

IESG Newsletter

SOMALIA ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT

UNDP/UNSOM Integrated Electoral Support Group (IESG)

OCT-NOV
2022



Garowe: IESG Deputy Chief Electoral Advisor at TPEC Garowe. 14 November 2022. Photo Credit: TPEC Facebook

Highlights

- FGS President invalidates extension mandate of NIEC commissioners
- Puntland: TPEC publishes list of VRCs and polling locations
- SWS: Ministry of Interior, Local Government and Reconciliation drafts an election management body bill

ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL UPDATES

Federal Government of Somalia (FGS)

On 22 November, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud issued a decree which invalidated the extension of the current commissioners of the National Independent Electoral

Commission (NIEC). The President also requested Parliament to approve new commissioners. The government has not given a timeline for the appointment process while

the outgoing commissioners have informed the NIEC Secretariat that they will remain in office until new commissioners are appointed.

Puntland

On 18 October, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, James Swan, and international partners, met with Puntland President Said Abdullahi Deni in Garowe. The group discussed the upcoming local district council elections. The international partners

emphasized that these elections could inspire one-person-one-vote elections elsewhere in Somalia.

On 17 November, Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission (TPEC) released a list of 524 sites, each with a Voter Registration Center

(VRC) and polling station. For some district areas, TPEC did not list VRCs and polling stations due to local and internal disputes. The Puntland Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization (MOIFAD) is trying to resolve these issues so the districts can partake in the elections.



Garowe: UN SRSG, International Partners, and President Deni. 18 October 2022. Photo Credit: UNSOM

ELECTORAL AND POLITICAL UPDATES

Galmudug

In October and November, the Galmudug Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation organized a series of indirect district elections:

- 7 October, 21 councilors (including six women), were elected in Balanbale District
- 31 October, 33 councilors were elected in Dhusamareb District (including four women); whereas the original number of seats up for election was 27
- 31 October – 1 November, 23 councilors (including four women) were elected in Abduwak District; whereas the original number of seats up for election was 21

South-West State (SWS)

On 3 November, the SWS Cabinet approved the SWS electoral law establishing an Electoral Commission which was drafted by the Ministry of Interior, Local Government and Reconciliation. It is currently awaiting approval by the SWS Parliament.

According to the law, the Commission consists of nine members with no gender quota required. Five out of nine commissioners will be nominated by SWS Council of Ministers. SWS Legislative Assembly will select the remaining four commissioners. The Commission will have a chair and vice-chair as well as secretariat led by the Secretary General of the Commission. The Commission is mandated to organize and conduct legislative and local council elections. It will also be responsible for resolving electoral dispute resolution cases. This draft law will be considered the first of its kind in SWS if approved by SWS Parliament.

IESG SUPPORT TO TPEC

Training Session on Data Analysis

The IESG Information Technology team conducted two field missions to TPEC Garowe and provided advice on data processing and safeguarding for the upcoming VR process. IESG created and shared a syllabus for a training session on data analysis, at the request of TPEC, scheduled for early 2023.

Support for Call Center

With support from IESG, TPEC has developed a Call Center with a toll-free number that can be called to ask questions related to the upcoming elections. TPEC, using funds from IESG, has commenced the procurement process for ten computer working stations for the Call Center and has hired EasyTech, a local company based in Garowe. EasyTech developed software, called Interactive Voice Response, that can connect callers automatically to Call Center agents for their questions. During a meeting on 26 October, IESG suggested that the subscribers of three mobile providers in Puntland (Golis, Somtel and NationLink) should each have access to the toll-free number.

On-The-Job Training to Implement Budget for VR Process

IESG/UNDP project team provided on-the-job training to TPEC departments on logistics, procurement, human resources and finance aspects.

The training focused on managing cash and preparing payment-supportive documentation to implement the budget for VR processes.

Helping Address Audit Findings of Electoral Commission

IESG/UNDP helped TPEC draft and revise institutional policies and standard operational procedures. This is helping address the audit findings on electoral commission's capacity management (e.g., financial policy, procurement policy, risk matrix, asset management, travel policy).



IESG SUPPORT TO TPEC

UNDP Visits Electoral Stakeholders in Puntland



UNDP Somalia senior management visited Puntland from 7–9 November where they met different stakeholders involved in the preparation of elections.

During the meeting with TPEC management, both institutions committed to provide necessary support and assistance for the effective implementation of the project activities, financed by the international community.

IESG Deputy Chief Electoral Advisor's Trip to TPEC Garowe

From 13–15 November, IESG met with electoral stakeholders in Garowe—MOIFAD; Director General of the Puntland Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Department; Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC); and Build UP—who work closely with TPEC.

The visit enabled a discussion on the ongoing electoral preparations, IESG support to the process, and opportunities for strengthened UN and TPEC collaboration and engagement.

IESG's Participation in Discussion on Youth and Electoral Participation

IESG participated in a discussion panel on the electoral process during the forum, Youth Elections and Democratization: Beyond the National Elections, organized by Folke Bernadotte Academy in Mogadishu from 27–29 November. The panel focused on how to create a platform for intergenerational dialogue between different stakeholders. This platform aims to increase youth electoral participation by fostering opportunities for collaboration and joint action. IESG committed to encouraging the electoral management bodies to:

IESG SUPPORT TO TPEC

IESG's Participation in Discussion on Youth and Electoral Participation Cont'd

- Involve young people (18–35 years old) in every stage of the electoral process
- Give young people opportunities in the electoral administration bodies, such as staff or intern positions
- Gather sex-disaggregated data on the presence of youth in the various stages of the electoral process

Other panelists included a Member of Parliament (MP) from the House of the People, the Deputy Mayor of Benadir, the Director of Political Affairs and Democratization in Benadir, and a Benadir District Commissioner. A firm commitment was made by the MP to meet regularly with youth and be an advocate

for them in the House of the People. Over 150 youths attended the forum. Similar forums have been held in six Federal Member States (FMSs) during the past months.



IESG SUPPORT TO NIEC

Legal/Procedures Support to NIEC

The IESG Legal/Procedures team met with NIEC to help draft and revise the NIEC paper, "Option and Suggestions to Existing Electoral Legal Framework, Oct 2022" containing:

- Recommendations for the implementation of direct universal suffrage elections
- Comments on harmonizing electoral timelines
- Legal challenges for the implementation of direct universal suffrage elections at the FGS level
- An overview of the legislative framework on the FMS level, providing for direct and/or indirect elections

NIEC is using this paper to inform decisions makers on the electoral-framework reform. It was also shared with an advisor for Federal Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation (MOIFAR).

NIEC's Working Session on Standards and Obligations

On 15 November, NIEC participated in a working session on Standards and Obligations on International Instruments with 45 participants. The event was jointly delivered by a Legal Advisor embedded in NIEC and IESG.

New NIEC Compound

IESG is supporting civil works and security-related improvements at the new NIEC compound. The Office of the Prime Minister recently issued a memo for the NIEC to vacate their office in the Villa Somalia complex, used since 2016.

The NIEC is expected to move into the new compound before the end of the first quarter of 2023.

NIEC Political Party Registration Software

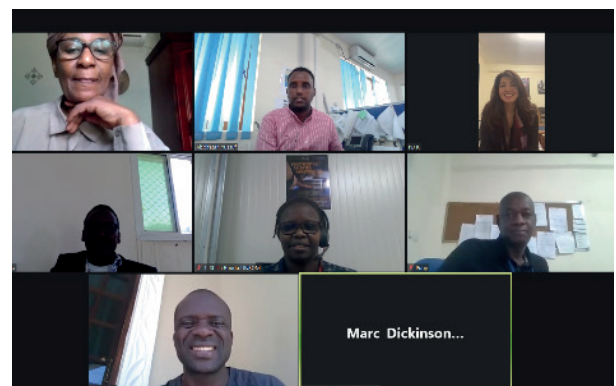
IESG is working on the political party registration software by improving modules and providing NIEC with the required list of necessary hardware and software. The procurement process will have to wait for the approval of the 2023 project assistance budget.

On 26 October, IESG met with NIEC/Office of the Political Party Registrar (OPPR) Head of the IT Unit and discussed the status of the OPPR Information System hosting. NIEC/OPPR is considering cloud hosting as an intermediate step while looking for funding for their own servers.

IESG SUPPORT TO JIBEC

IESG Discussion with Jubaland Independent Boundaries and Electoral Commission (JIBEC)

On 30 November, JIBEC and IESG convened their first meeting, discussing JIBEC's request for an orientation session for JIBEC members of the Board of Commissioners, planned for January. The JIBEC Chairperson noted their appreciation for IESG's commitment to host the first orientation session. IESG outlined the UNSOM electoral support mandate and scope. JIBEC Chairperson stated the capacity needs of the Commission regarding technical, operational, and administrative support. IESG will hold further discussions on how to proceed with JIBEC's needs and areas where current support can be expanded on.



JIBEC Chairperson and IESG in Meeting, 30 November 2022. Photo Credit: IESG

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