

31st



**Somaliland celebrates 31st anniversary
of regaining its sovereignty**

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Somaliland celebrates 31st anniversary of regaining its sovereignty

This year, the Somaliland's national 18th May 2022 fall on a Wednesday. It is time that the people from all over Somaliland celebrate their independence. Time flies so fast and we are already celebrating the 31st anniversary of Somaliland. According to the Somaliland Diaspora Office, the motto of this years' celebration is **Statehood Recognition & Prosperity**. It is our common goal to work together and ensure that Somaliland achieves recognition and prosperity.

For this year the people of Somaliland are celebrating their nation's 31st anniversary while at the same time supporting the victims of the Waheen market fire. Thousands of people lost their businesses and livelihood as a result of the fire that broke out in Waaheen market on the 2nd April 2022. The people of Somaliland have once again shown resilience and unity. Both the people and the Government have shown during the last few weeks to be supportive of each other in a multi-pronged



approach to recover from the devastation caused by the market fire. The tragedy of the fire was seen as yet another test facing Somaliland and needs to overcome through unity and co-operation between the government institutions and all the sections of Somaliland society, including business community, public and the Diaspora.

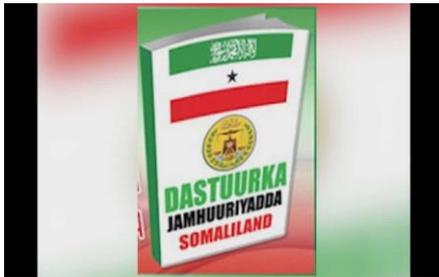
The drought that has severely affected many parts of Somaliland, especially the eastern regions of Somaliland, this is also one of the things we must remember on this 31st Anniversary. The drought issue was another test of the strength of solidarity and resilience for the people of Somaliland. The good news is that the business community and the Government of Somaliland were worked together to help people affected by the drought. However this is just the tip of the iceberg and the effects of the drought are still ongoing for the people of Somaliland. We must continue our efforts to support our people.

Coming back to my article, the 18th May celebration is a part of a long journey for the Republic of Somaliland and its people. This young nation has since 1991 gone through



testing challenges, grew by leaps and bounds to get to where it is today. You may be wondering what it has achieved since the reassertion of its independence. In this brief article, I do not intend to present all of its historical past or how it has reached its current position as a nation. You may want to refer, for this, to my article on the 30th anniversary: <https://gabiley.net/2021/05/somaliland-30th-anniversary-2021-by-abdi-cabdilahi-jibril-awliyo/>

First of all, May 18th is a day to remember that historically Somaliland gained its independence from the United Kingdom on 26th June 1960 and lost its sovereignty five days after Somaliland formed a dubious union with Somalia on 1st July 1960. It is therefore a day to remember the connections between 26th June 1960 and 18th May 1991. It is a day for the Somaliland people to remember their hard struggle for rectifying the June 1960 mistake. It is also a day to remember those who sacrificed their lives for the freedom we enjoy today. It is a day to celebrate achievements and ponder over challenges the nation is facing as a sovereign country.



May 18th is a day we appreciate how we established formidable functioning state institutions in Somaliland including the executive branch, the legislative branch and the judicial branch. In addition to the institutions, Somaliland has also achieved to have the following: constitution, national flag, passport, currency, national anthem etc. We note in particular that in many countries around the world, Somalilanders travel on a Somaliland passport. An example of this is the recent visit on 13th March 2022 by the president of Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi and his delegation to the United States.



Achievements in Somaliland over the past 31 years have also included the change of leadership of the country by five presidents, each of whom at the end of his term made a peaceful power transfer to the winning president. The five presidents are:

1. HE: Late: Abdirahman Ahmed Ali: 1991-1993
2. HE: Late: Ibrahim Haji Egal: 1993-2002
3. HE: Dahir Riyale Kahin: 2002-2010
4. HE: Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud (Siilaanyo): 2010-2017
5. HE: Muse Bihi Abdi, the current president: 2017-until present



Somaliland presidency Headquarter

Somaliland is also a country proud of its electoral achievements. It is politically a country with contesting parties and is sometimes described as beacon of democracy. In the case of the Somaliland elections we can take as an example the election held on the 31st of May 2021. It was a combined election contested by the Parliament and Local District Elections. According to the National Election Commission, two opposition parties (Waddani and Ucid) have won a majority of seats with 52 seats and the ruling party (Kulmiye) secured 30 seats. The current president of Somaliland Muse Bihi Abdi and his government have accepted the election was won by the opposition. Since regaining its sovereignty, Somaliland has peacefully held many elections, including local council, parliamentary and presidential elections. All these elections were monitored by international observers mainly from the EU, America and Africa.

Since Somaliland regained its sovereignty, it has invested a lot of time and effort in engaging with other countries in the world. Somaliland has over 20 Diplomatic missions countries in Europe, North Africa, North America, Asia and the Middle East.

In recent years Somaliland's foreign policy has become more proactive in dealing and engaging with other countries. An example of this is the recent visit of the Somaliland President and delegation led by him to the United States in March this year . It was a historic Diplomatic visit, in which they met with officials from US Congress, the State-Department, the Pentagon and other important institutions.



The visit of the Somaliland foreign Minister and his Delegation to Taiwan in this year was also another historic visit.

During their visit they met with the president of the country and other Taiwanese Government officials.



What is also important for the anniversary of this year is the adjournment debate on Somaliland's recognition held by some of the UK parliament members on Tuesday 18 January 2022. We are all well aware that all regions of Somaliland have welcomed the debate on recognition of Somaliland in the House of Commons organised by Gavin Williamson (MP South Staffordshire) former Secretary for Defense and Education. The view of the Somaliland people on this debate was very positive. In the future, they see this debate as a way to help the issue of Somaliland to gain recognition from the other countries.



We appreciate all the MPs who took part in the Somaliland debate and presented a strong case for recognition that shed light on the issue of Somaliland case and its existence. Apart from Gavin Williamson other MPs who took an active part in the debate include:

Stephen Doughty (Lab), Rushanara Ali (Lab), Tom Tugendhat (Con)
Chairman of the Foreign Affairs committee, Andrew Mitchell (Con) Former Secretary of state for International development, Sir Robert Buckland (Con), Clive Betts (Lab), Alun Cairns (Con), Paul Blomfield (Lab), Ruth Jones (Lab), James Daly (Con), Kerry McCarthy (Lab).

The commemoration of 18th May includes remembering and appreciating Somaliland's friends in the world who helped Somaliland in its long journey and struggle. Somaliland will never forget the countries and friends of the world who have long supported the cause of Somaliland and expressed their support and solidarity during Somaliland's difficult times.

With this 31st anniversary, Somaliland with its citizens are celebrating as the country still lacks international recognition but on the other hand a great opportunity for diplomacy is going forward as some other countries have diplomatic offices in Hargeisa (The capital of Somaliland). Such countries, we can take as an example UK, UAE, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Taiwan, Turkey, Kenya and Denmark (Programme Office).

When you look at the instability of neighbouring countries in the horn of Africa, Somaliland's 31 years of existence has clearly shown resilience in terms of security and stability. The people of Somaliland are naturally respectful and peaceful loving people. Despite the many circumstances and challenges that Somalilanders face in their daily lives, they are law abiding citizens. They are citizens who's main ambition is to one day see the international community acknowledging the existence of Somaliland and the right of self-determination of the people of Somaliland.



Somalilanders are resilient



A Message to the newly selected president of Somalia

I hope the newly selected president (Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud) will face the reality on the ground and respect the self-determination and the aspiration of the Somaliland people. The fact is that today the majority of the Somaliland population are people born after 1991. I hope the newly elected president will learn a lot from the mistakes of his predecessors. He does not need a policy based on hostility and repeat the failing tactics used by the Farmaajo regime. I also hope the new president of Somalia will be courageous enough to accept that the failed bibulous union will never be reinstated and that Somaliland will never be brought under colonization again but that the two countries should better live together as neighbours working together for the development and the security in the region.

It is important to mention that the majority of Somalilanders who make up about 70% of the population are under the age of 30 born after Somaliland regained its sovereignty in 1991. This new generations are the ones shaping and leading the country and deciding the future destiny of Somaliland. The same is true for Somalia. The new generations of both countries do not need to waste their time on things that are not in the best interest of both countries. For, there is no hope to continue the negotiations between Somaliland and Somalia, which started in 2012. It is clear that the nine rounds of talks between the two sides ended in failure. According to the Somaliland presidential speech, “Somalia was fully responsible for the failed talks and Somaliland sees no future in continuing any dialogue between the two sides”.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, with or without international recognition Somaliland will continue its struggle for a better and brighter future for its younger generations. There is no doubt that the people of Somaliland have achieved tremendous positive developments during the 31 years of existence as a sovereignty state. As we are celebrating on 31st anniversary, the people of Somaliland are still facing challenges. The impact of the drought on people, livestock and life in general is taking time to ease.

The devastation caused by the fire in Waheen Market is another major challenge affecting thousands of traders. However, these challenges as well as the challenged related to the lack of international recognition can only be overcome through genuine understanding and

cooperation between institutions and self-reliance which is the trademark of Somalilanders. So, in my view, we Somalilanders have a reason to celebrate and I wish to share my congratulation to all Somalilanders both in the diaspora or back home.

