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The quest for a recognized home: An analysis of the framing deployed by the Somaliland government

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The quest for a recognized home

An analysis of the framing deployed by the Somaliland government

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Master Thesis International Organisation

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Abstract

Somaliland is a self-declared country located in the Horn of Africa that has been struggling for international recognition for over 30 years. Nonrecognition hinders unrecognized states from participating in multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, it severely restricts their opportunity to attract foreign aid and it excludes their region from international legal frameworks. The decision to grant Somaliland recognition is a political process of negotiation and depended on the global context, and moreover, not strictly bound by international law. Discourse and framing theories exemplify that how actors frame their actions, words and perceptions has a significant influence on diplomatic relations. Hence, this thesis is intending to unravel the ways in which the Somaliland government aims to influence the stance of the international community towards recognizing its independence by using various types of framing. This will contribute to the academic debate as unrecognized states and their practices, interests and beliefs are still considered to be a 'black box'. A qualitative content analysis was carried out and data was gathered, comprising 14 speeches and interviews given by the Somaliland President and Minister of Foreign Affairs for the period of 2012-2022. The results indicate that the government of Somaliland prioritizes prognostic framing over diagnostic framing with a specific focus on the justification for acquiring international recognition. Motivational framing is mostly deployed towards the United States as this country is seen as a powerful actor in diplomatic relations.

Key words: Somaliland, International Recognition, Framing, Diagnostic Framing, Prognostic Framing, Motivational Framing

TABLE OF CONTENT

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| 2. THE CONTEXT OF SOMALILAND | 7 |
| 2.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND | 7 |
| 2.2 INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE AND INTERFERENCE | 8 |
| 3. LITERATURE REVIEW | 9 |
| 3.1 INTERNATIONAL (NON) RECOGNITION | 9 |
| 3.2 WHY (NOT) RECOGNIZE? | 10 |
| 4. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK | 13 |
| 4.1 DISCOURSE AND FRAMING | 13 |
| 4.2 COLLECTIVE ACTION FRAMES | 14 |
| 5. METHODOLOGY | 16 |
| 5.1 CASE SELECTION..... | 16 |
| 5.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH | 17 |
| 5.3 DATA COLLECTION..... | 17 |
| 5.4 DATA ANALYSIS..... | 20 |
| 6. ANALYSIS..... | 23 |
| 6.1 DIAGNOSTIC FRAMING | 23 |
| 6.2 PROGNOSTIC FRAMING | 25 |
| 6.3 MOTIVATIONAL FRAMING | 28 |
| 7. CONCLUSIONS | 31 |
| 7.1 CONCLUSION..... | 31 |
| 7.2 DISCUSSION | 32 |
| 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY | 33 |
| 9. APPENDICES | 40 |
| 9.1 TRANSCRIPT 1 | 40 |
| 9.2 TRANSCRIPT 2 | 45 |
| 9.3 TRANSCRIPT 3 | 53 |
| 9.4 TRANSCRIPT 4 | 57 |
| 9.5 TRANSCRIPT 5 | 60 |
| 9.6 TRANSCRIPT 6 | 77 |
| 9.7 TRANSCRIPT 7 | 83 |
| 9.8 TRANSCRIPT 8 | 88 |
| 9.9 TRANSCRIPT 9 | 95 |
| 9.10 TRANSCRIPT 10 | 101 |
| 9.11 TRANSCRIPT 11 | 106 |
| 9.12 TRANSCRIPT 12 | 112 |
| 9.13 TRANSCRIPT 13 | 112 |
| 9.14 TRANSCRIPT 14 | 119 |

“Since Somaliland announced its independence from Somalia, we have done everything that we could to earn a recognition. We rule in democracy, we have peaceful and functioning institutions, and economically we are not a burden to the world, yet we have no recognition” – Muse Bihi Abdi, President of Somaliland (Hassan & Nur, 2020, para. 3).

1. Introduction

More than 30 years after declaring itself independent from Somalia, Somaliland remains without international recognition of its statehood. This territory is still solely considered to be an autonomous region of Somalia. While Somalia has been struggling with conflict and violent outbreaks, Somaliland has been relatively peaceful (Kaplan, 2008). This lacking of recognition has a great impact on Somaliland as it puts constraints on the domestic economic situation and the formation of foreign relations. It limits access to foreign loans and investment, from for example the World Bank (Eubank, 2012). Moreover, due to the lack of opportunities, the unemployment levels are significantly high which is greatly impacting the internal economic stability (Pijović, 2014). Somaliland has established universities but many graduates migrate to foreign countries due to the few economic opportunities present (Madar, Subari & Buqatayan, 2017). The lack of international recognition thus shows to be of great internal influence, and poses a collective action problem to the Somaliland government. For that reason, the Somaliland government has been aiming to acquire the recognition of the international community for the past decades (Beyene, 2019). Somaliland is actively expanding its foreign ties by for instance establishing trade deals (Muhumed, 2016), creating a friendly environment for foreign investments (fDi, 2018) and by closing a deal with the United Arab Emirates for the construction of a military base (Penna Filho & Da Motta, 2021). Furthermore, through diplomatic conferences, interviews and speeches directed toward the international community the Somaliland government aims to sparkle a conversation about its independence (Beyene, 2019; Maruf, 2016).

Recently, there is an indication that there are slight developments leading to increased international attention for the quest of Somaliland (Gordon, 2022; Nyabiage, 2022). A Somaliland delegation was invited to the United States (US) to discuss and strengthen their diplomatic ties in March 2022 (Horn Diplomat, 2022). Moreover, Somaliland is increasing its regional position by establishing a trade deal with the DP World, an Emirati multinational logistics company, to expand its port (Gordon, 2022). With the increasing influence of China in the Horn of Africa, scholars see opportunities for Somaliland to gather support for its

independence since Somaliland openly declared its allyship against Chinese dominance (Gordon, 2022; Nyabiage, 2022). As Isachenko (2020) indicates: “it [international recognition] is conditional on global responses to particular concerns and circumstances” (p. 31). Pressing global issues might thus indicate a turning point and could lead to a changing attitude towards the recognition of a state. As both Gordon (2022) and Nyabiage (2022) indicate, the (perceived) threat of Chinese dominance on the African continent provides a window of opportunity for Somaliland to prioritize its case for independence on the international agenda.

Research has been devoted to the legality of secessionist movements (Kreptul, 2003), how media has a role in shaping governments’ position on international recognition (Maiorescu, 2009) or the stances of recognized countries on the matter of international recognition (Sarriâ & Demjaha, 2019). However, the agency of the unrecognized entity is often ignored (Visoka, 2019). How actors express themselves and their objectives can have a significant impact and the way in which the message is framed might lead to collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000). Framing is the process of assigning meaning to, and interpreting significant events and situations in order to mobilize prospective supporters, gain bystander support, and demobilize enemies (Benford & Snow, 2000). Especially in international relations, political leaders use framing to portray information in a certain way to sway the media, the public or other political leaders, in order for them to adopt and reproduce this manipulated information. Mintz and Redd (2003) state that framing in diplomatic relations is used to alter the perception of countries on various matters.

Most academic literature on state recognition enhance a top-down approach, focusing on for instance the international response to secessionist movements (Caspersen, 2015). This thesis emphasizes the agency of the Somaliland government to influence its legal status which will provide bottom-up insights into how a government of an unrecognized country aims to change the status quo. Unrecognized states and their practices, interests and beliefs are still considered to be a ‘black box’ as literature mostly focuses on the practices of sovereign states (Caspersen, 2013; Relitz & Biermann, 2017). This research could thus be a valuable foundation for future research as little research is yet carried out considering the framing deployed by unrecognized countries and its impact on its case for independence. Therefore, the following research question is developed: *How does the Somaliland government deploy framing focused on acquiring recognition from the international community?*

This thesis intends to make a dual contribution to the academic literature: it illuminates a largely unexplored area of unrecognized states and their practices, and it

enhances a bottom-up approach with a focus on the agency of the Somaliland government in framing its case for independence, whereas the majority of literature focuses on top-down approaches (Caspersen, 2015). Therefore, it fills a void in the current academic debate. This thesis enhances a qualitative content analysis where 14 speeches and interviews given by the Somaliland President and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2012-2022 are analyzed. The analytical lens provided by Benford and Snow (2000) will be used, where framing aimed at collective action is specified in diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing. The findings of this thesis indicate that the Somaliland government focuses more on arguing for the justification of acquiring international recognition and the variety of strategies employed to receive this recognition (prognostic framing) than on expressing how the lack of recognition affects Somaliland or what the causes are (diagnostic framing). This thesis furthermore shows that the Somaliland government maintains a specific focus when providing a rationale for action (motivational framing) on the US, as this country is seen as the most influential actor to convince of its case for independence.

This thesis will first provide some historical context to the case study of Somaliland. Furthermore, a literature review focused on the aspects of international (non)recognition will be presented. Then, discourses and framing will be examined and the analytical framework of Benford and Snow (2000) where diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing is discussed will be presented. Thirdly, this thesis will discuss the methodology where a qualitative content analysis is enhanced. After, the findings of the data analysis will be presented and a conclusion will be given. Finally, this thesis will reflect on both its limitations and implications for future research.

2. The context of Somaliland

This chapter will provide historical background information on the formation of the self-declared territory of Somaliland. It will furthermore discuss the involvement of the international community throughout the years.

2.1 Historical background

During the 1880s, European colonizers divided areas in the Horn of Africa into French Somaliland (Djibouti), Italian Somalia (Somalia) and British Somaliland (today's Somaliland). Somaliland received independence in 1960 from its colonizers and became the State of Somaliland, immediately being recognized by 35 sovereign states (Kaplan, 2008). At this time of independence, there was a strong feeling of anti-colonial sentiment which led the Somaliland government, solely after a few days of independence, to join Somalia to form the Somali Republic (Ahere, 2013). Following unification, the Somaliland government drafted an Act of Union and sent it to Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia. However, this Act of Union was never ratified by Somalia's legislative body and instead, they passed a significantly different document (Lalos, 2011). Following this dispute, the relationship between Somalia and Somaliland rapidly deteriorated, and the Somaliland government maintains that the union holds no legal validity since neither bilateral agreements were signed by two representatives (Lalos, 2011; Richards, 2020).

A complicated clan-based system made up the in 1960 established Somali Republic, where the population was divided into six major clans and some minority clans. The majority of the Somaliland area is constituting of the Isaaq clan, traditionally a nomadic group (Kaplan, 2008). As the governmental system consisted of a highly centralized, one-party rule where the Isaaq clan was excluded from, these clan members have long felt discriminated against and ignored by the Somali government (Richards, 2020). The discontent increased when president Barre came into office in 1969 as he prioritized his own clan and used excessive violence and punitive measures especially against the Isaaq clan (Ingiriis, 2018). In response to this oppression, the Somali National Movement (SNM), consisting of members of the Isaaq clan, was established. After the formation of this insurgency, the Barre regime increased its violence against the Isaaq clan and committed a genocide, now known as the Hargeisa Holocaust, where an estimated amount of 50.000-200.000 people were killed (Ingiriis, 2016). The SNM continued its revolution and toppled president Barre in 1991, whereafter this insurgency declared Somaliland to be an independent country (Woldemariam, 2018).

2.2 International influence and interference

The Horn of Africa has long been a territory of Great Power rivalry. Britain, Italy and France competed over territory, resources and power for decades, resulting in scarce resources, weak political structures and war-torn societies (Abdi, 1980). The US welcomed the decolonization and union of the Somali Republic as it saw an opportunity to ensure an independent Somalia sided with the West during the Cold War. Due to its strategic location along oil routes from the Persian Gulf, both the US and the Soviet Union competed for control over Somalia during the Cold War (Mohamed, 2009). By the 1980s, The Barre regime was an active military ally for the US in the Horn of Africa and received millions of military aid. Despite the repression, genocide and corruption, the US continued to support the Barre regime. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the shimming of the Cold War, the US decided to pull out in 1991, suspending all financial aid Somalia received for years and leaving a large number of military hardware (Schulz, 2011). This enhanced the power vacuum, with a civil war breaking out and the SNM deciding to declare independence. From 1992 onwards, the US returned with peacekeeping missions and aid operations in order to restore the Somalia situation, however, without significant results (Mohamed, 2009). Great powers thus had a prominent influence in Somalia's and Somaliland's political history throughout colonization, decolonization, and the Cold War era. The next chapter will explore the concept of international recognition and why countries would or would not recognize a self-declared territory.

3. Literature review

To acquire a better understanding of the dynamics behind international recognition, this chapter will first discuss the legal aspects of formal recognition. After, it will discuss why states could be hesitant to recognize self-declared countries and what the potential benefits are of granting recognition.

3.1 International (non) recognition

International recognition refers to “the recognition of another entity as a State” (Bachmann & Prazauskas, 2019, p. 395). It indicates that the entity’s government is recognized as legitimate and entitled to represent the nation in all foreign matters (Bachmann & Prazauskas, 2019). Somaliland is considered to be a de facto state, which is defined as “a separatist polity which displays accoutrements of statehood except for international legal status” (Florea, 2014, p. 788). Nonrecognition hinders de facto states from participating in multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, severely restricting their opportunity to attract foreign aid, excluding their region from international legal frameworks restricting their access to foreign investment (Buzard, Graham & Horne, 2016). The lack of recognition thus poses a collective action problem, as other nations' disagreement on the issue of recognition obstructs joint collective action. This therefore highlights the importance of international recognition for a self-declared country as it has effects on the state, the businesses and the population. Following, it is necessary to consider how unrecognized states can acquire international recognition and what the international legal criteria for statehood are.

During the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States, enacted in 1933, four criteria in order to qualify as a recognized state were established (Farley, 2010). These contain: “(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other States” (Farley, 2010, p. 214). For the criterion of a permanent population, there is no minimum threshold for the number of citizens. The Vatican, with around 1.000 citizens, is equally recognized as a state as any other country in the world (Bachmann & Prazauskas, 2019). A requirement to the criterion of a permanent population includes the fact that the population must intend to remain in the region on a permanent basis. As Bachmann and Prazauskas (2019) observe, the self-declared Principality of Sealand was not considered as having a permanent population under international law, as all their citizens had a second citizenship. A territory, the second criterion, is necessary for a state to become a state under international law. A state should have a certain amount of delimitation, however it is not necessary to have strict and fully defined borders nor is there a minimum size of land

obligated (Lee, 2018). For the criterion of having a government, the Montevideo convention considers a territory a state when it is an entity that has control over its population and territory. Moreover, this control also implies the protection of basic human rights by legal policies and methods by the government (Bachmann & Prazauskas, 2019). The last criterion, the capacity to enter into relations with other states, is often criticized by academics and lawmakers. It is not seen as a criterion to become a state, it is seen as a consequence of becoming a state (Grant, 1999). Bachmann and Prazauskas (2019) conclude that this criterion is paradoxical as it is difficult for an entity to engage in diplomatic relations without being considered a legitimate state.

While these criteria form the legal framework for international recognition, in practice there seems to be many variation to who is recognized as a state and who is not, regardless of meeting the Montevideo criteria. For instance, South Sudan instantaneously received international recognition after declaring its independence, while for territories such as Somaliland or Palestine this recognition has been withheld (Bachmann & Prazauskas, 2019). This while scholars such as Eggers (2007) and Beyene (2019) argue that Somaliland meets all the Montevideo criteria. The recognition of states is thus primarily a political decision and therefore variation exists within the recognition practices among states and their attitudes towards recognizing certain territories (Grant, 1999). Krasner (1999) adds that nonrecognition is often used as a political tool for countries to strengthen or weaken a specific government and its territory. He states that the international system is weakly institutionalized without authoritative structures where political leaders primarily have domestic interests. No international law or principle can cover all conditions and variations, and moreover, there are often mutually inconsistent rules and norms in place. Krasner (1999) states that this process of international recognition of sovereignty is merely a form of ‘organized hypocrisy’.

3.2 Why (not) recognize?

The previous section discussed how the practice of nonrecognition is mostly a political tool that is dependent on a metaphorical system of organized hypocrisy (Krasner, 1999). It is now of importance to consider what the benefits are for states to recognize another, and why states might be hesitant to recognize self-declared independent countries.

Pegg (1998) states that a good case can be made that de facto states such as Somaliland can be a useful entity for the international community. Here is stated that during secession, identity politics harden and political negotiations of reconciliation are often unsuccessful. For the international community, it could be more beneficial to recognize a

separate entity for regional stability. Newman and Visoka (2018) add that the lack of recognition might lead territories to turn to less peaceful resorts, as was seen in Kosovo where the lack of international attention led the Kosovo government to take military actions. Additionally, Hoch (2011) states that de facto states can pose an opportunity for the West to spread its democratic values and interests to other parts of the world. Recognition can therefore be a tool to strengthen a country's position in world politics. Adam (2021) states that abstract concepts such as ideology and culture are no longer the only drivers in international politics. Here it is stated that access to strategic resources is a key driver and that unrecognized countries can present economic opportunities. Somaliland for instance has a strategically located port in the Gulf of Aden, that can be used to improve the domestic economy of sovereign states (Adam, 2021).

The position of a country towards nonrecognition can often be traced back to its domestic history or the internal political disputes (Sarriâ & Demjaha, 2019). For instance, Spain has been reluctant to recognize self-declared countries, such as Kosovo, because it could create a precedent for its domestic secessionist regions of Catalonia and the Basque Country (Sarriâ & Demjaha, 2019). In 1932, the US introduced the 'Stimson Doctrine of Non-Recognition,' which declared that no state founded through illegitimate means or aggression would be acknowledged (Turns, 2003). This mindset still pervades current US foreign policy, with the US being wary of recognizing entities established by aggression. This is the case with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is not recognized by the US as it was constituted by invasion rather than self-determination (Ker-Lindsay, 2012). Overall, great powers are analyzed to be the most influential in the politics of recognition where smaller states tend to await the actions of these great power states. This is consistent with the argument of Newman and Visoka (2018) that state that Kosovo mostly focused on forming alliances with great powers such as the US in order to develop a stronger case for independence. The politics of nonrecognition thus depends on the specific situation and history of the unrecognized state, as well as general political dynamics and power balances.

In the case of Somaliland, most African countries are leaving the decision of its independence up to African Union (AU). Countries and international organizations (IOs) like the United Nations (UN) are hesitant to take the first step as they are afraid to interfere in African Affairs due to colonial history (Pijović, 2013). The Organization of African Unity (OAU) proclaimed colonially inherited boundaries sacred and unchangeable in 1964. As a result, colonial borders were turned into international borders, granting them international status and making them subject to international law. Any separatist declaration was

considered to be the start of opening Pandora's box (Eggers, 2007). As a result, the OAU and later on its successor, the AU, have adopted strict regulations against any attempt at secession, and secession is therefore regarded as a criminal act (Bereketeab, 2015). Just as the African continent, the international community's hesitancy in recognizing Somaliland as a sovereign state has been also been attributed to this phenomenon of opening Pandora's box (Eggers, 2007).

Newman and Visoka (2018) however argue that diplomacy has more of an influence than it is often credited for in academic literature, and suggest that micropolitics, timing and diplomatic efforts have an important role in recognition processes. Moreover, international recognition should not be considered a collective, worldwide label, as individual countries can grant recognition independently of each other. Therefore, recognition should be seen as a continuum and not a dichotomy which implies that small 'victories' can be achieved over time (Newman & Visoka, 2018). So while systemic factors should not be downplayed, agency should not be denied to the unrecognized country where discursive diplomatic efforts do in fact play an important role. Bereketeab (2015) wonders whether recognizing South Sudan as an independent country and thereby breaching this regulation on secession, could imply a new era of self-determination for the African continent. Furthermore, as mentioned before, the increasing influence of China in the Horn of Africa is perceived to open a window for the Somaliland government to strengthen its quest for recognition and gather more support from the international community. Therefore, the following chapter will discuss the power discourses and framing hold and how these frames can be deployed.

4. Analytical framework

As Benford and Snow (2000) analyze, actors have the capacity to actively define objectives and interpret grievances and cannot be seen as passive objects. Framing can be considered as social interaction that aims to constitute social movement (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Furthermore, how actors frame their words has an impact on the political and social level (Jabri, 1996). So, how a government presents and voices itself in the public influences collective action. This chapter will therefore first discuss the broader area of discourse. This will then be followed by an analysis of framing and soft power, which will be applied to the case of unrecognized states. This chapter will be concluded by discussing the analytical framework of Benford and Snow (2000) which will be used as an analytical lens in this research.

4.1 Discourse and framing

Discourses are conceptualized in different ways by various authors. According to Demmers (2016), these constitute of "stories about social reality" (p. 133). Jabri (1996) provides a more specified definition by stating that discourses are "social relations represented in texts where the language contained within these texts is used to construct meaning and representation" (p. 94). It is thus not merely an object description, discourses provide meaning and may instigate collective action (Jabri, 1996), where collective action is conceptualized as "group efforts to achieve a common goal" (Olson, 2009, p. 3).

Framing is a sub-variant of discourse analyses (Della Porta, 2014). Academics use the framing perspective as a means to clarify the relationship between meaning and mobilization (Svensson & Wahlström, 2021). Actors are here seen as 'signifying agents' who can actively address grievances and set objectives (Benford & Snow, 2000). Framing is the process of assigning meaning to, and interpreting significant events and situations in order to mobilize prospective supporters, gain bystander support, and demobilize enemies (Benford & Snow, 2000). Entman (1993) agrees by stating that framing is used to highlight some features of an observed reality through a communication text, in order to advocate a specific problem definition, causal interpretation, moral judgement, and/or recommendation. Through framing, an actor aims to make certain types of information more salient and attach a certain meaning to it. Molho (2015) characterizes this process as the 'soft power of framing'. This implies that actors can use framing as a means to construct a dominant discourse that challenges the perception of the geographical distribution of power and mobilizes actors at varying levels. Framing can thus be a powerful tool for challenging the status quo and pressuring actors to

take action.

Especially in international relations, political leaders use framing to portray information in a certain way to sway the media, the public or other political leaders. It is used to target a decision maker, e.g. a state, in order to influence its attitudes and behavior and with that, change the direction of the policy debate (Mintz & Redd, 2003). Broers (2013) suggests that especially unrecognized states rely on this form of soft power, as they need to create a favorable image in order to acquire international recognition. By using framing techniques, these de facto nations seek to establish this image and push their argument on the world agenda.

4.2 Collective action frames

Collective action frames are conceptualized by Benford and Snow (2000) as: “action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)” (p. 614). These collective action frames thus provide legitimacy for certain beliefs and actions and may result in increased support. Benford and Snow (2000) identify three complementary collective action frames: diagnostic framing to identify the common problem, prognostic framing to propose a solution for this identified problem and motivational framing to instigate collective action.

Diagnostic framing is used to express what is going wrong and who is responsible for this injustice. It requires setting boundaries between ‘good’ and ‘wrong’ and the identification of actors who are to blame for the unjust situation. Gamson, Fireman and Rytina (1982) identify a certain type of sub-frame within diagnostic framing, called ‘injustice frames’. Often injustice frames are used by actors wherein victims are identified and moreover, their victimization gets amplified in order to raise a voice against a perceived unjust authority. These frames have been utilized to advocate for political and economic reform (Benford & Snow, 2000). When the problem and who to blame has been identified, possible strategies or a proposed solution have to be articulated, which is defined as prognostic framing. There is usually a correlation between an actor’s diagnostic and prognostic framing, as the proposed problems and causes often limit the range of ‘logical’ solutions that can be suggested. Motivational framing is the final core framing task. This type of framing provides the rationale for supporting and engaging in collective action. It amplifies the urgency and necessity of the proposed action and is aimed at increasing the support for the movement and the proposed solution (Benford & Snow, 2000).

Benford and Snow (2000) argue that diagnostic and prognostic framing enable

agreement and provide incentives for action, whereas motivational framing actually instigates action. These three types of framing together are seen as a strategy to gain more support from both fellow activists as well as more neutral third parties (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). This analytical framework is therefore a useful tool to analyze the manner in which the Somaliland government aims to gain support from the international community and how it intends to instigate action, in this case the granting of international recognition.

5. Methodology

The research question, as stated in the introduction, is: *How does the Somaliland government deploy framing focused on acquiring recognition from the international community?* The aim of this research is thus to unravel the ways in which the Somaliland government intends to convince the international community to grant it recognition. This needs to be examined by examining contextual information consisting of social interaction, which is unfeasible to explore with quantitative methods as it cannot be given a numerical value (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Therefore, this research will use a qualitative content analysis. This chapter will first give an argumentation for the case selection. Then, it will describe the chosen methodological approach. This will be followed by a section considering the data collection and analysis process and a coding scheme will be provided.

5.1 Case selection

A single case study has been chosen, which can be defined as: “an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 14). This is an appropriate approach as this research aims to develop a deeper level of understanding and intends to provide a thorough analysis of the complex interaction of an unrecognized state. The specific case of Somaliland has been chosen as it proposes a unique situation where the interaction between a relatively peaceful and stable territory and the international community can be observed. In line with Yin (2009), this research thus sheds light on the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context, as it researches the social interaction between the Somaliland government and the international community. An influential case study is proposed as the objective of this design is “to explore cases that may be influential vis-à-vis some larger cross-case theory” (Seawright & Gerring, 2008, p. 303). It is the main aim of this research to validate and explore the relation between theory and a case study, and a possible by-product of the analysis could be that it contributes to the current analytical framework.

A connection can be made with other case studies that share similarities as well as differences. For instance, the case of Kosovo where Newman and Visoka (2018) discovered that its government successfully deployed framing to create resonating frames that greatly influenced countries recognizing its independence. A comparison could be made to see the differences and similarities in framing deployed by the Somaliland and Kosovo government. This study can thus provide insights into the framing techniques deployed by an unrecognized

country, which can provide a solid analytical lens through which discursive efforts of other unrecognized countries such as Taiwan, Palestine or the Republic of Artsakh can be examined. However, all unrecognized countries enjoy a different level on the continuum of international recognition so careful comparisons should be made.

5.2 Methodological approach

Foreign policy is considered to be a discursive practice that acts as a particular kind of boundary-producing political activity by which a state forms its own identity and therefore its own existence in reference to other states (Aydın-Düzgit, 2016). Therefore, this research will enhance a qualitative content analysis, that focuses on “the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This requires more than merely counting words, the objective is to classify text into an efficient number of categories that represent related meanings.

Specifically, a directed content analysis will be implemented where existing theory provides the focus for the research. This approach provides structure to the research as the analytical framework will generate concepts that will be transferred to initial coding categories. The objective and the strength of a directive content analysis is to validate or enlarge a certain analytical framework (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This corresponds with the objective of this research as it aims to apply existing concepts to a largely unexplored context of an unrecognized state. This research aims to validate this analytical framework by applying it to the case of Somaliland, as well as it might contribute to the existing theory as it will provide insights into how a government tries to invoke non-violent, diplomatic collective action.

There are some challenges to the chosen method of this research. While the use of theory as a foundation for the analysis results in an informed approach, it also poses the risk of bias. There is a risk that the researcher finds more evidence that validates the theory than evidence that opposes the theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Therefore, a critical and open attitude of the researcher is required during the data analysis. Constant awareness of this possible bias decreases the chance that other important information or codes will be left out.

5.3 Data collection

This research applied a qualitative content analysis to primary sources, consisting of speeches and interviews provided by the Somaliland government. Due to feasibility concerns, this research focused on a time span of ten years. Therefore, data was gathered comprising the period of 2012-2022. The President and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somaliland were the

focus of this research, as these are the most prominent actors in a country's foreign affairs. In Table 1 an overview of the actors that were subject to analysis is presented.

Table 1.

Actors subject to analysis

| Actor | Name | Term of office |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| President | Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo | 2010-2017 |
| | Muse Bihi Abdi | 2017-present |
| Minister of Foreign Affairs | Edna Adan Ismail* | 2003-2006* |
| | Mohamad Abdullahi Omar | 2010-2013 |
| | Mohamed Yonis | 2013-2015 |
| | Saad Ali Shire | 2015-2018 |
| | Yasin Haji Mohamud Hiir Faraton | 2018-2021 |
| | Essa Kayd | 2021-present |

Note. The speeches of Edna Adan Ismail, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, were given in 2019 and 2022 and are therefore within the time frame of this research.

As presented in Table 2 below, this research gathered 14 speeches and interviews until there were no more sources directed at the international community in English found, which led to the termination of the data gathering phase. However, with over 400 minutes of material obtained, data saturation, the absence of new patterns or results in further data analyzed, emerged and so the sample of this thesis is adequate to address the research question. Initially, the data was intended to be derived from the official Somaliland government website where speeches were stored. Unfortunately, when the data gathering phase was commenced, the Somaliland government updated its website and removed the section where the speeches were stored. Therefore, speeches were retrieved from websites such as Youtube and Google by using search terms such as the names of the actors, ‘Speech Somaliland’, ‘Interview Somaliland’, ‘President of Somaliland’, and ‘Minister of Foreign Affairs’. All 14 data sources were transcribed by the researcher and are presented in Appendix 9.1 to 9.14.

Table 2.*Data sources included in analysis*

| Number | Topic/name | Location and year | Actor | Duration |
|---------------|---|---|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Somaliland's Achievements in a Fragile Region | Atlantic Council of the United States, 2013 | Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo | 28.15 minutes |
| 2 | Remarks by the Somaliland President | The Heritage Foundation, 2022 | Muse Bihi Abdi | 27.40 minutes |
| 3 | Address on Somaliland-Somalia Relations | Consultation Summit in Djibouti, 2020 | Muse Bihi Abdi | 26.30 minutes |
| 4 | International recognition of the Republic of Somaliland | George Washington University, 2022 | Muse Bihi Abdi | 25.16 minutes |
| 5 | Crisis in the Horn of Africa: A Somaliland Perspective | IRI, 2011 | Mohamad Abdullahi Omar | 71.26 minutes |
| 6 | After Borama: consensus, representation and parliament in Somaliland. | Africa Research Institute, 2013 | Mohamad Abdullahi Omar | 25.50 minutes |
| 7 | A Small Pearl in the Horn of Africa | Interview New Europe Studios, 2015 | Mohamed Yonis | 20.08 minutes |

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|----|--|---|------------------|---------------|
| 8 | Q & A session with Saad Ali Shire, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Somaliland | Africa Research Institute, 2017 | Saad Ali Shire | 34.20 minutes |
| 9 | State building and struggle for recognition | Interview Horn Diplomat, 2018 | Saad Ali Shire | 16.40 minutes |
| 10 | Al Arabiya Exclusive Interview | 2018 | Saad Ali Shire | 24.19 minutes |
| 11 | Solidarity Conference, “Somaliland lobbies for recognition as a sovereign state” | Somaliland Trade Office, 2021 | Saad Ali Shire | 23.14 minutes |
| 12 | - | Taiwan presidential Office, 2022 | Essa Kayd | 10.10 minutes |
| 13 | Edna Adan’s speech at the press conference | The Press Conference In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2019 | Edna Adan Ismail | 45.54 minutes |
| 14 | Interview i24NEWS | Online, 2022 | Edna Adan Ismail | 21.12 minutes |

5.4 Data analysis

The data was stored and analyzed using Nvivo20, a qualitative data analysis software. This software allowed for the discovery of larger patterns and common themes as a researcher was able to store the data in one structured database and code it by using coding schemes and

color structures. In qualitative research, coding is a fundamental structural process, where “coding methods employ processes that reveal themes embedded in the data, in turn suggesting thematic directionality toward categorizing data through which meaning can be negotiated, codified, and presented” (Williams & Moser, 2019, p. 45). First, all texts were carefully read and notes were made on general patterns and impressions. Second, the data was organized by themes and relevance, using the codes derived from the analytical framework of Benford and Snow (2000). A coding scheme is developed as presented in Table 3, based on the concepts that were derived from the analytical framework of Benford and Snow (2000) where a combination of an inductive and deductive approach was enhanced. Four main codes derived from the analytical framework are presented below and generated a priori. During the data analysis phase more patterns were observed in the data and therefore additional codes such as ‘justification of the solution’ were added. An illustration of how the codes were applied to the text fragments can be found in Tables 4, 5 and 6 presented in the next chapter where the analysis is discussed.

As Table 3 shows, for the first code of diagnostic framing, three sub-codes have been generated:

- Problem identification applies when the Somaliland government identifies the major, current problem(s).
- Cause of the problem contains data considering the Somaliland government addressing the root causes of the earlier identified problem
- Injustice frames will be used when data reflects who the Somaliland governments expresses to be the victims, and when they amplify that victimhood.

For the second code, prognostic framing, three sub-codes have been generated:

- Proposed solution(s) refers to what the Somaliland government proposes as a solution to the earlier identified problem(s)
- Justification of the solution refers to how the Somaliland government aims to justify its independence and the acquiring of international recognition. (**Generated a posteriori**)
- Proposed strategies refers to what the Somaliland government proposes as strategies to achieve the proposed solution(s) to the problem(s)

For the third code, motivational framing, two sub-codes have been generated:

- Rationale for action pertains data where the Somaliland government uses motivational phrases to embark collective action
- The code "intended audience" refers to the actors who the Somaliland government wants to mobilize for collective action.

Table 3.

Coding scheme

| Code | Conceptualization | Sub-codes |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Diagnostic framing | Problem identification and attributions | Problem identification |
| | | Cause of the problem |
| | | Injustice frames |
| Prognostic framing | The articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan. | Proposed solution(s) |
| | | Justification of the solution |
| | | Proposed strategies |
| Motivational framing | Provides a “call to arms” or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive. | Rationale for action |
| | | Intended audience |

6. Analysis

In this chapter, the results of the qualitative content analysis will be presented and discussed. The analysis demonstrates how the Somaliland government aims to convince the international community by expressing itself through the use of diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing during both speeches and interviews. In this chapter, the interviews and speeches collected and analyzed will be referred to as data sources for readability reasons. For every subchapter concerning diagnostic, prognostic and motivational framing a table containing the coding scheme used for the analysis and an illustration of the coded text fragments will be presented.

6.1 Diagnostic framing

Diagnostic framing is used to express what is going wrong and who is responsible for this injustice in order to increase support (Benford & Snow, 2000). From the 14 data sources analyzed, 37 text fragments were categorized using the coding scheme connected to diagnostic framing. Table 4 illustrates the full coding scheme for diagnostic framing.

Table 4.

Coding scheme used for analysis diagnostic framing

| Diagnostic framing | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Code | Subcode 1 | Illustration coded text fragments (total N=37) |
| Problem identification | Lack of recognition (N=14)* | “But we definitely need to be recognized because recognition is hindering a lot of other areas in terms of development, in terms of investments, in terms of being and being a member of the international community” (Mohamed Yonis, 2015) |
| Cause of the problem | Unlawful unity (N=9)* | “Somaliland voluntarily united with Somalia [on 1] July, 1960 to form the Somali Republic. The union was not legally binding, as the Act of Union was never formally signed. Therefore, the unification effort fell short of the requirements mandated by domestic and international law” (Muse Bihi Abdi, 2020) |
| | Repression and discrimination (N=10)* | “Our people were oppressed. Trade was moved from Somaliland to Somalia. Banking was moved. Diplomatic presence was denied in Somaliland. Our ports, our schools, our hospitals became shut down. And when the oppression intensified, they took punitive military measures” (Edna Adan Ismail, 2019) |
| Injustice frames (N=5)* | | “Civilians were massacred. The weak, the sick, the old, the wounded were pushed, thrown into mass graves. Young children, school children became mobile blood banks, because they would go into the classroom and they would say, you, you you come over and they would bleed them. They would |

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| | just take all their blood because they believed if the young 11, 12 year old, their blood is healthy, they have no disease, and they would take all the blood from that child and use for the troops.” (Edna Adan Ismail, 2019) |
|--|---|

**Note.* N refers to the number of speeches/interviews containing coded text fragments

Diagnostic framing requires players to identify the primary current problem in order to highlight some features of an observed reality (Entman, 1993). All data sources identify the lacking of international recognition as the main current problem for the survival of Somaliland. This is in line with the article of Beyene (2019) where is stated that the lack of international recognition has a great impact on the country. However, the analysis shows that solely five data sources reflect the Somaliland government specifically addressing the impact of nonrecognition and its consequences for Somaliland. The Somaliland government seems more keen to discuss the cause and historical origins of Somaliland’s lack of recognition than the actual consequences of this nonrecognition. This is indicated by the fact that nine data sources emphasize that the act of union of Somaliland and Somalia was unlawful and not legally binding. Furthermore, ten out of fourteen data sources specifically address the violent repression of the Somaliland people under the Siad Barre regime as a reason for declaring independence. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Edna Adan Ismail (2019), discusses how the violence the Somaliland people endured before proclaiming independence continues to affect the country; “87 mass graves have been catalogued by the United Nations forensic teams, and we keep finding new mass graves even to this day. Every time it rains, it uncovers new mass graves”. This shows that diagnostic framing is deployed by the Somaliland government with a focus on the historical origins of the problem identified, instead of a focus on the consequences posed by the identified problem. Referring back to the analytical framework, these results contribute to the framework by specifying the manner in which the problem is presented, concentrating less on the problem's consequences and more on the problem's origins.

Furthermore, the data analysis shows that injustice frames were used to emphasize the suffering the Somaliland people endured during their unity with Somalia, which is used to legitimize their independence. These frames are thus used to raise a voice against the perceived unjust authority of Somalia and were thus merely used to elucidate on the origin of the problem. A comparison to the current conflict in Ukraine is for example made by the sitting president Muse Bihi Abdi (2022); “We feel the pain and the anguish that the people of Ukraine feel today because we went through the same experience.” This is in congruence with the article of Gamson, Fireman and Rytina (1982) that state that injustice frames are a sub-

frame of diagnostic framing and that these are used to amplify the victimization of a certain group of people.

6.2 Prognostic framing

When the problem has been identified, a solution has to be articulated and possible strategies to achieve this solution are proposed in order to direct the intended collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000). From the 14 data sources analyzed, 252 text fragments were categorized under the core code of diagnostic framing and its derived subcodes. Table 5 illustrates the full coding scheme for prognostic framing. Prognostic framing was deployed in a significantly higher manner, with 252 text fragments coded in comparison to 37 text fragments for diagnostic framing.

Table 5.

Coding scheme used for analysis prognostic framing

| Prognostic Framing | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| Code | Subcode 1 | Subcode 2 | Illustration coded text fragments (total N=252) |
| Proposed solution | Acquiring international recognition (N=14)* | | But we definitely need to be recognized because recognition is hindering a lot of other areas in terms of development, in terms of investments, in terms of being and being a member of the international community” (Mohamed Yonis, 2015) |
| Justification solution | Advantages international community | Bringing stability and peace to the region (N=11)* | “With proper diplomatic recognition, Somaliland will be able to contribute more effectively to a sustainable and prosperous future for the Horn of Africa, building on our own experience in forging an oasis of stability in a long-troubled region.” (Mohamed Yonis, 2015) |
| | | Joint fight against terrorism and piracy (N=8)* | “I think the potential is limitless. But first of all, Somaliland brings to the world 850 kilometers of a coastline that are free of terrorists and free of pirates” (Edna Adan Ismail, 2022) |
| | | Business opportunities (N=7)* | “Somaliland has a lot of potential for agricultural potential maritime trade, maritime potential maritime resources. Somaliland has mineral resources that wait to be tapped. Somaliland is a country that has as a route for the trade with our neighbors” (Edna Adan Ismail, 2022) |
| | | Strategic port (N=6)* | “In fact, we provide opportunity for global or regional economic facilities like Berbera Port. [...] and therefore we can act and be a bridge for economic development for the whole region. All sorts of reasons why Somaliland should be recognized are there” (Mohamad Abdullahi Omar, 2011) |
| | AU Mission (N=4)* | “We had a mission from the A.U. in 2005. And, in fact, they put together a very good report, a very positive report, and they said that wouldn't apply in the case of Somaliland, because there is no there is no case like Somaliland, in the history of Africa. So there is no comparison. And the | |

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| | | independence and the recognition of Somalia will not cause the Pandora's box.” (Saad Ali Shire, 2018A) |
| Comparison Somalia | Discrepancy in attention (N=5)* | “People seem to take for granted what is happening in Somaliland and prefer to fight fires in Somalia. In a way that creates an atmosphere where bad behavior is rewarded and good behavior penalized [...] But lack of attention hinders our efforts to deal with things like the current drought” (Saad Ali Shire, 2017) |
| | Instability Somalia – stability Somaliland (N=5)* | “As Somalia’s disintegration unfolded, Somaliland built a functioning, stable and democratic state. While the international community spent millions of dollars trying to save Somalia from itself, we focused on maintaining peace within our borders, building strong state institutions, and creating a sustainable economy” (Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, 2013) |
| | Lack of political will Somalia (N=4)* | “But it shows you that there is no vision, there is no ideas, and there is no commitment from the Somali political actors in moving the Somali question forward” (Mohamad Abdullahi Omar, 2011) |
| Domestic capacity | Democratic climate (N=14)* | “Over the last 30 years, we have built our democratic norms and institutions and ensured more than three peaceful transitions of power” (Muse Bihi Abdi, 2022A) |
| | Self-sustainability and self-reliance (N=7)* | “The fact that Somaliland has been peaceful for 30 years, developing for 30 years, bringing its people back from the diaspora and from refugee camps around the world for the past 30 years. When we have very little international support except for humanitarian aid, that in itself is deserving of recognition.” (Edna Adan Ismail, 2022) |
| | Successful fight against piracy (N=7)* | “Pirates have been reduced now to nothing into our region. We have managed to push them out.” (Mohamed Yonis, 2015) |
| | Successful fight against terrorism (N=6)* | “We are the guardians of the Red Coast from the extremists. As you know, in the Horn of Africa, there are a lot of extremist activities; al-Shabab, ISIS and others” (Muse Bihi Abdi, 2022B) |
| | Financial stability and progress (N=4)* | “Our government has no foreign debt, and our budget for 2013 of US\$174m is the largest and most balanced in our history.” (Mohamad Abdullahi Omar, 2013) |
| International law (N=11) * | “Somaliland is not yet recognized internationally but it is a de facto state and fulfils all the requirements of a sovereign state. It has a defined territory; a government in authority; the authority to enter into agreements with states, corporations and international organizations; its own army, police force and currency; and four million people who consider themselves Somalilanders. Our case is convincing” (Saad Ali Shire, 2017) | |
| Previously independent (N=6)* | “Somaliland, in fact, is a country with a history of over a century as a separate state.” (Saad Ali Shire, 2021) | |

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|-------------------|--|--|
| Proposed strategy | Strengthen international relations and engagement (N=8)* | “One of the key strategies for the last year since this government is the idea of linking up with the international community much more effectively than we have ever done before.” (Mohamad Abdullahi Omar, 2011) |
| | Increase economic ties (N=7)* | “We were able to convince people that were very peaceful, stable, open for business. Recognition is not only politics, it is also the commercial and business recognition. We have a lot of potentials here that could be developed in our country.” (Essa Kayd, 2022) |
| | Dialogue with Somalia (N=5)* | “We do believe that we will get our own independence very soon through dialogue. We decided to have a dialogue with Somalia and we are confident that Somaliland will get its independence very soon.” (Mohamad Yonis, 2015) |

*Note. N refers to the number of speeches/interviews containing coded text fragments

All data sources reflect acquiring recognition from the international community as Somaliland’s main objective and solution to the current situation. In three data sources, the Somaliland government specifically addresses the president of Somalia as needing to accept its sovereignty. Here is also explicitly referred to the past in order to justify its independence from Somalia by for example Muse Bihi (2020) who states that “the act of recognizing and supporting the independence of Somaliland would go a long way to heal the wounds of the past”.

The Somaliland government furthermore focuses on providing a justification for why Somaliland should be granted international recognition. As presented in Table 5, the government mainly focuses on its domestic capacity, the advantages it would convey to the international community, a comparison is made with the situation in Somalia and how its independence is congruent with international law. When the Somaliland government argues that it has the domestic capacity to be a sovereign state, it mostly focuses on its democratic climate and how Somaliland is self-sustainable as it achieved peace and stability without international interference. The Somaliland government furthermore specifically focuses on the advantages for the international community to recognize Somaliland as a justification for its independence. It is mostly emphasized that Somaliland brings peace and stability to the Horn of Africa, how Somaliland can be valuable in the joint war on terror and fight against piracy in the region and how Somaliland offers many business opportunities. Other justifications given for the case for independence made by the Somaliland government are how their sovereignty is in line with international law. The governmental agents often refer to the Montevideo Convention or how their borders are in congruence with the rules of respecting the colonial borders of the AU. The Somaliland administration is thus well aware

of the international laws such as described by Farley (2010) and aims to convince the international community that its independence is in line with international law. Furthermore, the Somaliland government refers to Somalia's instability as a justification for its independence. They aim to highlight the paradoxical relationship between a country's level of stability and its opportunity to receive international assistance. In the words of Mohamed Yonis (2015): "it's frustrating when you see millions and billions of dollars going into a war zone where there is chaos and anarchy. And when we are doing well and we are not getting anything".

Besides a solution to the problem and its justification, the Somaliland government also provided proposed strategies to acquire this international recognition. Three main strategies are reflected in the speeches and interviews. Most often, in eight data sources, the Somaliland government argues that strengthening its international relations and engagement is used to increase its chance of receiving recognition. Increasing its economic ties and relations and continuing the dialogue with Somalia are also named as strategies, as presented in Table 5.

To conclude, one remarkable finding of this analysis is the fact that the Somaliland government deploys a high focus on the justification for acquiring recognition, with 166 coded text fragments for this code, which is not reflected by the analytical framework of Benford and Snow (2000) and which therefore can be considered an addition. As a result, prognostic framing should be regarded not only as articulating a solution to the problem and the associated strategies to achieve this solution, but also as framing a solid justification for why this solution is legitimate. Furthermore, the paradoxical relationship between a country's level of peacefulness and stability and the level of international attention seems to reflect reality. Newman and Visoka (2018) observe this paradox as well in the case of Kosovo, where the lack of international attention and aid resulted in a shift from peaceful resistance to a military action that in turn led to increased international communication and attention. Adhering to international law such as the Montevideo Convention without military action is thus not rewarded with recognition, rather with a lack of attention. A parallel can be drawn with the argument of Krasner (1999) in which international politics are referred to as a system of organized hypocrisy, as states often do not adhere to longstanding norms and violate them frequently.

6.3 Motivational framing

Motivational frames are providing the rationale for supporting and engaging in collective action where it amplifies the necessity of the proposed action. Moreover, they are aimed at

increasing the support for the proposed solution (Benford & Snow, 2000). During the data analysis, phrases that urge the international community or specific actors to take action are coded under this type of framing. From the 14 data sources analyzed, 51 text fragments were categorized under the core code of motivational framing and its derived subcodes, as presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6.

Coding scheme used for analysis motivational framing

| Motivational Framing | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Code | Subcode 1 | Illustration coded text fragments (total N=51) |
| Rationale for action (N=11)* | | “Words are not enough. Again, words are not enough. The horror of the past requires more than words -- it requires actions. The act of recognizing and supporting the independence of Somaliland would go a long way to heal the wounds of the past” (Muse Bihi Abdi, 2020) |
| Intended audience | The international community (N=8)* | “Somaliland believes that the international community has a moral obligation to support Somaliland’s pursuit of international recognition.” (Muse Bihi Abdi, 2022A) |
| | The United States (N=5)* | “The U.S. has led the international community in supporting the self-determination and sovereignty of many peoples throughout modern times. The people of South Sudan, East Timor, Kosovo and many others remember that the U.S. spoke up for them when others were silent. The people of Somaliland ask for no more, and no less.” (Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, 2013) |

*Note. N refers to the number of speeches/interviews containing coded text fragments

There are various ways in which the Somaliland government aims to provide a rationale for action; by calling on the international community to do ‘the right thing’, by stating that it is a moral obligation or by stating that Somalia has the responsibility for the damage caused and therefore the responsibility to recognize. The Somaliland government furthermore aims to create a sense of similarity between the US and Somaliland and thereby a sense of loyalty, by stating that they encompass the same values such as self-reliance and freedom; “and it is this value—more than any other—that we share with the United States” (Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud Silanyo, 2013). So despite Somaliland’s turbulent past with the US during the Somali Republic (Schulz, 2011), it still sees the US as an important potential ally. The provision of rationales for action specifically directed towards the US is actively deployed

during the various speeches and interviews. While the Somaliland government primarily directed the rationale for action to the international community as a whole, the US was individually addressed in five data sources and was distinctively seen as a leader in the act of recognition with other countries being likely to follow. Mohamed Abdullahi Omar (2011), former Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated in an interview that the US recognizing its independence first would send a message that the US cares about “good behavior, cares about stability and peace, cares about democracy, cares about the people who are committed to the war against terror, which is a common international problem. And I think that other countries will follow suit”. This focus on the US is a strategy to acquire international recognition previously used by states such as Kosovo. Newman and Visoka (2018) state that Kosovo actively pursued the engagement of the US in its quest for independence, which resulted in encouragement for other states to rather quickly recognize Kosovo. As a result, it appears that the Somaliland administration is bolstering a previously successful tactic of involving the US in its case for independence.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Conclusion

Without downplaying the significance of systemic factors or the role of big powers in the process, this thesis focused on the agency of the unrecognized state of Somaliland in the complex process of acquiring international recognition. It elucidated how the Somaliland government aims to convince the international community by deploying three complementary types of framing focused on acquiring support and collective action. First, this research contributes to the larger academic literature as unrecognized states and their practices, interests and beliefs are still considered to be a ‘black box’ (Caspersen, 2013; Relitz & Biermann, 2017). This study of how the Somaliland administration has presented its case for independence over the last ten years provides knowledge and insight into their beliefs and practices and thereby contributes to the greater academic literature. Moreover, the results show that the Somaliland administration is enhancing a previously successful tactic deployed by the Kosovo government (Newman & Visoka, 2018) of involving the US in its case for independence. The rationale for action is more often directed towards the US than towards members of the AU and the US is seen as a key actor to convince, which contradicts the study of Pijović (2013) that states that the AU is the primary actor that could instigate wider support and action.

The findings of this thesis furthermore enrich the analytical framework of Benford and Snow (2000) with several contributions. First, while research (Buzard, Graham & Horne, 2016; Eubank 2012) demonstrates that nonrecognition has a significant influence on Somaliland's economy and international relations, the Somaliland administration uses diagnostic framing that focuses on the historical reasons for the lack of recognition rather than its negative consequences. There is thus a greater emphasis on the historical origins of the lack of recognition, for which the Somaliland government actively deployed injustice frames to clarify the suffering of the Somaliland people under the Barre regime between 1969-1991 in order to strengthen their case for independence. Hence, injustice frames were merely used to elucidate on the origin of the problem. Second, the results of this study show how prognostic framing should be regarded not only as articulating a solution to the problem and the associated strategies to achieve this solution, but also as framing a solid justification for why this solution is legitimate as 166 text fragments were coded containing a justification for the legitimacy of Somaliland's independence. Third, the analysis shows that the Somaliland government deploys prognostic framing (252 text fragments) more often than diagnostic framing (37 text fragments). The Somaliland government thus assigns more importance to

communicating the justification of acquiring international recognition and the variety of strategies employed to receive this recognition, rather than expressing how the lack of recognition affects this de facto state or what the causes are. This portrays a focus on the future and its possibilities instead of on the roots of the lack of recognition and its consequences.

7.2 Discussion

While this thesis contributes to the academic literature by elucidating on the ways the Somaliland government aims to convince the international community to grant it recognition, it does contain some potential limitations as well. First, due to the time-consuming nature of the enhanced qualitative method, solely a relatively small number of speeches and interviews were analyzed. While it allowed for an in-depth analysis, the small dataset could pose a threat to the generalizability of the study and therefore future research could enhance a quantitative measure to increase this generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, due to the chosen research design, this thesis was able to explore the Somaliland government's framing strategies; nevertheless, no causal inferences can be drawn about how the Somaliland government's framing affects its argument for independence. Future research could focus on this relationship, examining how the enhanced framing approach of the Somaliland government impacts the stances of the international community as the research of Newman and Visoka (2018) did for the case of Kosovo.

Besides the academic contribution of this thesis, it touches upon a significantly societal relevant subject where a peaceful territory has been excluded from the world theatre for over 30 years. Therefore, future research on international recognition should instigate awareness through analyzing the various aspects of the quest of Somaliland as it can change the lives of millions aiming for a peaceful, democratic future. This thesis, while small, thus contributes to a deeper awareness of a remarkable area of the world, as the President of Somaliland states:

“We cannot gain recognition in a few days. We know it's a long path to go, but we believe that every long journey starts from one step” - Muse Bihi Abdi, 2022

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9. Appendices

9.1 Transcript 1

I would like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Peter Pham and the Atlantic Council for inviting me to give this address today.

The Atlantic Council—thanks in part to Peter Pham’s diligent leadership at the Michael S. Ansari Africa Center—has stood out among America’s leading public policy institutions for promoting a truly interdisciplinary approach to understanding the politics and economics of East Africa. It is therefore a great pleasure and an honor for me to exchange views today on Somaliland and the future of our region with such distinguished participants.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I have traveled to Washington today from Somaliland, a nation that defends its borders, protects its citizens, and mints its own currency; a nation that your former Secretary of Defense called, simply, “an entity that works,” but a nation that has not yet been recognized by the United States or the international community.

Somaliland became an independent, sovereign state on 26 June 1960. Five days after independence, Somaliland chose to unite with Somalia with the aim of creating a “Greater Somalia” comprised of several former European colonies with citizens of ethnic Somali origin. Almost immediately, the people of Somaliland were excluded from decision making and representative governance in the new Somali Republic. In turn, our people rejected the Somali Republic’s constitution by referendum, and their disenchantment continued throughout the early years of the union as political and economic isolation grew.

After assuming power in a military coup in October 1969, Mohamed Siad Barre led a brutal military dictatorship that in the 1980s embarked on a violent campaign against the people of Somaliland, killing more than 50,000 civilians and displacing ten times as many people. Despite the atrocities committed, Somaliland rose from the ashes to rebuild and emerge stronger than ever before. We were determined not to allow such a massacre of men, women and children happen again. The people of Somaliland would no longer be victims in our own land.

Following the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, the people of Somaliland decided to withdraw from the union and re-assert Somaliland’s sovereignty and independence – in full compliance with international law.

As Somalia's disintegration unfolded, Somaliland built a functioning, stable and democratic state. While the international community spent millions of dollars trying to save Somalia from itself, we focused on maintaining peace within our borders, building strong state institutions, and creating a sustainable economy. And I am pleased to say that Somaliland will be celebrating 22 years of independence on May 18th this year.

Despite enormous challenges, Somaliland has held four peaceful elections and has preserved a culture of democracy. Our security forces have ensured that terrorist groups like al Shabab have no safe haven in Somaliland. And we have tackled piracy off our coast with determined and comprehensive actions.

Over 100 individuals involved in acts of piracy have been jailed by the Somaliland government. We have forged agreements with other governments on the transfer of these criminals. Our legislature has institutionalized Somaliland's anti-piracy laws. And we have partnered with friends in Europe and America to thwart these and other violent extremists, both on land and at sea. But we also recognize that there is more work to be done.

We have also made great strides with regard to education, development and public health. While others in our region have struggled with famine and relied on external food aid, we have invested in food security and avoided the afflictions of chronic hunger and disease. In fact, during the last drought in the region, our government donated nearly \$700,000 in humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

We accomplished all this independently, with limited assistance from the international community. This spirit of self-reliance continues to guide our nation to this day.

My presence in Washington today is a testament to our success. I recently stood in front of my parliament and described the state of our union to the people of Somaliland, one of the methods that we employ to ensure accountability and good governance. I spoke of my administration's challenges, especially in the diplomatic arena where recognition remains our overarching goal, and our accomplishments, which include:

- strengthening the independence of the Election Commission,
- facilitating the de-centralization of the state and empowering local communities,
- increasing government revenue and streamlining the tax system,
- presenting, for the first time in our history, a balanced national budget that currently stands at

- \$180 million per annum,
- Institutionalizing public finance reform – with our first report due for publication at the end of this month,
- further expanding and professionalizing the armed forces and police,
- improving relationships with international aid agencies, and
- investing in education, which has allowed us to build dozens of new schools, hire thousands of new teachers, and make primary schooling free for all students.

I am also proud of our most recent democratic achievement. Just a few months ago, we held our first Municipal elections in over ten years. In this process, over 4,000 candidates competed for 400 seats on local councils in cities and towns across Somaliland. As the political debates that framed those elections subside and these municipalities settle into the task of governing, we look forward to holding parliamentary elections as soon as feasible following completion of our voter registration process.

Somaliland continues to secure its borders to advance peace and stability in the region. Earlier last year, clashes occurred in the Buhoodle area of the Sool region between government forces and certain militia groups – groups that were seeking to destabilise and sow discord amongst the Somaliland population living in that region.

It is important to stress that all conflict is regrettable and only a measure of last resort. During these operations, the government took every measure to safeguard the well-being of civilians, including full access to water and other basic services. To advance wider peace, my government also conducted civilian reconciliation initiatives in key towns throughout the area. Following successful dialogue with the militia groups, the government released more than 200 prisoners and welcomed a number of the militia's key leaders into Somaliland's cabinet. To reinforce the peace, our government has also earmarked more than \$1.2 million for development projects for the benefit of the communities in that region. Somaliland will continue to promote reconciliation as part of our on-going efforts to strengthen unity within our borders.

If you have been to Somaliland, as a guest, a tourist, or an investor, you know that there is an oasis of calm in the troubled Horn of Africa. Dozens of international companies now recognize that Somaliland is a unique frontier market with real opportunities. Areas of Somaliland are anticipated to contain commercial quantities of oil, and energy companies are undertaking significant explorations. Coca Cola has opened a state-of-the-art bottling plant and other

companies are beginning to recognize Somaliland's potential as a regional hub. Somaliland is very much open for business.

We are proud of what we have accomplished with only limited outside help. On all fronts, Somaliland is poised to continue advancing security and prosperity for all its citizens.

As we do this, my people and I are watching developments to our south very closely. We hope that Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud will succeed where past transitional governments have failed. We also hope that enhanced diplomatic support and foreign aid from the international community will impede the corruption, tribalism, and militancy that have afflicted the people of Somalia for too long.

A secure and peaceful Somalia that is able to build and preserve strong state institutions, fight terrorism and violent extremism, and stimulate a functioning economy is in Somaliland's national interest. To this end, over the past year my government has undertaken good faith efforts to renew dialogue with Somalia, and held direct talks with the Transitional Federal Government in London, Istanbul and Dubai.

These talks laid the groundwork for my meeting just nine days ago in Turkey with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, where we affirmed our shared commitment to build trust and improved relations between our governments. Future meetings – the first of which we agreed to convene within 90 days – will aim to strengthen cooperation in the fight against terrorism, extremism, piracy, illegal fishing, toxic dumping, and other serious crimes.

Somalia and Somaliland can and should be equal partners. Yet as we proceed down this track, we hope and expect that those who are now reaching out to the new government in Mogadishu will do the same with our government in Hargeisa.

In this regard, we have already received assurances from the U.S. Government that its recognition of the government of Somalia will not negatively impact America's ongoing engagement in Somaliland. Our people were indeed encouraged by this gesture. However, as we move forward in dialogue and cooperation – and continue to serve as a model of security, stability and democratic governance in this fragile region – the people of Somaliland expect more. And that is why I have come to Washington, on the heels of the landmark agreement between Somaliland and Somalia.

The United States and the international community have recognized that the status quo in the Horn of Africa is not sustainable. Their engagement with Mogadishu seeks to stimulate and sustain the transition of Somalia to a viable sovereign entity. The same type of engagement is required for Somaliland. These two tracks are not mutually exclusive.

Our people believe that the time has now come for the international community to fully recognize the security and stability they have preserved in the midst of chaos, and to acknowledge the legitimate, sovereign and independent status of their nation. A new international paradigm for Somaliland is overdue.

Building on the Somaliland/Somalia dialogue that we have established, and the bilateral relations that we are working to expand with other governments, a critical next step will be Somaliland's attainment of observer status in our region's Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and in the African Union. The United States can do much to engage its friends in the Horn of Africa and beyond to help us secure this role, which will facilitate further dialogue with key stakeholders in the region, including Somalia.

We are not asking others to take a chance on what Somaliland may one day become, but rather to simply recognize the current state of affairs. Somaliland is a fully functioning sovereign entity. From 1960 to 1991 we gave unity within a Greater Somalia a chance. It did not work, and we cannot turn back. Today, only the people of Somaliland can and will decide their future – not the government in Mogadishu, not the international community.

With proper diplomatic recognition, Somaliland will be able to contribute more effectively to a sustainable and prosperous future for the Horn of Africa, building on our own experience in forging an oasis of stability in a long-troubled region.

This is the pragmatic option, and it is also the only option. Recognition of Somaliland's independence is long overdue and must be part of any sustainable peace in this region.

Ladies and gentlemen: What Somaliland has accomplished in a short period has taken other countries decades, if not centuries. The progress that we have made is irreversible. Our friends in the U.S. understand this, and we are grateful for their continued engagement and support.

However, in the long-term, engagement alone – on terms that do not adapt with other changes in policy – will be insufficient.

The U.S. has led the international community in supporting the self-determination and sovereignty of many peoples throughout modern times. The people of South Sudan, East Timor, Kosovo and many others remember that the U.S. spoke up for them when others were silent. The people of Somaliland ask for no more, and no less.

America emerged from the ashes of the Revolutionary War and became a nation by believing in its own people's capacity to build something greater than themselves. In Somaliland, we also believe in self-reliance and staying the course. We have rebuilt our nation from the ashes of a brutal war. We are willing to protect our freedom at any cost because we know its true value. And it is this value—more than any other—that we share with the United States.

Thank you.

9.2 Transcript 2

Good afternoon, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Dr. Kevin Roberts, President of the Heritage Foundation, for inviting me to give this address today. The Heritage Foundation stands out among America's leading public policy institutions for promoting a truly interdisciplinary approach to understanding the politics and economics of East Africa. It is therefore a great pleasure and an honor for me to exchange views today on Somaliland and the future of our region with such distinguished participants.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today the whole world is laser focused on the tragedy in Ukraine. The shelling, the bombardment, the destruction, the death, the mass suffering and the largest refugee crisis in Europe. Today, the suffering of the people of Ukraine is unfolding in front of our own eyes with the help of 24/7 news cycle and the social media. For us this tragedy is reminiscent of the genocide committed against our people 33 years ago. A tragedy I myself witnessed first hand and which over 50,000 of our people were massacred at the hands of Somalia government and more than a million of our people became either refugees or were internally displaced. We feel the pain and the anguish that the people of Ukraine feel today because we went through the same experience. Only in our case the genocide committed against our people was hidden

from the world as at that time there were no 24/7 news cycle or the social media. However the bitter memory of what we went through is forever memorized in our minds and will never be forgotten.

Ladies and gentlemen: I come before you today to talk about my country's progress, challenges and the role my country plays in the security, stability and economic development in our region and beyond.

Somaliland first gained independence and international recognition on 26 June 1960. Five days after independence, Somaliland united voluntarily with Somalia with the aim of creating a "Greater Somalia" comprised of five former colonies inhabited by citizens of ethnic Somali origin (British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, French Somaliland, the current Somali Region of Ethiopia and the then Northern Frontier District of Kenya). Unfortunately this union, which was never legally formalized, became more bane than boon. The dream of a greater Somalia not only did not materialize but caused untold suffering and devastation for the Somali ethnic group and the broader Horn of Africa region.

The hastily arranged union became untenable for Somaliland as our people were subjected to increasing autocratic rule and oppression from Mogadishu. Initially the civilian government of Somali Republic through administrative takeover reduced Somaliland to the status of junior partner in the union. This power grab and deliberate domination did not go down well with our people and they start to resist Somalia's design of domination.

Early dissatisfaction with the union led the majority of Somaliland voters to reject the unitary constitution in a June 1961 referendum, and in December of that year Somaliland officers launched an unsuccessful coup in Hargeisa, with the aim of restoring Somaliland's independence.

The military regime that seized power in October, 1969 continued systematic discrimination against the people of Somaliland. The formation of the Somali National Movement (SNM) in 1981 was a manifestation of the discontent of the people of Somaliland. Any attempt by the people of Somaliland to seek their lawful rights was met with extreme brutality, extra-judicial executions, disappearances, arbitrary arrests, detention, and torture.

in May 1988, the SNM launched successful assaults against Hargeisa and Burao. The conflict erupted into full-scale civil war. The military regime answered with indiscriminate bombardment and deliberate targeting of civilian population. Hargeisa, the Somaliland capital was razed to the ground. Other cities were also systemically targeted and destroyed. The regime's genocidal actions were in effect an act of ethnic cleansing. Evidence of widespread war crimes committed against the people of Somaliland has been fully documented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights and a forensic team from Physicians for Human Rights, as well as the Somaliland War Crimes Commission.

After the collapse of the Somali state in 1991, the people of Somaliland decided to withdraw from the union and re-assert Somaliland's sovereignty and independence – in full compliance with international law and the charter of the African Union. To fully understand the Somaliland people's desire for independence, all we need is to look at the tragic history of oppression, human rights violation, and genocide experienced by the people of Somaliland at the hands of Somalia government.

In the three decades that followed, the people of Somaliland built a functioning state, a successful market economy and a vibrant democracy. Inclusive and transparent elections, have been a critical element in the consolidation of the Somaliland state and its validation by our people.

These elections, which in recent years have been among the first to use advanced iris biometric verification technology, are widely endorsed by international observers as free and fair and have led to repeated peaceful and orderly transfers of power. These include Somaliland's combined parliamentary and local councils elections last May, held in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to continuing this tradition with more elections later this year.

My country, Somaliland, is often celebrated for our functioning, stable and democratic state in an otherwise volatile region. We do not wish to be extraordinary. But similarly sustained democratic progress in our part of the world is rare.

We have deterred terrorists from our land and pirates from our coastal waters.

Somaliland is rightfully very proud of the security, stability, and democracy we enjoy, and I am pleased to say we celebrated 30 years of independence in May of last year. Somaliland has now been outside the union with Somalia more than we have been inside the union.

We are confident that, in time, the world will come to acknowledge what an African Union fact-finding mission to Somaliland concluded in 2005 – that Somaliland’s search for recognition is “historically unique and self-justified.” And our ultimate goal remains: to gain international recognition as an independent nation and assume our rightful place within the international community. Yet while we maintain this aspiration, in the short-term the focus of our diplomacy is deeper engagement with those who share our values – especially the United States. This pragmatic and patient approach has helped Somaliland emerge in recent years as a reliable partner in a critical region.

First, the security situation in Somalia has deteriorated dramatically, provoking a reevaluation of the political considerations that impeded more direct engagement between the U.S. and Somaliland.

As you will recall, the U.S. reestablished diplomatic ties with Somalia in 2013, guided by a vision of an empowered central government in Mogadishu that could build domestic unity among disparate clans, degrade and defeat extremism and protect its people and its neighbors from the scourge of terrorism and instability.

That vision was not realized.

Today, even those most committed to empowering the Mogadishu government have lost faith in the project. Time and time again, Mogadishu’s partners have expended financial resources, diplomatic resources and military resources, with little to show for the effort.

Regrettably, after nearly a decade of good intentions by Mogadishu’s partners and considerable U.S. and international assistance, the Somalia government lacks legitimacy and struggles to exercise its authority beyond Mogadishu. It remains a source of instability in our fragile region.

The second major development is that the Horn of Africa has become a region of heightened strategic importance. In a difficult neighborhood, Somaliland’s stability and reliability is increasingly recognized as an asset for advancing the interests of countries who share the same values.

In recent years, the stability of the Horn of Africa has also been challenged by conflicts in the region, as well as the constantly evolving operations of terrorist groups. Instability and food insecurity is further exacerbated by drought, desertification, locust swarms and climate change effects.

Simultaneously, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait has emerged as a vital strategic link in maritime trade routes connecting the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean. Significant portion of the world's oil passes through Bab el-Mandeb, as well as considerable trade between Europe and Asia. Its importance is reflected in the expansion of foreign military bases and buildup of naval forces in the Red Sea, as well as enhanced international cooperation to fight piracy and ensure maritime security.

Great power competition in Africa will continue for the foreseeable future. In this environment, the United States should make clear its support for governments that embrace democratic governance and stability in the midst of threats, instability and external pressure. The Third major development is Somaliland's emergence as a trade and shipping hub. The modernization of the Port of Berbera, the opening of a new international airport and construction of commercial corridors to inland neighbors are connecting the Horn of Africa to global trade routes, serving as a linchpin for renewed economic development in East Africa. Last June, our government and DP World inaugurated a new container terminal at the Berbera Port, marking the completion of the first phase of a significant port expansion project. This was followed in October with DP World and Britain's development finance agency announcing plans to jointly invest significant amount of money in logistics infrastructure in Africa, starting with the further modernization of Berbera Port.

These investments, combined with ongoing challenges in neighboring countries, make Somaliland the most stable and reliable conduit between much of East Africa and the world's major shipping lanes.

Taken together, these three developments – the challenges the international community confronts in the Horn of Africa, its increasingly strategic importance, and Berbera's potential to create a new economic engine for the region – mean that Somaliland is poised to become a key player in global security and economy.

The Somaliland/Somalia dialogue started with the London Conference of 23 February, 2012. Article 6 of the London conference stated that” “the conference recognized the need for the international community to support any dialogue that Somaliland and TFG (Transitional Federal government) or its replacement may agree to establish to clarify their future relations.”

The key point here is to clarify the future relations between the two countries. Therefore, in order to clarify the future relations between the two countries, the core issues of the dispute, namely the status of Somaliland, would have to be addressed and resolved.

Despite nine rounds of talks between 2012 and 2022, the expected outcome of the talks, resolving the core issues of the dispute, the status of Somaliland, never materialized as there were no political breakthrough. The limited agreements made on the peripheral technical issues were never implemented as Somalia reneged on all of the agreements made. During those ten years Somalia has demonstrated complete lack of interest in meaningful dialogue. In fact Somalia has used the dialogue to pursue policies aimed at weakening Somaliland’s independence and its ability to develop including weaponizing international aid and economic development.

Given that there has been no progress over the last ten years since the dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia started, Somaliland believes that the dialogue had failed to achieve its objective. The reasons for the failure lies entirely with Somalia’s efforts to undermine the dialogue process as demonstrated by its harmful actions, willful disregard of the agreements made and its intransigencies.

Given that dialogue is not an option for Somalia as demonstrated by its conduct, bad faith and continuous sabotage of the dialogue, Somaliland believes that it is unfair to Somaliland to be beholden to a dialogue process that has failed to achieve its objective and has no hope of succeeding. It is difficult to imagine that what has not been achieved in 10 years can be achieved in one or two years.

Somaliland therefore believes that there is no future in the continuation of dialogue with Somalia and is prepared to pursue all available avenues for international recognition.

Given above, Somaliland believes that the international community has a moral obligation to support Somaliland’s pursuit of international recognition.

In fact, this chapter has already begun. From regional security to democracy promotion to economic development, the objectives and values sought by the United States align entirely with Somaliland's vision.

Recent months have seen an increase in engagement and collaboration, including productive visits by Somaliland Foreign Minister to Washington, and the recent visit to Hargeisa by a delegation of senior U.S. congressional staff – a historic first for Somaliland.

I am very heartened by these developments. But sustained direct dialogue and partnership is needed if we are to effectively address the growing challenges and truly advance our shared security, economic and governance objectives in the region.

An important foundational element of this partnership is the establishment of a permanent U.S. diplomatic presence in Hargeisa. Several nations – including Ethiopia, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Kenya, Taiwan, Turkey and the UAE – have diplomatic offices in our capital, and the United States should join their ranks. With this presence and regular visits by senior U.S. officials, we will be able to cooperate more closely in a number of key areas. Let me briefly highlight a few areas where Somaliland's capabilities and proven track record can be a valuable resource for the like-minded countries.

As I noted earlier, Somaliland has successfully deterred threats to our homeland and piracy in our territorial waters. Our Coast Guard works with partners such as the UK to guarantee the safety and security of maritime trade through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, and we work with foreign partners and international NGOs to minimize illicit trafficking and smuggling networks. We have much to offer in terms of community-based security successes, and closer collaboration with the U.S. on these efforts would advance shared interests and strengthen its needed presence in the region.

Similarly, our recently modernized infrastructure, particularly the Port of Berbera, is well-positioned to support security operations, logistics and humanitarian aid, as well as expand commercial opportunities throughout the region. We appreciate the U.S. government's interest in Berbera and hope discussions will continue to explore utilization and further development of what could be a vital gateway for trade, investment and security collaboration.

On governance issues, Somaliland's democratic government is the only one of its kind in the region. It serves as a beacon for our neighbors and others whose citizens seek opportunities to engage in the democratic process. Over the last 30 years, we have built our democratic norms and institutions and ensured more than three peaceful transitions of power. We are aware that there are still certain issues to be addressed to ensure that our electoral process is more perfect. We are working on ways and means, within our laws, of enhancing the role of women in our political process and increasing their participation, as candidates, in future elections.

Somaliland has much to offer others seeking to build their own democratization processes. From updating voter registration systems to ensuring the objectivity of national election authorities, and from managing polling stations to facilitating the work of independent election monitors, we have 20 years of practical experience to share. We would welcome greater partnership with the U.S government and civil society organizations to advance democratic norms in our region and elsewhere – and to further improve our own institutions.

In a troubled region that has experienced significant setbacks for democratic governance and continues to face serious threats from terrorists and other violent extremist groups, the successes of Somaliland are no small achievement. Our friends in the United States understand this, and we are grateful for their continued engagement and support.

Yet this is just the beginning. We can and must work more closely together if we hope to compete with – and overtake – those who seek further instability and dependency in our region.

There are so many practical and important steps we can take. And with each one, Somaliland will demonstrate to our partners and the world that our ultimate goal of international recognition should be granted.

As an equal with other nations, Somaliland will be able to contribute even more effectively to a sustainable and prosperous future for the Horn of Africa, building on our own experience in forging an oasis of stability in a long-troubled region.

The road ahead may be long, but I am more confident than ever that Somaliland will be able to count on U.S. support as we pursue shared objectives and journey toward our long-deferred destination: a free, sovereign, and democratic Somaliland.

9.3 Transcript 3

[Arabic Greeting]

Your Excellency, Ismail Omer Gelleh, The President of the Republic of Djibouti; Your Excellency, Dr. Abiye Ahmed, The Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; Your Excellency, Mohamed Abdillahi Farmajo, President of Somalia; Your Excellency, Hassan Ali Khayre, The Prime Minister of Somalia; Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union (They are here); Your Excellency, Dr. Wrkneh Gebeyehu, The Executive Secretary of IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development [for Africa)]; Your Excellency, Donald Yamamoto, The U.S. Ambassador [to Somalia and Somaliland]; excellenc[ies], distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen; all protocols observed, good afternoon:

Mr. President and Chairman as well,

First and foremost, let me say that it's a great pleasure to be here with you today, and to participate [in] the continuation of the dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia. Allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the regional, continental, and international community for your presence here today to discuss a topic of great importance to the Horn of Africa. Allow me to further thank His Excellency, President Ismail Guelleh and the people of Djibouti for their warm and brotherly hospitality in welcoming us in this beautiful country. Though we may be separated by land and sea, nothing will diminish the importance for -- the important role you all play, and will continue to play, in your efforts to bring peace and stability to the African continent.

The region is suffering from a combination of unprecedented challenges, which range from the COVID-19 to environmental and socio-economic issues. Regional cooperation and hegemony is urgently required to steward the vulnerable to a more prosperous and stable future.

Restarting of these mediation talks with international support is an important factor in securing a more sustainable future in the fulfillment of [the onerous] and worthy duty of building a safe, secure, and stable relationship for the people for Somaliland and Somalia. Excellencies, allow me to stress the current phase that we are entering is crucial in shaping the future -- the future bilateral relationships between our two neighboring countries, regional stability, and a sustainable and prosperous future for the Horn of Africa. However daunting or important such a task is, I remain confident and optimistic that through our and your attention, commitment, hard work, and dedication we will be able to contribute to the peace and security landscape across the continent of Africa.

Excellences, allow me to present a brief historical background on how we got to where we are today. Republic of Somaliland received its independence from the United Kingdom [on 26] June 1960. Notification of that independence was duly registered with the United Nations and 35 countries recognized Somaliland. Somaliland voluntarily united with Somalia [on 1] July, 1960 to form the Somali Republic. The union was not legally binding, as the Act of Union was never formally signed. Therefore, the unification effort fell short of the requirements mandated by domestic and international law.

From the beginning, the union malfunctioned as Somaliland people were hugely oppressed. The people of Somaliland expressed their displeasure with the union by overwhelming[ly] voting against the new constitution in the referendum held in 1961 and followed full-scale struggle against the Somali Republic. Th[is] result[ed] in the collapse of the Somali Republic in 1991 and the restoration of the independence of -- of the Republic of Somaliland, 18 May 1991.

Since restoring our independence, Somaliland with its scarce resources, and with limited international support, has embarked on a steady, incremental, and progressive agenda of conflict resolution, peace building and state building, and established good governance and functioning government institutions. We conducted a constitutional referendum in which 97 percent of Somalilanders voted to support the constitution and the independence [of] Somaliland. During that period Somaliland has made rounds of multiparty free and fair elections, including three rounds of presidential elections, two rounds of local council elections, and a parliamentary election. Republic of Somaliland created a conducive environment that enabled a thriving private sector and an in-flow of international investment. Somaliland has played an important role in the peace and security of the region and has been [a] reliable partner in the fight against terrorism, piracy, human trafficking, money laundering, and other forms of organized crimes.

Unfortunately, instead of appreciating all those efforts and contributions made by the Somaliland people for the last 30 years, Somalia was in a constant war against the development of Somaliland -- economically, security[-wise], investment[-wise] and this deepened the mistrust and animosity between the two countries. Ever since Somaliland entered hastily into a voluntary union with Somalia, the -- the Somaliland people ha[ve] been at the receiving end of injustice, discrimination and state sponsored genocide at -- at the hands of the Somalia government.

Evidence of the widespread war crimes committed against the people of Somaliland has been fully documented by the United Nation[s] Special Rapporteur for human rights, and [a] forensic team from Physicians for Human Rights, and Somaliland War Crimes Commission. The acts of genocide perpetrated by the Siad Barre regime are -- are memorialized in more than 200 mass graves in our country. The mass graves, which are still being unearthed, will forever testify to the crimes against humanity committed by the government of Somalia against the people of Somaliland.

Therefore, in approaching the present situation in Somaliland and Somalia, it's necessary to have a proper regard to the past and learn lessons from it. The legacy of oppression against the people of Somaliland cannot be easily swept away. Rather, they must be acknowledged and taken into account when considering Somaliland people's right to self-determination and independence.

The case for Somaliland independence is not [sic] unique. This fact is also acknowledged by the AU mission to Somaliland in 2005 that concluded the situation was sufficiently "unique and self-justified in African political history" that "the case should not be linked to the notion of "[opening a] Pandora's box." It recommended that the African Union "should find a special method of dealing with this outstanding case" at the earliest possible date.

Furthermore, the 2005 African Union fact mission to Somaliland reported that the "plethora of problems confronting Somaliland [are in part] the legacy of a political union with Somalia, [which] malfunctioned [and] brought destruction and ruin thereby overburdening the population" of Somaliland. Somaliland's claim to independence depends on part [upon] its circumstance, including [its] brief, but legal, period of independence in 1960 -- it[s] claim to recognized international borders relating to that period. As can be surmised from Somaliland's case [it is] is unique and demands unique solution. It does not create precedent for other unresolved conflicts in Africa or elsewhere.

Somaliland's legal case for independence is in conformity with international law. Somaliland satisfies the statehood criteria as set out in [the] Montevideo convention of 1933. Somaliland fulfils the conditions set out in article 4(b)⁵ of the Constitutive Act of the African Union which enshrines respect of borders existing on the achievement of independence since Somaliland borders correspond to those received upon independence from the Great Britain. Somaliland is fully aware that [in] the African context, the exercise of the right to self-determination is linked to the principle of respect for [pre-]existing boundaries [*uti possidetis juris*]. Somaliland's case for independence involves resorting -- restoring borders...it possessed both as a colonial entity [and] as an independent state.

Between 1991 and 2000, the Organization of African [Unity] consented to the break-up of two other unions. In 1989, Senegal opted to terminate the [seven-]year merger with Gambia as Senigambia federation and 1993 Eritria formerly seceded from Ethiopia. Furthermore, in supporting the comprehensive peace agreement signed in 2005 and subsequently independence of South Sudan and its admission to the African Union, the African Union has accepted the break-up of Sudan -- Southern Sudan.

The International Court of Justice in its legal opinion on Kosovo declared in 10 to 4 vote that the declaration of independence of Kosovo of the 17th of February 19 -- 2008...did not violate general international law because the international law provides no prohibition on declaration of independence.

Furthermore, the Arbitration Commission of [the] Peace Conference [for]

Yugoslavia produced a series of opinions on the validity of new states' claim to independence and conditions for recognition. The Commission determined, inter alia, the break-up of Yugoslavia was [as case of dissolution rather than secession.

Somaliland's pursuit of independen[ce] is not a case of secession but rather dissolution of voluntary union between [two] independent states. A number of African Union member states are also the product of a failed union: Mali, Senegal, Gambia and Egypt have all withdrawn from unions with their borders intact. The African Union has also accepted the independence of territories [that] never previously enjoyed full sovereignty.

Following the failure of the unity government, Republic of Somaliland exercised its inherent right to self-determination which are consistent with the preamble of UN 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Somaliland has long argued that Somali Republic was two united countries. The failure of the unity government provided adequate ground for the restoration of our independence.

We believes in that the key to sustainable and peaceful future lies in the honest and sincere dialogue between Somaliland and Somalia under the auspice of [a] neutral and impartial international mediation mechanism and a guarantor.

Somaliland remains committed to peaceful co-existence with Somalia. However, Somaliland insists in that the dialogue should be [a] two state process with a substantive agenda that addresses the core issues of the dispute. Today, how can we proceed to this dialogue if the previously signed agreements in London, Istanbul, and Djibouti were not implemented yet? We cordially propose that a serious mediation mechanism and a guarantor should be in place for this new round [of] dialogue.

We thank Somalia for their sincere apology [for] the horrors of yesteryear committed in Somaliland. The current generation of Somalia was of course not responsible for what the previous generations did but its acknowledgement of the wrongdoings of [the] previous generation is significant and heartfelt appreciated by...all Somalilanders.

But with acknowledgment also comes responsibility -- responsibility for the damage that horror caused. Words are not enough. Again, words are not enough. The horror of the past requires more than words -- it requires actions. The act of recognizing and supporting the independence of Somaliland would go a long way to heal the wounds of the past and enable our [two] states to embrace each other in our independent but closely interwoven futures. I am confident that we can build a bright future together as brotherly, neighboring nations and for our own people and our region.

Thank you very much.

9.4 Transcript 4

Muse Bihi Abdi: [00:00:00] Good morning, everybody. I want to extend my appreciation to George Washington University, the Elliot School of International Affairs, and Jennifer Cooke, the director of the Institute for African Studies, for inviting me to give this address today. As a top research university in the nation's capital, the George Washington University is educating the next generation of American leaders. It is therefore a great pleasure and honor to me and my delegation to speak to you all about Somaliland and the future of our region, the Horn of Africa. I am also happy to be speaking today and that the delegation is here today, a university named after the great leader of America's effort to gain independence or international recognition from the international community. Somaliland today also enjoys independence, but continues to work towards recognition that was vital in America's success as a young nation. Somaliland is a former British colony protectorate with international borders. Somaliland reached independence in 26th June 1960, and after five days voluntarily made a union with Somalia, which was an Italian colony. Somaliland provisions 4.5 million, the area of Somaliland is 137.600 km². Type of Governance: Democratic Republic of Somaliland with a multi political party. Presidential. Parliamentary system. House of Representatives and the House of Laws, or as we call it the House of Elders. Six elections freely contested with one man and one vote. Fulfills all the requirements of a sovereign state. But unluckily, until today, not recognized by the international community. Somaliland is a beautiful country. The last 33 years, there were only two events of extremist attacks in Somaliland. One was in 2008. It was

an explosion in two offices in Hargeisa. The other one was 2004. The target is a school and they killed two teachers of UK citizens.

Muse Bihi Abdi: [00:04:03] We are the guardians of the Red Coast from the extremists. As you know, in the Horn of Africa, there are a lot of extremist activities; al-Shabab, ISIS and others. We have a coast of 840 kilometers, for the last 33 years, no piracy in our coasts. No, AL-Shabab activities. It was very safe. Our people and our armed forces. We have succeeded to make the history of Somaliland, especially in the Gulf of Aden, to be secure for the last 33 years. And that security is also for our neighbors first Ethiopia, Djibouti and African countries like Uganda, Kenia, all the way to America. Somaliland achieved for the last 33 years to rebuild its cities, all the institutions of the government. I think you cannot imagine what we have experienced. Our governments, the army we pay with our taxpayers money, the aircrafts, jet fighters, the artillery and the tanks bombarding all our cities. In 1988, the capital was zero. And most of our cities. Then we replaced our country without any government institutions, no police station, no jobs, no security airports, no hospitals. So we started from zero ground.

Muse Bihi Abdi: [00:06:35] After 33 years. We have built all our cities. Most of them are booming today and we have succeeded to rebuild all the departments of government, not only governance, good governance, democratic, with six elections for the last 22 years, without any help from any government, we have more assistance from the NGOs. So we built educational environments and today we have built over 1000 schools in all regions and every region, six regions, in every region, we build a university. We built health care with health departments, over 400 health care centers, hospitals and clinics. Somaliland is proud of that. It's a liberal free market, absolutely free market economy. 90% of our GDP is in the hands of businesspeople. Gdp of Somaliland is 3 billion and in the year 2021, international trade is 1.6 billion. International investors; Coca-cola. General Energy. Cvs of Taiwan, which is exploring all oil in our country. Our public finance. Financial public services from domestic taxes only from our domestic taxes. No external debt. We are safe of debt, we built our institutions, hospitals, schools, infrastructure with only our home domestic taxes. International relations. Consulates in Hargeisha are from Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Taiwan and offices from Denmark and UK. Our delegation came here, that's what I expected from the United States, I'm happy. Our main goal was to explain to the people of the United States, as much as we can reach, their intellectuals and politicians and their leaders about the case of Somaliland. Our main goal is to get recognition from the international

community and to convince intellectuals, leaders and politicians of our case. Because for the last 32 years, we were internally building the country, we had to first clean our house to build our internal institutions. So everybody whom we are talking with, to be comprehensive that there is a government and institutions are working efficiently. So now we have the chance to explain our case. So that's why we came to this visit. Sure, we are aware of that. We cannot gain recognition in a few days. We know it's a long path to go, but we believe that every long journey starts from one step. So we hope now explaining to the United States administration when we met them, since we are starting to explain our case and our goal is recognition, we need now to start an engagement in many fields. Our country locates a very strategic position in the world. I think over 35% of world trade goes through Russia. Most of the extremists, al-Shabab and others, are in our neighbors, the Horn of Africa. So we're kept here to have an engagement with the United States administration for the safety of their country and for the safety of the world trade. [error in sound].

Muse Bihi Abdi: [00:14:26] Investment in water resources. Minerals and oil. Contribution to the development of the southern corridor. The United Arab Emirates have built our airport to extend it and build a corridor between Somaliland and Ethiopia. But there are many countries in the region which are landlocked. Our ports will serve our service for all these countries. Uganda. Central Africa. Ethiopia. Southern Sudan. So our ports will sell to the whole African landlocked countries and beyond. We are proposing to the administration of President, how can we cooperate in developing the trade, international trade and in between the regions of Africa? More than 38% of the youth in the whole African continent are unemployed. So we need development to make it better for our people. And that needs salt. And so I have that resource. But the international monetary components must accept to cooperate with us. Otherwise we just cannot lessen unemployment and that our youth will go the other way to the extremists. Adolescence and democracy. In our country, we have our people voting for Democratic Republic of Somaliland, 97%, almost hundred percent. [unintelligible] First. Every five years, we have three elections. This year the President, next year, the parliament. Second, that this year it's a presidential election. All this year we are going to make peacemaking between reconciliation, between conflicts of the effects of the election. Third year, the parliamentary.[unintelligible]. To build our institutional capacity, political parties, the election. People are asking you as a president and as a politician, election was after the election. So we came here to have a capacity building of the experience of this country and others of democracy to help us how democracy will survive in Africa and of all countries. We

are proposing this administration or the United States government should open a consulate in Hargeisa. Why? In the summer time, nearly 200,000 American citizens go on their holidays, their children and families to Somalia. So they need consulate services. They have to take an airplane close to Nairobi, Kenya or to Ethiopia. And a lot of extra expenses and it is time consuming. So first that consulate will serve American citizens and it will be a good channel that they can work with Somaliland government people. COVID 19. The first year. It was very serious all the way. All the vaccinations went to Mogadishu, Somalia, but with mismanagement and inefficiency of that government in Mogadishu. The COVID Vaccinations were in their hands, but they didn't reach us, Somaliland. So we did not get any vaccine of the US assistance COVID-19. So we are proposing all humanitarian assistance to our country as we deliver to the people. The cooperation of American citizens and Somaliland citizens. They have built a school near 20 kilometers west of Hargeisa. That school was very successful. Plus ten or 12 years. Now there are 200 students. 50% of them are girls. That was a very good example. If we cooperate with the American citizens in every field, hospital, business, education and any other field. That school is a good example that we can follow. Thank you all very much to you all.

9.5 Transcript 5

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:00:01] It is a great pleasure for me as a Foreign Minister of the government of Somaliland to be here today and to speak to such distinguished guests. I'm not going to bore you with a lot of historical and political process for Somaliland. I'm aware a lot of you are well informed about the history of Somaliland. But what I want to highlight in a few minutes about Somaliland is progress. Somaliland's challenges and Somaliland's views about the way forward for us and also for the region, because we are a part of the broader region that is in turmoil at the moment. Somaliland has a functioning democracy. We have, as you are all aware, a government that has been directly elected by the people of Somaliland. We have a parliament that is elected and kept accountable by the people of Somaliland. In fact, we have had a couple of successful elections, parliamentary elections, presidential elections and local council elections. But we also have had a peaceful transfer of power. From a losing party to a winning party. And I wanted to give you a tribute to the previous government of Somaliland for the way in which they have handed over power to my party who won elections last year. That's a credit to the people of Somaliland and that's a consistent pattern in the political behaviour of the people of Somaliland. The question is what, what made Somaliland so distinctive from Somalia in the way that the Somali political affairs have

been played out over the last two decades? I think one of the key issues here are the SNM, the former Somali national movement that has liberated Somaliland from the former regime of Siad Barre has been very effective and very clear about their ideas.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:02:21] And when the former Somali state collapsed in 1991, SNM was clearly the leaders in Somaliland, and they have been able to manage the aspirations of the people of Somaliland and deliver on a number of important objectives they had. But that was not possible in Somalia when the former regime left and has been defeated. There were too many groups in Somalia and there wasn't a clear victor in Somalia and its political Affairs. You had a number of competing political groups, often armed groups, and they were unable to manage their differences. And there wasn't a clear winner. And then you have from there, Somalia has never been stable. You have warlords after that who were running the affairs in Somalia. And now you have got radical groups, Islamists, al-Shabab that have full control of the bulk of Somalia. Unfortunately, Somalia has never had a stable period of time for the last 20 years. I think one of the key issues that made Somaliland to succeed is apart from having one political group, SNM is also the idea that Somaliland, that is want to have a form, and a nation state.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:03:56] We were all united to have our own nation state. We were all committed to that broader objective and goal that we all subscribe to. Having a well-defined goal helps for people to be united and to work together. That was another issue which made Somaliland become peaceful and stable and democratic. But also the approach we have taken for our conflict resolution and peace building and state building was a bottom up approach whereby people had equal access to that process from 1991 to up till now. And that bottom up approach, which involves less international involvement, has actually been very helpful for the people of Somaliland. But in Somalia, the peace process has been and I think to some extent there still is a product of international ideas, international interventionist, international views. And the political class in Mogadishu has been negatively rewarded for quite a long time. They have been allowed to continue with their administration despite the fact that actually they haven't delivered until.. I'll give you an example that current TFG was formed in Kenya in 2004. That's more than six years. And one of the key tasks they have been given was to deliver what the international community described as transitional tasks. And one of the main task is was to engage a reconciliation process among all the political

stakeholders in Somalia. They haven't achieved that task up until now. Another task was to draft a constitution that is acceptable to all Somalis.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:05:49] That's not been achieved. Another task was to have at the end of the transition, which was meant to be four years, to have an elected government at the end of that process. We are now more than six years and Somalia is far from having a democratic reform, political parties and elections. Yet the international community kept rewarding the TFG. They just had another year of extension. The international community has become very tough and become very vocal and very critical of the TFG and they want TFG to deliver all those tasks that was expected of them over six years to deliver in ten or 11 months. I don't think that's realistic. I don't think that's achievable either. But it shows you that there is no vision, there is no ideas, and there is no commitment from the Somali political actors in moving the Somali question forward. But that's the distinction. And I just talked about what made Somaliland possible. I think it's the idea of forming a nation state, the idea that they want to behave as a country, act as a country and work as a country has been demonstrated over and over by having free and fair elections by broadening the political space for people of Somaliland and by working with the international community on a number of issues. Another subject I want to touch upon is the role that Somaliland government takes in the regional and international affairs.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:07:30] Somaliland is a part of solution when you talk about the war on terror. We have been very active in fighting against terrorists. Al-shabab has indeed attacked Somaliland a couple of times. The last time was in 2008, October 2008, when Somaliland Presidential Palace and a number of key foreign offices in Hargeisa had been attacked by terrorists. And a lot of people have lost their lives. The reason why Somaliland has been attacked and is still under threat from al-Shabab is mainly because the values that we stand for, the values of democracy, equality and the rule of law. Al-Shabab and other terrorist do not think democracy is the best way to manage a country. They actually think it's alien values that we Somaliland, as a predominantly Muslim country, should not actually adopt. But our people, our government and our community are fully committed to promoting democracy. And I'm glad that Ira has been has witnessed that democratic reform. And it was a pleasure to have you in Somaliland during our elections, but also in many other times working with us in promoting democracy, but also providing vital services for our people. Another reason why we have been attacked is because of the relationship we have

with democratic states like the United States government, other peace loving nations on the earth, and the Somalian ambition to become a nation state that is taking an important role in the war against piracy and the war against terror which hasn't been welcomed by terrorists in the region. One of the key developments for the last year since this government is the idea of linking up with the international community much more effectively than we have ever done before. We have adopted what we call a pragmatic foreign policy, which in a nutshell sets out that, yes, recognition is and will always remain a goal for the people of Somaliland. My government is committed working on that and trying to convince many members of the international community to recognize politically the government and the people of Somaliland. But we are also adding other foreign policy objectives on the table. A foreign policy recognition is a key and a goal, but we want to cooperate and work with the international community on a range of issues. On economic development, for example, we think if we can deliver, if we can create jobs and opportunities for our young people, for our people, that will consolidate our governance, it will help our sustainability as a government. And that is going to make us sustainable that will help us to sustain the achievements that we have made so far. Achievements in democracy, achieve peace and stability, rule of law, development of the private sector and the civil society. These are vital, vital achievements that Somaliland have achieved largely on our own. We need to sustain those. That's our priority. And in order to sustain those achievements, we need to co-operate much more effective and imaginative in a way that we have never done before with the international community. So yes, we will be seeking for recognition, but that will not stop us working effectively with the international community Britain, UK, EU, Arab states and African countries, because we have a key interest in sustaining those achievements. For that matter our current government is actively looking for international investment. I have, as a part of a broader team led by our president, have been to Hong Kong, China recently. And one of the reasons we went there is to see whether we can have an economic development cooperation with China. We were looking for opportunities where we could have an investment in our infrastructure, roads, hospitals, ports, those key elements which we hope will provide us jobs and provide us security and provide us wealth is our priority. We also working with the West in the war against terror, because we think that's a common interest for us and for the other people. Otherwise, we will not be able to achieve the objectives that we have achieved. We also work with the international community on the war against piracy. Piracy has been very active in the region that we are part of. I have to say that Somaliland has taken a key role in the fight against piracy. We have arrested as many as 90 pirates who have been committing an act of

pirate crimes in our international territorial waters. And they are currently serving prison sentences, most of them in Somaliland. This is unique in a context where piracy is actually involved in the economic menace of Somalia, particularly regions of Somalia like Puntland. But we have been able to deny pirates to have bases on the ground in Somaliland. And we think that's the most effective way of dealing with piracy, is to deny them to our bases, let alone their economy, to be integrated with the normal economy. And that's something which we have achieved, something we are calling on for Somalia and in particular Puntland to because that's where the bulk of pirate pirates come. In fact, all the 90 pirates none is from Somaliland, who are in prison. All are from mainly from Puntland region, but other regions of Somalia. So we are calling on Somalia to be more effective and to deny pirates and the pirate activities on the ground in their territory. The dual track approach introduced by the United States government has offered us a renewed, a new opportunity. This has meant that the international community will, of course, focus on Somalia because of the problems that Somalia presents. But that will not stop, according to the dual track policy, working with Somaliland, in other words, rewarding positive progress, democracy, peace and stability. So that's a policy which we embrace and we welcome that policy. But we would like that policy to become a more clearer and more concrete in relation to what we could expect in Somaliland from from the United States government and from other friendly governments that is increasingly applying that dual track approach. But I have to mention here, and we are very pleased with that, that for the last year the international engagement have increased to Somaliland. We have had a number of high profile visitors and visitors from the West, including ministers, foreign ministers, international development ministers, people from Britain, Denmark, Norway. We have had a high level delegation from USAID in Somaliland in a way that we never had before. So we think that such policy has already started delivering. We want to have more substance of that in terms of increased development aid, increased cooperation in the fight against piracy, increased assistance in the fight and cooperation in the fight against terrorism. And we would also like to be supported to access international and regional forums where security and political issues that affect us are being discussed. I know the Security Council gets a regular report on Somalia. We would like for the UN Security Council to get regular reports about Somaliland too because we present an alternative and we present a positive contribution to the region. We would like Somaliland to be reported on on a regular basis at the UN Security Council briefings. A final thought about our view about Somalia. We have an interest in stable Somalia and a secure Somalia. After all, that's where the majority of insecurity in our country comes from. Piracy comes from Somalia to us. Pirate

problems caused by pirates, terrorism and al-Shabab and all that stuff originates mainly from Somalia, and we are being affected by that problem. So we have a key interest in bringing security and stability back into Somalia. And therefore, we are very supportive of the efforts by the international community with that regard. But we think the approach has been too long from a top down. I think the international community should make the TFG accountable for what they are doing for the people of Somalia. But we are very supportive about about that approach. We think that Somaliland has a role to play in bringing peace and stability. And therefore, we would like to be given an opportunity to express our views, to share our experience of state building and peace building and reconciliation in regional and international forums. You have what international community call ICG conferences, international contact groups. I know these conferences have not been very effective in terms of delivering peace and stability, but Somaliland can share experiences in forums like that and therefore we would like to be able to access those forums in order to play an active role in the regional affairs that affect us. Thank you very much for listening and I'm quite happy to take on questions afterwards. Thank you.

Moderator: [00:17:59] Before opening up to questions. I'm sure there are going to be quite a number of questions, especially on current events and the quest for recognition. If I can exercise the moderator's prerogative to ask a first question that looks a little bit backward, because I think looking at where you've come from and the decisions that Somaliland's leaders have made, one really has to acknowledge that some of them were visionary decisions that contained lessons learned, I think, for other transitions. I think understated, I think, was the decision of the Somali national movement to put itself out of business rather than continue as a governing party, which is unprecedented in the African context, where part of the problem is revolutionary liberation movements that become ruling parties that don't want to go off the scene. Can you tell us a little bit about that decision process because you were involved and certainly President Silanyo, how you made these decisions, which seemed haphazard at the time, but now we're paying very rich dividends in the political culture.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:19:12] That's a good question. The SNM, the Somali national movement, the main purpose for that system was to free the people of Somaliland. The purpose was not to get offices for them to lead the country or to to compete power. Their primary preoccupation was to free the people of Somaliland from the former regime of Siad Barre, because they felt that the citizens in Somaliland have been treated as second citizens.

They have not been given an equal access to natural resources, equal access to education, health and wealth. And therefore they think they have accomplished their job once they have freed the people of Somaliland and they have opened the political space for everyone to participate and to think with them about how to go forward. And one of the key, Peter is absolutely right, important decision they made was to to relinquish power to another group that was seen as to be more inclusive in terms of the different constituencies in Somaliland, but also to have the courage and the leadership that the people of Somaliland required at that time. And that decision will still remain historic in the history. The current president, Ahmed Silanyo, the leader with the longest period during the SNM, and he was leading that process and he was one of the key influential people who have made those decisions to be possible decisions to be made at the time in 1991.

Moderator: [00:20:57] The minister will now take questions. I think there are microphones and if you would identify yourself when you introduce your question.

Question public: [00:21:10] Welcome, Minister. Tony Carroll, Manchester Trade. And I'm an adjunct faculty member of Johns Hopkins University. I'm wondering, what do the African Union leadership or members tell you? I think with the perhaps one of the unforeseen consequences of the departure of both Thabo Mbeki and President Obasanjo in Nigeria seems that two of the African, most prominent African leaders who are inclined to have a serious discussion about an independent Somaliland, are no longer on the continent's political scene. So I'm wondering if you are getting much receptivity from African Union leadership, other African heads of state on the issue of sovereignty. Just wondering if that conversation has changed within the last two years.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:22:08] I certainly hope that the attitude of the African Union would change in the next year or two or whatever, more so because of the Southern Sudan case, which has become independent this year and has been well embraced by African countries. We think that will even though the case of South Sudan is not the same case as Somaliland. We have a very stronger case than South Sudan. We had had our own independence. We have been an independent state before. We're not talking about secession in Somaliland. We're talking about a dissolution of a union, a union that we went on on a voluntary basis, a union which we don't think it was actually ratified legally. So this is not a legal case that is taking us back or stopping us from having a recognition. It is actually a

political will and political will are decisions. Political decisions are made by member states, not the African Union, as an institution. So we hope that given our consistency in peacebuilding and stability and democracy, given our current economic position, that we are attracting international investment, given that the dual track approach and other approaches are giving us an access to the international community, we hope we will be able to convince African states to realise that it is actually in the benefit of the region and Africa that Somaliland gets its international recognition. We hope that South Africa that has been a friendly country to Somaliland will continue to do so. But we also have got other friends. Somaliland is not actually isolated. We have many friends in the world, in Africa, in America and Europe. And we count on those friends and we think that one day Somaliland government and people will hear a positive response in relation to recognition.

Question public: [00:24:18] Martin Murphy from the Atlantic Council. Foreign Minister, thank you very much for your remarks. Could you brief us on what the position is now in the border dispute with Puntland? What is going on and how you envisage that dispute being resolved? And also, what are your fears about that as that area is a haven for disruptive actors?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:24:49] The issue between Somaliland and Puntland is about people who ethnically or in terms of clan related to the Puntland, but they live traditionally in Somaliland. So we're talking about a district that is within Somaliland, but is inhabited by people who are ethnically related to Puntland people. That's the basis of the issue. But we can understand that Puntland wants for those people to be treated well, to be integrated into the system, which is what Somaliland wants. But we have been engaging with those communities in those regions, and the present scenario has offered a peaceful reconciliation process for the people. And they have been engaging well with our government. And as a result of that, like the Conference of Goodwill, which was this year, has provided a lot of opportunity for people on both sides to discuss about resolving those issues in a peaceful way. We don't actually think that Puntland and Somaliland will go into war on that issue. We really don't think and definitely that's not the intention of my government. We think we can resolve those issues peacefully. It is about people who are part of Somaliland, but ethnically related to Puntland. We think we have people in Ethiopia who are ethnically related to us and we have people who live in Kenya that are ethnically related to Somaliland. We're not laying claims on those territories, and we think that Puntland will realize that it will not be

wise for them to lay a claim on part of of Somaliland. But we are we are happy to discuss with them on if there are any other issues, because we can cooperate on lack of security, we can cooperate on piracy. There are so many other issues we can talk and discuss. But there is another dimension to this problem, which is about a group called SSE. This is a group of mainly from the diaspora and in fact, mainly from the United States of America, who are actually having a cause for concern for both of us, for Puntland and Somaliland, but also increasingly for Ethiopia. We think this group have links with the radical groups in the region. They have been bringing weapons and arms into the border between Puntland and Somaliland. And they have been attacking and killing some citizens in the region. And we are currently cooperating with a number of other governments in the region in order to have a common approach of dealing with SSE. So these things are distinctive. We are engaged in a peaceful negotiation with Puntland on any issues they feel that needs to be discussed. We are talking with our people in our country that feel ethnically related to Puntland, but we don't want to talk to the SSE. We want to cooperate with other countries in a way that we can effectively eliminate or reduce the risk that they are posing currently to us.

Question public: [00:28:10] Mr. Minister, thanks for being here. My name is Maureen Farrell. I'm with Booz Allen Hamilton, but I'm doing research on behalf of the US Africa Command. My question to you is regarding your comment about Somaliland's many international partners, I'm wondering if you could speak a little bit about some of the international cooperation in the security sector. If you have friends in the Arab League, perhaps in Europe, in the UK are possibly providing military assistance. Thank you.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:28:38] I think you would know that there is an arms embargo on the region which involves also Somaliland. And I know there has been violations of that UN security resolution, but because of that, Somaliland has not been able to build or train or develop the security sector, particularly the military. And so that's a problem for us because we want it to be better, to defend ourselves against piracy, better prepare ourselves against or defend, I would say, against international terrorists that are actively trying to attack us. But because of the UN Security Council resolution which bans arms embargo in the region, we are not able to become an active partner in the fight against terrorism, in the fight against piracy. But for police training, we have been increasingly being supported by a number of countries which we consider as friendly countries, including Britain. We have been able to train our police and our coast guards that have been very effective in defending

ourselves from pirates. And so we have American and the Britain and other countries are our useful partners in the security sector. We share intelligence information about terrorism. We jointly undertake operations against terrorism in the region. So we have partners, but unfortunately we are not able to develop our security service as well as we want because of that UN Security Council resolution. But we are working on getting some relief of that with the help of some friendly countries.

Question public: [00:00:31] During the current crisis that's going on, especially in South Central. The famine. How has Somaliland one fared in the overall crisis and what has Somaliland done in helping alleviate any of the issues that are going on? Is it possible is there any cooperation with the TFG or other aid agencies or is there a massive influx of refugees into Somaliland? I'm just wondering what from your perspective, how Somaliland is being impacted by this and what you're doing about it?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:01:11] Somaliland has been affected by the drought, because this was a regional famine. It is not only limited to Somalia, but as a result of that, a lot of people are suffering. In fact, we this week we produced a report which clearly states that around 1 million people in Somaliland and mainly nomadic people and farmers have lost their livestock. And as a result of that, they are at risk of becoming victims of drought and famine. And but what makes a different Somaliland from Somalia and the way we manage drought, because there has been a lot of more people who have died in Somalia from droughts than in Somaliland, much more people. I think what matters is the governance we have been able to, we are still able to work with the aid agencies to reach out those people that have been affected by the drought, even though we still have to get more assistance. But the assistance that my government has been able to deliver has actually reached the places where we need to reach. In Somalia, the TFG, unfortunately, is in the grip of al-Shabab because al-Shabab controls the most of Somalia and they resisted to allowing international aid agencies to provide humanitarian assistance to the people who need in Somalia. And that's why a lot of people died before aid reached them. So that's the difference. But we have been affected and we are actually sending appeals to the international community for assistance, for humanitarian assistance to Somaliland, because we think there has been too much focus on rightly so in Somalia, even relation to the famine. But the people of Somaliland have been affected too and we expect that the US aid and other development agencies, international

humanitarian agencies would provide an emergency and humanitarian assistance to Somaliland in order to reduce the risk posed by the drought on many Somalilanders.

Question public: [00:03:42] Hi and thank you for being here today. My name is Julie Mancuso. I work for the Center for International Private Enterprise. You've mentioned a little bit about your kind of growth strategy for seeking foreign investment. I was wondering if you could share with us a little bit more about internally what's happening on the ground with the local private sector and opportunities there, whether it be with the Chamber of Commerce's or SMEs. What sort of a growth strategy is internally. Thank you.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:04:14] Thanks. The FDI, the foreign direct investment is what we are looking for. But we're also interested to have international companies and governments that are willing to invest basically in our natural resources. So we will have added value to those resources and then and provide jobs and wealth for our government and for our people. So we are constantly welcoming anyone who is interested in investing in Somaliland. I understand in the current climate of lack of recognition, a lot of people do not feel comfortable in investing. But what we are telling those investors is that Somaliland's stability and security over the last 20 years should be taken into consideration for a future investment. And we have an investment policy and investment laws which would provide lucrative opportunities for investors, including tax relief, but also encouraging investors to invest in natural resources, which will provide a win win situation over the long term for all partners involved in relation to the private sector. That's what was working for Somaliland most. The government is small. We have opted for a small government and a big private sector and civil society and one of the main employers in my country are the private sector, particularly the business. The telecommunications sector employs a lot of people in Somaliland and we have one of the most cheapest telecommunication services in the region. Another area is the financial sector, which is mainly privatized, except the central bank, which has supervisory responsibility. So yes, the private sector is booming in Somaliland. Somaliland's reconstruction has mainly been done by the private sector and our diaspora in the United States of America, in Britain, in many other European and Arab states have heavily invested in our country. So, yes, the private sector is working for us and that provides an opportunity to link up with international investors.

Question public: [00:06:48] Mr. Minister. Dan Fisk with IRI, and thank you for for joining us being here. It would seem to me that under the standard of customary international law, Somaliland meets the standards of statehood, of sovereignty. Would you again go through your understanding of why what you've been told by the US government, why the US government is not recognizing Somaliland as an independent state?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:07:15] I fully agree with you. Somaliland satisfies all the conditions and criteria you would have, as being a criteria for a statehood. We have a permanent population. We have around 4 million people. There are more than six, seven African countries that have got less population than Somaliland. We have a territory, a permanent territory that's much greater than than half a dozen of African states, including our neighbor, Djibouti, and many other states. We have potentially economic sustainability for our country. In fact, we provide opportunity for global or regional economic facilities like Berbera Port, which conserves for Ethiopia, 85 million people, landlocked, with a very ambitious development and economic plan, actively looking for a port we can provide, and therefore we can act and be a bridge for economic development for the whole region. All sorts of reasons why Somaliland should be recognized are there and don't forget about the stability we provide in the region, the democratic values and and systems we have, which is all what the United States and other Western countries also would like to see happening in many, many developing countries. The official reason that's often provided, if you like, provided by the West, not necessarily only the United States of America, is that the issue of recognition is actually for the African Union or African states, if you like, to take to take home. We can understand that Somaliland is part of Africa and African Union should have an opinion on our situation. But we see the hypocrisy there, we have seen many examples where Western countries, including USA, have taken an active role in embracing new nation states. South Sudan is one of those countries. In fact, African Union opposed it actively to the independence of South Sudan. It is other countries that have promoted the idea of South Sudan with which we supported it. It is a self-determination of the people of Southern Sudan that has been respected. And we think that our self-determination should also be respected by America, by other peace loving and democracy loving countries. We think that there is a lot of things that America and other countries can do. And we are talking we still talking to the government of America and other governments and trying to convince our argument. Thank you.

Question public: [00:10:14] What is, from your perspective, the downside or is there a downside? Should the United States or another Western country, in other words, not an African country be the first one to recognize Somaliland, at the end doesn't make any difference? Don't you just need someone to recognize you?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:10:37] Honestly, I can't think of any downside for the United States government's decision to recognize Somaliland. I think that would be an encouraging that will be that will send a clear message out there to the international community, to Somalia, to everyone that the United States cares about good behavior, cares about stability and peace, cares about democracy, cares about the people who are committed to the war against terror, which is a common international problem. And I think that other countries will follow suit. I think South Sudan has been supported by big countries and there wasn't any downside. I can think of it. A lot of African states came to the inauguration of South Sudan's independence on the 7th of July. My president and myself have had the privilege of witnessing that historic moment in South Sudan. And I have to say, a lot of visitors have embraced us and they welcomed us, and they were wishing us that us that we are going to be the next country. Our flag has been raised, which we are very happy with, for the first time in a country that's not Somaliland. That shows the attitude of African states and some other countries have moved on. I can't think of any downside. I think it would be only positive results of that decision.

Question public: [00:12:18] Steve Evans from the Marine Corps University Press. Just a quick question on. Well, first, the comment. I don't think the United States or the UK should wait for the A.U.. I mean, we've been polite. They've had their chance. If they didn't want to avail themselves of it, then we should just go ahead and recognize you. Can you elaborate a little bit more on the recent deal that Somaliland affected with with China. In regard to the improving the port of Berbera?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:12:49] Yes. This specific initiative was as a result of an approach we have received from a Chinese investor and that Chinese investor has struck a deal with the Ethiopian government about producing natural gas. And they start thinking, about because Ethiopia is a landlocked country, they say they want it to have a port where those resources can be exported internationally. They also needed a factory which can transform natural gas into a liquid gas, which will be an end product for export. And Berbera

is the closest port to Ethiopia. At the moment Ethiopian government and Ethiopian business community make use of the Djibouti port, which I think they will continue because they have this massive country. They have a very ambitious development plan. Ethiopia wants to become a middle income in ten years time. That's their ambition, I think. They would need more ports, Djibouti, Somaliland and other ports. And then the Chinese have approached us and they want us to see whether we can accommodate for that purpose. And we we started talking to them. So there is no deal done yet. We started this is an initial talks about how we can make a deal. So we went to China. We have start talking about them. Obviously we will be thinking about the financial terms, the legal terms, the technical aspects. We are taking all those advice at the moment, but we are interested in embracing international investments, whether it comes from China or from the US or from Arabic states, it doesn't matter. We want to have international investors interested in our country that will help us to provide jobs, that will help us to take our profile higher than it is now. And we think it will encourage other investors and other people to come to Somaliland. So, yes, we are excited about that process. We hope that will produce some good results.

Question public: [00:15:16] Let me just comment on something. This is virtually the same response the US government gave when Minister Sumitry (name not sure) came here in 1992 to talk to the Hanke Cohen, the State Department, about the issue of recognition. Part of the reasons that I wrote that article was because I didn't think our arguments were getting an audience. It's unfortunate that the State Department hasn't moved appreciably beyond a point of 20 years ago, virtually on this position. And I'm sad that we haven't had more success in getting the State Department to be bolder on the recognition issue. I think there is an important difference between South Sudan and Sudan because it was the comprehensive peace agreement process. And one of the arguments that works against you is there's nothing there on the other side to negotiate with. That is two willing and able partners for able to negotiate a dissolution of their union, then that would nobody have a problem with that. The problem is there's nothing to negotiate with on the other side. Item three that I worry about. In fact, on my way over here, I had a word with David Shinn. David is professor at George Washington, as you know, was ambassador to Ethiopia. And his comment was on meeting you and sorry that he couldn't be here. But he echoed the recent press release about, well, if al-Shabab withdraws from Somalia, then that vacuum will be filled again with warlords and the clan structures that they manipulate to create the darkness that has governed Somalia for a long time. And there's a fear among the learned in this community or within Washington, that

fear that a repeat, if you would, of the horrors of the early nineties. And then lastly, as a comment, I know that you've had this discussion. Whenever I talk to the oil companies that have declared force majeure on their properties in Somaliland, they worry, notwithstanding the border issue with what land which, as you know, colors some of those properties, is that even if we were to go back in there, we would never be able to get insurance coverage on our you know, on our operations. And secondly, what would prevent another government from trying to somehow renegotiate these rights? And then, you know, thirdly, if we brought in a partner, what would the partners say? Because they might eventually be subject to a suit by the original holder. I mean, there's lots of complications here on the oil, which I get frustrated by, as I'm sure you do. So those are just some some observations which you don't have to respond to.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:17:57] No, no, absolutely. I agree with you. And just the point that if I can pick up the point of David Shinn about about the warlords coming, it has happened last week. The al-Shabab has occupied many space within Mogadishu. That the space has been well, a couple of spaces have been taken already by warlords. Warlords are not in favor of peace and stability and security, and they don't want the TFG to succeed. So the TFG it's very clear that they are so weak that they can't even capitalize on the recent achievements on the ground. So his assessment has already happened. And we're seeing. And your comments on the CPA. That's right. One of the key objectives for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan was to make unity attractive first in six years. And if that's not, it doesn't become attractive, then it provided an opportunity for the people in South Sudan to have a referendum on whether they wanted to go alone. We think that Somaliland has been in a unity with Somalia for from 1960 to 1990, which is 30 years. So we have given a unity. We have tried to make unity attractive. We sacrificed a lot. It didn't become attractive. It became destructive. And then what we are saying now is we had a referendum in 2001 in Somaliland in which people were asking, do we really want to go alone or do we still want it to be? And overwhelmingly, the people in Somaliland said, no, we want to go alone, we want to be independent. So, yes, I think Somaliland has had our own way of CPA. And there is no country like North Sudan that we can talk to and negotiate about our exit because of the squabbles, because of the division, because of the different groups, al-Shabab, the TFG, the warlords are now coming. So many groups, you cannot pick and choose a group. That's what I wanted to address, just as a comment on that.

Moderator: [00:20:06] Minister, if I can venture about a comment and then follow with the question, I've having long been an advocate as many in this room know for Somaliland. I'm now convinced that part of the problem that Somaliland has is you're too good. You don't present problems. You keep your 500 miles of coast free of piracy. So we don't need to patrol there to keep pirates away. You're stable enough that we ship prisoners from Guantanamo to you because we wouldn't dare ship them to Mogadishu. And you, the former government, agreed to take these people when we couldn't find anywhere else to take them. You don't attack your neighbors. It in fact, you do everything right so you can be ignored. It reminds you that the I often think maybe Somaliland's salvation might be that movie. You know, the mouse that roared. Maybe you would declare war on us, and then we'll defeat you in 5 minutes and then then proceed to rebuild [laughter]. But more seriously, I think one of the problems actually, that Somaliland does face in this town and many other capitals is that people presume that since you've been so good for all 20 years now, things will always be the same. So we can take you for granted. We'll worry about the people in Mogadishu since we're going to give them another year. You know, the audits reveal that they stole 96% of their bilateral aid the last two years. So we're going to give them another year to improve upon that record. So you improve a greater efficiency, you know, could you comment on that? If we continue, the international community, continues to ignore Somaliland in the worst case scenario, which I certainly hope doesn't come to pass that we continue to ignore, will things always remain the same? My suspicion is they won't and that we're making a major mistake in the international community by simply taking you for granted for 20 years and thinking it will always be the same.

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:22:15] Absolutely bitter. I agree with you. In fact, one of the key ideas I'm going to share or have been sharing with Westerners here in the US is you cannot take Somaliland's stability for granted. We have been working on stability and security and democracy for over 20 years. And that's because we are fully committed into promoting our position. But we will not going to be able to sustain those achievements alone. I think those achievements would have to be recognized and supported and defended. I don't think we would be able to do that alone. So this is a clear choice for the international community. We understand the focus on Mogadishu, but we don't think that has to be used as an excuse of ignoring Somaliland, stability and security and democracy. So I agree with Peter. We cannot guarantee, I think this is a message that we are sending out to the international community, that we need to be taken seriously, we need to be supported and we need to be engaged and

acknowledged. And the question about Somaliland being too nice. It's not a joke. I was told by the African Union that we cannot take your case to the Peace and Security Council in African Union because you are not in war at war with anyone. And Somaliland has no intention, by the way, to cause trouble with anyone [laughter]. That's not what we are aiming to do. But it was given in a conference like this that we are too nice, but we think that behaviour has to be acknowledged. We feel that it has to be rewarded by both the African Union but also by the Security Council.

Moderator: [00:24:08] If I can just follow up. You're asking for engagement as you have meetings around town. I know. I realize this is your first visit as foreign minister to Washington. What specific items, If there were two or three items that you would like to have from the United States in concrete terms other than recognition, which unfortunately, I don't think it's going to come immediately. What are you asking for? What can we deliver realistically?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:24:36] I think one of the concrete issues which I think can be easily delivered is, the Security Council gets regular reports on Somalia. In fact, in two days time, the ssrc, the secretary special representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, will be delivering a speech or a report for the Security Council and members. Often in those reports, Somaliland doesn't get mentioned. The UN Security Council thinks Somalia is one. They tend to believe the territorial integrity of Somalia. They acknowledge our progress and stability. But in those reports, we don't get mentioned. We are asking the United States government and other friendly other countries to ensure that Somaliland is progress in stability, democracy, ambitions and plans and the role that we can take in the region has to be reported on on a regular basis in the way that Somalia is gets reported for the Security Council. So that's one idea that we want to share with our friends and with the United government. And that's one thing. The other thing we would like to talk about is if the international community continually asks us, why don't you talk to the TFG, can you help? We would like to help, but we would like to be able to access to an international regional conferences where the issue of the region, including Somalia, gets discussed. So we would like the United States of government to help us to become a partner to the International Contact Group, for example, is a group of countries led by, I think the US is one of the countries that leads that process to try to engage us. So we need to access international forums. We need to be invited for the UN Security Council briefings. So we will come and

talk about Somaliland's progress and the role we can take in the regional security. Another issue is about piracy. Piracy. Even though we don't produce pirates in Somaliland, we have been affected by the problem as a result of that. The United States government can engage us and think creatively with us about ways in which we can help America and other countries, but also help ourselves in reducing the risk posed by piracy in the region. So these are one of the ideas we would like to share with America.

Question public: [00:27:23] Thank you. Ed Allen, Ibtc. Obvious to me, obviously the dual track initiative has represented an important step forward. In what ways can the dual track be strengthened to benefit people who have been trying to live peacefully and to advance their own development?

Mohamad Abdullahi Omar: [00:27:49] As I said, dual track policy offers a new opportunity for Somaliland, but also stable areas in Somalia. But I think if the dual track policy would have meant an increase in US aid assistance to Somaliland, and if that assistance would be based on a bilateral assistance in a way that the Somaliland, I don't mean a budget support cash coming from the USA and coming in going into the the budget of Somaliland government. But if there were trust funds where those money is put on and Somaliland government would have a role to play in deciding which areas those money is going to be spent on which sector is those moneys going to be? I think that would have been a good progress, a way forward for Somaliland. Another issue would be the security and we are expected to fight against piracy. We are expected to fight against terrorists in the region, but we are not allowed to develop our security sector. We don't actually share a lot of intelligence and information with America, with other countries. I hope that the dual track approach would facilitate those areas of cooperation. It would help us to train and develop our security sector, military and police. It will help us to get ships and boats in order to fight against pirates. And it will help us to have some military stuff that we can bring in into Somaliland in order to defend ourselves against terrorists.

9.6 Transcript 6

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address this meeting about Somaliland. The Borama Conference in 1993 was of critical importance for the future of our country. Broadly speaking, it had three major outcomes. First, it helped to establish a framework for managing security; second, it aided the definition of Somaliland's political structures, which laid the

foundations of an independent state; and third, it marked the transfer of power from the Somali National Movement to a civilian government.

The Transitional National Charter adopted at Borama reaffirmed Somaliland's sovereign independence, a principle first proclaimed two years earlier at the Burco Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples.

In 2001, this decision was endorsed by a referendum in which the overwhelming majority of the population voted to maintain the country's independence. Since then, the people of Somaliland have not wavered in their commitment to achieving international recognition of their status as an independent state.

The present government naturally shares this aspiration and has sought to advance the vision of an independent Somaliland which enjoys full international recognition. We have embarked on a process to achieve recognition through an incremental approach, by strengthening our governance, consolidating our democracy, reinforcing our security, and cooperating with other states, including both our neighbours and the major powers. President Silanyo's recent visits to Ankara, Dubai, London and Washington are evidence of this.

Meanwhile, we have initiated talks with our neighbour Somalia in a historic departure from the policy adopted by previous Somaliland governments. Somaliland accepted the invitation to attend the London Conference on Somalia in February 2012, and our Parliament changed the law in order to permit President Silanyo to be present. We persuaded the UK as hosts to accept language in the final communiqué which recognised the need for the international community to support any dialogue that Somaliland and Somalia may agree in order to clarify their future relations. That in turn gave rise to the meetings at Chevening House and Dubai in June 2012, which launched the talks process. The meeting in Ankara on 13 April of this year saw the talks resume under Turkish facilitation, and we now plan a further meeting with Somalia in the next two to three months.

The dialogue with Somalia will focus in the short term on security cooperation. We hope that the agenda can then widen to cover a range of other matters including trade and investment. In the longer term it is our hope that the talks could provide a means by which the two countries can address the issue of political relations, and the associated constitutional questions. We are

encouraging the wider international community to support the dialogue, as it provides a peaceful mechanism by which the concerned parties can build their on-going collaboration.

Unfortunately, we were unable to accept the invitation to attend next week's London Conference on Somalia. Our absence is caused by the fact that Somalia will be a co-host of the meeting, and that, unlike the February 2012 Conference, the arrangements do not acknowledge the unique status of Somaliland. Attending the conference on such terms would compromise Somaliland's position on international recognition, something that as a government we are not prepared to do.

If Borama marked a major step forward in consolidating our internal security, Somaliland has since focused on cooperating with external partners in combating the scourges of terrorism, piracy and jihadism. Like its neighbours, Somaliland is threatened by terrorism and jihadism, and we have worked with the USA, UK, Ethiopia and Djibouti amongst others to reduce this threat, in particular through intelligence sharing.

We have ensured that pirates are unable to use our country as a safe haven from which to launch their attacks. In February 2012, our Parliament supported a change in the law to permit convicted pirates to serve their sentences in our prisons. In the same month, we signed an agreement with the Seychelles providing for the transfer of such prisoners to our jails, and there are now around 30 pirates serving prison sentences in Somaliland as a result. Thanks to help from donors, the prisoners enjoy conditions that comply with international human rights norms.

In the wider region, Somaliland is becoming more integrated in economic, political and strategic terms. Djibouti and Ethiopia are no longer destinations for thousands of Somaliland refugees fleeing massacres in their homeland; they are now economic and security partners. Today, Somaliland looks to Djibouti for investment opportunities and cooperation in anti-piracy and other security initiatives. Ethiopia is a valued partner in the areas of immigration, counter-terrorism, education and trade, and Berbera is growing in importance as a major hub for Ethiopian imports and exports. Talks have been underway at senior official level covering these issues. Somaliland enjoys cordial relations with Kenya, and has also become more involved in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), where we seek observer status.

The transition to civilian government made possible by Boroma, and the new political structures which the conference agreed, also laid the foundations for a process of state-building in Somaliland. In 1993, democracy was more of a dream than a reality. After more than a decade of peaceful domestic politics, Somalilanders today are preparing to hold a sixth round of elections to choose their representatives at the presidential, parliamentary and local levels. All of the recent elections were monitored by international observers, and were found to be free and fair.

The provision of free universal primary education, the expansion of medical services and water distribution in both urban and rural areas, and the return of our diaspora in great numbers all testify to our achievements. Our government has no foreign debt, and our budget for 2013 of US\$174m is the largest and most balanced in our history. The Somaliland Trust Fund, set up by the UK and Denmark, will give us a greater say in the way in which development assistance is spent in Somaliland.

The lack of international recognition of course negatively impacts lending and insurance provision, discouraging much needed foreign direct investment in our country. The government is nevertheless doing its utmost to provide a welcoming investment environment. We have passed an Islamic Banking Act, and important pieces of legislation on commercial banking and energy are making their way through parliament.

The USAID- and DFID-funded Investment Climate Unit, as well as recently having produced guidelines on business confidence, economic regulations and value-chain assessments, are helping foreign investors navigate our economy and connecting local business people to regional and global networks. Coca Cola's opening of a US\$17-million state-of-the-art bottling plant and the latest oil agreement with Norway's DNO demonstrate investors' confidence in Somaliland. The port of Berbera has the potential to become a strategic commercial hub both for Somalia and the region.

What all this shows is Somaliland functioning as a state, maintaining security within defined borders, delivering services to its people, while collaborating with neighbours and the wider international community to address regional challenges. That both helps our people in the short term, and legitimizes Somaliland's claim to international recognition. I cannot say when Somaliland will be recognized, but I can say that its quest for recognition is legitimate on both political and legal grounds, and I am therefore confident that it will happen.

I would now like to turn to the question of eastern Somaliland. Sool, Sanaag and Togdheer have been a part of Somaliland since the time that our country was a British protectorate, and remained so after Somaliland joined the Union of Somalia from 1960 to 1991. Although Garowe asserts that these regions belong to Puntland, its claim has no legal or historical basis.

Moreover, the Somaliland government is the only administrative entity with the electoral mandate to govern, and with the capacity to maintain security, in the area.

Regrettably, there has been some localized conflict in the region. In some cases, outsiders with little popular support on the ground, such as Khaatumo, have fomented violence.

The government's response to violence has been lawful and proportionate. No accusations of excessive use of force have been voiced by the international human rights organizations that monitor and visit our country, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch; or by UNPOS, the UNDP-funded Observatory for Conflict and Violence Prevention or other international NGOs based in Somaliland that monitor and work in these regions.

Somaliland continues to put its faith in the localized traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that have kept our country peaceful for so long. Our government continues to engage with local elders and other stakeholders to address the root causes of our issues. For example, Saleban Haglatsiye, former leader of the SSC militia, recently chose to join the Somaliland government. Many other eastern politicians have been incorporated into the government as well.

Recognising that one of the underlying issues in the region is its relative poverty, and in particular access to land and water, the Somaliland Government has decided to focus more money this year on development projects in the east. National security agencies will also establish a presence there. Somaliland would welcome further support from donors for this region as well.

I would like to end by talking about Somalia. Somaliland has a strong interest in seeing stability restored in our neighbour, and we welcome the emergence of a more legitimate government under President Hasan Sheikh Mohamud. We would like to play a role in helping to stabilize Somalia further, including by sharing our experience of building peace and democracy in a Somali political context.

The international community should be realistic about the long and difficult road ahead for Somalia. Recent terrorist attacks in Mogadishu show how fragile the security situation is, even in the capital itself, and the government there is largely dependent on AMISOM for maintaining security in those areas which it nominally controls.

We understand why the international community is placing a lot of emphasis on ensuring that the new government receives the help which it requires in order to liquidate the threat from Al Shabaab, secure peace and stability, and build legitimate government institutions capable of delivering the services which the Somali people have lacked for more than two decades. At the same time, a strong Somalia cannot be achieved by neglecting Somaliland's achievements and aspirations. Doing so would be a historic mistake, and could serve to undermine a country which has proved itself to be an area of relative tranquility in an otherwise unstable area. Any diversion of aid away from Somaliland would put at risk the value of the aid already delivered. The international community should support both Somaliland and Somalia.

It is understandable that the UN should look again at its arrangements for delivering aid to the region given the new government in Mogadishu. However, Somaliland is a separate country with quite different development needs. It is not acceptable to my government that decisions on aid to Somaliland should be taken by a UN structure based in Mogadishu, in consultation only with an entity which has no presence in my country and no control over our territory. We have made our views clear to the UN on this point.

It is equally unacceptable to Somaliland that Somalia should adopt a constitution which purports to lay claim to our territory, or that it should declare an Exclusive Economic Zone off our coast. I wrote to the President of the UN Security Council about these points, and emphasised that Somaliland reserved the right to declare its own Exclusive Economic Zone. Here I would remind you of the final paragraph in the Ankara Communiqué, in which Somaliland and Somalia agreed to refrain from any act which may put the continuation of the Dialogue at risk.

To conclude, Somaliland has come a long way in the 20 years which have passed since the Borama Conference. We have made considerable progress in the areas of state-building and democratisation. We have engaged with the international community, collaborating in efforts to defeat terrorism, jihadism, and piracy. We took the initiative to embark on a dialogue with Somalia, which offers a means whereby we can discuss our views on Somaliland's political

status. We will continue our efforts to achieve international recognition. We believe that the international community will come to realize that recognising our country will be an essential means of stabilising the Horn of Africa.

Thank you.

9.7 Transcript 7

Interviewer: [00:00:08] Hello and welcome to the New Europe studios, where you can watch us make the news. Today, I'm speaking to His Excellency Muhammad Yunus. He's the foreign minister for Somaliland. Now, we may be familiar with the Horn of Africa, but many of us may not know too much about Somaliland, which is often called a small, secret success in Africa. Minister, could you just explain to our viewers a little bit about Somaliland and perhaps why we may not be too aware of it?

Mohamed Yonis: [00:00:43] Let me first take this opportunity to thank you for giving me this opportunity to have this interview with you. Somaliland, as you said, is a success story in the Horn of Africa. Somaliland was a former British protectorate from 1884 to 1960. So we have been under the protectors of Britain for 76 years. On 26th June 1960, Somaliland got its independence, and Somaliland has been recognized by 35 member states of the UN as an independent state. Five days later, Somaliland decided to join their neighbors from Somalia, the Italian part who got their independence on the 1st of July and became the Somali Republic. The objective or the intention of the reunion was to have the greater Somali. As you know, Somali speaking people are all in Djibouti, in Italian Somaliland, in Ethiopia and Kenya. And at the time, we had all the intention of having a greater Somalia. And that's what we have decided as the first nation that has got its own independence. And we joined the Italian part to form a union called Somali Republic. Unfortunately, that union was a disaster for us and it has never been ratified by the Parliament. But I think because of those emotions of becoming a greater Somalia, we stayed in there until the dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, came into power. He was a very brutal dictator, and he has actually destroyed and bombarded Somaliland and killed over 50,000, 200,000 people and half a million people fled and were displaced to Ethiopia and other neighboring countries. From there, Somaliland started fighting and we have managed to chase them out.

Mohamed Yonis: [00:02:48] And in 1991 we regained our own independence. Of course we are not recognized yet, but we are a de facto independent state and we are behaving like any other states in the world. I think most of the legal experts say that we do have the legal authority to be on our own because there was never an act of union that has been ratified. But we have decided to go the political way and talk to our neighbors in Somalia and see if we

could resolve our issues through dialogue. But as you said, Somaliland is peaceful, it's very stable, it's very democratic. And I think we have elections, we have the rule of law, we have proper human rights procedures in the country. We have freedom of expression and media. And I think Somaliland has proven to the rest of the world that it's a nation that needs to be recognized, that needs to be supported. But unfortunately, as you know, within the world that we are living now, most of the attention is wherever there is a war. We are doing very well as a peaceful nation. No one is really interested in you. But as you said, it's an oasis of peace. It's very stable. We're having a lot of projects and programs with different parts of bilateral member states, and we do believe that we will get our own independence very soon through dialogue. We decided to have a dialogue with Somalia and we are confident that Somaliland will get its independence very soon.

Interviewer: [00:04:19] It must also be a source of frustration that with Somaliland becoming almost a byword for for anarchy and disorder, that your independent nation, which is independent in all but recognition. Is a functioning democratic state that is completely ignored and bypassed.

Mohamed Yonis: [00:04:44] I think that's very true. Of course, we would like Somalia to be stable and we are very happy that the world is supporting Somalia's stability. And we do believe, as Somaliland is, we could play a role in really helping the rest of the world, in helping and restoring peace and stability in Somalia. We know them they are our brothers, we got the same culture, the same language, and I think we could contribute a lot. But as you said, it's frustrating when you see millions and billions of dollars going into a war zone where there is chaos and anarchy. And when we are doing well and we are not getting anything. So, of course, we would like to tell the rest of the world, do whatever you can do to support Somalia, but please encourage those who are helping themselves. We should provide an incentive for those who have performed well. Encourage them, give them the development aid and resources to do better. And that would be a perfect example for those who are misbehaving, to learn from those who are behaving and maybe learn from us and and behave well. And if they know that there is a response from the world that if you misbehave and create wars and whatnot, you will not get anything, maybe people will change. But I think we need the attention of the world. I think we need our own recognition. We need our independence. We're doing very well. We have an independent state and I think the world has decided to forget us and I think we are trying to do the best that we can. And I think I must say that we are on the forefront when it comes to issues of security. Somaliland is fighting terrorism, fighting piracy. And we have actually managed to remove pirates from our own shores. We have managed to be a buffer zone for both Ethiopia and Djibouti. And we are interacting with a lot of the international community when it comes to fighting terrorism. And

I think we have done well, and I think most of the world recognize the role that Somaliland is playing. But we definitely need to be recognized because recognition is hindering a lot of other areas in terms of development, in terms of investments, in terms of being and being a member of the international community.

Interviewer: [00:06:55] I mean, I remember your referendum over your constitution. Now, the fact that Somaliland in 2001, I believe, could organize a constitutional process and a public referendum on this is something that Somalia at the time just couldn't possibly achieve. So this shows to me and I think I hope people will look into it and learn a bit more that you are a country in all but recognition. And this recognition prevents you from becoming like a legal entity, which enables you to deal with this. So what would you say that this lack of recognition has done in your fight against terrorism because you've been real victims of a very brutal form of terrorism that's been very hard to eradicate from the Horn of Africa.

Mohamed Yonis: [00:07:55] I think we have done well when it comes to issues of fighting terrorism. I think most or 50% of our budget actually goes to security. Even though we don't have a lot of resources. We are spending a lot of a lot of our money on security to try to ensure that there are no terrorists within our region or within our country or within the neighboring countries. And I think that shows that the amount of resource that we are spending on security alone, which we believe is a priority for us because we want to have a peace and stability, we could have used it otherwise for education, for social services, for health and the rest. But the first security is key, and I think it's important for the world to realize that we are investing that money, not only in securing Somaliland, but we are securing our neighbors. And I think we are also securing the streets of Europe because we do believe if we manage to push out and to fight the terrorists coming into the rest of the world, I think it's a good thing for everybody. So it is very sad. And as you said, we had the referendum, 97% of the Somalilanders voted for independence. We had five elections that had been seen to be fair and free. We are having now this year hopefully a presidential election and the parliamentary elections. The EU and other donor countries are actually supporting the process and I think we have proved, we proved to the world that we are capable of being a very democratic nation, I think we are really performing better than many other African states. But definitely recognition, as you said, is key. We need to get the recognition issue sorted out very soon through dialogue. Legally, I think we do have a very strong case because we do believe that there was never an act of union that has been ratified between us and Somalia, but we do believe that we should handle it politically and through the dialogues that are taking place now between us and Somalia. We hope we will have our own independence soon. The last talks were in Djibouti in December of last year, a month ago, where the president of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, hosted both the Somali president and the Somaliland president. And we

have agreed to continue with those dialogues and hopefully we'll have the next one in February next month and we hope that we will have a way forward and I think we want to handle that thing in a very peaceful manner and have that dialogue rather than having a fight. And I think the rest of the world is very much aware of the fact that we have to be an independent state and we expect others to support the process and to be engaged in that process.

Interviewer: [00:00:04] And how is this lack of recognition affecting your country and its ambitions for development, for trade and for international relationships?

Mohamed Yonis: [00:00:15] Definitely, it is a major impediment and actually it's affecting us to have access to the development institutions like the World Bank or the African Development Bank or the Islamic Development Bank or the European Investment Bank. We cannot access loans and grants and money from those institutions. We cannot also have proper financial institutions. We lack proper banking. And I think the proper insurance and I think it hinders the development of the country. And I think it is a major problem for us not to be recognised because we do believe that we could do better. I think we are doing fine without the recognition, but I think if we have the recognition and the independence we believe and access to resources, access to money, access to funds, to a sitting of the United Nations being a member of the EU, be a member of the GATT, being a member of the Islamic Organisations and the rest. I think we will definitely do better and I think we are a very moderate Islamic nation. There is no extremism in Somaliland. We have been fighting terrorists and I think recognition would help us a lot achieve our own ambitions and I think there would be more success stories for us if we are a recognized state.

Interviewer: [00:01:38] How is this campaign for recognition and also for developing and bringing assistance to your country? Have you noticed any kind of changes in attitudes in the UN or in the European Union?

Mohamed Yonis: [00:01:53] We do have over 22 UN agencies in Somaliland. We also have the European Union, they do also have an office. We are having actually an excellent relationship with a lot of institutions and countries. We are getting a lot of support through the Somaliland Development Fund. The Somaliland Development Fund is being financed both by the UK and Denmark and Norway and the Netherlands also just joined. And we have been asking the EU also to join. I think the international community are interacting with us because we do believe that we also have all of the requirements of statehood. I think we have the population, we have defined borders, we have a government, we are behaving like any other state. So quite a good number of actually getting an agreement with other institutions and

bilateral countries. So we do have, I think, what it takes to be a state, but you don't have the recognition yet. But we expect the international community to look into our case more deeply and support us because we have been an independent state, we have been on our own and you know, like Syria and Egypt or Gambia or Senegal or Mali and Senegal who have been together and decided to go back to their own regional states, which we will fall into that category. We are not like South Sudan or Eritrea, but we have been an independent state and I think we need to be going back to that status and have our own independence as quickly as possible.

Interviewer: [00:03:32] And what else would you be looking for from the European Union? Is there anything else that you would be?

Mohamed Yonis: [00:03:40] We came to Brussels, of course, to raise the profile of Somaliland. We came to educate and inform the European member Parliament about Somaliland's progress, about the stability of Somaliland, about the peaceful people that we are, about our fight with terrorism and piracy and the role that Somaliland is playing when it comes to issues related issues, that are a threat to the world. And I think many of them have recognised that we have attended the meetings of the development group and we have been for the Foreign Relations Group and we have explained to them where we stand and what we have done. And we also came to ask for more resources, more development aid. They do have an office that's supporting us, but you definitely need much more support from them. So it was an eye opener for all of them to really see because many of them were not really aware. So I think we are trying to do that, raising the profile and creating an awareness of what's happening in Somaliland so those European members of Parliament would understand the role that we are playing in actually fighting terrorists to come into the streets of Europe and the rest of the world. So it was a good opportunity for us to really interact with many of them, raise the profile of Somaliland and fight for our own independence and recognition.

Interviewer: [00:05:08] This is tragically is a very timely event with the killings in Paris, which is triggering a rethink of how do we deal with terrorism, which which can be homegrown, can come from converts, can come from the diaspora. So how does that change people's attitudes here as we're beginning to look again at how we combat terrorism, the experiences that Somaliland has had in dealing with this.

Mohamed Yonis: [00:05:39] I think many of them actually realize that and appreciate the role that Somaliland's playing when it comes to issues of terrorism, piracy, illegal fishing, human trafficking and the rest. And I think we have proven to the rest of the world that we managed to do this and we could help others how to deter similar incidents like the one that

has happened in Paris. I think, as you said, it could be homegrown. Many of those guys would come. We also have a lot of diaspora who are living in all of those countries, and we are also trying to educate our own diaspora in the European country not to get engaged with these events. They are listening and they know that peacefulness and behaving and interacting in a reasonable and civilized manner with the rest of the people that they are living with here in Europe is good for our image. And we have had meetings with our own communities here to explain to them that they should behave, that they should learn, that they should spread the words of of Somaliland's recognition to the rest of the world. So we believe that we are on the forefront when it comes to fighting terrorism. I think we need to compensate and encourage and provide a lot of incentives to those countries.

Mohamed Yonis: [00:06:56] We do have, for example, a Coast Guard in Somaliland that's actually fighting piracy. Pirates have been reduced now to nothing into our region. We have managed to push them out. They know that we have a prison for the pirates. In fact, I've taken quite a good number of prisoners from officials who are present in our in our prisons. We need some support. We need support for our Coast Guards so that we could find them, so that they don't come into the seas of Europe. We need more support for our security apparatus in terms of information sharing, in terms of intelligence sharing, in terms of supporting one another so that we try to trace and avoid that there are no people running loose all over the place trying to do harm. So I think Somaliland, in my view, is a key part of the international community. And I think recognition would have given us that opportunity to be there. The forums that people discuss issues at the EU and and other places, and we do believe that we could really do much more as a recognized and an independent state to fight the terrorism, to fight the piracy, to fight all of the bad extremists at doing it.

Interviewer: [00:08:12] Well, I want to thank you very much for listening and for bringing this to people's attention as we look towards the Horn of Africa. Thank you very much.

Mohamed Yonis: [00:09:10] Thank you very much.

9.8 Transcript 8

“We always feel Somaliland is not as well-known as we think it should be. We want people to understand where we are coming from.

Somaliland was declared a British protectorate in 1887. Between 1888 and 1897 international boundaries were established in agreement with colonial and neighbouring powers. Somaliland

was on the map. For 70 years it existed as a country and on 26 June 1960 it was granted independence on the same day as Madagascar.

After five days we rushed into a decision which we regretted for the next 30 years: the new State of Somaliland joined in a union with [the former Italian-administered territory of] Somalia to create the Somali Republic. The way the union was effected was legally questionable. Our people soon sensed that they were not being dealt with fairly. In June 1961, a majority rejected the official constitution of the new republic and Act of Union in a referendum. Six months later, a group of Somaliland military officers unsuccessfully attempted a *coup d'état*. Somalilanders felt their expectations of the union with Somalia were not being matched by reality.

In October 1969 a military coup led by Major-General Mohamed Siad Barre toppled the democratically elected government of the Somali Republic. The junta stayed in power until 1991. During its time in power Somaliland was under continual pressure: the people felt mistreated, marginalised and discriminated against. In 1981 the Somali National Movement (SNM) was founded. Resistance to the junta grew steadily and skirmishes more frequent. In 1988 full-blown war broke out, with the regime in Mogadishu retaliating against the SNM in an almost genocidal manner. Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, was utterly destroyed by artillery fire from bases around the city and planes launched from its own airport; 50-100,000 people lost their lives and about 500,000 were displaced.

In 1991, the regime was defeated in Somaliland and the government in Mogadishu was overthrown. In May, Somaliland leaders, statesmen, intellectuals and the people in general met at the Grand Conference of the Northern Peoples in Burao and decided to leave the Union and proclaim independence. A series of meetings to reconcile the people after the civil war ensued.

The peacebuilding process in Somaliland was an indigenous one. Help was offered from outside the country but Somalilanders decided not to accept because this would have involved conditions and timetables. People just wanted to talk, to reconcile, without time limitations. Of course the process did not always go smoothly, but finally, in 2001, a constitution was put to the people. It was approved by 97%, a majority of the population.

On political development and elections

Somaliland has held a series of successful elections since reclaiming its independence. Municipal elections were held in 2002 and 2012; presidential elections in 2003 and 2010; and parliamentary elections in 2005. All five elections have been internationally monitored and declared free and fair. There have been delays – three times in the case of the parliamentary elections. We are not proud of that. Democracy is not just about elections, it is about timely elections. Parliament has been sitting far too long. The issue of regional allocations within parliament is still to be resolved and the *guurti*, the upper house, is the ultimate authority on holding elections.

This year's presidential election, scheduled for March, has also been postponed to November. We know that the UK and other friends are upset about this delay. We have a special relationship with Britain and wouldn't be able to finance elections without their support and that of other friends. But it just couldn't be done. We couldn't have held an election with the drought at its peak and so many of our people displaced.

Somaliland has a very important **role in the region**. It is the most democratic country in the region. It has a liberal economic system. We have achieved peace through our own efforts and processes, without outside intervention, and we have a constitution that guarantees the right to free speech. We have established good relations with our neighbours and have succeeded in maintaining peace and security in a very troubled region. Somaliland is a role model, I think, a positive influence.

As far as Somalia is concerned, Parliament gave the government authority to hold general discussions with them. To date there have been eight meetings, but so far little has come of them.

On social development

Somaliland has made progress in social and economic development despite non-recognition. Hargeisa, the capital, was rubble in 1988. Today it is a thriving metropolis of almost one million inhabitants. We did this ourselves. There were hardly any schools left by the end of the civil war. Any teaching that took place was done under trees or corrugated iron. By 2015, however, Somaliland had 1,200 primary and secondary schools with 290,000 children enrolled. We also have 30 registered universities with 30,000 students enrolled.

The health sector was also totally destroyed. We had to start from scratch. Now we have 230 health facilities – 16 public and 15 private hospitals, 101 mother and child units and 181 health posts. International partners have been very supportive in this area.

We still have real problems with water supply. This is as much an issue of management as of scarcity, although I think we have made some progress.

On economic development

The decision to enter into an agreement with DP World for the development of Berbera port, and with UAE for the lease of a military base, are economic decisions. The two deals are entirely separate. The rationale for developing Berbera into a modern port, including an 800 metre extension to the existing facilities, is self-evident. Among other reasons, Somaliland has a huge trade deficit with Ethiopia and an expanded port will help to redress this while assisting Ethiopia to reduce its dependency on port facilities in Djibouti.

As far the base is concerned we will get a new 250km road worth US\$100-200 million, to link Berbera and Hargeisa to the Ethiopian border at Wajaale; a new cargo airport at Berbera, worth US\$30-50 million; and other social and economic infrastructure which is still the subject of negotiation. We also have secured access to the UAE labour market, which is very important given high youth unemployment. The imperative of job creation is absolutely in the forefront of our minds.

Some people have suggested that there are risks and downside to the agreements, particularly the one relating to the military base. There are always risks in every investment. Every decision you make has a downside. But we have judged these agreements to be to the overall benefit of the people of Somaliland and the region. We have consulted our neighbours and friends closely: we would not do anything to endanger the security of our neighbours because ultimately that would have an adverse effect on us.

I must speak about the drought that started in October 2016. Although it affects the whole of East Africa, it is the worst in living memory in Somaliland and Somalia. Somaliland is predominantly a pastoral economy and pastoralists have lost two-thirds of their livestock. That tells you how severe the situation is. Businesses and the diaspora have joined hands and are doing a remarkable job in providing relief, as is the international community. But we will need international help to address the fact that droughts used to occur every ten years or so,

now it's every other year. Climate change and population pressure are really biting in the region.

On recognition as a sovereign state

In 2005, an African Union (AU) fact-finding mission assessed Somaliland. It commented that “the fact that the Union between Somaliland and Somalia was never ratified and that it malfunctioned makes Somaliland’s search for recognition historically unique and self-justified in African political history”. The mission recommended that the AU should find a way of dealing with Somaliland as a “special case” and should be disposed to judge the situation from a historical standpoint.

Somaliland is not yet recognised internationally but it is a *de facto* state and fulfils all the requirements of a sovereign state. It has a defined territory; a government in authority; the authority to enter into agreements with states, corporations and international organisations; its own army, police force and currency; and four million people who consider themselves Somalilanders. Our case is convincing. In meetings with senior government officials of more than 20 states no one has ever told me otherwise.

There is a downside to not being recognised – non-recognition imposes a lot of challenges to our continued development. For example:

- We cannot access funding for infrastructure from certain types of lender, including the World Bank, the African Development Bank and Islamic banks
- We cannot be granted bilateral aid – aid must be channelled to us through a third party
- It is harder to attract foreign investment. We have plenty of interest from potential investors but they do not leave much of a footprint
- Travel opportunities are limited for people with only a Somaliland passport
- We have limited participation in international fora, even ones whose decisions affect us.

I believe the region and the world are poorer for the fact that Somaliland is not recognised. I do not think anyone is benefitting from non-recognition, but a great many people are losing out. I am confident the situation will change – I hope sooner rather than later.”

Selected questions from the audience

Q. Somalia is less secure and more corrupt than Somaliland but receives a lot more support from the international community? How do you explain that and how does it affect your government?

We have a blessing and a problem called the good child syndrome problem. The naughty child gets the attention. People seem to take for granted what is happening in Somaliland and prefer to fight fires in Somalia. In a way that creates an atmosphere where bad behavior is rewarded and good behavior penalized, which I do not think is right. There needs to be a balance. Of course Somalia needs help. We ourselves have helped her, for example during the last drought in 2011. But lack of attention hinders our efforts to deal with things like the current drought. Somalia receives external assistance amounting to about US\$2 billion a year, much of it for AMISOM, whereas Somaliland receives about US\$100-150 million a year.

Q. Regarding the deal with DP World over Berbera port and the lease of a military base to UAE, is non-recognition of Somaliland forcing the government to “sell the family silver”?

A. We certainly do not see it that way. We’re trying to add to the silver!

Q. There are reports of increasing, large-scale land-grabbing in Somaliland. What legal power exists to counter this?

A. According to our constitution all land belongs to the state. There is no freehold. In the British colonial era Somaliland was zoned: there were demarcated urban areas, agricultural areas and pastoralist reserves. This system has fragmented. Land-grabbing has become a big problem, particularly for pastoralists whose corridors for moving livestock are now blocked by people laying claim to the land. I think that is wrong and we must do something about it. The problem is the implementation of policy and the law. We are trying to improve this by producing a single Land Act.

Q. The history of modern Somaliland is related as if it is all about the SNM. What about Awdal and other regions?

A. I agree that not everyone involved in defeating Somali government forces rebuilding Somaliland after the civil war was SNM, but the SNM is part of our history – just like the union with Somalia is part of our history. We need to be fair to all parties in creating and relating our history. I mentioned the role of Borama in the peacebuilding process – the role of everyone should be acknowledged and where there is bias it should be countered.

Q. Might Somaliland advance the case for international recognition by becoming an associate member of The Commonwealth?

A. We believe we tick all the boxes for being a full member of The Commonwealth, but in the interim we would like to be associated in one way or another.

Q. What guarantees does the government have regarding aggressive use of the military base being leased to UAE, for example in Yemen operations?

A. A military base is a military base. I quite understand that there are legitimate concerns. But there are others in the region. Think of the multiple bases in Djibouti or UAE's base at Assab, Eritrea. I am not aware of any negative repercussions for host countries of these bases.

Q. Is the government trying to silence anyone discussing or opposing the DP World and military base deals?

A. There is never a good reason why voices should be silenced. Of course when you are negotiating deals you cannot discuss all the details in public. Transparency and consultation is important, but so is securing a good deal. Some terms will always remain confidential, as they would in any country in the world. Both deals were approved by Parliament.

Q. Is the government in Mogadishu trying to disrupt the DP World deal and lease of the military base to UAE?

A. The Government of Somalia has no authority whatsoever in Somaliland as far as Berbera is concerned. The deals are none of its business. Those with whom we signed the deals know exactly what the situation is. They negotiated with Somaliland as a state and they know what they are doing.

Q. While negotiating with UAE did you ask them to recognize Somaliland formally?

A. You can be sure we asked – we ask everybody we have dealings with! But in negotiation you do not always get everything you want. You can only push conditionality so far.

Q. What is being done to combat youth unemployment and emigration?

A. These are huge problems for Somaliland and the whole region. We are not happy that our young people risk their lives migrating, in an attempt to fulfil their aspirations elsewhere. The way to deal with it is to create jobs and that is done by attracting investment. In this respect, Somaliland would be given a substantial boost if our friends and partners would formally

recognize us a sovereign state. We also need to re-examine education. It is very academic – there are too few technical schools. We need to address this.

9.9 Transcript 9

Interviewer: [00:00:06] In April, I was in Somaliland for a documentary for Rudaw TV. During my visit, I met the country's foreign minister, Saad Ali Shire, and had a conversation with him about Somaliland's process of state building and their struggle for international recognition. Mr. Saad Ali Shire thank you for giving us this opportunity for an interview with Rudaw TV. So I would like to ask you a few questions about the situation in Somaliland. Your foreign policy and diplomatic efforts and all that. And the first question is, I am aware that for 25 years Somaliland has been trying to gain international recognition. Why do you think the world is not willing to give you that recognition? What's the reason?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:01:05] Well, first, I would like to welcome you to Somaliland and to the capital of Somaliland, and especially to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So pleasure to have you here. It's true. Well, let me first perhaps give you a bit of the background history of Somaliland. Somaliland was a former British protectorate from 1887 to June 26, 1960. So Somaliland was on the map for 73 years. It's not a new country. And then in 1960, when we took our independence, we formed a government with the Prime Minister and a cabinet, and we had a legislature. And then at that time, there was a lot of anti-colonial sentiment and feeling within the community. There was a lot of African nationalism within the continent and you know, people wanted to see all Somali speaking regions come together. There is that dream of creating greater Somalia. And in that wave of sentiment, I think we rushed into joining Somalia, even though, in fact, the union was legally questionable in the way it happened, because it was supposed to happen this way. It was supposed that the parliament of Somaliland will pass a union law and the parliament of Somalia will also pass a union law. The two would be put together and then the outcome will be signed by both parties. That was the way it was supposed to be done, but it wasn't done at all. In fact, the union law proposed by the Somalia legislature was ignored totally. And we didn't sign any union as such with Somalia. And when the union law proposed by Somalia was put to a referendum, our people in Somaliland had rejected it. The majority of the people voted against the union law, against the Constitution. So, you know, there wasn't really much of a union. There was a desire for a union. But legally, the union really did not take place in a way. But nevertheless, we have been together for 30 years, and during those 30 years, the people of Somaliland felt

marginalized and discriminated against and suffered a lot, particularly in the last ten years in the hands of the Siad Barre government, which was in power at that time. We lost from 1981 to 1991, maybe up to 100,000 people.

Interviewer: [00:04:00] In prisons, executions or how?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:04:02] Well, I mean, particularly in the latter half of the eighties, there was a sort of a genocide campaign against our people. Up to now, we have identified 243 mass graves in the country.

Interviewer: [00:04:20] Separate mass graves.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:04:22] Separate mass graves, 243 separate mass graves. And the country was entirely mined. They laid more than a million mines. We have identified up to roughly 1000 mine fields in the country.

Interviewer: [00:04:36] This was all done by the government?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:04:38] By the government itself.

Interviewer: [00:04:42] Not a foreign country?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:04:45] No, and this city, Hargeisa, the capital was flattened, bulldozed to the ground by aerial bombardment and artillery shelling by the government itself.

Interviewer: [00:04:56] So basically, you gave Somalia a chance. For 30 years to live together in real partnership and in a democratic place. But what you got in return was this. Bombings and killings.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:05:10] Yeah, we were victimized, basically. And then in 1991, when the government collapsed. We have been fighting against the government for ten years and when finally it collapsed, our people decided to leave the union because that wasn't serving any purpose at all. You know, the net result of the union was total destruction and displacement. And our people came together and said, well, that's enough. We're going to reclaim our

independence. And they declared independence. And that was 25 years ago. And since then, we have been an independent country with a democratic form of government. We have an elected president and an elected parliament, elected councillors. We have our own army, our own police people, and our own flag and currency.

Interviewer: [00:06:03] So you mean as soon as Somaliland started ruling itself in 1991, things started to change for the better? The opposite of what it was under Siad Barre?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:06:12] Absolutely. Absolutely. I think what we have achieved in the past 25 years, you know, has no comparison with what was done in the previous 30 years or so. Just to give you an example. In 1991, there wasn't one single university in the country. Today we have more than 30 universities. That is an example.

Interviewer: [00:06:33] And so you have this functioning democracy here. You have elections in Somaliland, elected president, elected members of parliament, and stability because Somalia, we know what it has been going through since the early nineties. Going back to the first question, why the world is not recognizing you is right about the consideration of sovereignty or what?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:07:02] Well, in a way, Somaliland is a de facto state in the sense that it meets all the requirements of a state. It has defined boundaries, international boundaries. It has a defined population. It is a government in control and authority, you know. It has the ability to enter into agreements with other countries, with international companies. So it has been in fact, we have we have we have achieved de facto recognition. The only thing that's missing is the sovereign recognition of Somaliland.

Interviewer: [00:07:38] And I think that should be easy because you have already declared independence in 1991. And the difference with the Kurdistan region, for example, is that it is almost a state. It is ready to be a state, but it has not officially declared. You are one step ahead because you declared.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:07:56] Yeah, we declared.

Interviewer: [00:07:56] So what's the reason? They don't give you that recognition. They want to fix Somalia?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:08:03] Yes. I think there are maybe two main reasons. One has to do with Somalia. I mean, there is the notion at one point that, well, a lot is fast fix Somalia before we address the issue of Somaliland. You know, and then, of course, there is the issue of, we started talking with the Somalis back in 2012 and some of the people are saying, well, let us wait for the talks to succeed, you know, or in somewhere. So that's another reason. Of course, Somalia is still claiming Somaliland, even though, in fact, we have nothing to do with Somalia at the present time. And that's an issue that itself a lot of Europeans will say, well, it is an African matter, so why don't you talk to the A.U. and get recognition from the African countries before we can recognize? But we think that's not right at all for many reasons. First, we have a good legal case at the end of the day for Somaliland to be recognized by the international community. And I think we have also a moral case. You know, take into consideration all the things that we went through and the suffering our people had to bear during the 30 years in association with Somalia. So we think we have both a legal and humanitarian case for us to be recognized by the international community. But I think it is a matter of time. We're very optimistic.

Interviewer: [00:09:33] And if Somalia, I've heard or read in places that if the world says if Somalia recognizes you, then it would make it easier for a world to recognize. Do you think Somalia will ever say, okay, I recognize you as an independent state?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:09:49] Well, I really hope so, because I honestly believe that the recognition of Somaliland by everyone, including Somalia, will also benefit Somalia itself. You know, I think we would be better off as a neighboring brotherly countries who will cooperate on all issues of mutual interests.

Interviewer: [00:10:10] There are some concerns or some in the world. They say if the Kurdistan region of Iraq declares independence, it will cause instability in the region, which is not true. The Kurdish leadership says no, it will create more stability. Yes. Do people say the same thing about Somaliland.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:10:31] They do. They do. In fact, a lot of people talk about the opening of a Pandora's box, and this is what they say. But we had a mission from the A.U. in 2005. And, in fact, they put together a very good report, a very positive report, and they said that wouldn't apply in the case of Somaliland, because there is no there is no case like Somaliland, in the history of Africa. So there is no comparison. And the independence and the recognition of Somalia will not cause the Pandora's box. You know, people talk about because there is no country without history.

Interviewer: [00:11:06] Especially because you voluntarily joined Somalia. It's not that you are separating from Somalia.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:11:12] Yes. We voluntarily joined. We were not forced by anyone at all and we voluntarily left the union. You know, and this is not the first time this happened in Africa. There were other instances, for example, Senegal and Gambia. They joined as two independent countries and then separated as two independent countries. As you know, there is a union between Syria and Egypt at one point and they separated again, you know, peacefully. And even there were cases where, like Sudan, where you had one country, which now is two peacefully separated. I mean, they had a war for a long time, but the separation was negotiated and they separated. And that did not cause the Pandora's box.

Interviewer: [00:11:55] Actually, I think most separations in cases like Kurdistan, Somaliland, South Sudan, it stops bloodshed.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:12:08] I think it's more stabilizing than destabilizing.

Interviewer: [00:12:11] Yes. And as a foreign minister, can you tell us that? What's the foreign policy of Somaliland? Is it to have good relations with all of its neighbors? Because some fear that an independent Somaliland or an independent Kurdistan or some other places might pose a threat to one of its neighbors or to the neighborhood. What kind of foreign policy do you pursue?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:12:42] Yes. Well, in our in our foreign policy, we pursue three strategies. One is political strategy and has to do with building good relations with the international community, with other countries, and collaborating with them on many areas of mutual

interest or concern. The second strategy is the economic strategy. You know, we want to attract as many investors as possible, but also we want to ensure that we receive aid from the international community. But we also pursue a security strategy to make sure that we create allies who share the same interests with us, to make sure that our country and our region is peaceful and stable. So these are the sort of policies that we follow within the foreign policy.

Interviewer: [00:13:34] Has any country refused to deal with Somaliland diplomatically or economically out of consideration for Somalia?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:13:49] Well, not really. Not really. But I have been to 13 countries, I think, in the last year. And this year I've been to six countries. And I met with, you know, dozen ministries even this year. And I have had never come across someone who would say, you're talking rubbish. You know, we don't agree with you. I think everybody who hears the story of Somaliland is very sympathetic, says, well, you know, I think you should be recognized. So I think we have a compelling case here in Somaliland for the international community to recognize.

Interviewer: [00:14:24] And do you think, how many countries are willing or have expressed to Somaliland willingness to recognize you, but they wait for another country to do it first.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:14:37] Well, in fact, there are several countries who said, you know, we'll be the second not the first, you know. I want to mention that in front of the camera. But I think there's a lot of sympathy around the world for Somaliland case.

Interviewer: [00:14:52] And so, so far, no country has recognized Somaliland.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:14:55] Not yet [said with emphasis].

Interviewer: [00:14:57] Okay. But currently you have good relations with Djibouti. Ethiopia. And you haven't posed a threat to Somalia?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:15:07] Not at all. Not at all. I mean, for the past 25 years, you know, we didn't cause any trouble in Somalia. That's not our intention. But our vision is a peaceful, stable region which is economically integrated in this part of the world. That's our vision. So

we mean no harm to anyone but harmony, even to Somalia, despite all the suffering that we experienced in the hands of Somalia in the 30 years we were together.

Interviewer: [00:15:37] Mm hmm. Do you think the world should know more about Somaliland? Is there enough knowledge out there in the world?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:15:46] My real feeling is that people don't know very much or as much as they should about Somaliland. I mean, ignorance, I think, is one of the barriers to recognition for Somalia. And we are working on that. I mean, nowadays, you know, the Internet, the social media, enable you to reach all parts of the world. So we are working on that. But I think the more people know about Somalia, the better.

Interviewer: [00:16:10] Mm hmm. Thank you. Thank you so much, Mr. Saad Ali Shire, for this opportunity. And it was nice talking to you.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:16:37] It's my pleasure. Thank you.

Interviewer: [00:16:38] Thank you very much.

9.10 Transcript 10

Interviewer: [00:00:00] Your Excellency, it's a pleasure sitting down and interviewing you on this occasion on Arabiya English. We'd like to get an introduction from you about Somaliland, an autonomous state that has been running its own system and economy and rule of law since 1991, I believe. Can you tell us more about it?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:00:22] Well, first, it's always a pleasure to be here. And I just would like to start by saying that a lot of people confuse Somaliland with Somalia. The two are different. Somaliland was the former British protectorate and Somalia was a former Italian colony. Somaliland got its independence on 26th June 1960 and was an independent state with a prime minister and a council of ministers and a legislative body before it joined Somalia in on 1st July 1960. So it was really, there were two independent states that formed the Somali Republic at that time. Now, Somaliland and Somalia were together for over 30 years. And, you know, that wasn't a very good experience for the Somaliland people. And when eventually the Somalia government collapsed in 1991, the people decided to reclaim their independence and return to the status quo of back in the 26th June 1960. And since 1991,

that's 27 years now. Somaliland has been an independent country. We have started reconciling our people in the early years and then decided to adopt democracy as a form of government. And that's what we have been doing. And since then I think we had six elections, three presidential elections and a parliamentary election and two council elections. And Somaliland is a peaceful, stable country in the Horn of Africa. It's an exemplary, in fact, in many ways.

Interviewer: [00:02:04] And how is Somaliland ruled? It's a presidential democratic system. But there are other factors that are involved, maybe tribal factors.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:02:14] Well, Somaliland, as I said, adopted the democratic system as a way of governing itself. We have three political parties which freely compete for the votes of the public. And we have a parliament which is elected by the people, by one man, one vote, and a president who was selected also by the people. So we have a presidential system and a parliamentary system at the same time. And it's a system that works very well for us. And we think we have one of the most transparent and accountable and democratic systems in the Horn of Africa.

Interviewer: [00:02:54] But why is there no international recognition for Somaliland?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:02:59] Well, by the way, Somaliland is in a way recognized. But de facto, it's only the the jury recognition, which is still elusive and missing. But everybody understands that there is a country out there called Somaliland with a government which has authority and control over its territory. Somaliland fulfils all the conditions of a sovereign state. It has defined borders. It has a permanent population, 4 million people. And it has the ability to enter into agreements with other governments, with international companies, in other institutions as well. So in a way, Somaliland is recognized. But of course, you know, we would like to see a de jure recognition to be a member of the international community.

Interviewer: [00:03:49] And are there any kind of objections to your autonomous state by Somalia?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:03:57] Well, Somalia still claims Somaliland to be part of Somalia when it's not. In fact, the facts on the ground that there is a country called Somaliland, which on its own, which not ruled by Somalia. So the claim is there, but it's just a claim, because the fact of the matter is Somaliland is a separate country.

Interviewer: [00:04:19] And there is an economic boom in Somaliland. There's banking. The banking systems. There are communications systems established. International transactions occur. How did Somaliland manage to do that within this last period?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:04:42] I think in Somaliland we have what you might consider to be a miracle because in 1991, for example, let's take the case of Hargeisa, which is the capital, was basically a rubble. You know, there was nothing standing in 1991 and just 26 years without assistance from the international community and without recognition. We rebuilt our cities, particularly the capital. You know, to the stage that we now, we have a bustling metropolis with over 1 million population. And we have dozens of universities. We have private banks, there are three private banks. And we have adopted, in fact, a cashless system of transaction at the present time, where one of the first, I think in the world when it comes to the cashless society using electronic money, you know, and I think we have achieved all that through our effort of our people, the diaspora people who are in America and in the West, in Western Europe, particularly and in the Gulf, in fact, has played a major role in rebuilding the country.

Interviewer: [00:05:51] I want to touch upon your relationship with the Gulf. And we see the UAE establishing a military base in Somaliland. Furthermore, DP World has taken over Berbera Port for a long term period of about 30 years and all these investments coming from the UAE. How are they helping grow the economy in Somaliland?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:06:19] Well, our relations with the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf, in fact, goes a long way. We had always a very good relationship, particularly economic and financial and commercial relationship with the United Arab Emirates and also with Saudi Arabia in the region. And, you know, we're just building on that. As you said correctly we we have given a 30 year concession to DP World to develop and extend the port of Berbera, which we think should be a major hub in the region to serve the countries not only Somaliland, but the countries in the region. We have many landlocked countries in that part of the world. We have Ethiopia, Uganda, South Sudan and so on. So we believe that's an initiative and a development which will help the whole region. As you also pointed out to, we gave a security facility to the United Arab Emirates to be used. And we hope I mean, some people sometimes express concerns about the about the impact of that, you know, or the instability that that may cause. As a matter of fact, as far as we are concerned, we think it's a stabilizing factor which added to the region. This is a very important region. More than 30,000 ships just pass in our seas through the Red Sea every year. And I think, is very important to make sure that that route, that important maritime route, is clear and free of piracy. And we hope the presence of the United Arab Emirates security will add to the

security of the region and for ensuring that we have a free flow of trade, of world trade in that part of the world.

Interviewer: [00:08:12] And you have over 800 kilometers of coastline. How do you secure yourselves from piracy, from what's going on in the north of Somaliland and the dangers of the Houthis hurting the maritime trade or even the Iranian ships and facilities?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:08:35] Well, you're absolutely right. We have about 800 kilometer long coast and we have been able to free that area of piracy. You know, piracy is a land based crime. And in fact, we have managed to make sure that the pirates do not have that base in Somaliland. And we have a Coast Guard which is efficient and strong. Of course, it can be developed. We hope it will be developed, and we hope the United Arab Emirates will help us develop, which is taking care of the security of the seas.

Interviewer: [00:09:09] So what's the role of the UAE from a security perspective in Somaliland and around the coast?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:09:16] Well, we hope the presence of the United Arab Emirates in Somaliland will strengthen, stability and security in the region. I mean, as you correctly pointed out, you know, there are some there is a lot of contention in that region at the present time. Unfortunately, it seems like we are going back to the bad Cold War sort of days. We believe the presence of the United Arab Emirates will add to stability in the region.

Interviewer: [00:09:47] And what are the threats that you see at the moment in the region around you?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:09:52] Well, we face the same threats that other region is in the other countries in the region face at the present time. There is the extremism. Of course, there is the piracy. There is the illegal immigration, human trafficking. I mean, these are all instabilities. And, of course, as you know, in Somalia, there is still a lot of instability going on in there. And now we have the war in Yemen, you know. So there are a good number of challenges at the present time in the region.

Interviewer: [00:10:26] And at this time, with all these threats around you, is that affecting the trade flow to Somaliland?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:10:35] Well, not really, exactly. The trade is just flowing as it used to be. But of course, it adds additional uncertainty and risk at the regional level, not necessarily at

the Somaliland level, at the regional level. You know, we would like to see the whole region peaceful and stable and prosperous. That's really our objective and aim.

Interviewer: [00:10:57] So how deep are your relationships with the other Gulf countries, with Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and so forth?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:11:06] Well, we have good relations, in fact, with all of them. We have good relations with Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia is our main export destination. Our main exports are livestock and they go mainly to Saudi Arabia up to 80%. We have also commercial ties and relations with Oman. We have good relations with Kuwait. There are a number of projects which are funds or funded in Somaliland. So we have a very good relationship with all the countries in the region.

Interviewer: [00:11:36] To what level or what end would you like to take those relationships?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:11:41] We would like to deepen the relationships with the Gulf countries. We would like to see more investors coming from the region. We would like to see more trade flows between us and the region. And in fact, we would like to see our economies more integrated. We have a lot of opportunities for investors, in particular in different areas in agriculture, in livestock, in minerals, in tourism, in services. We would like to see, you know, some of the investors in this part of the world coming to Somaliland and investing in it.

Interviewer: [00:12:17] And I would like to know more about the Foreign Direct Investment Office and the Trade Office that you are establishing in Dubai. What's the goal of that set up and what's the aim behind it?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:12:31] We are planning to set up an investment company within the Dubai International Financial Center, and the purpose of that company will be to facilitate investment in Somaliland as an international hub. That will be to attract investors not only from this part of the world, from the Gulf, but also from the rest of the world. Well, its role would be to create venture companies, joint companies, from investors in from different parts of the world. And it would be a facilitator. It would be a facilitating company. Basically, the companies would be working and operating in Somaliland, but the formation would take place here.

Interviewer: [00:13:13] And I wanted to know more about the relationship with Somalia. There's a new presidency in Somalia and there's a new presidency in Somaliland. And I

wanted to know if there's been any engagement or communication between the two governments.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:13:28] Yes. Well, we consider Somalia as a neighbor, and like the rest of our neighbors, who would like to have a good, cordial, friendly relationship with Somalia. We started a dialogue to establish our future relations with Somalia back in 2012, and that started in London. Since then, we had about maybe about ten different meetings, mainly facilitated by the Turkish. Now the talks are in suspense, has been suspended in 2016, but the president of Somaliland and the president of Somalia are committed to the resumption of the talks. And we hope that this year we will resume the talks again.

Interviewer: [00:14:15] Thank you very much.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:14:15] Thank you very much. It's my pleasure.

9.11 Transcript 11

Saad Ali Shire: [00:00:00] Well, the main message was to really put things into context. A lot of people do not know Somaliland or do not know Somaliland very well. So I went through the history of Somaliland. Somaliland, in fact, is a country with a history of over a century as a separate state. Over 70 years under the British rule and for the last 30 years on its own, from 1991 to today, 2020. And in 1960, when we got our independence from the British, the 26th of June, we were an independent state called the state of Somaliland. We had a parliament and a prime minister. And at that time, there is a lot of anti-colonial sentiment and a very strong nationalist sentiment as well. Our people wanted to bring together all the Somali inhabited territories. As you may be aware of, in 1884, the Europeans divided the Somali inhabited territories into five. The French Somaliland and the British protectorate and Italian Somaliland and Ogaden, which is part of Ethiopia. And the Kenia. So the purpose was to bring all the five together. And in that, in the emotion of the moment, we decided to unite with Somalia, which was a former Italian colony. And we agreed that our parliament to draft an act of union and parliament, to draft an act of union, and then to negotiate the common act of union. That did not happen. In fact, the act of union drafted by our Parliament was ignored.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:01:55] And they forced upon us the act of union. But a year later, when the Constitution was put to a referendum, our people rejected the referendum. And in that same year, a group of young officers from Somaliland attempted a coup. To restore the sovereignty of Somaliland. But that failed. And then for the next 30 years, we had a very bumpy road with Somalia. We had particularly suffered in the hands of the regimes that ruled Somalia from 1981 to 1991. When finally the government in Mogadishu collapsed. And we

have decided in a national conference to leave the union because it did not work for us. It did not work for them. And since that time, we have been on our own. We started a process of reconciliation among ourselves and established a government and a charter. And later, in 2001, we voted on a referendum on a new constitution, which 97% of the people voted for. Since then, we established a truly democratic system whereby we had six elections, three presidential elections, two council elections, and one parliamentary election. And we are preparing ourselves for the 7th election coming this May. So we have been really on a democratic path and have been able to maintain security and stability in a very unstable region of Africa.

Interviewer: [00:03:54] Alright. So the modern Republic of Somaliland, 1991 is when you declared your independence. That's almost 30 years ago. Why is it that your country hasn't been given the sovereign status that it so desires?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:04:15] Well, in fact, Somaliland is recognizing the fact in general, not Nigeria, not yet the full recognition. And we deal and have relations with many states around the world. A state to state relationship. But coming back to your question as to why Somaliland was not recognized, the common excuse that is given by people outside Africa is that this is an African matter. And in fact it has been taken to the AU. And in 2005, the AU sent a mission to Somaliland, a fact finding mission, and the mission when it returned, it produces a report which was very favorable and which said. The Somaliland case is a unique case and has nothing to do with opening a Pandora's box in Africa. If recognized. And we're still waiting for the AU to act upon that report. But the AU, some of the members of the AU themselves, when you raise the matter with them, say, well, does it matter between Somaliland and Somalia? Well, as far as we are concerned, it's not just a matter between Somaliland and Somalia. It's an African matter, because here you have a country and people who are denied their basic rights, you know, simply because they are not recognized or simply because Somalia does not want us to be recognized, which we think is totally unfair. So in the meeting we had the past couple of days, we discussed this issue and I think it has been acknowledged and recognized that, you know, we should not suffer simply because Somalia doesn't want us to be recognized. I think the people should make a decision on the facts on the ground and the facts that we have a legal case and a moral case and a humanitarian case to be recognized. And we believe, if we recognize it, that will benefit the region, including Somalia itself.

Interviewer: [00:06:21] So how have you been able to function since 1991 with Mogadishu on the one hand and these borders that you've clearly defined? Is there movement between

Somalia and Somaliland as you've recognized it? Is there a border that one has to cross and get a passport stamped?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:06:44] Yes what Somaliland has defined boundaries. The British had a protocol with the Italians, which defined the boundary between Somaliland and Somalia. And of course, you have to cross a boundary. But how did we survive? I think we survive it on our own by relying on our own resources. Unlike Mogadishu, we don't have foreign troops that ensure security in our country. And we do not depend on donors. Another is to pay our government officers and civil servants and army. Our people pay taxes and we use these taxes to build schools and clinics and pay the salaries of the doctors and the nurses and the teachers and the police officers and all the civil servants. You know, and I think that's one of the reasons why we have been stable, because we have been on our own rather than relying on others who are sometimes, having some sort of a proxy war, in the territory in which they are.

Interviewer: [00:07:58] All right. Let's talk a little bit again about sovereignty. You've got clearly defined borders, as you say, but there is a disputed area of Sana'a to the northeast of Somalia and to the east of Somaliland. How is this going to be resolved? Because that's part of the equation as well, isn't it?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:08:23] Well, the African Union, in its conference in Cairo in 1964, said that all states must respect the colonial boundaries. Not that because they were right, but because that can be a solution to all the disputes that may arise in contesting boundaries. So we have a defined boundary not by us, but by the colonial era, and it's accepted and acknowledged by the AU. Of course, you know, there are communities in that part of the Somaliland, which you mentioned, and elders from these communities were part of the conference in which we decided to leave the union with Somalia.

Interviewer: [00:09:09] That may be the case, but Puntland still continues to dispute and won't let go of the portion that you say belongs to Somaliland.

Saad Ali Shire: [00:09:23] But disputing doesn't give you the right to a territory which is not yours. I'm quite sure we have the same situation in many African countries. People are disputing the borders, but the borders are well defined internationally, so there's no dispute on that.

Interviewer: [00:09:43] So the African Union, is it just taking time or do you think that there genuinely will be movement towards full recognition and then perhaps taking the next step to the United Nations?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:09:58] We are confident that the AU will do the right thing and the right thing is to recognize the right of the people of Somaliland to be a sovereign state. And once you know the AU recognize us, then the UN will not be difficult. But of course the AU and the UN as organizations do not recognize states. It's the states, the member states that recognize. But I'm quite sure with the consent of the AU we will have it will be recognized by the members of the AU.

Interviewer: [00:10:38] So what travel documents do citizens use at the moment now to travel on?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:10:44] When we use Somaliland passports, of course, sometimes we use European passports or American passports, but we have our own passport. We have, as you know, a service passport, a diplomatic passport and an ordinary passport. And our people travel on these passports. And there are many countries which accept our passports. South Africa was one of the countries that, in fact, accepted our passport in the past. But recently, you know, that has changed. And we think that's not really fair. And that's one of the things we are going to discuss with the authorities here.

Interviewer: [00:11:21] Let's talk a little bit about your economy. You're a finance minister there. What is the engine of Somaliland? What keeps the country going?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:11:31] Well, as I said, I think self-reliance is a big factor. But as far as the economy is concerned, our economy is basically an agrarian economy. The livestock sector accounts for up to 28% of the GDP. That's followed by the service sector, which accounts for 22%. Agriculture is about 7% and construction and property about another 7%. But the diaspora also, I think, it's a big factor in rebuilding and investing in the country, which drives development in the country. But our business people are really also very, very shrewd and quite brave. And, you know, we started in 1991 with nothing, absolutely nothing, and the capital of Somaliland, Hargeisa was destroyed. It was you know, it was a rubble, more or less. But today, it's a thriving metropolitan city with over 1 million population. And all that reconstruction has been led by our people and by our government.

Interviewer: [00:12:39] How do you manage to have an enjoy so much growth, peace and stability in a very unstable region? And, you know, literally next door we look at Somalia and half the time there are explosions, there is fighting, there is war. How has Somaliland been able to insulate itself from what's happening very close to your country?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:13:07] I think the pain we experienced. You know, while we were with Somalia has brought us together. And, you know, it's really a government of the people by consent in a way. And we have a system whereby we make a decision whenever we want to make a decision in which people, whether in parliament or whether the elders are consulted. So it's really by consensus and consent and also vigilance and the history that we had that we went through. That's helping us unite as a nation. But at the same time, ensure security and, you know, saving us from the problems of piracy and the problems of extremism and explosions that is so common in Somalia.

Interviewer: [00:14:13] So then why is it that Mogadishu won't let go?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:14:17] Well, that's the question. I think that's the question which we would like to put to Somalia, as a matter of fact. Starting from 2012, we decided to have a dialogue with Somalia, initially sponsored by the UK government, and the aim was to have a peaceful and amicable divorce. You know, and since then we had up to nine meetings sponsored by different governments the British, the UAE, Djibouti, Turkey, and I think the last time also the Americans were involved. But in all these meetings, really nothing substantive came out of it. We had few agreements on a few issues, but they went back on all the agreements. They did not honour any of the commitments and the agreements they made in these meetings. So, you know, we really feel they have been deliberately dragging their feet, perhaps thinking that one day Somaliland will come round and join Somalia. But I tell you, that's not going to happen.

Interviewer: [00:15:23] In the meantime, I think you've already alluded to it. You're reaching out to southern Africa, South Africa in particular, to fully normalize relations between the two countries, particularly when it comes to travel and recognition. How is that going?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:15:39] I think that's going well. I think there is a lot of sympathy. And by the way, we engaged with South Africa from 2000 to 2010. I think there has been just a lull in between. And I think the authorities are reasonably aware of the situation in Somalia, but we would like to engage them actively. And that's because South Africa now holds the chairmanship of the AU, but also South Africa, you know, as the biggest economy in Africa has responsibilities. As a result of that position, to ensure that all Africans have enjoy their due rights. And we believe that there is a case to answer here in Somaliland.

Interviewer: [00:16:27] Let's talk a little bit about your outward relationships with other parts of the world. Africa is one aspect and I think we've chatted a bit about that. What about other

regions like Europe and North America? How much engagement have you had with other parts of the world?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:16:52] Yes. Well, in fact, we have offices and representatives in 20 countries around the world, including Africa and Asia and Europe and North America, U.S. and Canada as well. You know, we have a large diaspora in all of these countries and others, and we relate through them directly as well. But at the same time, there are countries with consulate offices in Somaliland, and that includes the neighbours; Ethiopia, Djibouti. We have Turkey, we have the UK itself. And we have Taiwan recently. So there are countries that have representatives in Somaliland, I think, as a sign and symbol of respect for the existence and the sovereignty of Somaliland.

Interviewer: [00:17:48] Do you think that you might be a victim of your own success in that, because you're peaceful, you're stable, and you're literally getting on with it, that there's no sense of urgency required by the international community to give you your sovereignty?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:18:05] I think that may be a factor, to be honest. You know, we are not a naughty boy or a naughty child. And if you are not naughty, people don't notice you. You know, that's a fact. And sometimes we have the sense that perhaps we're being punished for being successful and somebody is being rewarded for failing, which is really a paradox.

Interviewer: [00:18:30] What would full recognition do for Somaliland and its people? How would the country benefit from full status because you're already succeeding?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:18:45] Well, I think there are many advantages to being recognized fully. First. At the present time, we cannot access financial credit from financial institutions like the World Bank or the African Development Bank because we are not a member. It is also more difficult to attract investment in a big way if you are not recognized. There's another problem. We don't get any support or supplementary support in our budget. We rely on our taxes entirely and travelling, as we have said earlier, is a problem as well because it's very difficult for our students to go abroad and study. Or for our people who seek health care to go out of the country or our traders to go out and do business in other countries. So there are a number of restrictions imposed by lack of recognition. And we think these are rights. You know, rights are denied.

Interviewer: [00:19:52] Perhaps in conclusion, what would your message be to the people of South Africa and the continent. From Somaliland at this time?

Saad Ali Shire: [00:20:04] Well, the really the message is here is a country called Somaliland, which is an African country which denied its right. To be recognized as a state. And as a result, its people suffer and are denied rights because of the because of lack of recognition. And we think it is to the benefit of the African continent and the region as well, including Somalia, for Somaliland to be recognized.

9.12 Transcript 12

Essa Kayd: [00:00:00] Salaam alaikum. Ladies and gentlemen, dear mayor, distinguished guests. Ladies and gentlemen, it's an honor for me here to be here tonight sharing this nice dinner, but at the same time, meeting this strong community from London. I'm very proud of you, and I thank you very much for your warm welcome. Two days ago, we came from the United States of America. We have made our case in the United States of America. We worked very hard. We met high level government officials. We were able to tell what country we are as Somaliland. We describe Somaliland as one of the best countries in Africa. And it's the reality nowadays. We were able to convince people that were a very peaceful, stable, open for business. Recognition is not only politics is also the commercial and business recognition. And that's true. We have a lot of potentials here that could be developed in our country, but nevertheless, we are a very stable country. You know what's happening around nowadays, around Somaliland, how turbulent and vital the situation is in our neighboring country, how Somalia is in turmoil. And we were able to explain to the world that with our poor economy, we were able to pay for our elections.

9.13 Transcript 13

Edna Adan Ismail: [00:00:00] Well, I first of all, want to thank you for giving me your precious time on a Saturday, going to share with you the the story of my country, Somaliland. It's a story that needs to be told. It's a story that needs to have the truth told about it. I will give you a brief so you'll have some reference documents. But I will share with you the real, the reality of the Horn of Africa, the Somali Horn of Africa. A horn that is very troubled. An area of the world that has known a lot of conflict. And which we hope will stabilize and become an area of the world where children can grow in peace, where youth can be educated, where we can develop our trade and our relationships stronger. We can become a commercial hub. But before that happens, we need peace. Peace is the foundation of all development. I know that you here know what Somaliland is, where Somaliland is. As you know, Somaliland is the former British Somaliland protectorate. To our west, there is the La Cote Francaise de Somali,

Which is now the Republic of Djibouti. Then you have British Somaliland protectorate. And then to the east, we have LA Somalia Italiana, the Italian colony of Somalia. And one of the three colonies that Italy had in Africa, Somalia, Eritrea and Libya. Its geography, its history, its a fact. You cannot change it. I cannot change it. That is history. But very few people know about it. Somaliland is the only country among those countries that has never been colonized. We had a treaty of protection with Great Britain. Djibouti was a colony. Somalia was a colony. But Somaliland was the British Somaliland protectorate. That is very important because as a protectorate, we have always been sovereign. Somaliland gained its independence on the 26th of June 1960. We have the same birthday, the same Independence Day as Madagascar. And we became the 12th independent country in Africa. 42 countries sitting in the African Union today were still under colonial rule when Somaliland became independent. Because Somaliland had its sovereignty, we had a very powerful national movement that were campaigning for the independence of all nations. There was the wind of change, the wind of freedom in the late fifties, in the mid fifties, and the time of Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta Hastings Banda. These are the people who were campaigning for the independence of the African countries. And the vision at that time was when these African countries would become independent. Then they would form the great Pan-African movement. Our people in the fifties had that vision of unity, of cooperation, because unity is strength. Unity brings economic power. It encourages trade. Unity, wanting to unite African nations. Was not something that was imposed on us, but it was something that was born out of our leaders, from our leaders, encouraged from our leaders. And our late president, Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, who was also my first husband, was one of the leaders who campaigned for the independence of African nations and Somali nations. Because we were not a colony. We had the freedom to speak and campaign. Italy was oppressing the people in Somalia. They could not hold open political campaigns. But we in Somaliland could. And for one year before independence, the British groomed Mohammed Ibrahim Egal, who became the first president of an independent Somali nation on the 26th of June 1960. But for one year, he was the leader of the government. So the British were training him to hand over the reins of governance to him. These were times when we were very strongly, were passionate about our freedom, about our independence. You in Ethiopia were lucky because you were already a nation that has never been colonized. You were always free. Ethiopia is a great nation that has never known the oppression of colonialism except for the Second World War. A few months of occupation by the Italians. But you have always been free. We also wanted to be free. When Somaliland became independent and the date was signed for the

independence of Somaliland, we began to campaign for the other Somalis. And the first ones were the ones in Somalia. And the agreement was that when the two Somali nations would become independent, they would unite to form the basis, the foundation upon which future Somali nations would also join. Somaliland, therefore, is the first born. Is the senior nation. This is the first fully sovereign Somali nation. I am repeating that 20 times because that is the fact. I am repeating that because our neighbor, Somalia, who is a junior partner who became independent one week after Somaliland. Somehow has given itself a position of owning Somaliland. Given itself a position of deciding the fate of Somaliland. Where that has come from, we don't know because Somalia has never owned Somaliland, has never won Somaliland, has never bought Somaliland. We were two independent sovereign nations who voluntarily united. Somalia, being the second independent Somali nation, somehow did not respect the act of union between former British Somaliland and former Italian Somaliland. The act of union that should have formalized our union was never signed. Was never approved by the parliaments of the two nations. When there was a plebiscite, a referendum. They froze it because the referendum showed that the people of Somaliland did not accept the terms that Somalia had included, in the act of union. So in fact, Somalia and Somaliland have never united formally. It was never a formal union. There was never a signed contract. There was never a marriage. It was an informal partnership. Many people refer to Somaliland as a country that is splitting, fragmenting from Somalia. It is not. Somaliland is withdrawing from the union it tried to establish with neighboring Somalia. And the territory of Somaliland, the territory of former British Somaliland protectorate is as it was designed, in 1883. It is the same when we gained our independence on 26th June 1960 and it is the same today. Somaliland is supportive of the African Union constitution that condemns the fragmentation of nations. Somaliland is not a Biafra, is not a section that is eating or breaking away. It's not a the breakaway region. It's an entity in itself, a country of Somaliland. And I will give you a map. Our union is similar to the union that Gambia and Senegal had, exactly the same. Senegal was French. Gambia was British. Same ethnic people on both sides of the river. They united. They did not need the permission of anybody to unite. And after six months, it did not work. And as it were, we were better as friends and neighbors. Let us go back. To our status before the union and they separated. They were only Senate Gambia for six months. When they separated, the world did not punish Gambia, did not punish Senegal. Their decision to unite was respected. Their decision to separate was also respected. This is exactly what happened between Somaliland and Somalia. The world accepted our union but is not respecting a separation. Our separation came because our union failed. Our people were

oppressed. Trade was moved from Somaliland to Somalia. Banking was moved. Diplomatic presence was denied in Somaliland. Our ports, our schools, our hospitals became shut down. And when the oppression intensified, they took punitive military measures. In fact, there was an attempted coup to separate, the father of Ambassador Salam. He was a leader of the coup that was attempted on the 10th of December 1961. I was there because I was wounded. The Union failed from the beginning. And when the wish to separate, became denied, it turned into a freedom fighters militia. Many of them sought refuge inside Ethiopia to fight with the oppressors. The dictatorship of Siad Barre. From 1982. Until 1991. A nine year civil war continued. To separate and withdraw from that union we went into with Somalia. And that war brought airplanes to bombard cities. Russian MiG fighters were flattening our cities. Civilians were massacred. The weak, the sick, the old, the wounded were pushed, thrown into mass graves. Young children, school children became mobile blood banks, because they would go into the classroom and they would say, you, you you come over and they would bleed them. They would just take all their blood because they believed if the young 11, 12 year old, their blood is healthy, they have no disease, and they would take all the blood from that child and use for the troops. And when this child collapses, they will throw him into a mass grave. 87 mass graves have been catalogued by the United Nations forensic teams, and we keep finding new mass graves even to this day. Every time it rains, it uncovers new mass graves, each one containing dozens, if not hundreds of human remains. With the clothes on. With their shoes on. With their belts on. Young ones, small skeletons, baby skeletons. Five, six, ten year old skeletons. What is the military danger of killing a five year old because he or she is from Somaliland? That was the crime they were executed for. I am describing this in detail because the world has to know this. In 1991, nine years after our Civil War ended. We ousted, defeated the troops of Siad Barre. Ambassador Minister Abdullah Abdullah. He was another freedom fighter at that time in the bush. Once the military aggressions were ousted, we began to rebuild our country. But before we could do that, we offered a general amnesty to all our people, all the clans, traditional elders, sultans, chiefs, leaders of Somaliland agreed on two things. The unanimous separation from Somalia. To their peace among themselves. No enmity. Who was with who? Who was fighting what? General amnesty. And that general amnesty also included the troops, about 30,000 troops of Somalia. We're still inside Somaliland territory and we're prisoners. And for three months, those soldiers who were captive, who were prisoners of war were not shot, were not killed, were not starved. They were protected for three months. They were given food. They were given water. A Somali gives you water. He's giving you his life. We shared whatever we had with them, and once we

secured a safe corridor, we said, Go home. Just go back to Somalia. That [emphasis] is the best thing that we ever did. We could have denied them food. We could have denied them water. Within days, they would all have been dead. The crows would have had a feast. The hyenas would have had a feast. But that would have been the wrong thing to do. We started to rebuild our country. We brought our people back from the refugee camps. The biggest refugee camp in East Africa was inside Ethiopia. Ethiopia protected our weak, our sick our refugees protected them from other Somalis who are bombing them. You gave 1 million of our people protection and we will always, always be appreciative and grateful for that. Others went to Yemen. Others went to Djibouti. Some went to Europe. And as far as they could go. Running away from an enemy who was their brother. Another Somali. A Somali killing a Somali. We rebuilt our country with whatever we had left. There was no Marshall Plan. There was no. What was that name? There was no plan to rebuild Somaliland. We built it ourselves. There's no IMF. There was no peace dividend. There was no international support to rebuild Somaliland. There was no World Bank, there was no IMF, there was no bilateral aid. We did it with what we had and as best as we could. We developed our Constitution. We established law and order. We demobilized our powerful militia that defeated Siad Barre. Not with the international troops. But we did it our way, the traditional way. We disarmed a very powerful militia with less than 100,000 USD paid for by the people. By the community themselves. Our neighbor, Somalia has had every nation supported and has failed to demobilize its Shabab and its militia. 28 international nations have been in Somalia. Americans have been there. The Germans were there. The Brits were there. The Ethiopians, the Djiboutian there. The Kenyans are there. The Ugandans are there. The Rwandans are there. The Burundians are there. The Pakistanis were there. 28 nations have given their sons and the blood of their sons to protect Somalia. Inside Somalia. And a victory is still not in sight. I don't know how many Ethiopian troops have died there. I don't know how many Americans have died there. Anybody who has watched Black Hawk Down will see the Marines dragged through the streets. Today it is Somalia refugees who are in Kenya, Dadaab. Protected by Kenyans in Kenya. Once peace was secured, we started our nation building. Developed a constitution. Elected our members of parliament. Developed political parties. Held a referendum in 2001 attended by international observers to ask the people, Do you approve the Constitution? And do you approve the separation from Somalia? And 97% of our people said no more Somalia. My government, the government of Somaliland is respecting the will of the people. The will of 97% of our people who said no Somalia. Since then, we have held five peaceful presidential elections. Our current president, Musa Bihi, who was elected in 17. He was elected. And I

will give you the figures. 305,909 votes. He had 55% of the registered voters of votes. Farmaajo next door, was elected with 184 votes. Who is the true president? This is the question I asked myself. Which one is a true president? The one who is elected by a third of a million people in a population of 4 million. By the way, the land of Somaliland is bigger than 18 countries in Africa. Because many people think it's why it's a small country. We are bigger than 18 countries. Our coastline is 850 kilometers long and pirate free 850 kilometers coastline. When right next door, in Somalia and the tip of the horn in that region that calls itself Puntland now, is known as the world's most pirate infested waters in the world. So right next door. Is the most pirate infested waters where ships are pirated, where people are taken hostage. And in Somaliland, we have never had one single hostage taking. Not one single act of piracy has taken place in Somaliland. And in the last 28 years that Somaliland has separated from Somalia, we've had one act of terrorism. In 2008, instigated, of course, by neighboring Somalia. When Somalia experiences several terrorist acts a week, if not a day. The president of my country, Somaliland, controls the entire country of former British Somaliland protectorate, all 175,000 square kilometers of it. The President Farmaajo does not even control one street. Even his presidency is protected by Amazon. Protected for him. I wonder who is a president then? President of what? Somaliland has maintained peace and stability over the years. We trade with all nations. We trade with African nations. We trade with Asians. We trade with Arabs. We trade with Americans. We trade with British. We trade with all nations. Most of all, we enjoy a privileged position when it comes to our trade with Ethiopia. The Port of Berbera has a partnership with Ethiopia. And 90% of the port of Berbera is contracted to Ethiopia. Together we look after it together, we manage it together. We will build it together. We will expand it together. We will continue to trade with each other as we have done for millenniums. And for centuries. The Berbera corridor is now being contracted and is being built. Ethiopia is in a very privileged and much appreciated position when it comes to trading with Somaliland. And at this point, I really want to thank the repeated hospitality and the welcome that our government and our delegations receive each time we come to Ethiopia. Ethiopia has become a second home. We come here for education, we come here for health, we come here for political discussions. Our partnership grows and strengthens from day to day. And I would like that to be recorded, please. Our expression of thanks and appreciation to be recorded. Recently, our president and his delegation traveled to the country of Guinea. The invitation of President Alpha Condé over the years Somaliland, heads of state, ministers and delegations have visited over 90 countries in each one of them we have received warm, friendly welcome and receptions. Red carpets. Presidential salutes. Friendship. Our

neighbors in Somalia have decided for reasons unknown to us, to sever relations with Guinea for having welcomed the delegation from Somaliland. Now the question that I ask myself is. Is Somalia planning to sever relations with another 90 countries that have welcomed Somaliland? Is it planning to sever relations with Ethiopia, Djibouti and others? We think this is a great disrespect. To the president. Who is very much loved by his people and respected by the rest of African governments. President Alpha Condé. It's a great disrespect and an insult to a head of state who cannot be given a dictation about who he can welcome to his country or not. President Alpha Condé does not need the permission of Shabab or terrorists or the heads of failed governments. And since Somalia is very expert in terrorism, I'm asking myself, is this are they inventing a new form of terrorism, diplomatic terrorism, political terrorism? This cannot work in Africa. Heads of states are sovereign and need to be respected as such. The world considers us to be still part of Somalia. When we united with Somalia, Somalia was one country. Today, Somalia is fragmented. Somaliland is intact. But former Italian Somalia is fragmented into mincemeat. Who speaks for Somalia? There is no country known as Somalia. It's little fiefdoms and little warlords who control sections of it. Who in their right mind would reunite with a failed state like Somalia? And for the record, Somaliland respects the territorial integrity of nations. We don't believe in fragmentation. We don't believe in secession. We don't believe in splintering a nation. Borders must remain as in the Constitution of the African Union as they were at the time of independence. Like Somaliland. And the only just thing to do is that since there is no Somalia. No intact Somalia. No government in Somalia. When Somaliland has been peaceful for 28 years, that's a long track record. There is no going back. There is no reunion with Somalia. We need to have dialogue to establish good neighbourly relations. And Somaliland, from its position of strength, is ready to dialogue on how we can turn our region into a peaceful region. We're willing to dialogue. And as the special envoy of Somaliland for the peace dialogue. We're ready to talk to Somalia any time about establishing peace and neighbourly, and I will repeat unneighborly relations as two separate, independent nations. Somaliland will not be dictated to. Somaliland is not part of Somalia. Somaliland is not part of the federal or so-called federal government of Somalia. Somaliland is a sovereign country and the international community needs to come to terms with that. I am going to give you this because, gentlemen, this is the independence declaration of Somaliland from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth the second, who is still alive today. This is history. This is fact. You cannot change it. I cannot change it. Somalia cannot change it. To prove Somaliland's independence, this is the congratulatory note from the United States of America by the secretary of state of the United States of America, who sent it on the 26th of June 1964,

congratulating the Somaliland government on the achievement of your independence. Yeah. On the achievement of your independence in 1960. So when people say Somaliland wants its independence. They don't know what they're talking about. Somaliland has always been independent. And I have also added this to show you French Somaliland, Djibouti, British Somaliland and Italian Somalia. That's how the territory was at the time of independence. And gentlemen, I am happy to answer some questions if necessary. I will give you this as a reference and my colleagues and the Minister of Health, who I should have introduced at the beginning and I hope you will forgive me for this oversight are here. We're here on a goodwill not only for Somaliland, but for the entire horn. We must be wise. We must build our nations. And we must bring peace to our Horn of Africa. We cannot spend all our energy on fights and weapons and killing. We must learn to build and grow. We must learn to improve. We must reach the development of other nations have reached because of peace and stability. So I thank you for having given me this opportunity to explain the position of my country to you. I hope you will share this with the world, and I'm happy to answer any questions. And of course, you will excuse me because I am 82 years old. If I talk too long, you will forgive me. But that's what grandmothers are for. Thank you.

9.14 Transcript 14

Edna Adan Ismail: [00:00:00] To recognize Somaliland as an equal partner, as a member of the free world with a representation in the United Nations would bring forward the contributions that Somaliland can bring to the peace and stability of the Horn of Africa. The fact that Somaliland has been peaceful for 30 years, developing for 30 years, bringing its people back from the diaspora and from refugee camps around the world for the past 30 years. When we have very little international support except for humanitarian aid, that in itself is deserving of recognition. And that proves that Somaliland is a country that can bring forward and contribute to the peace and stability. And then, of course, if diplomatic relations are also granted to Somaliland, Somaliland would be a very useful and a proud member of the international community and the communities of the world that value peace, that values stability, that value free trade, that value economic, to fight poverty and joblessness and of course, anything that can harm the stability and the peace of the world.

Reporter: [00:01:31] And we're seeing a kind of a redrawing of the map in this part of the world, don't we? The relations between Israel and the UAE and Bahrain and Morocco are really flourishing because of the Abraham Accords. Do you think that this new climate of

friendship provides an opportunity for Somaliland, and do you think Israel might recognize the country?

Edna Adan Ismail: [00:01:55] Well, Israel did recognize Somaliland at the time of our independence in 1960. In fact, Israel was one of the 34 or 35 countries that had sent congratulatory notes to Somaliland, that had recognized Somaliland. And among those 34 countries were the members of the Security Council at that time.

Reporter: [00:02:18] But do you think they might build on that and grant full diplomatic recognition?

Edna Adan Ismail: [00:02:24] Well, at the time, if Somaliland becomes recognized and its identity is recognized, there is no reason why Somaliland should not trade and establish relations with any country in the world. And in fact, Israel is part of the nations that live along the Red Sea that have access to the Red Sea, the port of Aqaba, that supplies Jordan and Israel is on the Red Sea. And there is no reason why Somaliland should not have relations with all the members, the countries that we share a geographical location with, that we share maritime trade with and roots. But it would be at that time to discuss and how and the modalities. But any cooperation, in my opinion, is a good thing. It is the lack of cooperation that affects development and collaboration among nations.

Reporter: [00:03:34] Absolutely. And I mean, given the fact that Somaliland is overwhelmingly Muslim, I think it's 98% Muslim. Is there any opposition to recognizing Israel, to doing business with Israel openly because of a feeling of solidarity with the Palestinians?

Edna Adan Ismail: [00:03:51] Well, there are many Muslim countries in the Middle East that have chosen to recognize Israel. We share the same religion with those countries. Collaboration with Israel is a strategic, political and commercial relationship. Neither one country will affect the religion of the people living in those countries. And trade, security, collaboration is something that develops between governments and peoples. And Somaliland would not be the first Muslim country that has good relations with Israel. And why not?

Reporter: [00:04:41] And as so often is the case, business and trade are kind of going ahead of the politics. Somaliland is, as you mentioned, on a major shipping route. It's very strategic. There's been a lot of foreign investment, including from the UAE, which has invested heavily in the port. Do you see more opportunities? Do you see that growing regardless of whether there will be diplomatic recognition or not?

Edna Adan Ismail: [00:05:09] I think the potential is limitless. But first of all, Somaliland brings to the world 850 kilometers of a coastline that are free of terrorists and free of pirates. It's 850 kilometres and a location that is surrounded by a lot of instability and insecurity. And it would be to the advantage of the free trade and maritime routes in the world to recognize Somaliland so that those 850 kilometres of coastline that are peaceful and stable today remain free and stable for the international world. Somaliland has a lot of potential for agricultural potential maritime trade, maritime potential maritime resources. Somaliland has mineral resources that wait to be tapped. Somaliland is a country that has as a route for the trade with our neighbors our very big giant neighbor Ethiopia with 110 million people which are landlocked and already one third of the trade destined for Ethiopia and the food aid destined for Ethiopia comes through the port of Berbera in Somaliland. So to develop and expand those relationships and those partnerships that we have had for the past 30 years with Ethiopia, and now recently that we have with the United Arab Emirates and with Great Britain that has also invested in the Port of Berberao, offers great potential for further development, further partnership and further development of the natural resources, as well as the human resources and the political resources that Somaliland can bring to the international community.