



****Press Statement****

Date: August 01, 2024

The Somaliland Election Monitoring Office (SEMO) welcomes and commends the National Election Commission (NEC) for its diligent efforts in preparing for the upcoming elections. Despite the challenging political climate and the unprecedented nature of this year's combined presidential and political association elections, the NEC has shown its commitment to ensuring the elections happen on time.

This year's election is significant as it marks Somaliland's first combined presidential and political association elections. The prolonged election dispute has heightened the stakes, and the country is experiencing a deeply divided voter base. Additionally, political leaders were already engaging in baseless accusations and disinformation campaigns before the official election campaign to undermine their opponents, worsening tensions among the electorate.

The regional geopolitical climate adds another layer of complexity to this election. With numerous regional actors having conflicting interests within Somaliland, there is heightened concern over foreign influence on the electoral process.

The traditional elders have played a crucial role in resolving the prolonged election dispute. We believe that they, along with the former presidents, vice presidents, and other notable leaders, can play a vital role in helping the NEC to discourage the political parties from using inflammatory language and prevent pre-election and post-election violence.

Furthermore, this year will be the first election in Somaliland in which a political party's chairperson will also serve as the Minister of Interior. Given the Ministry's crucial role in elections, especially in ensuring security and managing regional officials, this issue raises significant concerns about the smooth electoral process.

Recommendations

1. Due to Somaliland's prolonged election dispute, election delay, and commission disputes, there has been a growing distrust among election stakeholders. However, we note that the current National Election Commission has successfully gained their trust. To maintain and further strengthen this trust, we urge the NEC to prioritize greater transparency, inclusiveness, and openness in its operations.

2. This year, social media disinformation is alarmingly high. Active foreign and regional actors with various agendas regarding the Somaliland elections have a significant presence on social media. Therefore, we call on the NEC to pay close attention to social media activities and find a balance between upholding freedom of speech and countering disinformation effectively.
3. The Somaliland Election Monitoring Office calls upon the government, the ruling party, the opposition parties, and the new political associations to refrain from using baseless political accusations and disinformation. Instead, we urge them to share with their audiences why they are better than others and their political agendas. This approach will contribute to the country's unity, a more informed electorate, and a healthier democratic process.
4. We urge all election stakeholders to prioritize the integrity of the electoral process and work towards a peaceful and democratic election. Mitigating pre- and post-election violence is essential to maintaining stability and unity within the country.

About us:

The Somaliland Election Monitoring Office (SEMO), established eight years ago by the Center for Policy Analysis, has recently expanded to include over 11 prominent Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including SOYDAVO, the lead organization of this group and the initiative. SEMO and its member organizations, including SOYDAVO, have extensive experience in Somaliland elections, notably the 2017 presidential election and the 2021 combined elections.

Contact us:

SOYDAVO

Lead Organization director@soydavo.org

Any specific question about SEMO

Reach out

Sahra Mohamed

Coordinator,

somalilandelection2016@gmail.com