



The Implications of Hegemony or A Single-Party System on Somalia's State Fragility and Political Development.

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Introduction

The Party of Justice and Solidarity was established and inaugurated on May 14, 2025, in Mogadishu, bringing together the current president, Hasan Sheikh Mohamoud; his prime minister, Hamza Abdi Barre; the leadership of the federal parliament; federal government ministers; senior government officials; and some presidents of Federal Member States, including Hirshabelle Ali Abdullahi Gudlaawe, the president of Galmudug Ahmed Abdi Qoor-Qoor, and the president of South West Abdiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftaggareen, whose terms of office and constitutional mandates had all previously expired.

Former Somali presidents Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo and Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, along with previous prime ministers, prominent politicians including the leader of the Wadajir party, Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame, and scholars, have warned against the consequences of a single-party hegemony encompassing the president, prime minister, and certain presidents of federal member states. They alleged that the Somali federal president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, had dismantled the National Consultative Council, which comprised the federal president, prime minister, and presidents of regional federal states, and he is transforming it into a singular political party. The president's critics argued that the tasks of the National Consultative Council are essential to focus on the state-building process, federalism, unity, universal suffrage, and completing Somalia's provisional constitution, as

Somalia remains a fragile state whose legitimacy depends on political elite agreements, clan power-sharing, a provisional constitution, and elections occur every four years.

The president's unilateral change of the provisional constitution, exploiting the weakness of accountability institutions like the federal parliament, auditing office, and judiciary, alongside their amalgamation with the executive branch, could undermine credibility and the integrity of free and fair elections. This raises apprehensions regarding the Justice and Solidarity party, which currently holds the power to manipulate elections by means of rigging, political patronage, and purchasing of political allegiance through national resources, security forces, the partiality of the Electoral Commission, and state media.

The overview of Somalia's Political Parties

Following independence in 1960, Somalia adopted a democratic multi-party system; nonetheless, this ultimately led to the emergence of a military dictatorship in 1969, attributed to the lack of experience within Somali culture regarding the modern state and centralized political power.

The Somalia Youth League (SYL), as a liberation party, has subjugated all other political parties as a result of a particular leaders exploiting the party's role in national liberation from Western colonists. Additionally, they persuaded the Somali public that politicians lacking affiliation with the Somalia Youth League (SYL) were supporters of the colonial powers.

Widespread corruption, clannishness, and dysfunctional institutions marked with the Somalia Youth League (SYL) party led to a military coup in 1969, which civilians greeted with patriotic songs and celebration.

Following the military coup, the regime abrogated National Legislature and suspended the constitution. Additionally, the military had established a single political entity, the Somalia Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP). The party banned the formation of further parties and permitted its membership only to individuals who adhered to socialist doctrine. The military regime made significant strides in social security and service delivery in its first decade of governance.

The two parties emerged in the beginning thirty years of Somalia's modern state and post-independence: the Somalia Youth League (SYL), which established itself as the hegemonic party, and the Somalia Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP), which became a singular party, as they ended in military coups, state collapse, and a violent civil war, respectively.

Prof. Abdurahman Baadiyow has explicitly cautioned against the implications of singular and dominant political parties, urging the newly established parties to learn the historical lessons of prior parties such as the Somalia Youth League (SYL) and the Somalia Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP), which include the repercussions of their hegemony and elements that led to military coups and brutal civil conflict.

Understanding Hegemony and a Single-Party Systems

As poetical scientist professor Daniele Caraman stated, hegemony and a Single-Party Systems have no characteristics of democracy. In addition, the hegemonic party system allows the existence of other multi-party systems; nevertheless, they are subjected to strict authoritarian control, precluding any possibility of attaining power or winning elections. This ruling party was present in Egypt and Tunisia until the breakout of the Arab Spring in 2011.

And this party is also prevalent in other authoritarian regimes across Africa.

The single-party system is exclusively lawful in authoritarian regimes, banning other political parties. Single-party systems existed in communist countries such as the Soviet Union and Somalia from 1969 to 1991, during which Somalia maintained relations with the Soviet Union from 1969 to 1977, and the party continues to function in China today.

The recently formed Justice and Solidarity party has characteristics of a hegemonic party, which we will be discuss in the next section.

The New Party of Justice and Solidarity

This section examines the formation of the New Party of Justice and Solidarity, which combination from deferent groups. This part brings together the Union of Peace and Development Party (UPD), which itself came from the unification of the Dam-Jadid (New Blood), a faction of the Islah Islamic Movement that is ideologically based on the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Dal-jir group, which adheres to the doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood; it is not regarded as part of that Muslim Brotherhood. Addithanlly, the incumbent president of Somalia, Hasan Sheik Mohamud, was at the helm of this coalition, led this coalition to the victory in the 2022 presidential election.

This coalition of ruling group formed the Party of Justice and Solidarity, comprising people with divergent ideologies and political background, including the speakers of the federal parliament, federal government ministers, senior government officials, and the three presidents of federal member states, including Ali Abdullahi Gudlaawe of Hirshabelle, Ahmed

Abdi Qoor-Qoor of Galmudug, and Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftaggareen of South West, whose terms of office and constitutional mandates had previously ended.

It's unsurprising that the individuals with different political ideas are actually members of the new Party of Justice and Solidarity. Historically, the Somali political elite has never had coherent political ideas or political programs; rather, they concentrate mainly on their today's needs and preserving their power for personal and family enrichment. The membership of this newly formed party includes those linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, those split from Salafi Jihadi factions, those who believe in clan political identity, and those who consider politics a lucrative project.

The only objective of this coalition party is to secure victory in the forthcoming presidential election by consolidating elite power, manipulating the electoral process, or prolonging the president's constitutional term beyond its conclusion on May 15, 2026.

The constitutional terms of the three leaders of federal member states—Ali Abdullahi Gudlaawe of Hirshabelle, Ahmed Abdi Qoor-Qoor of Galmudug, and Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftaggareen of South West—have expired. More importantly, the federal government granted to these leaders a legitimate and extended tenure, which is entirely illicit.

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The formation of a hegemonic party, unilateral amendments to the provisional constitution, the enactment of selfish laws like as election and party laws through the Somalia Federal Parliament, and the installation of loyalists to the National Electoral Commission and Bounders. In addition, A shift from a parliamentary to a presidential political system implemented in the controversial constitution without consensus and inclusivity, would further exacerbate the fragility of the Somali state, breed fresh fragmentation, and hinder the slowly political development achieved since the Arta peace reconciliation of Djibouti in 2000.

Professor Afyare Elmi articulated that Somalia's political elite settlement, founded on democratic governance, encompasses conducting elections every four years, implementing clan power-sharing through the 4.5 system—where each of the four clans is assigned 61 parliamentary seats, while marginalized groups receive 31 seats—and sustaining a parliamentary system.

This is the new Party of Justice and Solidarity, which currently holds the power to

monopolize the nation's self-determination, the state-building process, and the electoral process; all of these are crucial for Somalia's stability after the catastrophic civil war in 1991, which could reignite conflict and increase distrust among political elites and the broader Somali society.

Furthermore, the new party has excluded marginalized groups, such as agricultural and coastal communities, from its leadership and overall structure. This is due to the fact that the party's structure is still based on clan power-sharing. Despite their claims that the country is transitioning to elections based on citizenship and universal suffrage.

In light of these issues and challenges, the government must refrain from utilizing the state institutions such as public funds, judiciary, an unbiased Electoral Commission, and national security forces to secure group interests and re-election by leveraging public power to purchase political support and loyalty from specific individuals.

Furthermore, the federal government has regularly provided legitimacy to the leaders of three federal member states—Hirshabelle, Galmudug, and Southwest—whose constitutional mandates have expired, with the aim of supporting their re-election and overstaying their power. As well as the federal government is establishing a patronage system, and providing state privileges and public money to influential businesspeople and self-serving politicians, while neglecting public service and the basic needs of the entire population, including the youth and poor people are suffering from unemployment, inflation, and extreme poverty.

Way Forward for Current Deadlock

Considering state fragility, elite division, and security issues, the ruling group avoids unilateral electoral models without political elite agreement. They must learn from 2021's crisis resulted from previous president Farmajo's unilateral electoral framework.

My argument does not oppose the implementation of direct elections; however, the shift from indirect to direct elections necessitates consensus and compromises among the political elite, and it does not necessarily require a free and fair electoral process.

The Somali citizen has not participated in self-determination or state-building, except from the constitution ratified in 1961 and direct election took place during the civilian governments from 1960-1969. As Sead Alihodzic and Necholas Matatuwith argue in policy paper published by IDEA international in 2019; “the election must legitimize the government and strengthening the democracy, peace and security”. Sead Alihodzic and Erik Asplund say in their 2018 policy paper titled “The Prevention and Mitigation of Election-Related Violence,”

published by IDEA International stated “that direct elections require a framework of laws and regulations that guide the voting procedure, alongside a neutral electoral commission to implement them. And they emphasize that inclusivity, integrity, and well-defined electoral rules are essential for ensuring successful election”.

Finally, Somali elections necessarily require the political elite's agreement, agreed legal framework, and an independent electoral commission rather than political rhetoric, unilateral decisions by the ruling group, and purchasing political loyalties, as the Somali state remains extremely fragile and legitimacy and power are distributed among federal member states, clans, and other non-state actors like armed militias.