

IESG Newsletter

SOMALIA ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT

UNDP/UNSOM INTEGRATED ELECTORAL SUPPORT GROUP

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2024

FEDERAL ELECTORAL DEVELOPMENTS

Since the adoption of the first four chapters of the Provisional Federal Constitution on 31 March 2024 by the Federal Parliament, IESG has actively engaged the Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs, and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) Legal Team to assist in reviewing the electoral legal framework in line with the constitutional amendments.

IESG's technical assistance to the MoIFAR Legal Team focused on three priority draft laws: the National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC) Law, The National Electoral Law, and the Political Parties and Associations Law. IESG has submitted written comments and recommendations on these priority laws to the MoIFAR Legal Team.

Currently, the MoIFAR Legal Team is reviewing the draft laws together with a technical team from the Office of the Prime Minister. After the review, MoIFAR is expected to submit the draft laws to the Prime Minister's Office for Cabinet deliberations. These revised drafts will then go to Parliament for debate and voting, after which the adopted draft will proceed for presidential assent.

The Somali Federal Parliament will reconvene in early July 2024, to revise and adopt the entire electoral legal framework. The NIEBC Law will likely be adopted as a priority, which will allow the appointment of the NIEBC Board.

HIGHLIGHTS

IESG provided technical inputs to MoIFAR on the legal framework in line with the recent constitutional amendments

IESG organized a Training on Electoral Systems and "Temporary Special Measures" for women CSO leaders

The Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) released the election calendar for the remaining three districts

PUNTLAND DIRECT ELECTION

ON 27 MAY the Acting Chairperson of the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC), the Secretary-General, and other Commission Members met with the Puntland President, Vice President, and Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization (MoIFAD). The discussion focused on accelerating the state's democratic process and organizing elections for the remaining three districts of the Nugal region: Dangorayo, Garowe, and Godobjiiran.

ON 28 MAY, after meeting with the PEC, the President of Puntland together with the Vice President met with the leaders of the Puntland political parties, namely, Mideeye, Horseed, Sincad, Ifiye, Mustaqbal, Labor, Runcad and Kaah. Similar to the meetings the President and the Vice President had with the PEC, the discussion with the political parties focused on organising the district council election for the three districts of the Nugal region.



Puntland Electoral Commission meets with the President and Vice President. Photo credit: Puntland State House

ON 2 JUNE, following the meeting with the Puntland authorities and political parties, the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC) released the district council election calendar for the remaining three districts in the Nugal Region, with the elections slated for 23 July 2024.

Following the release of the electoral calendar, the PEC has launched extensive voter education campaigns to ensure all eligible voters are well-informed about their rights and the voting process.

In addition to voter education, stakeholder consultation meetings, preparation of local electoral offices, and distribution of voter cards across the three districts were identified as priority activities by the PEC. The released electoral calendar also contained a designated campaign period for candidates and political parties, the announcement of results, and the period for handling any electoral disputes.

This round of elections will conclude the first cycle of one-person one-vote district elections conducted in an FMS in Somalia since 1969, excluding Somaliland.



Puntland President meets with Political Party Leaders. Photo credit: Puntland State House



Puntland Electoral Commission announces the Electoral Calendar. Photo credit: PEC

JUBALAND

ON 25 JUNE, IESG, along with the UNSOM Political Affairs and Mediation Group (PAMG) and other UN entities, took part in a meeting in Kismayo with the Jubaland Minister of Interior, Federalism, and Reconciliation. During the discussions covering various topics, the minister mentioned plans to hold direct elections for the district council of Afmadow but did not provide a specific timeline. He also mentioned that the district councils of Dhobley, Garbaharey, and Luq would be established through an indirect election process.



IESG and PAMG staff meet with the Jubaland Minister of Interior. Photo credit: IESG

GENDER AND INCLUSION

ON 23-24 APRIL IESG, in coordination with the UNSOM Integrated Gender Office (IGO), organized a two-day training on Electoral Systems and Temporary Special Measures (TSM) for 35 women Civil Society leaders.

The main objectives of the training were to enhance the participants' understanding of electoral systems and their potential benefits for women's participation; strengthen their comprehension of Temporary Special Measures (TSM); and enhance their ability to advocate for the inclusion of TSM in the electoral legal framework to increase women's representation in the Somali Federal Parliament and other elected bodies in Somalia.

During the training, special focus was given on introducing participants to the background of the TSMs, international conventions, different electoral systems and their role in promoting inclusiveness and representation of women. Furthermore, participants were also briefed about case studies from other countries' electoral systems and their applicability to the Somali context in order to strengthen the participants' capacity to contribute to the process of developing an electoral system suitable for the Somali political context.

During open discussions, women participants highlighted some of the barriers Somali women face that prevent them from meaningful participation in the electoral process and politics in general. The barriers highlighted included: lack of resources, lack of support from clan leaders, politicians, and cultural factors. The CSO leaders also emphasized that overcoming these challenges requires not only legal provisions but also the implementation of awareness campaigns and broader societal changes. During these discussions, the importance of advocacy by Civil Society leaders for the 30 per cent quota implementation at an early stage of the electoral process was emphasized.



Training on Electoral Systems and Temporary Special Measures (TSM) for women CSO leaders. Photo credit: IESG

To make these trainings wide-reaching and more impactful, a series of similar trainings are being planned for the women members of the Federal Members State Assemblies and CSOs leaders at the state level.

IESG IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNSOS AVIATION SECURITY CONDUCTED A CAMP SECURITY MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR THE NIEC

The IESG security team, in coordination and collaboration with the UNSOS AIROPS Security Team, organised and facilitated a Camp Security Management Training Course for nine members of the NIEC Secretariat and five UNGU colleagues. This training is part of the new NIEC Compound security management systems and procedures and took place 14-20 April.

The participants received comprehensive training in security protocols and procedures for managing the security compound entrance. The training enhanced the participants' ability to conduct luggage searches to identify potential security threats and vulnerabilities, including the basics of X-ray screening and handling sensitive security information.



Additionally, they were trained to identify methods of concealing weapons, narcotics, and explosives, and to implement access control procedures to ensure facility security.

The participants received both theoretical knowledge and practical skills (physical and technological) necessary to operate X-ray machines and metal detectors effectively.

This training was aimed at helping the NIEC security management to prevent intruders from bringing explosives and other aggressive materials into the compound, thereby enhancing overall security.



Group photo of the training participants Photo credit: IESG

WORKSHOP ON ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION AND OBSERVATION

ON 20, 22, and 23 MAY, in Mogadishu, IESG held a Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) customized workshop titled "Introduction to Electoral Administration and Electoral Observation" for IESG staff. The workshop was organized and facilitated by BRIDGE IESG facilitators. A total of 15 IESG staff from headquarters and field offices participated in the workshop.

The workshop aimed to enhance the participants' understanding of different electoral systems and their significance in promoting inclusivity and representation, Temporary Special Measures (TSM), and how to conduct electoral observation throughout the electoral cycle. The workshop also explored the electoral standards and the significance of international obligations and good practices. Additionally, the workshop featured a keynote speaker from the League of Arab States (LAS) who introduced the participants to the hands-on election observation mission composition, functioning, and protocols.

At the end of the workshop, facilitators organized a mock election observation exercise to provide the participants with a simulation of the work that the observers need to do and to familiarize them with the election observation forms.



Participants of the BRIDGE workshop held on 20 May 2024 in Mogadishu. Photo credit: SCPAG

This workshop represented a significant step towards enhancing the capacity of IESG staff in supporting democratic processes and ensuring credible and transparent elections in Somalia.