



NORTHERN SOMALIS for PEACE & UNITY (NSPU)

Press Release

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African Union Shuts the Door of Recognition to “Somaliland”

After sixteen years of repeated failures our breakaway northwestern region which calls itself “Somaliland” made a desperate and, we hope, final move to force the African Union to recognize it. Last year (June, 20-21) a delegation of the secessionist region arrived at the AU meetings in Banjul uninvited but was, understandably, denied admission. They tried, nonetheless, to lobby for recognition in the hotels where delegates stayed but had no one to listen to them.¹

This year (January 31, 2007) they attempted to gate crash the meetings of the AU in Addis Ababa only to be evicted unceremoniously from the meeting halls.²

All of this was uncalled for since there is a way of becoming a member of the AU that is clearly laid out in its Charter. The AU is not sovereign: it does not and cannot, therefore, grant diplomatic recognition. It is a club for 53 African sovereign states, and a new country can be admitted as a member, not only if it is African, but also if recognized as sovereign by half the membership of the Organization.

The self-styled Somaliland is not recognized even by one single member state or any state in the world for that matter. Hence its desperate attempts to gate crash the AU Ministerial meetings with the vain attempt of forcing a collective recognition unheard of in the annals of international organizations. With security and stability returning to Somalia and with the existence of an internationally recognized national government operating from Mogadishu the prospects of diplomatic recognition for our breakaway region is dimmed beyond redemption, and this certainly explains its apparent acts of desperation.

The flimsy arguments of the secessionists in favor of their ill-advised and divisive project have never made any sense to anyone. The name itself “Somaliland” has no equivalent in the Somali language, and is also ludicrous in the sense that the entire Somali Republic is a Somali land. The name made sense when the region was called “British Somaliland” because it meant then “that part of Somali land which is under British rule”. Worse still, secessionist die-hards call themselves “Somalilanders” which even the colonial administration never used and which, again, has no equivalent in the Somali language; it is in fact so grotesque that it invokes laughter when translated literally into Somali.

Northern Somalis for Peace and Unity (NSPU) take this opportunity, once again, to call upon our fellow northerners, whose obsession is secession, to take cognizance of the fact that they have reached a cul de sac and hence join the process of national reconciliation by entering into dialogue with the internationally recognized national Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in order to ensure genuine home rule for their region in parity

with the other regions. Only by working together towards that end can we bring about a shifting of power from the federal government to the regional governments.

We also request the international community to facilitate this dialogue so that the long suffering people of the Somali Republic can attain their goal of genuine national reconciliation.

Please address your comments and feedback to:

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***NORTHERN SOMALIS FOR PEACE & UNITY (NSPU)** is a grass-roots Somali advocacy organization with Branches in Somalia, United Arab Emirates, Canada, USA, UK, and South Africa. We are dedicated to the promotion of peace and unity among the long suffering people of Somalia. We believe the ‘Somalia problem’ can only be dealt with within the framework of a holistic strategic approach aimed at the empowerment of a central government to rebuild national democratic governance institutions and restore law and order throughout the country. NSPU believes the balkanization of Somalia is a recipe for future conflicts and a bleak future for the Somali people, who are bonded by ethnicity, language, religion, and shared centuries-old culture and traditions.*

