



SAFERWORLD

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

SAFERWORLD

in Somalia/Somaliland

Introduction

Somalia has endured nearly three decades of civil war and state collapse. Frequent droughts and resource shortages have led to devastating famines and the displacement of people within Somalia and to neighbouring countries. The election of a new president in February 2017, though still conducted by a highly limited electorate, was seen by many as more inclusive and transparent than previous selection processes. The country is now preparing for universal-suffrage elections in 2020–21. Somaliland, which has enjoyed greater stability over the last 25 years since declaring itself an independent state, also peacefully elected a new president in November 2017.

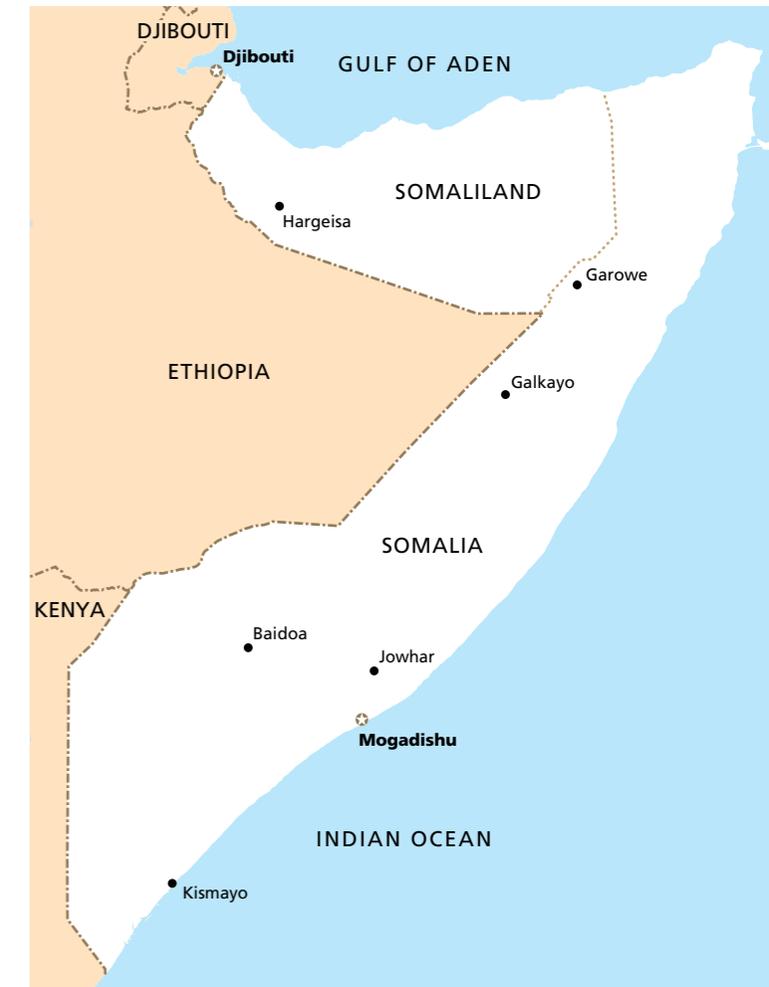
In **Somalia**, 30 years of violent conflict have eroded institutional structures and severely strained the economy of this traditionally pastoralist society. Severe droughts, clan disputes, corruption and al-Shabaab attacks have affected people in terms of their security, access to justice, jobs, healthcare, food and nutrition.

Nevertheless, there are reasons for hope. In February 2017, Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo was elected president in a more inclusive and transparent process than in past political transitions. Work towards planned one-person-one-vote elections in 2021 must begin right away, but democratisation in Somalia will undoubtedly continue to be gradual and characterised by difficult compromises.

Prolonged violent conflict over power and resources has prevented Somalis from living together peacefully and obstructed the development of strong and accountable state institutions. Formal security services such as the police and national military lack impartiality and regularly abuse their power.

In the absence of fair and unbiased security services, there is a high level of mistrust and conflict among communities, and between society and the state. Clans often provide their own informal security, and armed groups and individuals frequently use violence to resolve disputes and assert power. In the absence of a coherent and inclusive approach to people's security, armed non-state actors like al-Shabaab continue to draw recruits.

In **Somaliland**, despite a devastating ongoing drought, the situation remains comparatively peaceful. In November 2017, Somaliland elected a new president, Muse Bihi Abdi, in an election accepted by domestic and international observers as fair and transparent – a major achievement given the instability in the region. Parliamentary and local elections are now scheduled for early 2019.





About us

We believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity.

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We are a not-for-profit organisation, with programmes in over 20 countries and territories across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Saferworld has been working in Somalia and Somaliland since 2004 to promote democratisation and more inclusive governance, and to improve community safety.



To do this we:

- support communities to identify and address their own security and safety issues
 - build better community-police relations
 - work with partners to improve the accountability of police services and make recommendations on security policy
 - support civil society organisations, particularly women's groups and youth groups, to get involved in important decision-making processes on peace, security and development
 - ensure civil society organisations are equipped with skills to influence decision makers on policies that affect the lives of all Somalis
 - build partnerships with both state and non-state actors and train partners to tap into existing opportunities, improve efficiency and impact, and to make the most of available resources
 - conduct research and analysis on the drivers of conflict and their dynamics, good governance, and democratisation.
- through our programmes, research and analysis we identify new models of conflict transformation and peacebuilding
 - support evidence-based advocacy nationally and internationally
 - train and deploy local observers to monitor electoral processes throughout election cycles
 - empower political party officials at the regional and district level to effectively carry out their duties
 - build the skills of women's and youth wings of political parties to participate in decision-making
 - convene consultation meetings on the constitutional review process, and
 - train and deploy local mediators to help in election disputes.





Our work

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Established three non-state actor platforms in South Central Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland to promote and coordinate civil society involvement in peacebuilding, statebuilding, governance and democratisation.
- Introduced community action forums in three regions of Somalia to enable communities to identify and determine how to address their own safety and security challenges.
- Organised large-scale, civil society led domestic election observer missions for the 2012 and 2017 general elections and for the 2016 voter registration in Somaliland, as well as for the 2016–17 electoral process in Somalia. This work has strengthened public oversight of election processes and enhanced the credibility of election results.
- Identified drivers of conflict and explored effective means of addressing them through extensive research and consultation with stakeholders and communities across Somalia and Somaliland.
- Achieved one of the strongest presences in Somalia and Somaliland of any international peacebuilding NGO – through successfully recruiting talented staff, building strong partnerships with Somali organisations, and launching offices and installing representatives across Somalia and Somaliland.
- Led a coalition of Somaliland civil society actors to promote innovative action on Sustainable Development Goal 16 – at a national, regional, and global level.

OUR STRENGTHS

- Over 14 years' experience of working with Somali partners on governance and peacebuilding in Somalia and Somaliland.
- A large and experienced team who are predominately Somalis.
- Permanent offices in Hargeisa and Mogadishu, with representatives in Nairobi, Kismayo and Baidoa.



Governance and democratisation

We support civil society's crucial role in observing elections, increasing civic engagement and improving voter education.

Saferworld plays a significant role in supporting democratisation and improving governance in both Somalia and Somaliland. In partnership with Somali civil society organisations (CSOs), which are crucial in providing services that are usually the responsibility of the state, we build better relations between the government and Somali citizens. Saferworld aims to strengthen the participation and influence of these CSOs in important policy and decision-making processes on peace, security and development. With partners, we established and continue to work with three platforms that offer Somali people the opportunity to consult with national and international policy and decision makers on issues that impact the well-being of Somali citizens (see: Promoting Somali voices for peace).

To promote fair and transparent elections in several political regions across Somalia and Somaliland, Saferworld has also helped with civic and voter education and formed working partnerships with electoral management bodies. These include the Transitional Puntland Election Commission (TPEC), the National Independent Election Commission (NIEC) of Somalia and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Somaliland.

Saferworld supports civil society organisations in overseeing democratic processes across the region. In the lead-up to Somaliland's 2017 presidential election, Saferworld encouraged voter education on the voter registration process, assisted parliament in the amendment of the house of representatives election legislation, built the capacity of the three political parties that contested the election, and supported the training and deployment of 620 domestic election observers.

Drawing on lessons from peace processes around the world, we also research and analyse conflict dynamics and assess how these might help or hinder potential peace agreements in Somalia.



**CASE STUDY:
SOMALIA'S ROAD TO DEMOCRACY**

Throughout Somalia's 2016–17 election process, Saferworld worked alongside civil society organisations, authorities, national and international groups to improve transparency and accountability to ensure Somalis had a greater say in the future of their country.

In February 2017, Somalia's lower and upper houses of parliament elected the country's new president, Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo, using an indirect selection process. The process began in 2016 with 135 clan elders appointing 14,025 delegates to represent numerous clans and sub-clans and to elect the lower house of parliament. Members of the upper house were elected by the parliaments of the federal member states.

One success of the 2016–17 electoral process – regardless of its unevenness – was the active engagement of domestic election observers despite the challenging political and security environment.

"Election observation is a valuable tool for improving the quality of elections. Observers help build public confidence in the integrity of the electoral processes," reflects election observer, Fadumo.

The observers – trained by Saferworld and its partners – took on varied duties including checking election materials and voter registration documents, deterring and reporting any incidents of violence or intimidation, and documenting the general atmosphere in polling stations. "Observing the electoral process was proactive, not confined solely to election day but crucially during the steps beforehand including the planning phase, election officials' recruitment and training, electoral delegate selection, campaigns and so on" said Mohamed Noor, former chair of Saferworld's partner, the Puntland Non-State Actor Association (PUNSAA).

Another improvement was the increased involvement of women in the 2016–17 election process. "The adoption and enforcement of the women's quota was among the most interesting yet challenging occurrences in the male-dominated clan culture of Somalia. A woman defeated three men during the upper house election within the Puntland Parliament – an amazing outcome!" said Mohamed Noor.

"My hope for future democratisation processes in Somalia is to get leaders who will respect and implement the constitution, and enhance the capacity of government institutions to deliver the services that citizens expect."

Hamud Mohamed, PUNSAA election observer.



Somalia elections in numbers



16.3
million

Somalia's estimated population



34

Election observers trained and deployed by Saferworld



2020–21

The year when one-person-one-vote elections are scheduled

The 2016–17 electoral process

Somali leaders designed the 2016–17 process with the international community's support. Thousands more voted in this election than the last one, but voters still made up a tiny fraction of the population.

135
Clan Elders

SELECT

14,025
Delegates

51 per elective seat

ELECT

Federal Member State parliaments

ELECT



54

Members of the Upper House



275

Members of the Lower House

BOTH SELECT



President

Source: Wall Street Journal; World Bank

Somaliland elections in numbers



873,331
registered voters



704,198
registered voters who
collected voting cards



80%
voter turnout



55.1%
Kulmiye votes
(the winning party)



1,642
polling stations



620
domestic election
observers trained by
Saferworld and SONSAF



CASE STUDY: SOMALILAND DECIDES

In 2016, after consultations with 1,500 community members and leaders in Somaliland, Saferworld and its partners, including the Somaliland Non-State Actor Forum (SONSAF), helped the Parliamentary Committee for Internal Affairs and Security to redraft legislation on the election of the House of Representatives. In advance of voter registration for Somaliland's third direct presidential elections in 2017, Saferworld successfully advocated to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to change its civic education strategy to directly engage local civil society and elders before the election. We trained and deployed 620 election observers who covered 41 per cent of polling stations across Somaliland. Reporting by Saferworld and SONSAF-trained domestic election observers found that 90 per cent of polling stations opened on time, closed peacefully and began counting votes on time, which strengthened confidence in the legitimacy of election results.

“Because we are an emerging country, the world can see our democracy. So it’s important to show our process is fair and transparent.”

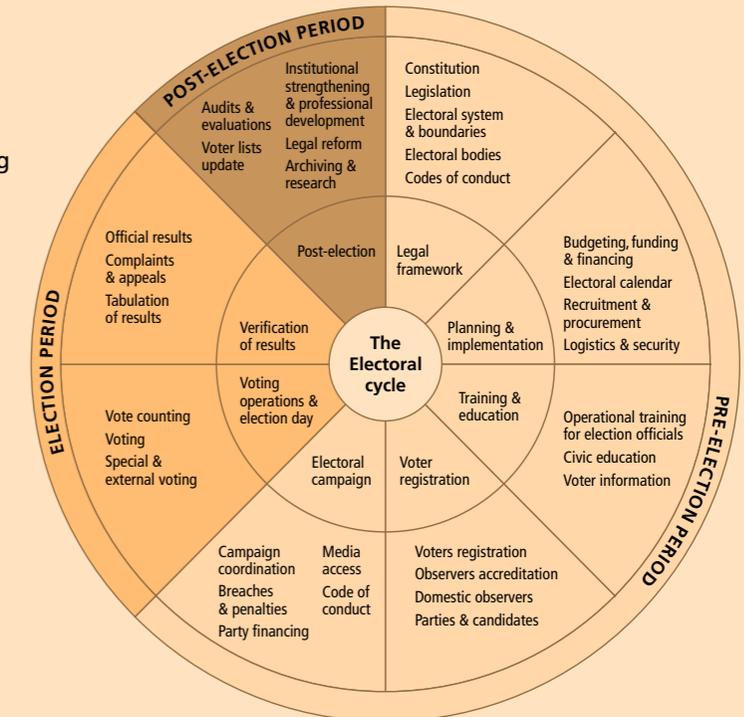
Isir Guleid Hussein, observer and student.

Al Jazeera featured Saferworld-commissioned photos in its Somaliland elections photostory, raising awareness about the election process including registering to vote, campaigning and voting.

Since the election results, Saferworld has been supporting post-election activities including putting together a documentary film on the election process, organising photo exhibitions of campaigning and voting in Hargeisa, Nairobi and London, reporting on election findings, and paving the way for the 2019 House of Representatives and local council elections.

“We designed a high-tech application system that enabled our domestic observers to send data every single minute to SONSAF’s office. It also allowed us to locate every observer across Somaliland. The data we received included the time polling stations opened, any incidents that occurred and how they were resolved.”

Mohamed Barwani, executive director, SONSAF.



The electoral cycle – reflecting Saferworld’s holistic approach during Somaliland’s presidential elections. SOURCE: <http://www.eces.eu/eea-training>



Promoting Somali voices for peace

Saferworld's approach is based on a conviction that the exclusion of the voices of Somali citizens from the country's political and peace processes has contributed to conflict and has prevented inclusive peacebuilding and statebuilding. Working to address this, Saferworld helped to establish and develop non-state actor platforms (NSAPs) in Somaliland (SONSAF), Puntland (PUNSA) and South Central Somalia (SOCSENSA). These platforms offer a two-way channel for Somali people, whose voices are too seldom heard in important decision-making processes, to connect and communicate with national and international policymakers. The platforms' legitimacy stems from including a diverse range of participants from many different sectors of society, and conducting consultations on policy-making gives the platforms their legitimacy.

The platforms feed information both 'up' to policymakers and 'down' to platform member organisations and the communities they serve. Policy is thus informed by those who are closest to and most affected by the relevant issues and contexts, and information about decision-making processes and their outcomes is shared transparently with the broader society.

All three platforms' growing influence over emerging policy issues is demonstrated by the outputs they have generated and developed, including consultations, advocacy, outreach activities, position papers, and policies. Examples include: PUNSA's crucial input into Puntland's electoral legislation and media freedom bill; SONSAF's successes on the issue of hydrocarbon exploration, which committed the government to ensure all new explorations are preceded by community consultation; and SOCSENSA's support for Somalia's constitutional review process, the NGO bill, and the mediation of a conflict between the Ministry of Education and a private sector education establishment.

Since 2015, the NSAPs have scaled up their work in numerous areas: strategy development; increasing public trust in government institutions; improving representativeness; supporting policy formation; and securing strong relationships with governments. Saferworld has focused on building NSAPs' capacities to maintain and strengthen their position as citizens' conduits – so that citizens can ensure their needs are met through effective governance, hold authorities to account, and bring about long-term change towards peace and stability.



Community security



Prolonged conflict in South Central Somalia has prevented Somalis in many regions from living together peacefully. Often violence has been used to gain power and resources. Continued conflict in the region has prevented the development of strong, unbiased and accountable state institutions. Formal security services, such as the police, lack legitimacy and impartiality, and regularly abuse their power.

Consequently, there are high levels of mistrust and conflict among communities and between society and the state. The clans themselves often resort to providing their own informal security, and armed actors frequently use violence to resolve disputes and assert their power. Due to the lack of a coherent and inclusive approach to human security, violent groups such as al-Shabaab are thriving in many parts of the country.

Saferworld is working with partners in three regions of Somalia – Banadir, Jubaland State and South West State – to tackle mistrust among and within communities that leads to violence and conflict. We do this by supporting partners to create community groups that identify safety concerns affecting their communities. We then support these groups to work with security providers to find solutions to these concerns.

We are also working with partners to establish state-level advisory committees for the police services. These committees – made up of civil society representatives, former police officers, lawyers and government officials – visit police stations to assess their work and to feedback ideas for improvement. We use the evidence gathered from this process to make recommendations to improve policy – to create more accountable and inclusive institutions where people have a role and voice in addressing their concerns and grievances.





Research, advocacy and analysis

Saferworld's research ensures our programming and advocacy is underpinned by sound analysis. Our recent research has focused on a range of objectives, from understanding the attitudes and perceptions of community members towards democratic reforms, to learning about how federal state formation is impacting governance and reconciliation in Jubaland.

Where possible, Saferworld works in close partnership with Somali actors and partners to build their research skills and to ensure that research is grounded in their understanding of conflict, governance and state formation.

We have explored how communities perceive conflict actors such as clans, the government and non-state armed actors like al-Shabaab. Building on existing evidence in Jubaland, Saferworld is looking at the need for political agreements in Somalia to help create peace and stability.

Our research, which spans South West State, Jubaland and Banadir, will analyse current political and conflict dynamics and changes to the context that could help or hinder potential peace agreements. It will also analyse best practices from approaches to conflict in other countries – including Algeria, Colombia, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. Understanding both successes and failures from these cases will help build a body of knowledge that can guide recommendations for Somalia to build a lasting peace.

Saferworld's Somalia and Somaliland team conducts advocacy across all our programmes of work. We engage international and Somali decision makers through policy and practice recommendations, informed through our experience in and knowledge of the context. Our advocacy addresses democratisation and good governance, gender equality, peacebuilding and how the international community can better engage in Somalia to tackle issues that are of concern to Somalis.



THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a standalone goal – SDG16 – on peace, justice and inclusion. This goal – together with goals on gender equality and reducing inequality make up a collection of universal commitments to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies – something we call SDG16+.

In Somaliland, Saferworld is exploring what implementation of the commitments of SDG16+ will look like. We are bringing together civil society leaders, working with government ministries, and holding consultations across the country to raise awareness of the importance of SDG16+. Saferworld has supported Somaliland civil society champions to share their work on SDG16+ with global audiences at high-level policy events. Through this engagement, Somaliland civil society organisations are creating networks with other regional stakeholders to collaborate on SDG16+ initiatives locally, nationally, and regionally.



Gender equality

According to the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index, Somalia has one of the highest levels of gender inequality in the world. This is characterised by various forms of discrimination against women and girls, and gender-based violence. Institutionally and culturally, responses to gender-related issues have been weak. We integrate a strong gender perspective into our community security programming, working with partners to understand the particular challenges faced by women and girls and supporting women's participation in public debate, policy-making and peace processes. Integrating gender into our planning and programme is essential to ensure that issues recognised during the design phase are addressed throughout implementation.





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For further information about us and our work, please visit www.saferworld.org.uk/somalia-somaliland or email us at communications@saferworld.org.uk.

You can keep up to date with our work by signing up at www.saferworld.org.uk/stay-informed or by following us on social media.

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CONTACT US

SAFERWORLD IN SOMALIA AND SOMALILAND

communications@saferworld.org.uk

Web: www.saferworld.org.uk

Twitter: @saferworld

OFFICES

Goljano Area, Hargeisa, Somaliland

Phone: +252 634 772 586

Km 4, Check Point Four, Airport Road,
near Beder and SOMPRINT, Mogadishu, Somalia

Phone: +252 615 252 276

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