



REPUBLIC OF SOMALILAND
Somaliland Special Envoy

Hargeisa, 24/06/2020

**CELEBRATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE INDEPENDENCE OF SOMALILAND !**

In my humble capacity as Somaliland's Special Envoy, I wish to share with the world the joyful news that in a few hours, the people of the Republic of Somaliland will be celebrating the 60th Anniversary of our Independence from Great Britain which occurred on the 26th of June, 1960.

We take pride in this achievement which marks the moment we secured our place in history when Somaliland gained its sovereignty and became the first 'Somali' nation to gain full independence, while our neighbor ' *La Somalia Italiana*' to our East was still an Italian Colony, and Djibouti to our West remained '*la Cote Française des Somalis*'.

In achieving our independence on the 26th of June, 1960, Somaliland became the 15th country in Africa to gain its independence from colonial rule, even as thirty five or more other African countries yet remained under colonial rule.

Our Independence was celebrated in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland, with all the pomp and pageantry appropriate for such a joyful occasion. It took place in the presence of Her Majesty's Special Envoy who read the Royal Proclamation of Independence from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the 2nd.

In response to our declaration of independence, 35 States, including the members of the United Nations Security Council immediately acknowledged our independence. During that occasion, the United Kingdom signed several agreements with Somaliland and deposited them at the United Nations under article 102 of the UN Charter. Our newly independent State was registered as the State of Somaliland and thus became a fully-fledged Sovereign State under the International Law and the Charter of the United Nations. The Organization of African Union did not exist then.

The mystery is how we can now find ourselves in the preposterous situation where Somalia, which did not even exist at the time of Somaliland's independence, and which has evidently failed in its governance efforts within its own territory for the past 30 years, has somehow been 'crowned' by the international community as a 'legitimate government' and also allowed to take a seat at the UN and the AU as self-appointed representatives of both Somalia AND Somaliland !

Our independence was heralded as the first stage in a possible union between all Somali nations once all five territories achieved independence. Italian Somalia subsequently became the second Somali country to become independent five days after the independence of Somaliland.

As planned, the former British Somaliland and former Italian Somalia entered into an informal union, one that was never ratified, on the 1st of July, 1960. Yet the idea of a union of five Somali nations, which had been the justification for this informal union, was never going to be realized. When the Republic of Djibouti became Independent on the 27th of June, 1977, it wisely opted to stay out of the planned union, because it had witnessed the mess that resulted from the failed union between Somaliland and Somalia.

Today, we do not wish to dwell on the dark and tragic side of our failed union with Somalia. We do not need to detail the ensuing hardships, the destruction of our cities, the genocide and the mass killings of the civilian population of Somaliland by the army of Somalia. Anyone interested in knowing more about those painful years of our history can avail of the reports by Amnesty International and by the American Human Rights Watch 'A Government at War with its Own People'. Another important milestone document is the report of the African Union Fact Finding Mission to Somaliland in 2005.

Today, above all else, we Thank Allah as we celebrate our 60 years of independence, a period which has witnessed the rebuilding of Somaliland by our people over the past 29 years after we fully separated from Somalia in May 1991 and began to bring our people back home and to safety.

Our rejoicing starts with recognizing, appreciating and thanking all those who have helped us along the long road to recovery from the days our people returned from refugee camps in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya in 1991, to the present Covid-19 pandemic crisis when our appeal for assistance was met with a generous rapid response and the immediate delivery of supplies from the EU, WHO, UNICEF, the USA, UK, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, China, Qatar, Taiwan, Djibouti, Turkey, Ethiopia, Kenya, and many others, as well as from the local business people who made generous donations to support the Government of Somaliland to fight this pandemic.

Thankfully, the help that was extended to us was not in vain, because Somaliland seems to be holding the pandemic in check with a strong determination and in a spirit of public and private partnership. We do however mourn the loss of 28 lives due to Covid-19 and pray for the speedy recovery of those who are still fighting the disease. Without the 'world's' help, we would have struggled to fight it with our limited resources and wish to say a loud and clear **'Thank You!'** to all who have responded to our emergency appeal.

While rejoicing, we should not forget the years that it took to recover from the long years of war, a recovery which would never have happened if the USA, Britain and Denmark had not helped us to remove the millions of landmines left in our cities and throughout Somaliland before we could bring home our one million refugees from the camps in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Yemen and beyond where they had fled to seek refuge.

On the 60th anniversary of our independence, we take this opportunity to sincerely thank our many friends who saw us through the testing periods and major struggles that we had to overcome before we could have the peace, stability, and the democratic system of government that we enjoy today:

- Our direct neighbours Ethiopia and Djibouti opened their borders to over one million of our people who sought refuge in their countries to escape Somalia's Russian Migs.

- Our Arab brothers: The GCC, and in particular the United Araba Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait for investing in Somaliland and helping us rebuild our country.

- The European Union for supporting us with humanitarian assistance and with our current development projects.

- We are grateful to the United States of America for immediately coming to our assistance to help us reconnect the water supply to our cities in 1991. Since that time, the USA has been extending huge humanitarian and development assistance to Somaliland. I hope that the USA will re-evaluate its outdated 30-year old Somalia policy, which has ignored and isolated Somaliland while spending a massive amount of taxpayer's money and the loss of many American lives in Somalia.

-The United Kingdom has been a great and constant supporter who heavily invested in many areas but particularly in our police force, in our intelligence as well as in each one of the numerous Presidential, Parliamentary and Local elections we have held since 2001.

- We appreciate the assistance of France, especially during our Borama Conference when we laid the blueprint for the civilian government that we have today. The ensuing Borama Charter became the foundation upon which we developed the Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland which guides our people today.

- The Scandinavian countries, have also invested heavily in our humanitarian assistance both here and in their countries where many of our people have fled.

-We wish to recognize all the friendship and assistance received during our turbulent past from our friends in Germany, Switzerland, Canada, South Africa, India, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea Conakry, China, and many more.

- We cannot forget to mention the UN and the INGOs who have extended valuable humanitarian assistance to us as well as helping with repairing and rebuilding our health infrastructure, schools, roads, bridges, and government offices.

We warmly welcome the UN and INGOS who have established their offices in Somaliland since 1995 and have been living with us without let or hindrance since that time. Many of them drive their own cars, have their children and families in Somaliland, and run their offices as they would in any normal country.

Once our Constitution became adopted during the Referendum we held in 2001 when 97% of the people of Somaliland also voted for our separation from Somalia, we embarked on the long task of Democratization and nation building. We started by electing a parliament, an Upper House, creating and training our police force, our army, judiciary, government offices, and establishing political parties.

-With our own flag, currency, passport, Identity Cards, Banks, and National Anthem, we appreciate the countries that have established 'Offices' in Somaliland and although they do not call them Embassies, still provide a diplomatic presence which we welcome.

-As soon as peace became established, we also re-started our vibrant livestock industry, which exports livestock around the world and today have a busy Chamber of Commerce that has registered several hundred national and international companies who trade with Somaliland and have offices here.

-With the re-opening of our deep-water Port of Berbera in 1995, we welcome the fact that we can now offer an outlet to the sea to Ethiopia and are proud that one third of the food Aid to Ethiopia comes through our Port of Berbera. In recent years, we have also had the honour to welcome many international companies, such as the Dubai Port which, within a short period, has doubled the amount of container traffic and goods which come through the port of Berbera and go on to Ethiopia and beyond.

Somaliland has indeed much to be grateful for including our long record of keeping our shores free of pirates and our country free of terrorists and warlords. We are proud that our accomplishments, peace, stability, and governance have earned us many friends who describe us as ' A Rare African Miracle'.

We have clearly demonstrated that we have the maturity to run our country. We have earned the confidence of our people. We have delivered security and stability to the Horn of Africa and to the 'Mouth of the Red Sea', and have become the masters of our own destiny. We have shown ourselves to be a reliable and responsible regional partner and have lived in peace and harmony with all our neighbours, including Somalia, to whom we have on many occasions extended assistance during the many periods of crisis it has faced.

All we can say now is ‘Please do not condemn us for the sins of others but instead, please judge us by how hard we fell and how much we have succeeded to pick ourselves up to accomplish all that we have described in the previous pages’.

We condemn all forms of terrorism and are determined to move forward to contribute to the peace and stability of our part of the world.

We are determined to promote and encourage our free economy, build our industries, create jobs for our youth, and trade with all who wish to trade with us for our mutual benefit.

We are determined to respect all our international borders as they were demarcated at the time of our independence from Great Britain.

We are determined to keep protecting human rights and freedom of expression, and also continue our determination to fight harmful traditional practices that endanger the lives of our daughters.

Our separation from Somalia is firm and final but Somaliland will continue to extend a hand of friendship to all our neighbors, including Somalia, in a spirit of regional collaboration which benefits all our peoples.

Long Live Somaliland !

Mrs. Edna Adan Ismail

Attachments: 1. Map of Africa in order to locate Somaliland

2. Royal Proclamation of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II

3. Somaliland General and Presidential Elections Report

4. Message from the US Secretary of State at our Independence

5. Stamps of Somaliland Protectorate (Because I love philately !)