

## *Somalia's insurmountable Impediment and Possible Exit of the Maze*

Somalia's pacification drive stalemates and the impediments look insurmountable. A host of strategies from different angles is attributed to that lack of progress. These impediments are laid by many political circles both local and international actors who have diverse stakes. Some of these actors are known traditional adversaries of Somalia. Other more dangerous ones are either indigenous actors who are subservient to international interest groups. These holdups come from two fronts, namely the international front and the local front:



### *I. The international Front*

*UN Special Envoys to Somalia:* The UN assigns special envoys to the Somali file. The UN had never had it right when it comes to the current Somali issue. Its envoys come in clean and ambitious. They inspire the war-weary Somalis with hopes, try to make difference and later somehow mess up in the local politics and dirty their hands in the process and finally bow out or get removed. A typical example is the outgoing UN envoy, Nickolas Kay. Somalis welcomed him with enthusiasm that a first worlder is in charge of supporting Somalia heal its self-inflicted wounds. This enthusiasm waned when his Excellency became a silent spectator of not only our leaders' misrule, corruption and abuse of power, but also disregarded more serious issues in the Somali political process. His Excellency turned a blind eye to the deterioration of the peace process and reneged on his promise that Somalia will have democratic transition in August 2016. His Excellency has been a silent spectator while the current federal government was procrastinating or deviating from the transitional process in its four-year term, with the mandate to lead Somalia to a democratic path resulting in one-man-one-vote election design. His Excellency's reports to the Security Council and the Secretary-General of UN included silver linings that '*progress is being made*', a statement which belied the reality on the ground.

Ambassador Kay endorsed the formation of unconstitutional Federal States like Galmudug State which added fuel to the raging fires. The Central Regions need to have their own state as part of the democratization process provided that this goes along the terms of the interim constitution. This only culminated in the ongoing bloodshed in Galkaio and elsewhere and the brewing strife in many parts of the country.

*Frontline States and their Negative Role:* Both Ethiopia and Kenya which had had border disputes with Somalia are part of AMISOM troops virtually controlling Somalia. They are accused of policing Somalia for the interests of their respective countries. It is understandable why AMISOM is creating dependency on foreign forces guarding the government officials and aborting any attempt to re-establish national Somali army institutions or even forbidding any opportunity to reconstitute Somalia. Countries contributing AMISOM troops happened to be the greatest hurdle to the formation the Somali army and meddled in goings-on of the Somali security institutions.

In addition, it is no secret that these countries have undercover agents in the all the Somali executive organs. Their only excuse to meddle in Somali affairs is to contain the extremism that is already going across borders, but their geopolitical interests outweigh that justification. These countries micromanage the Somali affairs from behind the curtains and the world remains silent about this interference due to the concerns of global fight against terrorism and extremism.

## *II. The local front*

*The Somali Federal Parliament:* The Somali parliament was elected undemocratically and hence acts undemocratically. The majority of the un-elected parliamentarians were handpicked by community leaders on power sharing basis of four major clans and less numerous clan groupings, better known as 4.5 formula. Once in the Council of legislators, the majority turned corrupt and offered their voice to the highest bidder in the vote-hungry higher corrupt officials some of whom serve the interest of the foreign entities.

In a Somali legend, a tree complained to the cutting edge of the axe that was digging deep into its trunk and retorted “Hey Axe blade! You wouldn’t have cut me down like this if a part of mine (the wooden handle of the axe) were not in collusion with you!” Likewise, many concerned Somalis are complaining in silent desperation that foreign interest groups would not have stalled our endeavor to put our house in order if some tyrants amidst us were not in collusion.

*The GIGO effect is at work here.* The term GIGO came with the development of the cyber technology and related jargons. If wrong input (garbage) is fed onto the computer, it will process the wrong information and will output wrong information (garbage) in return. Hence Garbage in Garbage out (GIGO) was coined in. Analogically our legislative council was staffed with the wrong people and the executive government organs they produced were incompetent. They sold their votes to corrupt executive bodies.

Once elected, Somali leaders both at the regional level and Federal government level concentrate their energies to cling to power, using their positions to amass wealth for future vote-buying. This prompted them to get distracted from national agenda and just sought opportunities to show off that they are on the right track in order to mislead the public. Corruption, nepotism and impoverishment of the nation are the invariable hallmarks of their leadership. They surround themselves with politically bankrupt cronies who are like the soft ticks that suck the gore of the festering wounds they inflicted on the ailing nation. Conflicts of interest among them played havoc on the national interest, thereby promoting confrontations at the executive institutions. The last two governments had costly political confrontations between the presidents and their premiers that dragged on and on and deplete the national coffers through bribery.

## *III. The ongoing flames of conflict to be extinguished*

The recent conflict in Galkaio where dozens of people lost their lives and hundreds of thousands were displaced under the very noses of the international community is just a vivid example of politically motivated misdoings of the so-called Somali federal government. Galkaio became a

victim of this political mishandling where both the federal government and state governments were involved. The carnage was politically motivated.

Hiran region is another hot spot. Clan wars erupted. Hundreds were killed, wounded or displaced. The menace is still going on. Lower Shabelle is another scene that has witnessed burning down of entire villages. The conflicts are still unresolved and government-induced conflicts are festering wounds. Extremists cash in on the situation and are likely to win the support of the victimized clans as is the case with many of the current conflicts sponsored by the federal government.

#### IV. *Corrective Measures Needed*

If the Somali impostors and the international stakeholders ever want to play a positive role in stabilization of this ill-fated country, it doesn't demand rocket science. It is as easy as ABC and straightforward. Appointment of district-based MPs is the most feasible option of the options proposed by the Somali High-level Partnership Forum (SHLPF). This will pave the way for a broad-based representation that would reduce the hostilities and initiate a democratization process.

Decades of civil war destroyed the Somali social fabric and forced people to seek shelter in their respective districts. Grassroots representation of the Somali communities is a must in nation rebuilding without which the clan-based conflicts and political stalemates prevail that will hamper any way forward.

History will be a witness that 4.5 power sharing will be the continuation of the existing state of affairs that will thwart any progress to the right direction. Hopes of clan dominance through guile, vote-rigging and misrepresentation are the motivations for sticking to 4.5 election model.

Another possible port in the storm is the formation of a legislative council from Somalia's former 92 districts chosen on basis of their educational qualifications and other positive merits. This is a bit cumbersome process as some districts will not be able to send representatives for one reason or another. This will be manageable with the help of the well-meaning international community. This legislative council will elect a government with two-year mandate which will pave the way for one-man-one-vote preceded by taking correct UN-monitored census, resolving border disputes. The current leaders at the state or federal level should be banished from taking part in the election process of that government.

The process should also be immunized against the meddling and the interference of frontline states or even their AMISOM troops. The frontline states which are part of the problem guard their vested interest and will see to it that their strategies are served in the process. That will have an impact on process. Their influence must be curtailed.

*Questionable AMISOM's peace-keeping role:* The Somali so-called leaders take AMISOM protection for granted. This hampers the seriousness of the Somali political leaders. *The mouse will play when the cat is away.* In an analogy, the corrupt Somali officials are the mice. The cats are the extremists, warlords and other defiant groups. The mice will just feast on with the cheese while the defiant groups are being kept away the AMISOM protection. These corrupt officials

will make no progress as long as they feel they can play with ease. AMISOM engagement should have a timetable for withdrawal so that the mice will be taken to task and forced to take on responsibilities and lead judiciously than to play. Currently, the cats are regrouping and planning. The mice are just in merrymaking activity. The well-meaning international community is just beating about the bush, providing the cheese for the wild party.

AMISOM role should include training future Somali army from the across the regions in a balanced way. The UN is needed to help in integrating these trainees into a force with a national character that can replace AMISOM troops in a short time frame.

#### *V. The Negative Consequences of adopting the best corrective measures*

The stalemate will prevail and new conflicts will follow suit. The current confrontations in Galkaio, Beletweyne, Dusamarreb, Marka and elsewhere will be dwarfed by major wars polarizing the Somali clans further, causing further displacement, refugees and insecurity in the whole region. The defiant groups like Shabab, ISIS and Al-Qaeda will be well entrenched in Somalia making Somalia the breeding ground for pirates, terrorists, fugitives, and warlords.

Somali instability will benefit no one. It has the potential to spread to the neighboring countries and even beyond. It needs to be nipped in the bud before it is too late. The international community should call a spade a spade and take on its proclaimed humanitarian and world security responsibilities. It has the capability to make a difference in the Somali situation fast and effectively.

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