

Jubaland State of Somalia: A Model State to Somalia

Abdighani Hirad

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Summary

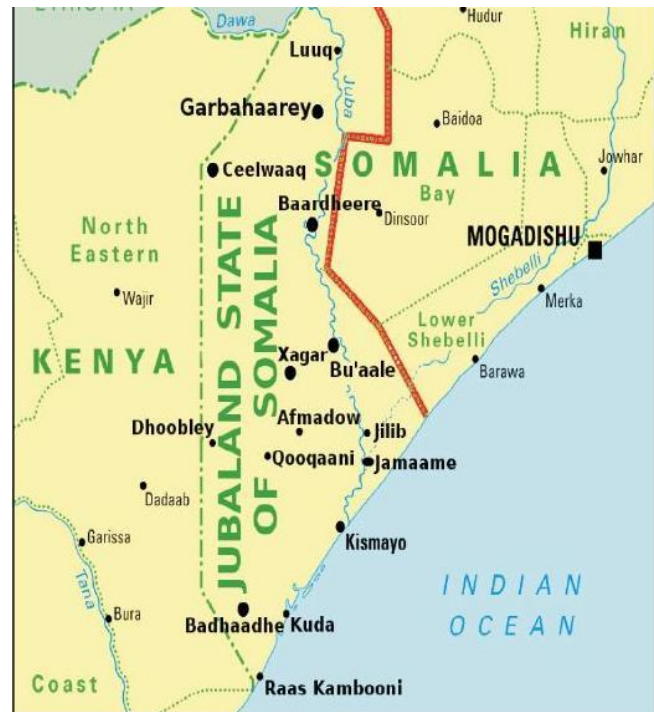
Jubaland State of Somalia came to being on May 15, 2013 after it elected President Ahmed Mahammed Islam (Ahmed Madobe). This bottom up approach, where clans, who have endlessly and senselessly feuded since the fall of late Siyad Barre, coalesced and came together, is a welcome sign to all Somalis and a sight to rejoice. These three regions (Lower Juba, Middle Juba, and Gedo) have achieved and should be commended for what could be considered a model to the rest of the regions in Somalia, and for that matter, a blue print for how to create grassroots-driven administration. The Somali Federal Government (SFG) should welcome it as a partner. The people of the region should start the rebuilding process and commit themselves to equitable power sharing and embrace the new president-elect.

Background and Introduction

Somali adage goes “*haantu guntay ka soo tolantaa,*” which means the milk container gets built from the bottom up. The bottom-up approach¹ driven by the local people in Jubaland puts an end to the days of powerful and unscrupulous clan warlords dominating the political scene; thanks in large part to the Jubaland masses who, at last, realized that the only way to solve clan fiefdoms is outgrow it

¹ Puntaland and Khatumo were grassroots models

Jubaland State of Somalia



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and rid themselves from the paralyzing grip of warlords and religious extremists

The drivers of the creation of Jubaland State should be commended and emulated. While many wanted the process accelerated or derailed, they took the time to lay a solid foundation for inclusive administration of which all the stakeholders subscribed into it. They did not rush it, in order to counter those who wanted to derail on the basis of myopic clannish views. Although prior Somali Administration welcomed the creation of Jubaland State, the current Somali Government has made its top priority to derail the process, but more of this later.

Jubaland's creation is enshrined in the Provisional Federal Constitution to establish regional administration as clearly delineated in Article 49.6 of the Constitution.² The new state will, as expected, contribute to the establishment of a progressive and accountable local government system capable of supporting the overall economic development and stability of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Furthermore, the three regions (Lower Juba, Middle Juba, and Gedo) that make up Jubaland are very diverse and their model could be used as a blue print for the rest of Somalia. For example, the process that culminated in the creation of Jubaland has been in the works for over four



Juba River Meeting Indian Ocean near Gobwein, Jubaland

years. Previous Transitional Federal Governments (TFGs) headed by “Sheikh Sharif Sheikh

² Somali Federal Constitution Article 4.6 says “Based on a voluntary decision, two or more regions may merge to form a Federal Member State.”

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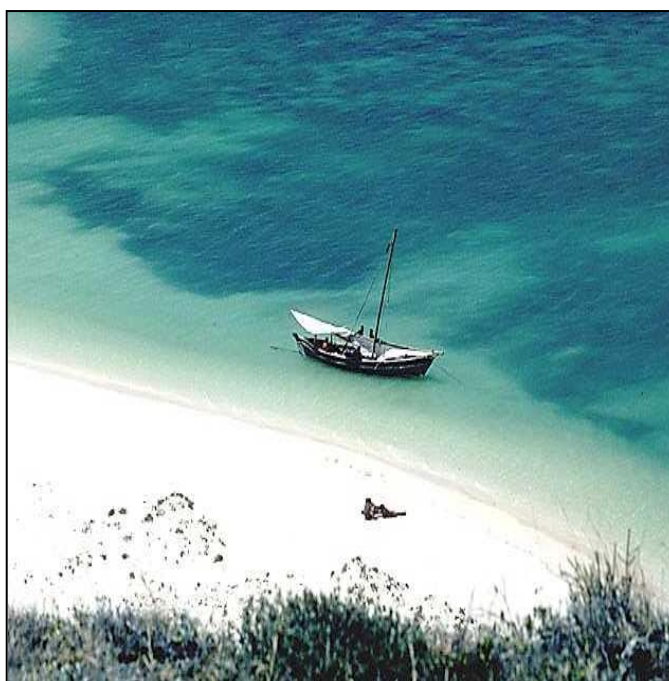
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Ahmed affirmed the TFG's commitment to the process as he sought to mobilize the regions' political elites against the Shabab, which was then in control of much of region."³ The TFG and Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) have spent great deal of effort in laying the foundation for an administration that can take over after Al-Shabab has been dislodged from these three regions. Considerable time and resources have been spent to establish fair and inclusive regional administration to this volatile and highly contested region. This is a win-win scenario for the people of these regions, the rest of Somalia, and neighboring countries.

SFG Hostilities to Jubaland

Ever since the Muaskar Ras Kamboni (MRK) forces lead by Ahmed Madobe and Kenyan Defense forces dislodged Al-Shabab from Jubaland towns, the SFG has been hostile to this grassroots-driven process. It tried every Machiavellian tactic in the book to derail it, however, the SFG doesn't know this, but the creation of Jubaland is a blessing in disguise. It is a blessing because it is the only way to prevent the re-emergence of the

likes of Al-Shabab or the warlords who previously occupied the area with reign of terror and environmental destruction.



Fuma, Jubaland State of Somalia

³ "Somalia's Jubaland conundrum," ihs.com/janes on 25 April 2013.

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Without a credible administration that has the consent of its residents created in a process that is transparent and representative, this area will fall back into the hands of Al-Shabab. To defeat highly motivated insurgency like Al-Shabab, you need more than win the war of attrition by recalcitrant and ever-shifting alliances; you need the support of the Jubaland residents to be accepted as a legitimate authority. For all practical purposes, people of Jubaland consider the currently elected President, Ahmed Madobe, as the only legitimate authority that can win the war against Al-Shabab. Therefore, the SFG should welcome the creation of new administration in Jubaland as a partner against common enemy—Al-Shabab.

The current Somali Government should see Jubaland as an exemplary state to use as a model for the rest of the Somali regions and not as an existential threat which it gets fixated on and lose sight on the bigger picture of unifying the country. After all, “[t]he Somali Federal Government’s new policy of doing away with the federalism that brought it to power poses a threat to the country’s progress towards stability.”⁴ Unless the SFG wants the reconstitution and the revival of Al-Shabab, Jubaland is the only Regional Administration that can defeat Al-Shabab and usher in lasting peace, prosperity and development to the state.

It is to the benefit of greater Somalia to have stable administration based on the natural desires of the people



Lido Beach Kismayo, Jubaland State of Somalia (1993)

⁴ "Somalia’s Jubaland conundrum," ihs.com/janes on 25 April 2013.

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to govern themselves. For the current SFG to have a lasting legacy of an administration that brings the Somalis together, it has to change its course and cease hostilities toward the Jubaland Region.

Developing Jubaland Economy

While the likes of Al-Shabab and SFG might not welcome Jubaland, the people in these regions are very supportive and have been waving its flag for the last several years, culminating with the election of its inaugural President, Ahmed Madobe. They need to do more than waving the flag in far flung places. They need to make Jubaland a cosmopolitan⁵ region similar to those of Puntland and Somali Regional State of Somalia. All Somalis living in the diaspora need to come back and bring sorely needed capital, critical skills of all kinds and crucial technical know-how.

The new Administration in Jubaland need to rebuild critical hard infrastructure such as roads, airports, and the Kismayo port that effectively connects Jubaland to the rest of the country and the world, and immediately jump-start economic recovery to make a dent on the high levels of unemployment. Recent research supports that economic return on investment projects in developing countries are the highest for roads (more than 200 percent), followed by electricity generation (40 percent), and telecommunications (30 percent to 40 percent). In addition to hard infrastructure, Jubaland needs the rebuilding of soft infrastructure such as the financial system, credible judiciary system and the provision of social services such as education and health care.

The Region will strengthen and complement other regional administrations such as Puntland, Khatumo, Galdmudug, etc. It can usher a new era of peace and prosperity for all Somalis and a healthy and constructive competition between the regions that will revive the economy of the country and foster stability and good governance.

With such a long coastline - which was subject to illegal fishing when Somalia was unable to defend its shorelines – the prospect of these shores teeming with commercial ships owned

⁵ The Enough Project • www.enoughproject.org | After the Kenyan Intervention in Somalia

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and operated by local Somalis is not too distant. Modern fish processing factories dotting the shorelines of Jubaland will generate substantial export earnings for the capital needed to build Jubaland.

Tabbing into the agricultural potential along the Juba River is huge and can provide food security for the whole country and will be a major source of exports when the new administration puts in place economic policies that will attract the sorely needed capital and investments from Somalis and others who want to participate in this opportunity.

The livestock sector is also another source of tremendous potential. As of the late 1980s, Somalia had an estimated 40 million animals including 5 million cattle, 6 million camels, 12 million sheep, and 18 million goats.⁶ In

1983, the Jubaland share of cattle export through Kismayo was 17 percent whereas camel share was 43 percent; however, this numbers went up as the embargo of Saudi Arabia was lifted. "Cattle have taken over an ever more important share of the live export trade, constituting more than 43 percent of the total tropical livestock units (TLSS) exported in 1982, the best year for livestock exports in Somalia's history. That year, cattle counted for



Kismayo Port, Jubaland State of Somalia

⁶ AN EVALUATION OF THE SOMALI KISMAYO MEAT FACTORY FINAL REPORT Prepared for: U.S. Agency for International Development Mogadishu, Somalia Prepared by: International Science and Technology Institute, Inc.

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32 percent of the nation's foreign exchange earnings for live exports. Most of these activities took place in Jubaland port of Kismayo”⁷.

Path to Peace and Prosperity for People of Jubaland

More than bringing needed capital, labor, and know-how, the people in the Region should stay above divisive and toxic clan squabbles. Unlike, Puntland, Khatumo, or other regional administrations, Jubaland is a diverse region; however, this diversity can be both a blessing and a curse. It can be a blessing because the diversity of the people will result in political and economic vibrancy by different communities. It could be a curse that can unfortunately create division and distrust amongst the communities, akin to silos of clans that do not cooperate and lose the synergy the Region needs to rebuild. While it is a tall order, however, it is in their best interest to build Jubaland in



Juba River near Jilib, Jubaland State of Somalia

order to join the rest of Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and be integrated to the East and Central African economic community.

The economic opportunities are clearly abundant and to wit, one can easily make cash out of trash by starting trash-hauling business. However, no clan should fear of being shut out of the Region’s business opportunities and the new Administration has already made this

⁷ In those years, my family bought cattle and camels throughout Lower/Middle Juba and Gedo and exported at Kismayo port.

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its top priority. As the Somali adage goes, “qaalin xaaraan ahi, nirig xalaala ma dhasho,” meaning ill-gotten gains, never prosper.

The Jubaland Administration has to be visionaries that aspires the population to higher calling of good governance, development, and execute the vision laid out in the Jubaland Constitution. The incoming administration must select competent and diverse cabinet that are committed to the cause of serving the Jubaland people.⁸ All members of the Administration must have the relevant skills, education and work experience for the post under consideration. They must be an honest person with integrity and good character.

Finally, it is up to the people of the region to come to terms that they are the only people who can make or break the future of Jubaland. It is critical and hoped that the Jubaland people will commit to, without hesitation, to the best path forward of self-governance in a process that is fair, transparent and equitable in sharing the administration of the state. Without commitment to a model of good governance and equitable power sharing, it is certain that Jubaland will falter. If the residents of



Juba River in Gedo, Jubaland State of Somalia

Jubaland transcend petty clan infightings, Jubaland will be the most prosperous region in Somalia. Clan squabbling is not new to Jubaland and it is time-honored tradition, as was

⁸ Ahmed Haji-Jama at Raawadaag

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the case over 100 years ago.⁹ It is my hope that after over 20 years of death, destruction, and despair, people of the Region have gained wisdom and maturity to make Jubaland a model for rest of Somalia.

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⁹ <http://www.kaiserscross.com/188001/326601.html>. "[T]he Herti started squabbling about who had got what in compensation, and the IBEA Acting Superintendent at Kismayu, J. Ross Todd, was threatened by dissatisfied Herti."

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