

Forum: The United Nations Membership Council (UNMC)

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TOPIC 4: The Membership of Somaliland

I. Introduction to the Topic

Somaliland is a region situated in northern Somalia that has been completely autonomous from Somalia since 1991. As a self-governed region, Somaliland's political system is partially democratic as it does hold democratic elections yearly. However, Somaliland's sovereignty is not recognized by foreign officials or the UN. Evidently, as Somaliland is not verified as its own country, its economic situation has been tumbling with additional impacts from former COVID-19 lockdowns. Moreover, the effects of climate change has led to a major food crisis in Somaliland. Droughts and natural disasters have led to a loss of 3 million livestock. As well, as half of Somaliland depends on livestock, the amount of individuals with high food insecurity is concerning. With all these issues, Somaliland is inadequate in finding solutions. Being disregarded by foreign powers, Somaliland's activity in foreign trade and investment has been limited, creating a fragile economy isolated from the foreign market. As well, Somaliland is unable to receive loans from the World Bank or International Monetary Fund due to its lack of recognition as a nation. However, if Somaliland does receive UN membership, it will be eligible for foreign aid. Thus, loans can be given to combat its looming food crisis and financial aid to maintain its poor economic state. Additionally, as a member of the UN, Somaliland could receive more international support as Article 2 states in the UN charter "All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter." This means Somaliland can receive direct support from nations who specialize in the necessary fields Somaliland requires.

Concerning regional issues pertaining to Somaliland's UN membership, security concerns of Somalia's stability and unity is apparent. For a long time, the UN has invested in maintaining Somalia as a whole but it sees the independence of Somaliland to be a hindrance to such stability. Foreign powers are wary that Somaliland's independence will spark other Somalian provinces such as Puntland, Jubbaland, and Hiraland to demand separation from Somalia. Similar to the Somaliland's War of Independence from 1981-1991, large swaths of rebellions from each province will plausibly fight against Somalia's government for liberty, leading to anguish and war. Fundamentally, these revolts will lead to the balkanization of Somalia. Accordingly, if Somaliland gains UN memberships and has its sovereignty recognized, the implications of Somalian peace seems dour.

Somalia does not recognize Somaliland sovereignty and still believes it to be part of Somalian territory as stated by Omar Mahmood, a Somalia analyst for the International Crisis Group. Nevertheless, Somalia is facing its own civil war against the Al Shabaab, an Islamic fundamentalist group. The Al Shabaab are currently fighting against the Somali government as they want to eliminate foreign influence and establish an Islamic state in Somalia. This has in general made the state of Somalia in peril. Adding on, with the Somali War, Somalia has to endure its numerous economic hardships. The rise in prices from the war in Ukraine and the economic shock from climate disasters have made millions displaced with poverty becoming more widespread. Hence, the state of Somalia is too fragile to allow Somaliland sovereignty. To reiterate, there will be a domino effect of revolts for independence from Somalia's provinces, generating more issues for Somalia to handle. With conflict arising from every corner, Somalia's resources may deplete and leave it with a fractured economy.

On October 25, 2020, Somaliland halted its relations with the UN because of the UN's lack of acknowledgement to Somaliland sovereignty. For some time, Somaliland received a plethora of international support from the UN and other nations with the benefit of expenses being covered. Regardless, even with such abundance of international support, Somaliland continued to bear its crumbling economy as international funding is not applicable to a non-autonomous nation. Somaliland claims the UN's financial investments would have been better spent if they were directly transferred to its government. As Somaliland is unrecognizable as independent, such directions were not exercised. Nevertheless, if Somaliland received UN membership and recognition, then financial aid may be better spent as Somaliland claims.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

Definition of Key Terms

Divided: The action of separation or the presence of an united group of individuals in disagreement

The key issue of Somaliland independence is the plausibility of a divided Somalia. Essentially, foreign powers are concerned that Somaliland independence will create a domino effect of revolts from Somalia's secessionist provinces: Puntland, Jubbaland, and Hiranland. In turn, these provinces may separate from Somalia through the acts of bloodshed similar to the Somaliland War of Independence.

Autonomy: A country that holds the rights to self governance, meaning it is free from external conflict of influence

Somaliland is a completely autonomous state that is self-governed with its own democratic elections. Even though Somaliland has the distinguishing features of an autonomous state, it has still not been recognized by foreign powers. It has for years pleaded the UN for its title as an autonomous state, yet the UN has avoided such terms. Somaliland has grown impatient as its citizens are suffering without financial support from World Bank or the IMF as it is not considered autonomous.

Stability: The quality of having a stable situation while being unchanged by anything. In addition, it could mean the quality of a situation with the absence of any harmful changes or effects.

The question of Somaliland's independence poses growing concerns of Somalia stability. Foreign powers believe having Somaliland being recognized as independent will only lead to the escalation of violence and suffering. As Somaliland becomes independent, so will Somalian provinces like Puntland, Jubbaland, and Hiranland, causing an unstable region with conflicting provinces.

Loans: A large sum of money that is borrowed from a bank or finance institutions with the expectation to be paid back accompanied by interest.

As Somaliland is not internationally recognized as independent, it is unable to receive loans from the World Bank or the IMF. Currently, Somaliland is facing an economic crisis and a major food crisis due to the effect of climate change. On a fundamental level, Somaliland needs loans to get its economy back on track to allow the number of suffering to mitigate.

III. Key Stakeholders

Kulmiye Peace, Unity, and Development Party (KULMIYE):

The Kulmiye Peace, Unity, and Development Party is Somaliland's main political party with its leader being President Muse Bihi. President Bidhi's party has strived for international recognition to allow UN finances to be directly funded to the government. This is due to the fact that Somliland believes the UN's investments in its programs to be useless as Somaliland still suffered many hardships. However, as Somaliland did not receive international recognition, President Bihi's cabinet officially suspended its relations with the UN on October 25, 2020. Nevertheless, if the UN grants Somaliland UN membership, loans or funds from organizations like the IMF or World Bank would be at the hands of the KULMIYE, meaning they can decide where funds are better spent. Depending on how President Bihi's party handles these finances, Somaliland's major issues like its economic crisis could either be fixed or further escalated.

Al-Shahaab:

Foreign powers worry recognizing Somaliland sovereignty would lead to more casualties to Somalia's ongoing warzone. As Somaliland becomes internationally recognized, Somalia's provinces like Puntland, Jubbaland, and Hiranland would fight for its separation. Additionally, as Somalia is currently at war with the Al-Shahaab, an Islamic fundamentalist group, conflict with its regions would bring a distraction on Somalia's part. Therefore, this could give the Al-Shabaab the opportunity to hit Somalia at its weakest point, making victory ever more likely.

Peace and Developmental Party:

Peace and Developmental Party is a political party in Somalia led by president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. If Somaliland becomes internationally recognized, then the party would have to maintain its provinces' responses. As Somaliland is recognized, provinces like Puntland, Jubbaland, and Hiranland would fight against the Somali government for independence. This means the Peace and Developmental Party would have to deal with the plausible wars and losses from its provinces' revolts and rebellions. Moreover, having multiple provinces attacking all at once would cause instability and chaos within the party, leaving the party in a vulnerable state. As Somali is at war with the Al-Shabaab, the political party would be left open for target during its most fragile situation.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

Somaliland economy:

The prevalence of climate change and the aftermath of COVID-19 has caused a crisis to Somaliland's economy. The pandemic caused a lasting disruption of commerce in the industry sector and a massive dislocation among small businesses. This has led to an economic shock on Somiland's part. Additionally, as Somiland is unrecognizable as its own nation, accessibility to foreign markets have been limited, meaning international trade has not been prosperous. Moreover, with the increasing number of droughts and floods, crops and livestock have decreased over the years. In addition, as Somaliland's main source of revenue is from its agricultural sector, the increasing threat of climate change has caused Somaliland's main source of export to crumble.

The unity and stability of Somali provinces:

Somalia is made up of 4 different provinces: Somaliland, Puntland, Jubbaland, and Hirland. For a long period of time, the UN and foreign nations, especially the U.S., has invested heavily into Somalia stability and unity. However, if Somaliland does become internationally recognized as independent, then the threat of Somali unity is concerning. The concern is that if Somaliland becomes recognized, other Somali provinces would strive for a similar title. As well, having all Somali provinces split up would lead to the destruction of Somalia as a whole.

Somaliland farmers:

With the increase in extreme temperatures and reduction in rainfalls, the inhabitants of livestock have been decreasing rapidly. As 50% of Somalilanders depend on livestock for income and food, the number of farmers in extreme poverty and food security is immense. Additionally, the worsening number of floods and droughts have caused further displacement to millions of families. The lands once inhabited by Somaliland farmers are no longer adequate for living and access to water has been dry due to the increasing number of droughts. However, as Somaliland sovereignty is not internationally recognized, direct financial aid like loans are not available to the most pressing issues. Even with the UN's support, many Somalilanders still cope with multifarious economic hardships. However, Somaliland believes if financial aid is given directly to the government, such issues would be less apparent.

Somali Civil War:

Since 1991, Somalia has been in civil war. Nevertheless, the situation can become worse if Somaliland receives its international title of independence. Somaliland becoming internationally recognized would cause public uproar for independence from neighboring Somalia provinces. The Somalian government is currently combating Al-Shabaab forces, an Islamic fundamentalist Salafi jihadist group, because of the Al-Shabaab's goal to implement the Sharia, the Islam legal system. However, if Somali provinces rebel for independence, then Somali will be powerless to defend itself from the Al-Shabaab. Combating its provinces will be a distraction for Somalia and allow the Al-Shabaab to hit Somalia during its most chaotic situation.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

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Date	Description of event
1870	Egypt's authority over Somaliland becomes recognized
July, 1887	The British Somaliland was established and was a British protectorate that provided Somaliland clans with military protection if neighboring territories would attack.
1940	Italy occupies British occupied Somaliland
July 1, 1960	The State of Somaliland and the Trust Territory of Italian Somaliland unite to form the Somaliland Republic
June 1961	Majority of Somilanders voted against Somiland unity in a form of a referendum

December 1961	To reestablish Somaliland independence, army officials rebelled against the government.
October 1969	The military toppled the civilian government in coup d'état
January 1991	The collapse of Somaliland government
April-May, 1991	Somaliland reclaimed its independence in the Buarao conference, a conference with the aim to bring peace with Northern Somali clans
April 2003	First presidential elections were held
Oct 1, 2007	Somaliland and Puntland fight over disputes for Soot region

May 24, 2018 Tensions between Somaliland and Puntland escalate with violence in the vicinity of the border of Tukaraq in Sool, a region being fought over by both regions

February 26, 2020 Taiwan and Somaliland sign a bilateral agreement in Taipei

Jan 31, 2022 Taiwan sends 150,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Somaliland

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Somaliland economy:

The Somaliland government may look for loans from the IMF or the World Bank as a solution to its economic crisis. This is apparent as Somaliland has strived for international recognition to gain direct financial aid from international organizations like the IMF. However, it should be noted Somaliland's government has not always been efficient when handling funds. Thus, the allocation of funds may be distributed unequally without guaranteed grants towards Somalilanders desperate for economic relief.

The unity and stability of Somali provinces:

Foreign powers would say that denying UN membership to Somaliland will maintain Somali stability. Nevertheless, if Somaliland is declined UN membership, then its access to loans or effective financial aid from the IMF or World Bank will be permitted. Though the UN is providing an abundance of support, Somaliland still suffers from its economic crisis, food crisis, and many more issues. The Kulmiye, Somaliland's main political party, and its leader President Bihi believes UN funds to be misused as the suffering of millions continue. Additionally,

President Bihi believes direct funds to their party would be more beneficial. Hence, if Somaliland does not gain international recognition, then its issues will still ravage without financial support.

Somaliland farmers:

On a fundamental level, the majority of individuals would come to the consensus that financial and medical aid to displaced Somaliland farmers is necessary. The right to housing is a human right recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human rights on article 25, meaning most foreign powers would forward such support. Regardless, not every nation is compliant with such acts of human rights. Additionally, Somaliland's thoughts of its citizens are unknown which means its opinions could vary on this topic.

Somali Civil War:

The Somali Civil War could be resolved if Al-Shabaab simply is suppressed. Nevertheless, winning a war is extremely arduous and prolonged. Moreover, foreign powers, especially the US, would agree that permitting UN membership to Somaliland will mitigate the escalation of Somalia's civil war. However, there is still the consequence of an escalation of The Somali Civil War. As Somalia's government utilizes further resources to combat Al-Shabaab, Al-Shabaab would plausibly exercise more effort and violence, leaving the state of Somalia with further damages.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

During the merging, some countries who share an unrecognized status would forward Somaliland's UN membership. Countries like Djibouti, Ethiopia, Turkey, Denmark, the United Arab Emirates, and Taiwan are nations that have, in the past, supported Somaliland's goal for international recognition. Nevertheless, it is certain the US would be against such a resolution as President Biden excluded Somaliland from this year's US-Africa Summit. Additionally, US allies may have similar opinions, but perspectives can vary depending on countries.

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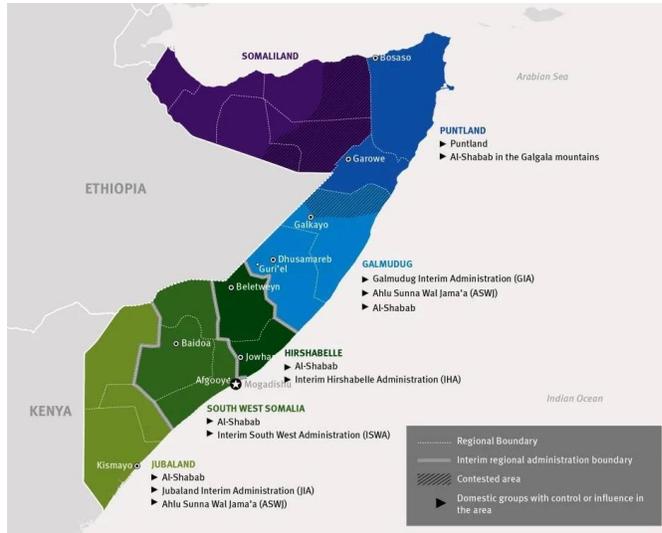
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IX: Additional Resources

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