884 – 1960
- Independence of Somaliland 26 June, 1960
- Independence of Somalia and union with Somaliland 1st July, 1960.
- Popular uprising in Somaliland February 1984 and start of a decade-long civil war
- SNM captured SL (Northern Somalia) from Somali army in January 1991
- Somaliland Independence reclaimed May 18, 1991

Basic information

- Area of 137,600km² (68,000 sq. miles).
- It shares borders with Republic of Djibouti to the west, Federal Republic of Ethiopia to the south and Somalia to the east.
- Somaliland has a coastline to the north of the country which extends 740km along the Gulf of Aden.
- Population around 3.5 million
- Three Clan-families MP shares: 14W-57C-11 E

Key Issues shaping Somaliland peace and state-building Processes

- The 1960 independence and the legacy of hasty union with Somalia
- Two-decade-rule under absolute dictatorship
- Bloody struggle to reclaim Somaliland independence and legacy of the Somali National Movement - SNM
- Clan-family Interests and fears (3 main clans).
- Quest for recognition

Reclamation of Somaliland State

- Focusing SNM victory to peace building
- Grand all-clan Conference in Burao:
 - Establishes peace among clans – role of traditional leadership takes prominence
 - Agreement on formation of Somaliland state through popular pressure from Isaq - no return to Mogadishu
 - SNM government rule for 2 yrs and inclusion of non-Isaq clans in Central Committee

Four distinct stages of SL peace and State-building experience

1. May 1991 all clan conference in Burao

- Key drivers: traditional leadership, SNM and political Elite

2. 1993 Grand conference in Borame

- Key drivers: Traditional leadership, SNM factions, political elite, diaspora, civil society

3. 1996 Last General conference in Hargeisa

- Key drivers: Government , political elite, traditional leadership, civil society – women included

4. May 2001 Successful Constitutional Plebiscite

Stage -1 Reconciliation Focus

- All clan reconciliation: bedrock of Somaliland peace and ongoing process (Accommodation non-SNM clans)
- Reclamation of SL independence (accommodation of SNM supporting clan)
- First state-building attempts (concession for ruling SNM)
 - 2-year rule for SNM
 - Inclusion of non-SNM clans

Attempt to control heavy weapons

- Burao conflict in 1992: Attempt of SNM government for control of heavy weapons: opposition faction of SNM refused and triggered war, which turned into clan war.
 - Traditional leaders from all other clans intervened and stopped fighting
 - First state attempt of monopoly of legitimate use of force failed – clans not prepared to let go.

Attempt of state control of Public Revenue Sources

- Berbera Conflict 1992: SNM government attempt to control sources of revenue (sea & airport) was frustrated. Clan war ensued.
 - Traditional leaders from all other clans intervened and settled it in late 1992.
 - Ruling on state property adopted, but not implemented until next government.
- 2 yrs SNM rule is coming to an end- date and agenda for next conference were set.

Summary of stage-1(1991-1993)

- Processes of peace-building lead by Traditional leadership were successful
- Processes of state-building lead by elite failed
- SNM and other elite factions were not able to reconcile their different political interests.
- 2-Year SNM rule was weak in state-building, but was successful in creating space for the traditional leadership peace-building role.

Stage 2: State-building focus cum consolidation of peace

- Borame Conference - March 1994
(core delegates: 150 all-clan elders)
 - Consolidation of peace processes
 - Negotiation for form of government to adopt
 - Pressure SNM transfer of power to civilian rule
 - mandate to elect president and vice-president
 - Potential conflict: President's clan not on board

Peace Charter Adopted

- Sanaag peace conference endorsed:
Unfinished reconciliation attended to
- Key drivers: traditional leadership, regional elite and traditional leadership
- Core agreements: return of land and immovable property; dialogue for conflict,
- Cities and infrastructure shared again

National Charter adopted

- – 2yr transition period for constitution
- Government of executive president and VP;
bicameral parliament, independent judiciary
- Elders role formalized as legislature
- Clan power sharing formula adopted –
favoured smaller clans
- 2 Powerful clans not satisfied – especially
Replaced President's clan

Conflict over power sharing 1994-1997

- Elected President- Egal is a veteran SL politician but not from SNM. He teamed up with powerful SNM opposition faction to replace transitional SNM president-Tuur.
- SNM opposition faction got the vice-president and most influential cabinet posts in Egal's first government.
- Result: three years of civil war – major towns destroyed and citizens displaced back to camps in Ethiopia.

Traditional Leadership Role is transformed

- The Guurti is now formally part of the government (House of Elders) – opposition did not trust them
- It's attempts to mediate failed
- Therefore, conflict dragged to a stalemate
- Local elders and elite of Burao major clans started dialogue among themselves
- Egal's term is coming to an end – new opportunity for settlement.

State authority established in three western regions

- Three western regions: Awdal, Gubeed region and Sahil
 - Heavy weapons handed over to Government
 - Major port of Berbera brought under Gov. Control airports
 - Taxation system established in these three regions
 - Parliament worked and draft constitutions prepared.

Stage3: Hargeisa Conference 1997- Political Settlement

- Membership of two Houses of Parliament increased to 84 each to accommodate rebel clan
- Constitution drafted to enshrine one-man one-vote (satisfied larger clans) and majority of elite vs clan power sharing formula
- All clan militia integrated into national armed forces (dispelled fear of clan domination)
- Cabinet reflected clan/elite interests

Stage-4: Democratization cum state-building

- Constitution adopted on a popular plebiscite in May 2001 with overwhelming majority
 - Political parties formed
 - Election and party laws adopted
 - Independent Electoral Commission formed
 - Elections of local Councils, president and VP, lower House of Parliament held
- Peace maintained

Political interests around the constitutional process

- Change vrs status quo
 - Popular elections vs clan power sharing
 - Wider-base of Traditional leadership role vs legislative role
 - Open multi-part system vs limited multi-party system
 - Parliamentary vs presidential model of gov.
- Drivers: traditional vs elite; large vs small clans

Changing character and source of conflict

- Conflict emanating from incompetence of state institutions
 - elections not held on time resulting in legitimacy issues for state institutions
- Lack of capacity or will to advance democratization, such as amending the constitution
- External terrorism threats etc.

Conflict prevention cum state-building- current situation

- Increasing importance of non-state actors role
 - Organized civil society groups (ie Independent Scholars Group organized through SORADI; APD, SONSAF, FOPAG etc)
 - Civic groups: mediation groups mobilized on case by case
 - The local private media
 - The diaspora.

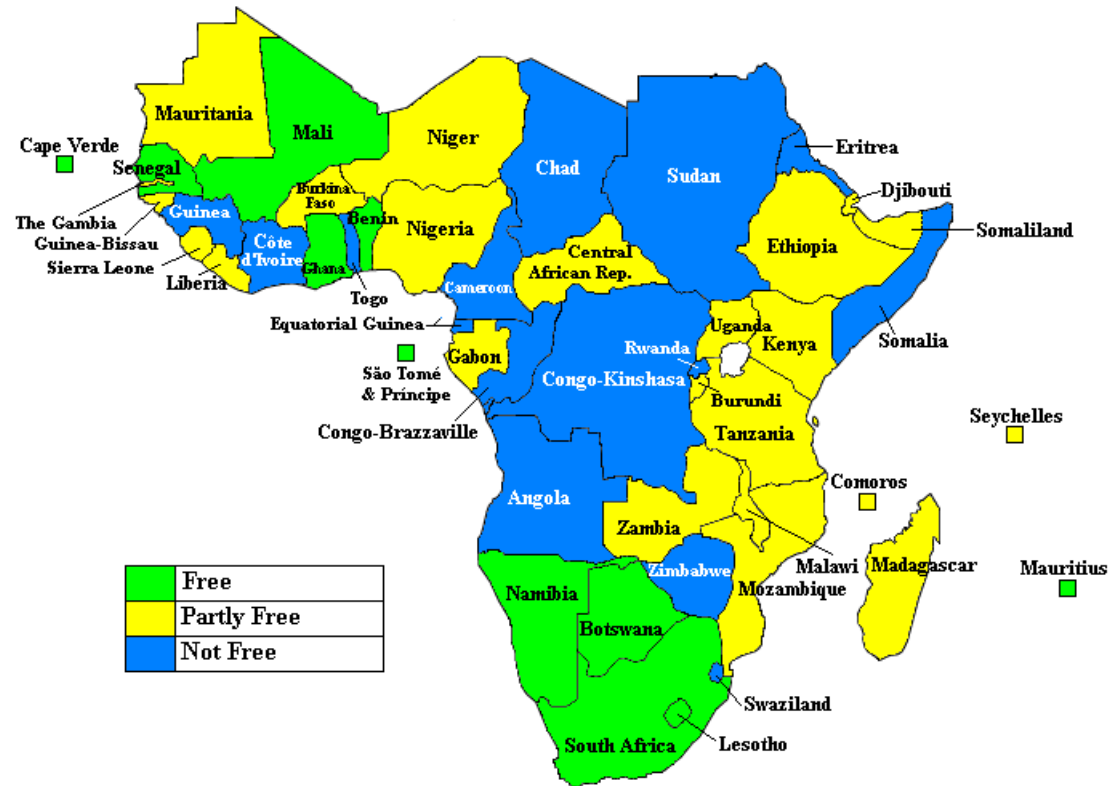
Challenges to Somaliland State-building process?

- Addressing the unfinished business:
 - The Guurti became a state organ; modality of selecting or electing it is still not agreed upon.
 - Limited multi-partism: The process of new political party formation is not settled yet – The second round of Local Council will be the battle ground for this issue to be addressed
 - Cultural barriers of equal access for women and minorities exist
 - Sool and eastern Sanaag issues

Challenges – cont.

- Fixing the system
 - Empowering the Constitutional Court and the Judiciary in general
 - Ensuring legitimacy of state institutions through free and fair elections – Now all Somaliland elections are due in 2010 and need a new mandate to continue functioning
 - Responsive government and cooperating institutions

Published by freedom house



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