

## *Somalia's Search for an Elusive Ray of Hope*

Somalia's 2016 Vision is a failed opportunity. It has succumbed to the current leadership's misrule, lack of sincerity and trustworthiness. The leadership's dictatorial ambitions outweighed its declared mandate and as a result the Vision's fate is sealed by this corruptive ambition. The leadership did not shy away from openly announcing that it had failed its mandate of leading the country to democratic process. The wasted opportunity created uncertainty which may have far-reaching negative consequence for the whole of East African region.



Somalia could have been saved by dedicated far-sighted thinkers which now seem to be in short supply, not by corrupt cartels and the AMISOM troops which are increasingly becoming part of the problem. The country is now the play field of corrupt cartels and international interest groups fishing from Somalia rough political sea. The ray of hope is intentionally ignored by these interest groups who claim to run the country directly or indirectly.

The bungled 2016 vision for democratization of the troubled nation, which has been chaotic for more than quarter of a century, has been deliberately bungled under the very nose of the United Nation's envoy and monitoring groups. Consequently, Somalia is now posed for the further internecine wars and uncertainty being paved the way by conglomerate of these corrupt so-called leaders and their sponsors.

No port in the storm is being sought with sincere desire to achieve it. The stakeholders are trying to avoid blame and are seeking an alternative to the failed vision. A group dubbed as Somali National Consultative Leader Forum (SNCLF) has been formed under the initiative of the international community to find an alternative to the cancelled 2016 *"one person one vote election."* However, the ruling clique got the leverage to exploit the situation and unilaterally controlled SNCLF to its advantage. The group presented four potential electoral processes or models which may form the basis from reconstitution of what will be called *"Somali National Assembly"* or *"the Somali parliament"*. SNCLF envisioned that

1. Formation of *"National Electoral Caucus (NEC)"* to elect 275 parliamentarians. The NEC will vote for political parties. Each political party will nominate a number of parliamentarians in proportion to the total votes received.
2. Formation of *"State Electoral Caucus"* in each Federal Member State for the election of number of parliamentarians to be allocated to each federal member states including Hiiraan/Middle Shabelle State, and Benadir Region State.
3. Formation of *"sub clan Electoral Caucus"* under the 4.5 clan system. Each sub clan will elect its allocated representatives. This model replicates the clan-based representation certified by the 135 traditional leaders.
4. Formation of *"District Electoral Caucuses"* in each of the 92 districts that existed before 1991. Each *"District Electoral Caucus"* will elect 3 parliamentarians. The total members of the federal parliament will be 276.

The first two options are dubious approaches which can be easily manipulated by the ruling clique and their cohorts. The aim is to create a round-about way for term extension to keep the status quo in line with their vested interest. In option two, for example, the clique has been successful to install own man as the head of Galmudug. It is trying to do the same in Hiran/Middle Shabelle and Benadir. These two

options will lead to the continuation of the status quo, crippling any potential to move forward in the national political process.

The third option, the sub-clan electoral caucus stands for the much detested unfair 4.5-power-sharing scheme. This scheme had not guaranteed any just representation of the Somali society. It had been an ad hoc political arrangement to contain the warring clan groupings.

These three options mentioned represent Somalia's Pandora's boxes and they are not worth opening. The current ruling clique's strategy is to enforce one of these options in order to have enough leverage to state-manage the situation.

The fourth alternative, District level caucuses, stands for the only transparent viable grassroots representation. It is at least a just/fair representation for all the sections of Somalia. It might not be a corruption-free political process, but it supersedes the other options in fairness and transparency. Citable reasons include:

- a. It will be a step forward for one-man-one-vote democratic process.
- b. It will neutralize the clan-hegemonic strategies which has been Somalia's Achilles Heel and the sources of instability.
- c. It will herald a sense of nationalism which will gradually replace the destructive clan sentiment that have plunged Somalia into chaotic situation.
- d. Every section of Somalia will fairly be represented and the destructive clan strife will be swallowed back.

There is no doubt, clan strife will be there at the district level, but it will have no much impact at the national level as the case has been major clan contests for the last quarter of a century. The higher these clan-based political disputes go, the more is the effect they will have on higher national institutions. The political wrangling at the district level can be intervened by the respective federal states. Any persistent presentation squabble can also arbitrated by the rest of the undisputed elected parliamentarians will adjudicate on who will represent that particular district in consultation with the chief community leaders in these districts.

The ruling clique and the heads of the federal states will reconvene in December to decide which of these parting ways to follow. Much will depend on partakers' vested individual political ambitions rather than on the national aspirations. The UN's fruitless involvement can make no difference unless it commits itself harder in a healthy Somali political development and intervene in the widespread corruption and political misrule.

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November 7, 2015