



Puntland State of Somalia

## **Somalia: Puntland President Praises Jubaland Election, Condemns 'False' Federal Constitution**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

May 27, 2013

The President of Puntland State of Somalia H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud (Farole) held a Public Symposium to address important issues and engage in Question and Answer session with the Puntland public.

The two-hour event, held at Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC) in Garowe, was attended by over 100 people representing different sectors of Puntland society, including elders, religious scholars, women and youth, businesspeople, Diaspora, students and academics.

President Farole gave a 40-minute speech, touching on key topics of security, economy, democratization process, and federal affairs. The President was joined by Interior Minister H.E. Abdullahi Ahmed Jama (Ilkajir), Education Minister H.E. Abdi Farah Saeed (Juha), State Minister for Good Governance H.E. Mohamed Farah Issa (Gashan), and Deputy Livestock Minister H.E. Abdiweli Hersi Nur.

Sheikh Mohamud Haji Yusuf, an Islamic scholar with the East Africa University in Puntland, opened the event with an Islamic sermon.

### **Security**

President Farole said the entire world is struggling with security issues and Puntland has made remarkable achievements in strengthening its own security, by reforming the security forces, providing training initiatives, waging war against Al Shabaab terrorists in Golis Mountains and in urban centers, fighting piracy criminals on land and in the high seas.

"Terrorist groups want to create endless conflict. They do not want any place of peace. They kill people even inside the mosques. Terrorism is the worst kind of evil and I call upon the Puntland people to unite and to work with the Government to fight the terrorists," said the President.

"We commend the effort, hard work, courage and sacrifice of Puntland security forces. In Mogadishu, the Somali Federal Government troops receive payments from donor countries, while Puntland Government pays its own security forces," President Farole said.

He discouraged Somali youth from joining "dangerous human smuggling attempts and risking their lives in new countries. Here in Puntland, there is a new phenomenon of working youth or youth from families with money, who take the dangerous journey of human smuggling. There is limited job opportunity in Puntland, but there is not a lack of jobs. I encourage the youth to complete their education and to get jobs," said President Farole.

"London Conference for Somalia, held on May 7, 2013, praised Puntland Government's anti-piracy efforts and encouraged support for the upcoming multiparty Local Elections in Puntland," said the President.

### **Democratization Process**

President Farole described the democratization process as "the way forward for Puntland. We [the Government] are working to restore power back to the hands of the people, so the people may vote and elect their leaders. If we lose the election, we will transfer power democratically."

Continuing, the President said: "The last democratic elections in Somalia took place over 45 years ago. The youth were not present so they know little about democratic elections. I am encouraged by the progress of the democratization process. The Registered Political Associations have submitted their Candidate Lists for the upcoming Local Elections scheduled for July 15. I encourage the Puntland people, the youth and the elders alike, to participate in the Local Elections and help to decide a better future for Puntland."

## **Economy**

President Farole described the currency situation in the country, explaining that the Somali Shilling to U.S. dollar exchange rate changed and that has impacted the Government's ability to pay salaries and government expenses on time.

"A nine-member Committee consisting of three Cabinet ministers, along with businesspeople and academics, was appointed to find a solution for the currency crisis. The Committee decided that the Puntland Government should base payment of salaries and expenses on the U.S. dollar, whilst ensuring the continued use of Somali Shilling banknotes," the President said.

"This currency crisis is a common problem throughout Somalia. For example, the Somali Federal Government in Mogadishu has based its entire budget on the U.S. dollar. The Federal Government-Puntland Agreement of March 11, 2013, called on the Federal Government to print new Somali Shilling banknotes, so the country can recover from this currency crisis. It has now been over two months and half without any action from the Federal Government, and so Puntland will engage in consultations on what steps to take next, because we cannot continue in this present situation," President Farole warned.

## **Federal Affairs**

The Puntland President said that, in 1998 when Puntland State was formed, the Puntland people faced the question: "Should we secede from Somalia, like 'Somaliland', or be part of a Federal Republic of Somalia?"

President Farole said that the Puntland people opted to be part of a federal Somalia and have made significant sacrifices in efforts to rebuild a new Somalia. But President Farole warned "some people have tampered with the legitimate Provisional Federal Constitution (PFC) of Somalia, signed in Nairobi on June 22, 2012 by the Somali Roadmap Signatories, and co-signed by the U.N. as a guarantor."

"The Federal Constitution is the document that unites Somalia, so who will be held responsible for this great crime of tampering with the Constitution? We have written and shared our grave concerns with Somali President H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the U.N. Secretary-General's Special Representative to Somalia, I.G.A.D., the European Union, the U.S.A., and the U.K., calling for an international inquiry on the tampering with the Provisional Federal Constitution of Somalia. So far, Puntland legal experts have found 30 Articles and Clauses in the Constitution that have been tampered with," President Farole declared.

President Farole also called on the other Roadmap Signatories, namely Ahlu Sunna group and Galmudug administration, to defend the country's legitimate Provisional Federal Constitution. The President expressed his concern that the Upper House of Federal Parliament, which protects the rights of Federated States at the national level, has not been established yet "even though the Constitution says that the Upper House of Federal Parliament should be established and should have taken part of the election for the Somali President in 2012."

The Puntland President criticized the Somali Federal Government's policy on Jubaland State: "Jubaland State formation process has been underway for the past four years, long before the current Federal Government leadership came to office. The Federal Government says that it plans to build what it calls 'Federal Units' – what is a 'Federal Unit'? Certainly, it is not in the Constitution because the Constitution calls for the establishment of Federated States, such as Jubaland."

Continuing, President Farole said: "I congratulate the Jubaland people and their elected legitimate leadership – Jubaland President Ahmed Mohamed Islam and Jubaland Vice President Abdullahi Sheikh Ismail Fartaag – on the Jubaland election. Have you witnessed the events in different corners of the world supporting Jubaland? This is the people's will. I encourage the other regions, such as Bay and Bakool and the central regions, to establish Federated States so that the Somali federal system may be completed."

President Farole warned the Somali Federal Government against "returning Somalia back to the civil war era. The Federal Government should adhere to the legitimate Provisional Federal Constitution and should avoid inciting clans against each other. The Federal Government should not interfere, should not attempt to impose itself, and should allow the communities to voluntarily establish Federated States."

President Farole praised the role of African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia (AMISOM) and thanked all the countries that host Somali refugees, including Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Yemen, Uganda, as well as Western countries. Members of the Puntland public in attendance at the event asked President Farole more than 20 direct and relevant questions, mostly focused on the Puntland democratization process, Jubaland situation, the impact of human smuggling, and the economy.

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