



## CENTER FOR POLICY ANALYSIS (CPA)

### BREIFING PAPER

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### Somaliland: dispute over extended presidential and parliamentary terms

#### Background

Somaliland's presidential and House of Representatives election scheduled on June, 2015 was postponed due to controversial Upper House decision. The government reasoned out the delay for technical issues while the opposition parties accuse the government unconstitutional and political extension solely intended for prolonging its term in contrary to the constitution.

Since the election can't be held as scheduled (June 2015), on May 5 and 7, 2015, the ruling party and the opposition parties convened meeting to discuss the matter. The ruling party and the Justice and Welfare Party agreed the presidential and parliamentary election to be held on November, 15, 2016. While The other opposition party, WADDANI, didn't accept the agreement.

On 9, 2015, Somaliland National Electoral Commission announced that 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016

the presidential and parliament elections could be held. All the political parties, the government and the international community welcomed. Similarly Somaliland civil society welcomed the decision of the National Electoral Commission which they strongly recommended that any decision from the Guurti to be in lined with the elections roadmap that NEC proposed.

On the other hand Somaliland House of Elders established a committee consulting from the extension of the presidential and parliament election and the committee mentioned in their report about the reasons that can be postponed to the election.

On May, 11, 2015, the Guurti of Somaliland announced a one year and ten months extension of the current government, and House of Representatives term, which means that elections to be held on April 27, 2017. The Guurti also dismissed the election period specified by the Somaliland National Commission. This decision was opposed by

the opposition parties who insisted National Electoral decision which was accepted by all stakeholders. Kulmiye, the ruling party, welcomed the Guurti's decision.

To resolve the current political deadlock resulting from the Guurti decision, the vice president of Somaliland, Cabdiraxmaan Saylici, announced National Consultation Dialogue on May 20, 2015. The opposition parties accepted the consultations. The dialogue was held timely on May 20, 2015. So far no agreement regarding the Guurti decision has been reached. The parties agreed to precede their Consultation Dialogue on May 23, 2015.

### **The Impact of the Decision to Somaliland**

Internally the Guurti decision is undermining the democratic process of the country, where the laws of the country are directly violated. The Guurti decision established disputes between the opposition parties and the government. The opposition parties were blaming the government to have a role in the Guurti decision. WADDANI opposition party organized demonstration against the Guurti, and called nationwide demonstrations throughout the country, though the government controlled their rally.

The decision was divided the society where some of them supported while others opposed.

Internationally, foreign pressure exerted to the government. The international community argued that Guurti's decision puts in jeopardy the foundations of the Somaliland Special Arrangements.

### **Conclusion**

Such dispute and the way of solving are not new to Somaliland. Somaliland has a long history of consensus building and dialogue over its election disputes.

### **Recommendation**

1. National Interest should be preferred
2. The Government, ruling party, and opposition parties should refrain from any actions that can undermine the foreign policy regarding Somaliland.
3. the parties should end their dispute as soon as possible
4. external consultations can harm the dialogue and should be refrained from
5. The new election time line should be based in accordance with the civil society stand and environmental circumstances.

## ABOUT CENTER FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

Center for Policy Analysis (CPA) is non-governmental, nonpartisan & non-profit Policy Analysis center. Its vision is to help the countries in the region of Horn of Africa to achieve democratic, peaceful and good governance systems. The headquarters of CPA is Hargeisa, Somaliland.

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## **END NOTE**

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