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Back to basics: The trust deficit and what the Kampala Accord tells us about the need for more inclusive decision making processes in Somalia

Introduction

Commitments made by both international actors and Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) over recent months suggested a growing recognition of the need for meaningful and inclusive consultation with Somali civil society on ways out of the country's political deadlock.

However, the signing of the Kampala Accord, and the strong reaction it provoked from a broad base of Somali civil society, highlights the perception that these commitments were largely rhetorical. For many Somalis inside and outside the country, the Accord signalled the continuation of internationally driven political processes. These exclude the participation of the Somali people and, ultimately, undermine the effectiveness of international interventions.

This briefing argues that the international community's engagement on Somalia must get 'back to basics' and focus on rebuilding trust between actors in Somalia. This should begin by including civil society in determining the content and processes of the new roadmap. It should also extend to their broader engagement on political and development processes throughout the country.

The briefing is organised into four sections, as follows:

- Section 1 argues that the signing of the Kampala Accord demonstrates an 'about face' by the international community and the TFG, who had both made previous rhetorical commitments to supporting an inclusive political transition including broad consultations.
- Section 2 suggests that the Kampala Accord has contributed to reinforcing a 'trust deficit' between Somalis, national authorities and the international community.
- Section 3 argues that international and domestic political and development actors must get 'back to basics' in order to make their support more effective.
- Section 4 offers recommendations for the international community and the TFG.

1. The back story: seeking dialogue?

The signing of the Kampala Accord on 9 June 2011 repeated the trend of exclusive political settlements in Somalia that are driven by the international community and dominated by the country's elite political class. The Accord signalled an abandonment of the international community and the TFG's previous commitment to broad and inclusive consultation. Instead short-term political calculations won out.

Commitments to inclusive political processes

In the months leading up to the end of the TFG's mandate in August 2011, both the TFG and the international community made rhetorical commitments to support an inclusive political process, including consultations with Somali civil society. The TFG made commitments to inclusive consultations on the political transition following their refusal to participate in a

meeting organised by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in Nairobi scheduled for early May. They announced that they would hold an “inclusive consultative meeting” in June in Mogadishu to identify a way forward on key transitional tasks¹.

The international community made similar commitments to support inclusive consultations in the lead-up to the end of the transition. Following a meeting with Somali civil society representatives, the UN Security Council delegation and international community pledged to keep the door open for further dialogue with civil society. They praised their meeting on the 25th May with Somali civil society as one of the most productive discussions on Somalia/Somaliland during their visit. They also welcomed the civil society statement which was delivered at the meeting and which included recommendations for a way out of the political deadlock.

Furthermore, on 3 June, the International Contact Group (ICG)² stated in its communiqué that:

“The ICG encourages all efforts to further the consultative process amongst Somalis... in consultation with regional actors and the rest of the international community and within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter and Djibouti Agreement. *In this regard, the ICG welcomes the initiative of high-level consultative meetings which are aimed at facilitating Somali-led political decisions, and are inclusive of all segments of society, elders, women and youth.*” (emphasis added).

The ICG went on to urge the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) to reach “... agreement as soon as possible on the holding of elections for the President and Speaker of Parliament, without which there can be no extension”.

About face: Political expediency and the continuance of elite agreements

In the sidelines of the ICG meeting, a meeting was convened between the President of the TFG, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, under the auspices of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and facilitated by SRSR Mahiga. Together in a room, four individuals brokered an agreement on the future of Somalia’s political transition.

The Kampala Accord responded to the significant rift that had emerged between the President and the Speaker, which paralysed the work of the TFIs. The Accord stated that the meeting was convened to “... agree the way forward on bringing to an end the transition in a spirit of cooperation and harmony in accordance with the Djibouti Agreement and in line with the Transitional Federal Charter” and “cognisant of the counsel of the ICG meeting of June 3rd, 2011”.

The Accord agreed to defer elections of the President, the Speaker and his deputies for a period of 12 months ending 20 August 2012. It also stated that the Prime Minister would resign within 30 days of its signing. The President would then appoint a new Prime Minister, who the Parliament should endorse within 14 days.

Civil society reaction

The signing of the Kampala Accord sparked popular protests in Mogadishu. On 10 June, a diverse group of Somali civil society actors, including representatives from professional associations, local NGOs and members of the business community convened at the office of

¹ The meeting is now scheduled for late July.

² Participating at the ICG meeting in Kampala were Austria, Belgium, Burundi, Canada, China, Denmark, Djibouti, Egypt, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States, African Union, European Union, Islamic Development Bank, IGAD, League of Arab States, Organisation of Islamic Conference, NATO, United Nations.

SOSCENSA, 'South-Central Non State Actors'. Together, they agreed a statement³ in response to the Accord, which stated:

"... these articles [of the Accord] are primarily intended to subvert the positive development that the Government of Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi (Farmajo) has created and also to erase the hope of Somali peace and good governance ... The participants described the Kampala Accord as an agreement between leaders who have no desire to support the Somali people but are just protecting their own personal interests ... The international community should refrain from imposing solutions on the Somali people and instead assist them in solving their problems."

The reaction from members of Somali civil society highlights a popular perception that the Accord demonstrates a disregard for the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC), which it claims adherence to. They feel that the Accord dismisses the powers of the TFIs, in particular the Parliament which is supposed to represent the Somali people. According to the TFC, it is the Parliament that has authority to approve and disapprove changes to the Charter, including elections of the President and Speaker and extensions of the mandate of government officials.

2. Implications of the Kampala Accord: reinforcing Somalia's 'trust deficit'

The signing of the Kampala Accord is not the first time that international and domestic support for peace efforts in Somalia have been called into question. Indeed, the Accord is illustrative of a broader and concerning trend in which Somali citizens and civil society groups are excluded from key decision-making processes that affect their and their communities' lives. Instead, these processes are frequently driven by external actors and dominated by a closed group of Somali and international elite, occasionally even in contravention of previous agreements.

The continuing lack of structured, substantive and ongoing consultation with Somali civil society, on both the political agenda and development priorities, has created a 'trust deficit' between local, national and international actors. This trust deficit fuels a culture of suspicion among all actors, which undermines opportunities for them to engage meaningfully with one another. The trust deficit makes international support to Somalia less effective and risks allowing a repetition of failed interventions.

3. 'Back to basics'

This pervasive trust deficit, in a context of protracted international involvement in the Somali conflict, reinforces the need to get back to basics. If the international community and national authorities are to regain trust they must ask a broader range of Somalis what constitutes effective support for achieving peace and stability, and engage seriously with their responses.

Involving Somalis in the decisions that affect their lives is not only a moral issue, but also a pragmatic imperative. Achieving lasting stability and sustainable security in Somalia will rely on narrowing the trust deficit between local actors, national authorities and the international community. This will only happen through concerted commitments to ensure that Somali citizens and civil society not only consent to, but actively shape and determine the issues and processes that affect their lives.

The lack of trust between Somali civil society and national and international actors is the 'camel in the room' when it comes to policy making on Somalia: unmistakable, but little addressed.

³ See: www.soscensa.org/what-we-do/activities/news/article.php?article=8

4. Recommendations

The Kampala Accord, and responses to it, illustrate why the international community must do more to improve responsiveness to Somali concerns and to support inclusive decision making processes. The Accord can be seen as the latest failure by the international community and domestic political actors to support inclusive political processes. But it is also an opportunity to make good on previous commitments.

In line with Articles 4m and 6 of the Kampala Accord, **the international community and TFG should make concrete commitments to consult meaningfully and inclusively with Somali civil society on the new roadmap.** Civil society should be invited to shape and determine the benchmarks, timelines and compliance mechanisms, in partnership with the TFG and international actors.

Furthermore, **meaningful and inclusive consultation should be a key feature of the new roadmap.** Together, the TFG, international community and Somali civil society should set benchmarks, timelines and agree compliance mechanisms to ensure that the next year of transition reflects a new and practical commitment to inclusive politics. Moving forward, the pervasive trust deficit reinforces the need to get back to basics. **If the international community and national authorities are to regain trust, they must ask Somalis more broadly what constitutes effective support towards achieving peace and stability, and engage with their responses seriously.**

Finally, all members of the international community should strive to better reflect the OECD's Principles for Good Engagement with Fragile States⁴ in all their engagements and to start a dialogue on how the principles can best be applied collectively in the Somali context. Experience suggests the following would be central to such efforts:

- Engagement based on deeper context and conflict analysis
- Commitment to engage with a broad base of Somali civil society in regular dialogue in both sector-specific and overarching policy and decision-making processes
- Strengthening support to demand driven interventions
- Providing longer-term and more flexible funding directly to local organisations
- Committing to a common 'do no harm' approach.

⁴ These points relate particularly to OECD Principles 1, 2, 7 and 9 which are Take context as starting point, Do no harm, Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts and Act fast... but stay long enough to give success a chance.

About Saferworld and the Somalia/Somaliland Non State Actors (NSA) platforms

Saferworld is an independent, international NGO that works to prevent violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security. We believe everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives free from insecurity and armed violence.

Through our work in the Horn of Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe we aim to understand what causes violence by talking to the people it affects and then bringing together communities, governments, civil society and the international community to develop solutions. Using this experience, we also work with the UK, EU, UN and others to develop ways of supporting societies address conflict and insecurity.

The primary objective of Saferworld's Somalia/Somaliland Non State Actor programme is to enable a wide range of non state actors to engage in policy dialogue with local and international decision-makers on key issues of peace, security and development. We therefore support the development of capable, credible and broad-based platforms with members representing business, the media, traditional elders, professional associations, local NGOs and women's / religious / youth groups in Somalia and Somaliland.

More information on the work of the Non State Actor platforms can be found here:

- Somalia South-Central Non State Actors: www.soscensa.org
- Puntland Non State Actors Association: www.punsaa.org
- Somaliland Non State Actors Forum: www.sonsaf.org

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