

Puntland Post Monthly

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An Interview with Ali Mohamed Gedi Former Prime Minister of Somalia and Leader of Somali Patriotic Party (SPP)

Ali Mohamed Gedi, a former Somali Prime Minister, leads Somali Patriotic Party, one of the political parties that will contest the 2021 elections in Somalia. In April *Puntland Post* interviewed him .



Ali Mohamed Gedi: Leader of Somali Patriotic Party

Puntland Post Monthly: As a former Prime Minister of Somalia you lead a political party. When and why was the political party established?

Ali M. Gedi: First and foremost, let me take this opportunity to express my thanks and gratitude to PUNTLAND POST team for the interview. To answer the first question, Somali Patriotic Party (SPP) was established in February 2016 (even before the political parties' law was enacted by the Federal Parliament) to shift the country from centralised/dictatorial rule to decentralised and democratic governance through multi-party system. SPP was established by competent and qualified scholars (men and women) who complement my professional and political experience.

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INTERVIEW WITH ALI M. GEDI

From page 1

PPM: What differentiates the political party you lead from other parties?

Ali M. Gedi: My long-term academic and research activities coupled with more than a decade-long collaboration, partnership and interaction with international organisations, plus three years (2004-2007) of working as a Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia have equipped me with the necessary knowledge, experiences and tools that make difference to leading a modern party compared to the other political parties.

PP: Somali Patriotic Party is not a member of the Forum for National Parties. Does that mean your party supports an open contest in place of building coalitions based on a desire to unseat the incumbent administration?

Ali M. Gedi: Yes. SPP is not and will not be a member of the Forum for National Parties due to differences in vision and mission, principles, objectives and goals. In this regard, SPP has a political and moral philosophy based on secularism, equality, freedom of

speech, freedom of press, human rights, corruption-free, anti-tribalism, anti-radicalism/extremism and terrorism among others.



Somali Patriotic Party's Logo

PPM: What is the position of SPP your party on possible postponement of elections due to Covid-19?

Ali M. Gedi: The position of SPP on possible postponement of the coming elections is very clear. The current government has been given 4 years mandate to run the affairs of the country, ending January 2021. Therefore, by constitution, the federal government must hold elections timely, freely and fairly without any further delay. Yes, FORCE MAJEURE is an imperative issue, in the event of unexpected disasters like the Coronavirus Pandemic. In this case, the leadership of the Federal Government of Somalia must come up with options and mechanisms acceptable to all the political stakeholders of the country so as to proceed smoothly to a conducive environment which can allow free and fair elections to take place next year.

PP: Some federal member states criticise the Federal Government for bringing back centralised governance. In your view is there a substance to the criticism?

Ali M. Gedi: Criticism is a regular act before the eyes of a public administration. Hence, expressing adverse or disapproving judgment on governmental institutions is a tool for dealing with mistakes and the leaders must take it easy as corrective measures. Based on the above, the Federal Member states have the right to constructively criticise the Federal Government within the framework of the Provisional Federal Constitution and the government must accept it as such. Destructive or divisive criticism must be avoided by all stakeholders.

PP: Does Somali Patriotic Party have branches in other parts of Somalia?

Ali M. Gedi: At the levels of the Federal Member States of Somalia, local regulations and guidelines in conformity with the federal government, for opening offices of the political parties are not yet in place; but SPP members and supporters are in action everywhere in the Federal Member States and district authorities country-wide as well as in each and every Diaspora community of Somalia world-wide.

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JUBALAND AGREEMENT RAISED QUESTIONS ABOUT AHMED MADOBE'S LEGITIMACY

By Mohamud A. Dersi

Kismayo (PPM) — In 2009 when Al-shabaab captured Kismayo, Ahmed Mohamed Islam (aka Ahmed Madobe), then a senior Hizbul Islam officer, called on the extremist organisation to make peace with Hizbul Islam. Hizbul Islam had dissolved when its founder, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, joined Al-shabaab. Ahmed Madobe fled to Afmadow where he helped Raskamboni brigade to regroup as a formidable enemy of Al-shabaab. Ahmed Madobe allied himself with Kenya Defence Forces that invaded Somalia in 2011 to counter the threat of Al-shabaab forces in Gedo. In 2011 and 2012 Raskamboni launched hit and run attacks against Al-shabaab but was hardly able to retake territory from Al-shabaab. Azania project headed by Dr Mohamed Abdi Gandi, a rival of Ahmed Madobe's, boosted the latter's chances to lead a Federal Member State that was in the pipeline. The former US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton told Somali stakeholders she had met in Nairobi in 2012 that plans to dislodge Al-shabaab from Kismaayo were afoot. In September 2012 Kenya Defence Forces captured

Kismayo in conjunction of Raskamboni brigade. Ahmed Madobe emerged as the potential leader of a federal member state in the making. Clashes between Raskamboni brigade and forces of former Defence Minister Barre Hirale preceded the 2013 election won by Ahmed Madobe as the President of Jubaland Interim Administration. In 2015 he won the Jubaland Presidency to lead a fully recognised federal member state. His 2019 candidacy for a third term ran into trouble after the Federal Government formulated a policy to oversee electoral processes of federal member states formed after 2004, the year Somalia adopted a federal system. With the exception of Puntland State, the Federal Government has had input in the formation of the other four federal member states. New guidelines published the Federal Ministry of Interior and Federal Affairs vested in the Federal Government powers to prepare criteria for selecting MPs, who elect Jubaland President. The agreement signed in Nairobi by Jubaland leader and three rivals who questioned his legitimacy after 2019 elections removed one hurdle in the path to making Jubaland an inclusive administration. UNSOM has welcomed the agreement as a steppingstone to getting other stakeholders involved the political process. "Somalis, like others, deserve to choose their leaders via free, fair and legal elections. Last August's process was deeply flawed. It's good to see old rivals reconcile

but truly inclusive politics - local and national - requires more" tweeted Ben Fender, the British Ambassador to Somalia.

"Four men have thrashed out their differences in Nairobi. Jubaland is a multi-clan federal member state. The deal deepens the crisis of legitimacy facing President Ahmed Madobe" says Dahir Abdi, a former traditional leader in Jamaame. The Council of Inter-State Cooperation founded in Kismayo in 2018 folded after Hirshabelle, Galmudug and South West allied themselves with the Federal Government of Somalia. Close relations with Kenya at the expense of cooperation with Federal Government further eroded the legitimacy of Jubaland leader. Like Mukhtar Robow, Ahmed Madobe has joined mainstream politics as a reformed extremist. Somalia's International Partners urge Ahmed Madobe to cooperate with the Federal Government to make Jubaland Administration more inclusive. Following that bit of advice could politically stand Ahmed Madobe in good stead.

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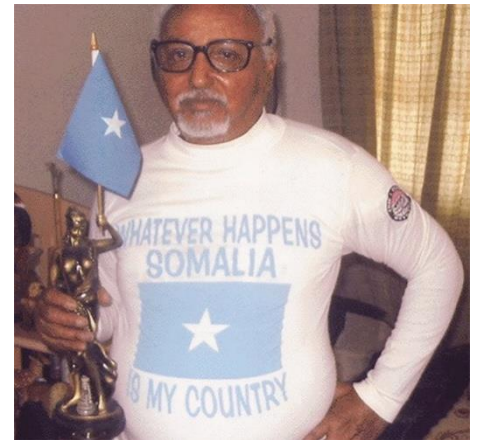

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THE JOURNALISTIC LEGACY OF MOHAMUD M. AFRAH

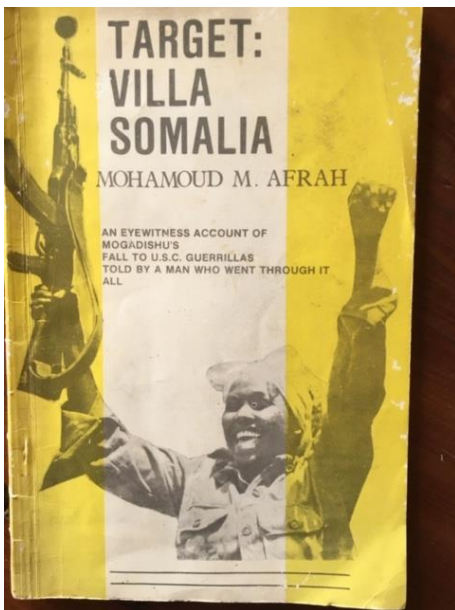
One year ago Somali community in Nairobi lost a Somali journalism luminary Mohamud Mohamed Afrah. Born in Mogadishu in 1935 Afrah spent the first decade of his life in Mogadishu and learned Koran.



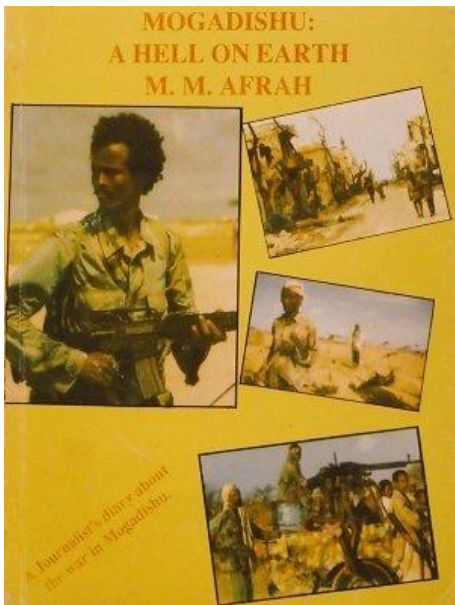
Early 1940s, when the British Military Administration was controlling Mogadishu, Afrah had been sent to what was known as British Kenya where he remained until he finished primary and secondary education. Afrah returned to Somalia when it gained independence in 1960. He was among the first group of employees at the Somali Ministry of Information. He was appointed as editor with the Somali National News Agency (SONNA). His diligence earned him scholarship in West Germany. He studied mass communications at Eningen. Afrah voraciously read the weekly *Somali News* in which his letters were published.



In one letter published in 1966 Afrah recounted how at a press conference he challenged a journalist from *Ethiopian Herald* who had made misrepresentations about Somalia. When he had finished his studies and returned to Somalia he was promoted to managing editor of SONNA. In 1978 when the Ministry of Information and National Guidance launched *Heegan*, Afrah was appointed as the editor-in-chief. He edited *Heegan* until December 28 December 1990, when the last issue of the paper appeared. Afrah's contemporaries include the late Said Bakar Mukhtar, Mohamed Roble Nur, deputy editor-in-chief, Hassan Ayeh Boqorreh, Ahmed Zaki Gulaid. Afrah nurtured talents of many journalists whose careers took off at SONNA and *Heegan*. He edited the *Quarterly Economic Review* then based at the Somali Presidency and was a correspondent for Reuters. Afrah remained in Mogadishu during January 1991 when United Somali Congress militias fought the forces loyal to the military dictatorship. His book *Target: Villa Somalia*, recounts the first phase of the internecine civil war in Southern Somalia.



His second book, *Mogadishu: Hell on Earth*, depicts an accurate picture of Mogadishu's descent into clannish bloodletting that resulted in the 1992 famine.



Afrah left Somalia after 1992 and arrived in Canada. Afrah had a sense of humour, was generous and kind. He loved his country and people. “I owe a lot to Somalia and Somalis. I cannot promote divisive policies or sow discord among my compatriots” Afrah once told a group of Somali men and women, who visited him in Toronto in

2005. Afrah will be remembered for his three decade-long service to Somali journalism under different conditions— parliamentary democracy followed by military dictatorship . His principled stand on the rights of the Somali citizen will inspire many people.

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Puntland Political Associations Face An Uphill Task,

Your report on Puntland political associations (*Puntland Political Associations and the Road Ahead*, PPM, April) touched on issues that politicians should address before people take the democratisation initiative seriously. Puntland lacks the clan diversity enjoyed either by Somaliland or Galmudug. This disadvantage sharpens intra-clan power struggle. Political associations may bring to an end the practice of taking turns at Puntland presidency, a system that rewards leaders of three subclans. 15 years of political stability in Puntland have yet to yield good governance. Political accountability is virtually absent in Puntland. The executive controls the Parliament. Political dysfunction in Puntland — manifested in leasing Bosaso Port to DP World without community wide consultations — deepens every day. Puntland prides itself on introducing the federal system but its government seldom benefits from training and other institutional development opportunities other Federal

Member States access through the Federal Government in Mogadishu. Puntland forces are organised along subclan lines. Each new administration recruits new forces and senior civil servants loyal to the new administration. Against this backdrop political associations can make little or no change without becoming candid about the clan-based politics that discourage criticism of an incumbent administration. Added to this is the length of time it takes to put political programmes of parties across to citizens. Local government elections will take place in three districts. Whoever made the decision to conduct pilot local governments only in three districts unwittingly disclosed how poor governance stalled decentralisation in Puntland despite Garowe being vocal about defending the nascent federal system of Somalia. If Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission can pilot local government elections in three districts, it should be able to conduct elections in all districts under the control of Puntland Administration. Who proposed the local government elections in this limited format? Puntland political associations, Puntland State government and TPEC had better put their heads together and come up with a more democratic pilot local government elections plan.

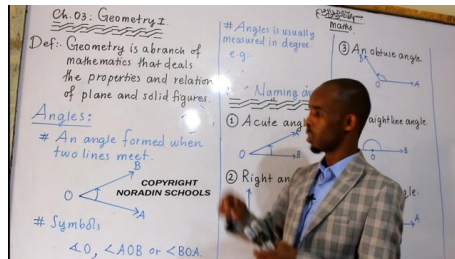
Hussein F. Taher, Bosaso

THE Lockdown Transforms Somaliland Educational System

By Khadar Mariano

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted every aspect of life around the globe in the last three months. It changed the way we interact with each other, the way we conduct business, and the way we learn. People are conforming to social distancing, employees are working from home, meetings are conducted via Zoom and students are receiving their lessons online. In Somaliland, the government had closed all schools and universities to prevent spread of COVID-19 in learning spaces. The schools were originally supposed to be closed for four weeks, but the period was later extended by four weeks. Educational institutions, like other institutions affected by the preventive measures, have no clues how long it will take to reopen schools and universities. They have had to adopt new ways to deliver lessons to students to meet their teaching obligations. Universities and schools have come up with a creative solution: online classes. Distance learning is a new territory for most universities in Somaliland. It is a timely initiative to lessen the impact the lockdown has on students' learning. Students avail themselves of enough, influx of recorded lessons and live sessions on Facebook or YouTube. These lessons benefit from interactive facilities that enable student following

live lessons to ask questions or leave comments once the live lesson comes to an end. Students have found ways to boost their learning. WhatsApp groups to exchange class links, assignments, and other resources have become common. Social Media platforms, which were dubbed to be a waste of time, have suddenly become a valuable resource.



A teacher in Hargeisa gives an online lesson via YouTube

Moreover, cable channels have started airing prerecorded lessons for elementary, intermediate and secondary students. Students who do not have access to the internet or television sets can just turn on their radios because Radio Hargeisa has also started broadcasting lessons. The interesting thing is that this new way of schooling is in a sense becoming a great equaliser regarding the quality of education students from public and private schools receive. It's usually the private schools that hire the best teachers since they pay much better than government schools do, this has long caused a disparity between the quality of education students in these institutions obtain. This gap is most evident in the secondary and intermediate

leaving exams taken by the Ministry of Education; private school students receive top marks. But now classes taught by the best teachers in the country are available for all on platforms like Facebook and YouTube, the educational inequality in Somaliland gets temporarily addressed. When the lockdown is over, the Somaliland Ministry of Education will be hard pressed to ignore educational disparities that deprive many children of life chances bestowed by quality education.

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BOSASO-GAROWE ROAD IN POOR CONDITION

Garowe (PPM) — Built during the second half of 1980s, Garowe-Bosaso Road plays an underappreciated role in the post-1991 reconstruction of Mudug, Nugaal and Bari regions. The road has been gradually showing signs of wear and tear. It is a landmark infrastructure project that the military regime implemented with timely assistance from the former Italian Aid Fund (FAI).

Since last year the incidence of accidents and minor landslides from seasonal rains that affect travel on the road has increased. The most worrying aspect of this situation is

reflected in the more than 40% increase of the travel time between Bosaso and Garowe. When the road was in good condition it took a truck driver roughly 5 hours to deliver goods from Bosaso to Garowe, the administrative capital of Puntland State. Now it takes between 8-10 hours.



A deep pothole in the Bosaso-Garowe road

The travel time increases ever more when an accident in the road involving haulage trucks

severely affects travel to and from Bosaso. Puntland does not have cranes that can remove overturned trucks in the main road.



Trucks avoiding the treacherous Bosaso-Garowe road

The economic costs of poor roads result in inflationary pressures in Puntland. Truck drivers that once charged US\$ 1000 to deliver goods to Buhodle now charge between US\$ 1,500-1,800 to make up for extra hours to travel on unpaved and rocky roads. “I have to service my lorry once we unload goods. The mechanic charges me between US\$ 300-500 ” said the owner of a lorry in Lasanod. Puntland Highways Authority tasked with renovating roads remains underfunded. The

misappropriation of funds for the renovation of Garowe-Galka'yo road in 2016 dented confidence donor organisations have in the ability of Puntland State to run small-scale infrastructure projects.

A Backbreaking journey



A gully formed in a part of the road between Sunni-jiif and Garowe

Spring rains contribute to the deterioration of Bosaso-Garowe Road condition. When a minibus carrying passengers reaches a gully in a part of the road near Sunni-jiif, passengers have to disembark and carry their belongings on their backs to wade through the stagnant rain water. People fleeing the inclement summer weather of Bosaso to spend their xagaa-bax (summer holiday) in inland districts face longer travel times and riskier journeys. Minibuses

travel on sandy and rocky terrains by the main road. Passengers walk by the minibus or the truck for one or two kilometres to return to the main road to resume the backbreaking journey. “The 2019 summer was exceptionally tiresome. Families travel in minibuses or small cars that cannot travel when so many potholes and gullies necessitate longer walks as a part of the journey. Families with children or elders or sick people had to stay in Bosaso to brave the hot summer weather there” says a Bosaso-based business man.

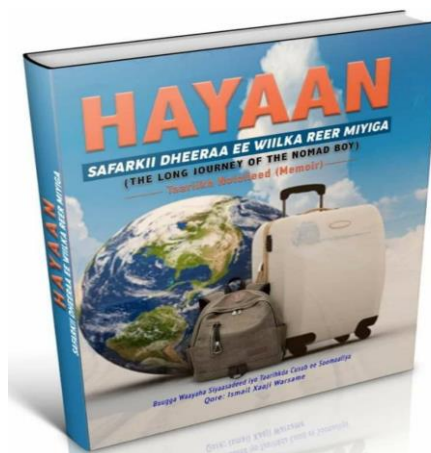


Pile-up of mini-buses and cars on Bosaso-Garowe road
People who regularly travel on Bosaso-Garowe Road complain of the rate at which potholes get formed in the main road in addition to the threat of

seasonal torrential rains that further weaken the foundations of the road.

The new Puntland administration that took office in January 2019 had not asked for assistance from the Federal Ministry of Housing and Public Works. With assistance from Qatar the Somali Federal Government last year launched projects to renovate Mogadishu-Bal’ad Road and Mogadishu-Agoye Road. “Poor relations between Garowe and Mogadishu should not deprive us of our right to seek renovation assistance from the Federal Government.

The pre-1991 Somali Government implemented Bosaso-Garowe Road and Bosaso Port” said Dahir Ahmed, a teacher in Bosaso. People in Puntland are waking up to economic costs resulting from the poor condition of Bosaso-Garowe Road.
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An Excerpt from *Talking Truth to Power* by Ismail Haji Warsame

January 9, 2020

I watched and listened to President Deni’s State of Union Speech on his First Year in office last night. While the efforts of his administration are commendable in many aspects, I felt that there is a long way for him to go to address root causes as to why Puntland State is falling behind in many fronts, including, first and foremost, democratization process, public service, judiciary and public security reforms.

But, what is clearly noticeable and overarching problem of Puntland is the absence of strategic policy planning on:

1. Puntland policy objectives towards poverty reduction, youth unemployment, the crisis of health sector, whereby there is no a single quality hospital in State after 21 years of statehood.
2. Economic benchmarks to strive for in the next five years, at least.
3. Education goals, where Puntland State has fallen behind Somaliland and Banadir Region, especially in quality of its higher learning.
4. Think Tank and academic research centres.
5. Competent State advisory boards and professional associations tackling with issues of state and national interests on daily basis.
6. Provision of proactive policy

and strategy in dealing with the fledgling Federal Government in the making of a “New Somalia”. Puntland should cause things to happen, not to wait for things to happen to her and reacts to events. It should take the lead in national political developments. It should make noises and alerts of its dissatisfaction to Somalia’s International Partners and all stakeholders.

7. Unlike the rest of Somalia, Puntland has immense human and natural resources to exploit effectively. It has a huge diaspora population. It has rich cultural heritage and long history of self-government. In the past, it had played critical and leading roles in Somalia’s statecraft and statehood. These are historical achievements it couldn’t abandon to be quite visible and proactive. It has to re-assert itself, reset and reboot.

8. Finally, Puntland should proclaim policy guidelines on fighting maladministration, cronyism, nepotism and abuses of public office.

There must be developed and known standards for handling issues of malpractice in both public and private sectors. Ismail Warsame:

9. In conclusion, the Head of the Administration must launch a policy of public accountability and must do away the notion of ‘Madax-Ka-Nool’, whether it is perceived or real. This will be a break from the past mistakes or abuses of power. All branches of government must operate in the accordance with the Constitution. That is what people of Puntland

deserve after long and historic struggle for a better life. This will also set the record for Somalia’s governance, and act as another Puntland contribution to Somalia’s continued nation-state.

It is my sincere hope that President Deni’s Administration would wake up and wise up to meet the challenges of the time.

© Ismail Haji Warsame, 2020

HOW INADEQUATE TOWN PLANNING INTENSIFIED IMPACT OF FLOODS IN QARDHO

Qardho (PPM) — The torrential rains that caused floods in Qardho on Monday evening had resulted in displacement, loss of life and wealth. Puntland State Government has appointed a disaster response committee tasked to assess the damage wrought by floods.

Since 1993 Qardho has been undergoing expansion spurred by population increase. Like other towns of Puntland State Qardho has benefitted from economic growth triggered by enterprising internally displaced people from Southern Somalia and other districts of Bari region before and after Qardho had become an administrative capital of Karkaar, a new region created by Puntland.

Geographically Qardho is located between two watercourses (*tog* in Somali). A bridge spans over the watercourse between Qardho

and Garowe districts. Rain water flows under the bridge. The distance between the bridge and Qardho safeguards the district against floods. The second watercourse runs through Qardho. A concrete watercourse (known as *buundo jiif*) able to withstand rainfloods has been on the road to Bosaso. Cars and Lorries wait for rainfloods to run their course before resuming a journey.

Before the district expanded locals had left the watercourse unaffected by town planning. They knew building houses or offices along the watercourse was to put oneself at the mercy of roaring seasonal floods that meander through the semi-desert terrain of Bari region before flowing into the Indian Ocean.



President Said Abdullahi Deni (second from right) visiting Qardho neighbourhoods affected by floods

The watercourse in Qardho proved an ideal place to build houses, offices and business premises. Some businesses near the watercourse have built an annex along the watercourse while the area was becoming a much sought after spot for developers.

Two factors have contributed to the devastating impact of rainfloods in Qardho. 1- The local government has failed to discharge its duty not to issue planning permits for an area known to be a natural watercourse for seasonal rain water. 2- Low rainfall for the last ten years has lulled locals into a false sense of security.

Rainfloods did not cause damage of similar scale in the district before the watercourse had become a local neighbourhood of Qardho. Houses, schools, parks, business premises and the market built on the watercourse force rainfloods to bifurcate into two parts of the district. One part of floods affected a part of Qardho not too far from the watercourse. Houses diverted floods to other other neighbourhoods of Qardho. The second part of floods damaged most buildings built on what was once the district watercourse.

The absence of disaster mitigation policy along with inadequate town planning had intensified the impact of rainfloods. While the impact of rainfloods on the neighbourhood of the watercourse was foreseeable, it was difficult to plan for the district-wide impact of floods. How lessons from the devastating rainfloods will inform planning and relocation decisions remains unclear. Allowing families and businesses affected by floods to return to the watercourse

area is as dangerous as leaving the watercourse as it is now — clogged with properties and other amenities. Rainfloods will cause more displacement and loss of life as long as the one-time natural watercourse gets referred to as a Qardho neighbourhood .

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Somaliland Imposes Temporary Ban on Khat Imports

By Khadar Mariano

Hargeisa (PPM) – The Chairman of the National COVID-19 Preparedness Committee, Vice President Abdirahman Abdilahi (Saylici) has announced 25 days ban on Khat imports effective from the 23rd of March. The temporary ban has not come about easily, but rather after long deliberations within the government, health experts

Sayli'i: Common stand on Khat and three successive meetings with the major Khat importers in Somaliland. The Vice President has underlined that the Somaliland Government is very serious about reinforcing this decision with stringent measures. The Somaliland Police will confiscate any vehicles caught illegally delivering Khat during the temporary ban.

“The Khat traders have shown great patriotism. They

have agreed with us on the importance of prioritizing saving lives in the wake of this COVID-19 pandemic . We agreed to temporarily stop Khat imports. We are very thankful for their demonstration of responsibility” said H.E. Abdirahman Saylici.

The majority of the people have welcomed this decision, but many issues remain unresolved. Taxes on Khat account for about 20% of the national budget. Khat trade also employs notable portions of the population, for many of whom Khat business is their only source of income. This decision is presumably going to exacerbate the unemployment rates of the country, estimated to be over 70%.

The government is yet to say how it plans to make up for the budget deficit the Khat ban will cause or how it will deal with the unemployment



the temporary ban of Khat imports will surely result in . Another question one might ask is how effective the government can enforce this decision given that the

Minister of Information Mr. Saleban Ali Koore has previously acknowledged the government's inability to patrol the long border Somaliland shares with Ethiopia to stop Khat imports from the neighbouring country.

However it turns out, the people of Somaliland are closely following what comes out of this bold decision to stop Khat trade for the first time since 1991.

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How Will Remittances Affect the Somali COVID-19 Response?

Nisar Majid

Laura Hammond

Khalif Abdirahman

Guhad Adan

Nauja Kleist

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads into the Horn of Africa, and as diaspora communities become affected by lockdowns, layoffs and illness, the remittance lifeline that sustains more than 40% of Somalis is being attenuated. This blog outlines a number of issues related to remittances and Somalia in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been considerable research on remittances and the role that

the Somali diaspora and its financial resources play in times of crisis. Taking stock of this information can provide useful insight into the likely impacts of the imminent drop in remittances.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an event of radical uncertainty: we don't know the dynamics of the pandemic in different contexts (especially in Africa), nor its wider economic impact. We don't know if this shock will compound other stresses afflicting Somalis (such as war and food insecurity), or whether the resilience shown by Somali communities in response to those shocks will also serve them well under the pressures of the pandemic.

The Somali diaspora, numbering well over 1 million, is distributed throughout the globe. Some of the largest communities are in the US (where at the time of writing the [most cases](#) have been recorded as a result of COVID-19), the UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, and Italy (all of which have extremely severe outbreaks and high – although varying – death rates).

While the Somali diaspora are renowned for their ability to respond to crises in their country of heritage and have been doing so for decades, typically it is they who are insulated from the shocks that their relatives are facing within the Somali territories, whether

conflict, drought, floods or economic emergencies (or a combination of these). In this instance, however, the shock of COVID-19 has begun in the diaspora. Ultimately it is likely that both ends of the remittance chain are likely to be affected by the same shock, playing out in similar and different ways. Already, according to an industry source, the volume of remittances has dropped by as much as 50% in certain corridors.

International assistance to the unfolding crisis will always have political dimensions and responses need to use '[conflict lenses](#)' and the principle of '[know your epidemic](#)'. Somalia has a deeply politicised history of aid, most recently brought out once again in relation to the [political economy of food assistance](#). This will play out in the current context in terms of which countries provide assistance and how it is distributed internally.

What do we know about those who send remittances?

Remittances from Somalis abroad are estimated at between US\$1.3 – 2 bn annually, possibly much more, where GDP is estimated at US\$6bn. Approximately 40% of households in the country are estimated to receive these funds directly. The vast majority of direct recipients are based in urban settings, but many send

on a portion of this money to rural relatives.

Remittances contribute to the payment of national food imports in what is a food deficit country. At the household level, this money primarily covers food and household essentials – *biil*, in Somali. It also contributes to essential education and health care expenses. Receiving remittances makes it easier to access credit, repay debts, make business investments and smooth out fluctuations in overall household expenditures. Diaspora funding is a major source of finance for the private health care sector. They play a major role in peace-building activities as well. Some remittances have undoubtedly funded conflict activities in the past, but data on this is difficult to obtain; today [funding for conflict](#) mostly comes from sources other than remittances.

The diaspora's support in times of crisis occurs in different ways. It may involve an extended family mobilising financially to support an individual household that has fallen on difficult times, or it may involve the wider diaspora in multiple countries organising together to respond to a drought or famine. Mobilisation can take many different forms, including calling on family and kinship networks, groups of young people using social media or holding charity events, individuals or small groups of

people organising global fundraising initiatives through WhatsApp groups, or Somali community groups working together with their memberships to raise funds. Remittances usually intensify during crises and emergencies, whether through increased demands from recipients or additional contributions to fundraising activities. It thereby compounds existing [diaspora contributions and civil society engagement](#). In the cholera outbreak of 2017 remittance funds were used to buy medical supplies, pay for health staff salaries and protective equipment and supplies.

In the Somalia famine of 2011 as well as in the 2017 emergency, the ability of those living in the midst of appalling conditions to take advantage of their '[social connectedness](#)' to reach out through social networks to Somalis in urban areas of the country and to the diaspora to ask for help was crucial to their survival. Of particular concern in this pandemic is that the virus [knows no boundaries](#) and may affect members in rural, urban and diaspora locations at the same time.

What do we know about who receives remittances?

We also know that remittances are not equally distributed in Somali society. They are concentrated within particular clans, lineages and extended

families.¹ These [geographic and identity-based particularities](#), for example, link Somaliland (and its diaspora) strongly with the UK, a function of colonial history. Some of these patterns may be even more localised with large extended families linked between specific towns in the diaspora and in Somalia. One of the four major Somali clan families, the Digil and Mirifle, are predominantly found in southern Somalia, are historically marginalised, and have a much smaller diaspora than the clan families of northern and central regions. These communities, who are also predominantly the farming and agro-pastoral populations, have been the worst affected by natural hazards such as droughts or locust swarms, as well as due to their weaker social and political status. They make up the majority of the internally displaced living in Somalia's largest cities and those who remain in their home areas are largely under Al Shabaab's domain, complicating their position. These factors will need to be considered in analyses of vulnerability and in humanitarian response.

Research also suggests that as many as 80% of remittance recipients receive [money from one sender](#), suggesting a high dependence and vulnerability on this relationship. Older women, who retain strong ties to family 'back home' are

important senders. If anything happens to this person – they lose their job, become ill, or have to care for immediate family members who are ill – they may not be able to continue to remit at the same level. The extent to which the remittance link is resilient will depend on other family members being able to take up this role. The result is likely to be a reduction in the amount of remittances people in the diaspora are able to send, if not at first then over time if the unemployment and disease crises are protracted. Likewise, this reliance accentuates the significant pressure that Somali diaspora groups may encounter in this crisis.

These geographic and identity patterns matter in light of COVID-19 as both the health and economic impacts may play out quite differently in the countries (and localities) that host the majority of Somali diaspora groups; financial impact as well as economic and welfare support is significantly different in, for example, the USA, the UK and Scandinavia.

Remittance vehicles

The story of remittances in Somalia over the last 40 years is linked to the evolution of the Somali telecommunications and money transfer enterprises, who are a great success story in innovation. They have faced and continue to face threats to

their own survival – particularly the [restrictions in recent years on access to bank accounts](#) – but have been instrumental to the survival of their clients. They are also powerful economic and political actors in their own right.

Depending on the sending country location there are different options and preferences for how to send money. Following the collapse of the state, the Somali-owned money transfer companies were the only option, with cash taken to a shop, which could then be collected within minutes or hours in numerous locations in Somalia. This is still a very common means of sending money, especially for the older generation, many of whom are less familiar with online technologies.

In recent years, online services have grown although not equally in all places. In Somalia, in terms of internal financial transfers, mobile money has become ubiquitous, and various online platforms can be used to move money within Somalia or between neighbouring countries – particularly Kenya – and Somali recipients. In the UK, online sending platforms to Somalia are not that commonly used given the tight restrictions on money service providers in many Western countries. However, money transfer companies like Dahabshiil and its mobile platform eDahab and Hormuud/Taaj have online

services both in the US and the UK. These services are nonetheless limited due to restricted banking services and accessibility in the Somali territories. Continued restrictions on money transfer companies' operations have an impact as well on international aid agencies' activities, as they use these channels to pay staff and deliver essential funding for aid resources inside Somalia.

Emerging issues and vulnerabilities in the diaspora

Immediate concerns and reactions in the diaspora are centred on the personal health and financial impacts that people are facing. As in wider society, economic impact is differentiated across [different countries and labour markets](#). People working in sectors such as transportation, retail, domestic and office cleaning, and restaurant/hospitality (all of which are major employers of Somalis) are being laid off. Cafes and teashops are closed in many locations; taxis business is virtually at a standstill. Where it has been promised, income support is not likely to cover their full lost salary. There will also be a cohort of unregistered/undocumented migrants doing casual work, who will be badly affected and for whom no compensation will be available.

Some areas of employment are still active or well protected. Notable amongst these are public sector workers, including health workers and those in the education sector. Public transport in cities like London is considered essential and well-protected and is a source of employment for many Somali men. Minnesota is an important hub for Somalis and while there are many taxi drivers and other occupations that are hard hit there is also a strong meat processing industry that remains active.

Beyond their employment, people are concerned about their elderly relatives, and are trying to use social distancing practices if possible and to live with restrictions on movements. The illness and deaths of prominent Somalis in the diaspora as a result of COVID-19 are being shared in media/social media and are being used as warnings for Somalis to follow social isolation practices.

Somalis in the diaspora contacted for this blog suggest that people are still preoccupied with their own situation and that it is still too early to know how remittances will be affected; the end of the month of March is the first month that an effect on remittances will become evident. Anecdotal reports indicate that people are not visiting money transfer companies' shops (in the UK)

and some activities have stopped, such as women's savings clubs – *hagbad* in Somali. It is expected that belts will be tightened and families in Somalia warned that less money will be coming their way.

However, as COVID-19 cases in Somalia begin to be reported, some diaspora and community groups have started to raise funds for response. In a single weekend, in response to the Somaliland appeal for support, for example, several thousand pounds have been raised from within the diaspora. Ramadan is approaching, which is a traditional time of giving, which may help to alleviate some of the worst effects of the crisis if people can find ways to send funds home. However over time, as the economic impacts deepen, such giving may be difficult to sustain.

Emerging Issues and vulnerabilities in Somalia

Pre-existing food security and economic vulnerability is focused on southern Somalia, particularly amongst displaced populations, however displacement-vulnerability is as much a factor of access as it is of vulnerability; conditions of rural populations in Al Shabaab territory are not clearly understood. The underlying health conditions in IDP camps and poor urban settings are extremely worrying in relation to the health impact of COVID-19. The hope of many Somalis that

the virus will spare them is already being shattered by reports of people with fevers and cough-related illnesses in many parts of the country. With no in-country testing procedures it is impossible to know whether these are COVID-19 cases.

Northern and central areas depend more on remittances as well as on food imports, as these are predominantly urban and pastoral areas. These areas also have a greater reliance on the livestock economy. Especially the [export of livestock to the Gulf](#), where the Hajj in Saudi Arabia – due to start this year in late July, and already under doubt – provides a huge annual demand for Somali-reared animals, and an important source of household income and food imports. With the potential for strict economic lockdowns and restrictions on imports, such as of cereal imports, warning bells will already be ringing.

Looking forward ... it seems likely that the negative impact on remittance flows to Somalia and globally will be considerable. Those who remain in work or whose income is protected by the various financial support provisions being made by governments in the Global North are likely to be obliged to support relatives in these same areas. Increased reliance on forms of welfare support in Europe and the UK, where

health care is largely free, appear to offer better prospects than in the USA where social protection is patchier and health care costs can be exorbitant. In short, the social support mechanisms in Somali society, which are extremely strong, may be coming under great strain, just to support those in the diaspora. The longer the domestic and international lockdowns continue to inhibit economic activity, the greater the challenges to remittances will be.

The epidemiology of COVID-19 and its interaction with other diseases in Somalia, and in Africa, is not yet known, but will be revealed in the coming weeks. If remittances to Somalia do diminish significantly and the Hajj pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia is cancelled, if food imports remain restricted and prices start to rise, pressure will quickly mount. The *gu* rains that are starting across the Somali territories will play an important role in 2020 as good livestock health will mean more milk and meat and higher value animals.

Following on from this preliminary piece, and as the COVID-19 crisis evolves, we will be developing a more detailed analysis.

This brief review already suggests several recommendations:

1. There is a need for continuous monitoring of conditions in both diaspora countries and in Somalia to see how the epidemiological and economic impacts of the pandemic influence diaspora/country of origin interactions; operational aid agencies (both Somali and international) and donors should use this information to adapt their approaches.
2. The influence of politics and conflict on the spread of COVID-19 needs to be monitored in real time to be able to adapt.
3. Remittance-sending channels need to be protected to enable people to send money to all parts of Somalia.
4. All money transfer companies operating in Somalia should reduce their transaction fees to help maintain the flows.
5. Aid flows to Somalia may need to increase to compensate for losses in remittance support. It is worth noting that humanitarian agencies rely on Money Transfer Companies to deliver this much needed aid.

6. Source: LSE Blog

7. *This blog was written following a meeting of researchers and practitioners working on Somalia, on 1 April, hosted by the Rift Valley Institute (RVI) and facilitated by the Centre for Humanitarian Change (CHC). Thanks to*

Daniel Maxwell, Hannah Stogdon, Peter Hailey, Mark Bradbury and Alex de Waal for valuable inputs.



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TASS

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Donor: SHF

IFB NO: PNTB/12/2020

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 10th May 2020

Tadamun Social Society (TASS) is a national Relief and Development agency with cross- sectorial programs bridging relief and development assistance and program services to vulnerable communities.

Tadamun Social Society (TASS), is hiring TWO vehicles (Land cruiser) (ONE VEHICLE for Laas Caanood and Dharkein Genyo and ANOTHER ONE in Taleex) for a period of 9 months. The vehicles will support SHF funded protection project in Laas Caanood, Taleex and Dharkein Genyo of Sool region.

Interested bidders are invited to collect a complete set of Supplier Registration Forms/ documents in visiting the TASS offices in Bosaso, North of international Village Hotel and in Garowe, Gen Nuur Salaad Rd, Street 14, Mire Aware Stadium area-Opposite Save the Children, from 1st May 2020 to 8th May 2020, between 08.30am to 03.30pm.

Key Requirements:

1. Duly filled in Vehicle Hire Prequalification Form in English Language with Owner's and driver's full details
2. Certified True Copy of all Pages of the Vehicle Ownership/Log Book with the generality of proprietors- (Certified by the Ministry of Public Works- Transport Department)
3. Road Tax Clearance Certificates
4. True Certified Copy of the driver's license (valid)

5. Car Rental /Hire rates per Month hired within Puntland expressed in USD Currency
6. The Rates MUST be inclusive of the Drivers and fuel
7. Copy for the owner's passport/ID

Completed and sealed bids indicating tender reference numbers on the sealed envelopes are to be submitted into tender box placed in TASS offices in Bosaso, North of international Village Hotel and in Garowe, Gen Nuur Salaad Rd, Street 14, Mire Aware Stadium area-Opposite Save the Children.

Late bids shall be rejected. Bids containing other external markings that can identify the vendor or addressed to individuals will be automatically disqualified.

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For More Information, Kindly Contact:

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