

Politics

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Somalia SITUATION UPDATE: FGS, FMS, opposition resolve electoral disputes, sign agreement to hold elections within 60 days on May 27

Executive Summary

- The signing of an agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), Federal Member States (FMS), and the opposition on May 27 notably ends the ongoing electoral impasse, which led to heightened political tensions and violence in Mogadishu.
- The relatively quick formation and signing of the agreement could be attributed to President Mohamed Farmajo's absence from the FMS-FGS negotiations. Pressure from international and regional actors also potentially convinced all stakeholders to compromise and quickly reach an agreement.
- However, there remain several problems with the agreement, including issues concerning the nomination of members to the election management committees in Somaliland and the lack of clarity over the nomination of delegates voting for the Members of Parliament (MP). This may further delay the electoral process and increase political tensions over the coming months.

Please be advised

- Reports indicate that the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS) have signed an agreement to hold presidential and parliamentary elections within 60 days on May 27.
- The Federal Indirect Elections Team (FIET) and State Indirect Elections Team (SIET) will prepare election timetables, while persons opposed to President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's 'Farmajo' initial nominees to the FIET have 72 hours to submit their own lists to PM Mohamed Hussien Roble who will assess and send it to the FMS and FGS for replacement.
- The SIET is made up of 11 members and the FEIT has 25 members. Each FMS can nominate four members to the FEIT and two to the dispute resolution mechanism.
- The agreement also states that Roble will be responsible for the conduct of the elections in Somaliland in consultation with Speaker of the Upper House Abdi Hashi and Deputy PM Mahdi Guled.
- Hashi will appoint four members to the SIET, one member to the FIET, and one member to the dispute resolution committee, while the appointment of the rest remains unspecified.
- The agreement also states that Roble would be responsible for security, reconciliation, and the formation of an administration in Jubaland's Gedo Region.
- A committee from all FMS, excluding Jubaland, will nominate two persons for the position of district commissioner and deputy district commissioner for Garbaharey, Gedo Region, and present them to Jubaland President Ahmed Madobe for appointment.
- The agreement does not mention the procedure for the nomination of delegates who would eventually elect the Lower House MPs.

- These elections will take place in two major towns of each state with Roble to create a nine-member committee made up of the federal police and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to oversee election security.
- The US, UK, and EU have released statements welcoming the agreement and expressing support for its outcome on May 27.

Assessments & Forecast

1. The signing of this agreement functionally ends the electoral impasse between the FMS and opposition on the one hand and the FGS on the other, which has resulted in heightened political tensions and violence in the past few months. The relatively quick signing of the agreement after just five days of resumed FGS-FMS talks is notable given months of failed negotiations over contentious issues, including the composition of the electoral management committees, due to perceptions of Farmajo not willing to compromise. In this context, this latest agreement could be attributed to Farmajo's decision to not pursue a two-year term extension and his absence from these negotiations, likely encouraging confidence within the FMS and the opposition in the FGS's commitment to resolving the electoral impasse.
2. Given that Somalia remains heavily dependent on foreign humanitarian and security assistance, pressure from international and regional actors to resolve the impasse likely pressured the FGS, opposition, and the FMS to make a concerted effort to reach an electoral agreement. This effort can be observed with Jubaland's decision to allow for elections despite the continued presence of the Somali National Army (SNA) in Gedo Region's state capital of Garbaharey. The SNA presence had become a major point of contention between Jubaland President Madobe and Farmajo, with the former perceiving it as the latter's attempt to take control of the region. However, the decision to have FMS-nominated persons assume the positions of district commissioner and deputy district commissioner of Gedo Region likely reduced Madobe's threat perception of potential FGS attempts to control the region, making him amenable to an electoral compromise.
3. **FORECAST:** Despite these compromises, there remain several problems with the agreement which could further delay the electoral process. There is an ongoing dispute between Speaker Hashi and Deputy PM Guled over nominations to FIET, SIET, and the dispute resolution committee regarding federal elections for Somaliland State. The agreement does not specify the individual responsible to nominate people for 10 out of 15 positions. This suggests tensions may occur as both Hashi and Guled attempt to fill these nominations, which could lead to further delays in the federal electoral process with the authorities unlikely to be willing to proceed without elections for the Somaliland State given that Somalia continues to disregard the semi-autonomous territory of Somaliland's independent status.
4. **FORECAST:** Additionally, the agreement does not mention details regarding the procedure for the nomination of delegates voting for the Lower House MPs. A combination of clan elders, regional state leaders, and civil society groups elect 100 delegates in the first stage of the election. These delegates then vote for 275 MPs who represent clans and subclans. There are likely to be potential disagreements between various clans over the nomination of these delegates, which may further delay the first stage of the elections to the Lower House. These disagreements are likely to lead to heightened inter-clan political tensions, which could devolve into localized clashes across the country's rural areas. Furthermore, while Roble's central role within the organization of the elections notably accentuates his neutral stance, it is worth noting that he was considered to be a strong Farmajo ally in the past. Thus, there remains the potential for increased tensions and further electoral delays if the FMS and opposition perceive Roble's actions to be favorable to Farmajo.
5. The unrest recorded in Mogadishu as the opposition-allied forces' demonstrated their strength and ability to counter the FGS-allied forces in [late April](#) had been a significant motivator in Farmajo relatively withdrawing and Roble managing to negotiate this latest agreement. **FORECAST:** Thus, if any existing issues within the agreement continue to fester or if new disputes between the FGS and FMS over the agreement's implementation arise, tensions have the potential to devolve into unrest, particularly in Mogadishu. This could also manifest in protests as well as the resumption of

violence between pro and anti-government forces, severely deteriorating the already precarious security situation. Eventually, given that this latest agreement does not give concrete timeline commitments regarding the Lower House, Upper House, and Presidential elections, it remains to be seen whether these elections take place within 60 days, with political tensions likely to persist over the coming months.

Recommendations

1. We advise against all travel to Somalia with the exception of the Somaliland region and the Puntland cities of Bosaso, Garowe, and Galkayo North due to the threat of militancy, inter-clan violence, and crime.
2. If travel to Mogadishu is unavoidable, we advise remaining in the confines of the Aden Adde International Airport complex.
3. We advise to exercise vigilance and adhere to stringent security precautions in Hargeisa and Berbera, while avoiding nonessential travel to the outlying areas of Somaliland due to the risks of crime.