

# Possible avenues for dialogue merge; election model set for debate in parliament

SOMALI DIALOGUE PLATFORM

## Key messages

- Political dynamics around elections in Somalia are reaching a critical juncture. Parliament is poised to debate the joint parliamentary committee's (JPC) recommendations on regulating four contentious areas in the elections law, whilst the NIEC is set to present on its operational plan for elections on 27 June.
- The FGS has signalled a clear commitment to delivering elections, reducing speculation around a term-extension. The opposition and FMS, however, remain concerned that the model in the law, and the JPC's recommendations, favour Villa Somalia. Many of these actors prefer an indirect election process.
- The House of the People appears to be moving quickly to pass the regulations recommended by the JPC. The Upper House by contrast is attempting to stall this process, and has called for urgent dialogue with the FMS, and other actors, before the NIEC's presentation.
- In response to the Upper House initiative Villa Somalia has invited the FMS and BRA to meet under the auspices of a National Security Council meeting, and recognised Ahmed Madobe as interim leader of Jubbaland. The initial reaction has been lukewarm amongst the FMS, however. For now, both dialogue processes are in motion, and it is not yet clear which will act as the forum for national discussion.

## Considerations for advancing political dialogue

- Recognise the need to build broader political dialogue on an election model before parliament passes the JPC's regulations and NIEC's presentation to parliament on 27 June. Initial talks should agree a sequencing of three processes: 1) FGS-FMS agreement on elections; 2) finalisation of the law; 3) starting election implementation.
- Build on the FGS recognition of Ahmed Madobe, towards further engagement between the two sides, and a meeting of the principals. Intensive shuttle diplomacy by the international community and Somali actors, such as parliamentarians from Jubbaland, may support this goal.
- Re-establish trust between key stakeholders, especially the FGS and Puntland and Jubbaland, in advance of discussion of the elections. To achieve this, an initial meeting between principals from these parties could focus on building agreement on the situation in Gedo and aid cooperation, especially with regard to COVID-19.
- Explore the possibility of merging dialogue processes, both those initiated by the FGS and the Upper House, to create an integrated, inclusive forum that is likely to sustain buy-in from all stakeholders, including civil society and opposition parties.
- Develop options for the end of the parliamentary term on 27 December, based on the views of a wide range of Somali stakeholders, which can help lay the foundation for constructive dialogue towards enhancing inclusive politics.

## Credits

This update is a product of the Somali Dialogue Platform, which supports Somalis to achieve consensus on contentious political issues. The Platform is implemented by the Rift Valley Institute and FDG Synergy. Somali Public Agenda also contributed to this research. The Somali Dialogue Platform is funded by the UK Department for International Development. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.