

Galkaio – A battleground for Vision-2016 Electioneering

On 23rd of November, clan conflict started in Galkaio, the capital city of Mudug. The conflict was part of a greater strategy pursued by Damjadid government in Mogadishu. The pretext was the construction of 130-meter tarmac road in Garsoor neighborhood of the city which was to be paved by Puntland. Militias from Galmudug Administration invaded the municipality workers who were paving the road. Three workers died in the incident and 40 civilians were wounded by shrapnels from Howitzers fired from Galmudug side.

Galkaio is a divided city consisting of four major neighborhoods, three of which is controlled by Puntland and the other controlled by Galmudug. The strife started between Puntland controlled neighborhoods and the Galmudug-controlled Barahley neighborhood.

Galkaio had a history of being the epicenter of the clan-based Somali storm. It had become a battlefield in 1991 when 800 people were killed in a single night by some warlords who are now igniting the flames of yet another civil war while at the same shedding crocodile tears over the

current onslaught. The new confrontation has now become the best card available to be played in securing Damjadid's dream to extend this reign beyond 2016 dead end. The inhabitants of the city have to pay the price of this power extortion by being subjected to displacement. The elders and community leaders are desperately trying to contain the situation and forbid any escalation of the conflict, but this may end in vain as warlords elsewhere in the country are aborting the community leaders' endeavors to defuse the situation.



Galmudug State was unconstitutionally formed with the patronage of Damjadid led by Mogadishu strongman, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, in 2015 in violation of the federal

charter adopted. President Mohamud's presidency is coming to end in August, 2016 but he is desperately trying to create a situation which will enable him to be re-elected. The current conflict is seen by many political analysts that it is a maneuver to create destabilization between Galmudug and Puntland to pave the way for term extension as the federal states are not in agreement on the approach Vision 2016 election. The election of parliament and possible strategy to elect government in August 2016 is a subject of controversy.

The Damjadid coterie in Mogadishu is pondering ways to nib the district-level power-sharing in the bud by destabilizing the stable federal states hostile to its political ambitions of seeking the extension of its term.

States like Puntland and Jubbaland have strongly supported the idea that 2016 election be based on grassroots approach where the 91 pre-civil war districts will appoint their own MPs, while Mogadishu and Galmudug supported the outdated barren 4.5 power sharing formula which has been the norm since post-civil-war power sharing is the only viable way which should be based the 2016 election.

The so-called 4.5 formula has proven to be a hindrance to the democratization of Somalia and a fuel for the clan-based conflicts which are prevailing in many parts of the Mudug region and elsewhere in the country. The formula envisions that power should be shared on the bases of four main clans and less numerous groups. The arrangement has been proven to be a destabilizing factor and had the insurmountable pitfalls which include

1. Unfair representation of the Somali community
2. Aggrandizement and Glorification of the destructive clan sentiments which had been the Achilles heel of Somalia. Somalia has been a failed state for a quarter of century and 4.5 formula defied any power-sharing consensus among the political contenders.
3. The continuation of the status quo in Somalia which only benefits many interest groups like the current con artists in the Somali political arena and international stakeholders fishing from the murky political climate prevailing
4. clan-based power struggle which deprived Somalia of any hopes of pacification and forbade the development of any nationalistic aspirations
5. The marginalization of Somali elites who would have made difference in re-shaping Somalia along democratic path and principles. Clan heads had to nominate the parliamentarians who had no national credit, character or qualifications other than being diehard exclusionist out to settle old scores. This had created a political stalemate.

The international community, which virtually sponsored and legitimized the clique in power, is either indifferent to the chaotic situation and the unrestrained swindle of Damjadid or have their vested interest in the stalemate. The United Nations Secretary General nominated special envoy Michael Keating, to Somalia on November 22nd 2015. Ambassador Keating will replace Nickolas Kay whose term is coming to an end. Somalis are putting their high hopes on Ambassador Keating's efforts to help Somalis regain their failed state and save Somalia from politically-induced clan wars, the likes of Galkaio conflict, orchestrated by political imposters.

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