

**All Doors are slammed on “Somaliland’s”
Secessionist Faces
By Mohamed F. Yabarag
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Twenty long years have elapsed since the one-clan secessionist state called “Somaliland” was declared unilaterally in Burao in 1991 under the blazing guns of the then victorious SNM fighters, following the collapse of the Somali state led by the late Mohamed Siyad Barre. The real objective behind the creation of this phantom state that would never see light of day was to establish primarily a country dominated politically, economically and socially by one clan, the clan that supported SNM through thick and thin.

The proponents of this mirage state have never anticipated the consequences of their rather unfortunate decision as they never gave a proper thought to the reactions of unionist clans in the region, or the consequences such a decision may have on the rest of Somalis. Northern Somalia is home to Warsengeli and Dhulbahante in the east, Isaq the SNM Clan in the Centre, Gadaboursi and Issa in the West and several other numerically smaller clans scattered all over the region. Irrespective of the reactions of regional and international communities, it was always going to be difficult for the SNM clan to install their own fiefdom in the midst of formidable strong unionist clans who always banked on the support of other Somali clans in central and southern Somalia to counter such a state.

International recognition hit dead-end

In a recent interview with Somalilandpress.com, [Dr. Mohamed Abdillahi Omar](#), the foreign minister and the former lecturer of Brunel University in London, admitted rather diplomatically that the secessionist’s endeavor to gain the much-sought after international recognition had hit difficulties. In other words, it is dead in the water. Without exactly saying the word dead, he mentioned his initially hyped trip to China alongside with Ahmed Silanyo in which tripartite trade deals between China, Ethiopia and “Somaliland” were supposed to be signed had ended in failure for reasons Dr. Omar deliberately avoided to explain but believed to be related to the enclave’s status in the international community. The painful fact is that “Somaliland” cannot enter deals with the outside world because, as far as international community is concerned, they don’t exist. The international community, including regional bodies such as IGAD and Arab league, doesn’t recognize “Somaliland” as a legitimate state. They recognize the TFG of Sheikh Sharif Ahmed as the sole and legitimate government of Somalia.

In addition to Dr. Omar’s candid admission, anyone who observed Ahmed Silanyo’s statements during his recent trip to London, Addis Ababa and Djibouti, together with his body language will tell that the most veteran politician in the enclave, who had seen better days in Somalia during a spell of eight years as being a prominent economics minister, may finally be giving up this unattainable dream that exhausted the enclave’s meager resources. Unlike Riyaale, who used to promise the earth as far as international recognition is concerned every time he returned home from personal trips to abroad, often hyped as official trips by “Somaliland” officials, the incumbent Ahmed Silanyo is at least

honest enough to show his frustration and share his lack of progress with the public in the attainment of international recognition.

His recent after-midnight interview with the “Somaliland” press in which he talked, among other things, the lack of progress in the hunt of international acceptance is another indication that things are not getting better for the secessionists. In fact, things are getting from bad to worse. Despite privately endorsing “Somaliland”, it is an open secret that Ethiopia had never wanted to see another Somali state, albeit “Somaliland”, breathing on its neck, although politicians in Addis are happy to see the continuation of the status quo in the Somali peninsula as it suits them pretty well. Worst of all, Ethiopia has smelled a rat in Ahmed Silanyo’s cabinet and this made things even more complicated than they were under Rayaale’s regime. Zenawi, who was in good terms with Rayaale’s government, sees certain prominent ministers of Ahmed Silanyo’s government, among them Mohamed Hashi Elmi and the now departed Dr. Gaboose, as staunch supporters of Somaliweyn (greater Somalia), hence a threat to the Ethiopian sovereignty. Ethiopia, believed to be an honest friend of “Somaliland” rather mistakenly, may have finally pulled the brakes on the secessionist’s runaway train.

SSC and Awdal state factor

The communities of Sool, Sanaag and Cayn as well as Makhir have always detested the idea of one-clan state being erected in their backyard and declared their intention from the get go that they would not entertain such a notion. But the secessionists, having amassed weapons and believed that nobody can withstand with their might, had gone alone with it anyway and formed an administration called “Somaliland” in the former British Somali Protectorate in Northern Somalia.

At the height of secession in the early nineties, “Somaliland” supporters in the Diaspora community in the UK were reportedly told by the former British Secretary of State for Overseas Development, Lynda Chalker (now Baroness Chalker of Wallasey), that for “Somaliland” project to stand any chance of succeeding, they [secessionists] should bring other northern clans onboard the secession bandwagon, a mammoth task that was always going to be difficult to undertake. Believing that everyone was on their side, the secessionist flatly rejected such a suggestion. So long as SNM had the upper hand militarily, they couldn’t care the feelings of unionist clans. This had created resentment among unionist communities in SSC, Makhir and Awdal.

Then as expected came [Awdal State](#) in March 2011, a Diaspora-inspired regional administration that threw the gauntlet to Hargeisa-based authority. Although secessionists have taken Awdalities for granted for reasons only known to them unlike SSC, a simmering resentment was always brewing in the residents of these two regions, particularly among the Diaspora community toward the secession. Awdal and Salel regions are now buzzing with the news that, at long last, an administration of their own had finally arrived, even though still at its infancy. With both SSC and Awdal State, not to mention Makhir State, challenging the SNM hegemony on former British Somaliland territories, the secession movement that could not manage a single support from the

international community in their favor over a period of twenty years is coming to a grinding halt. All diplomatic doors are slammed on their face as far as international recognition is concerned.

TFG and Mogadishu factor

After a long and bloody civil war that has decimated more than half of its population, Mogadishu, the war-ravaged capital of Somalia, is finally emerging from its miserable past. A normal semblance of life is springing up everywhere in the city, not to mention people going out and doing their day-to-day normal chores without looking over their shoulders. Even a Turkish man (BBC report) was spotted cycling in one of the Mogadishu streets as recently as this week, a thing that was unthinkable only a few months ago. Foreign countries are re-opening their missions. The Al-Shabaab terrorist group, which brought death and destruction to the residents of Mogadishu, is on the wane although they can still pose a threat to certain areas of the city and its environs. For a large number of northern Somalia population, this is the news they longed for many years. Should peace continue to prevail in Mogadishu (and it is most likely this time round), there is no reason why many northerners would not contemplate going back to their properties in Mogadishu aka Xamar and re-start a new life. A similar situation occurred during the short spell the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) restored law and order in Mogadishu where almost half of Burao's residents were believed to be on their toes.

The current situation in Mogadishu will encourage business communities in Hargeisa, Burao, Las Anod, Borama, Erigavo and others major cities and towns in the northern Somalia to relocate their business, or at least partially, to Mogadishu, largely due its higher population together with the fact that Mogadishu is the capital of internationally-recognized Somalia. Consequently, it will have a knockdown effect on the population of Hargiesa, the current capital of the secessionists. The secessionist may think this a fantasy, but believe me you things are turning good for Somalia in general and Mogadishu in particular, and every secessionist doubting this fact is living a cloud in cuckoo land.

In conclusion, if the recent events taking place in "Somaliland" are to be considered very carefully, the wheels are certainly coming off the secessionist campaign. Nothing is going in their way despite using all sorts of tactics, including hiring foreign mercenaries. Exhaustion and fatigue is showing on the faces of all the major shakers and movers of "Somaliland" project, including the top two – Ahmed Silanyo and Dr. Omar. If tenacity and hard work alone can bring international recognition, which was abundant in the secessionist camp, the one-clan state of "Somaliland" would have been celebrated in Hargeisa and Burao many years ago.

"Somaliland" politicians had left no stone unturned as far as international recognition is concerned, but what they forgot to understand is the fact that the issue of secession is simply untenable. Nobody is going to buy it, especially when there is no concrete reason for secession is evident. Colonel Ojukwu, who just passed away this week in London after a long illness, tried it before and failed when he had declared a secessionist state

called Biafra in Nigeria in 1967. This claimed the lives of more than one million people and ended in failure. After more than decades in the wilderness, colonel Ojukwu redeemed himself and ran for the office of presidency of Nigeria in the 2000s. I hope the current politicians of “Somaliland” will redeem themselves and initiate a constructive dialogue with their counterparts in Mogadishu for the sake of their people as well as for the good of Somali nation as a whole.

Mohamed F Yabarag

WardheerNews Contributor

E-Mail: Myabarag@yahoo.co.uk