

# WDN Interview with President of Somalia Hassan Sh. Mohamoud

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**Editor's Note:** WardheerNews had a rare opportunity to interview President Hassan Sh. Mohamoud, on the occasion of completing his first year in office. Abdelkarim A. Hassan has conducted the interview for WDN.

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**WardheerNew:** Mr. President, congratulation for the first anniversary. Many people argue that your administration has unearthed the scars of the past Somali civil war, particularly the FGoS policies towards Jubaland administration has made many to criticise your government, amid the agreement between the FGoS and Jubaland in Addis Ababa. Could you share the position of your administration on Jubaland?



**President Hassan:** Thank you WardheerNews for this interview, the FGoS always believes the best way to solve our problems is through dialogue, reconciliation and to respect the constitution and all the laws that exist. The issue of Kismayu, the FGoS made many efforts to solve in a peaceful manner, and this is our policy towards all issues within Somalis. Contrary to your assertion, our policy towards Kismayu has been very clear to many Somalis, to move away from an era of chaos to an era of peace and stability with due regard to the institutions that have the mandate to represent the people of Somalia. I am very glad that we have now solved the issue through peaceful dialogue and understanding. This is the beginning of the process to implement federalism in Somalia as enshrined in our constitution. A set of processes will follow the agreement, such as a conference in Mogadishu and another one in Kismayu, the parliament to review the constitution and to set up all the legislations required to forming federal units in Somalia

**WDN:** Mr. President, Al-Shabab although weakened, still controls important regions of Southern Somalia, particularly the key port city of Brava. The momentum of driving

**Al-Shabab out of their strongholds seems fading. What are your plans to expand the control of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to Brava and beyond?**

**President Hassan:** Al-Shabaab is on the run, but they are still alive. Our forces and AMISOM are stretched as we now control most of the country. Due to logistical reasons we have been focusing on plans to continue our offensive against Al-Shabab. We will soon take over all the areas that are under Al-Shabab control. Our focus was also the stabilization on territories under the control of the FGoS. We are grateful for the support of African forces including Ethiopian forces. Our forces are ready not only to stabilize the country but also to continue the fight against Al-Shabab. It will be a matter of time before we see Somalis enjoying peace and stability. Our vision is to see a Somalia that is at peace with itself and with its neighbours, a Somalia that is a useful member of the nations of the world. With the help of the people we can achieve more and more.

**WDN: Mr. President many people applauded your government's recent decision to put Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys through a due process to face justice while the Sheikh's supporters were angered by such decision, what can you tell us about the status of Sh. Aweys' case?**

**President Hassan:** Hassan Dahir Aweys is in custody and awaiting due process. All options are on the table.

**WDN: According to Article 53 of the Federal constitution, "the Federal Government shall consult the Federal Member States on negotiations relating to foreign aid, trade, treaties, or other major issues related to international agreements." Is your administration consulting with regional administrations on matters related to trade and aid?**

**President Hassan:** The FGoS believes that it is absolutely critical and important that communities are consulted and engaged in all decision making process. Current and future Federal units will absolutely have our support, engagement and consultation. Having said that the parliament and the cabinet is the legitimate body that is fully represented by all communities and they are the only institutions that have the mandate to represent the interest of the people of Somalia. I have no doubt that once the review of the constitution is finalised all processes will be very clear and transparent on roles and responsibilities.

**WDN: Puntland administration recently announced that it suspended all cooperation and relations with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGoS). Is there any dialogue between FGoS and Puntland authorities to address the concerns raised by Puntland?**

**President Hassan:** Puntland is an essential and integral part of the Federal Republic of Somalia, so it is absolutely necessary to listen to their concerns and have a dialogue with

them. As I said in my previous answer, all issues relating to Somalis will be solved through dialogue, reconciliation, and the FGoS is ready to talk to Puntland. Having said that, statements that are not used in diplomatic words will not help the unity and the will of the people. Our unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity are what unite us and we are all responsible for protecting that. We are now moving away from an era of chaos to an era of peace and stability; so togetherness and our unity is paramount to our approach to overcome our huge challenges that exist. I have no doubt that Somalia will be a country that makes huge progress in every aspect.

**WDN: Many critics don't see your government as an inclusive government representing the 4.5 all-inclusive power sharing, but a government dominated by one group mostly from Damul Jadiid; how would you respond to such critics?**

**President Hassan:** I said before and I will repeat it that I do not belong to any religious group. The parliament and the cabinet are fully representative of all communities of Somalia,



so your question misses the point and misleads people. Our institutions are based on power sharing of all communities of Somalia. Critics that you mention need to be objective and to see the bigger picture of what we are trying to achieve in our beloved country and that is what unite us more, rather than concentrating on what divides us. Political parties will be

implemented in Somalia. This will pave the path for democracy. We want to hold free and fair elections in 2016 so people will decide their future leaders. So, these critics need to work hard and help the government to succeed this vision of holding elections in 2016.

**WDN: What kind of working relationship do you have with the Parliament and how do you see the oversight functions of the Parliament?**

**President Hassan:** I have very good relationship with the parliament and the cabinet and other institutions. I believe excellent partnership is the key to not only success but also concentrating on key priorities that can help us to reach our objectives. Our parliament is doing well in terms of debating and discussing key legislations; sub committees are working closely with their respective institutions and the oversight functions are proceeding very well. As you are aware, ministers and the Prime Minister were called on to provide explanations and progress report on their tasks.

**WDN: Somalia for the past years ranked first as the most corrupt government by the International Transparency Group, also recently the International Crisis Group levelled corruptions and misappropriation of aid funding mainly on Central Bank of Somalia. How is your government addressing such issues to curb corruption?**

**President Hassan:** We have begun the process of setting out new standards of public finance management (PFM) and we are working closely with the IMF, World Bank and key international allies to rebuild critical Institutions. We are doing everything we can to improve the situation and implement new PFM mechanisms. Over the past few months:

- We have introduced a detailed Public Finance Management system in liaison with the World Bank and IMF
- We have completed work on the Financial Institutions Act ready for Parliament to review
- We have published a government budget, which is to be rigidly enforced
- We are close to finalising the Central Bank Board of Directors
- We have been subject to the first international audit in two decades

With the support of International Financial Institutions, we have restored our Central Bank swift code, international accounts and an electronic payment system for first time in two decades.

I maintain my insistence that we have a zero tolerance of corruption, and we will make a thorough investigation into some of the allegations made in the report and will take action where necessary. We cannot deny that there are deep capacity limitations in the system and we are committed to accelerating our reform. Institutions are indispensable and we must enable accountable systems to establish and grow.

To describe the Central Bank as a “slush fund” and the process of *Fadlan (Please)* as a ‘personal patronage system’ is a gross misrepresentation and an insult to the many Somalis working hard in an extremely challenging environment for the recovery and renewal of their country. These so-called ‘personal withdrawals’ are in fact largely proper and legitimate payments to ministries and government personnel who have no other banking facilities available to them.

Had the Monitors come to Mogadishu and followed the system from request to withdrawal, rather than blindly accepting the salacious gossip of spoilers, they would have seen for themselves how things must work whilst we attempt to implement new procedures.

The FGoS requested the UN Security Council establish a mandatory pre-publication consultation period and appoint an Independent Adjudication Panel for all future Monitoring Group reports, to ensure that the government's rebuttal is recorded and inappropriate, unsubstantiated allegations are removed.

**WDN: What can you tell us about the dialogue between the FGoS and Somaliland, if there is a progress and if your administration is dealing with Somaliland as an equal partner (government) or as region in Somalia?**

**President Hassan:** The FGoS is committed and determined to continue the dialogue with Somaliland authorities. As I said a number of times, we are very grateful to the democratization process in Somaliland and their governance structure, which made it possible for the region to be peaceful and stable in the most part. In order to fulfil our vision which is a Federated Somalia that is peace with itself and with its neighbours while protecting our unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity, we decided to do everything in our power to convince our brothers Somaliland to listen to their grievances and concerns and to find a way that can promote our unity, which will help our country to prosper. It is our responsibility to show our brothers that past histories will not be repeated and our unity will be one that benefits all. What we are looking here is a win-win solution.

**WDN: Mr. President, in light of your first anniversary, what are your administration's accomplishments to be remembered in your legacy in the nation's history?**

**President Hassan:** A remarkable transformation has been achieved in Somalia such as in the security sector, public finance management and other factors.

Al-Shabab has been ousted from most major cities in Somalia and our security forces and AMISOM didn't allow them to come back, so they are on the run. We have made reforms in the security sector, and new commanders are in place. We are training thousands of soldiers inside Somalia who are now ready to take over security from AMISOM in some parts of Somalia. We are laying strong foundations. The government has not lost any territory and there are no illegal checkpoints.

The government has signed bilateral agreements with several countries in strengthening its security forces by training inside and outside of Somalia. Most of the budget is spent on security, as security is our top priority. Integration of forces is underway with a view to rehabilitating former militias into the system.

Stabilization process is underway for most of the cities under the control of the government. In Mogadishu, continual patrol and search of properties is progressing very well. Our forces have been able to stop or prevent suicide and roadside bomb attacks even though there have been few incidents in Mogadishu.

Recently the killer of a journalist in Mogadishu has been punished by public execution, which shows the commitment of the government to zero tolerance in the killing of innocent civilians. Rapists have also been publicly punished.

In the security sector we face the challenge of finding the right balance between the simultaneous requirement to fight the battle and reform and retrain. Doing either would be difficult from our starting point. Doing both at the same time, as we must, is a real challenge.

Instability, poverty and chaos on the scale we have seen in Somalia for two decades, has been the breeding ground for extremism. Piracy and insurgency that takes place are a risk not only of the security of Somalia, but also, if left unresolved, the security of its neighbours and the world at large.

We are gradually building the long-term sustainable force that will take over our own security management.

So, we are doing what we can as quickly as we can. I do not for a moment deny the deep capacity limitations in our institutions.

### **Political outreach**

Leaders (President, Speaker of the Parliament and the Prime Minister), Ministers, MPs visited most of regions of Somalia. They have restored political outreach inside Somalia by reaching out to all regional administrations including Puntland and Somaliland.

Baidoa, Beledweyne, Jowhar Galgadud and Sh/Hoose administrations are functioning well under the FGoS.

Recent agreement with the Interim Jubba Administration came as a result of dialogue, reconciliation and peaceful talks and that is how the FGoS wants to solve all issues and problems within Somalia.

FGoS held National reconciliation conferences on Judiciary reform, Education reform political vision and extremism, which we engaged with all stakeholders of Somalia from all walks of life in order for them to provide recommendations that the government will consider to implement.

### **Other areas:**

- Review on the draft constitution is underway,
- Parliament has adopted a number of new legislations such as budget, investment, review on constitution, establishment of local administrations law, and many more.



- Restored and improved relationship with our international partners.
- Restored international relationship with different international community member states; thus, acquiring international recognition. London Conference, Yokohama Conference and Brussels Conference.
- With its Turkish counterpart, FGoS institutions succeeded in rehabilitating a number of health and education facilities. Other on-going recovery and reconstruction tasks include the rehabilitations of road infrastructures in Mogadishu and the implementation of a Solar Lighting Project on the main streets in Mogadishu.
- Succeeded in regaining the authority to manage its civil aviation after two decades.
- Established foreign embassies in Mogadishu.
- Succeeded in resuming and reinvigorating the Somaliland-Somali talks.
- Succeeded in excellent working relationship with all branches of the government, the President, the Speaker and the Prime Minister. All appear to be-on the same political platform and agenda.
- It has a unique parliamentary forum addressing bills of institutional laws, and fairly holding FGoS institutions accountable
- Cabinet members have devised strategic plans with measurable deliverables and predictable budgets and have put these to parliament for approval
- Within 12 months, we laid down foundations such as necessary laws
- Parliament functions properly – historic achievement in holding parliament sessions without fail – more legislation approved
- International recognition – US, EU, World Bank, IMF, Norway, and others—More Ambassadors given credentials in Mogadishu
- Japan and Somalia have now established new bi-lateral relations
- Good partnership working with IGAD; Ethiopia, Kenya, AU, UN
- New UN Mission UNSOM in Mogadishu and not based outside the country as was previously
- Development – Turkey – Digfer Hospital, Schools, nurseries, etc.
- Economic Gains

- Public Finance Management in operation
- Norway Special Facility Fund which will attract direct funds to the government
- Budget approved by parliament twice
- Civil Servants and security forces get paid
- Focus on security as per our priorities
- World Bank & IMF partnership – new relationship that never existed before
- Ensured the timely disbursement to civil servants, particularly the parliament and the civil servants and executive institutions
- Raised its revenue income
- Businesses are coming back to Somalia. Foreign investment already started and can be seen in Somalia International Airlines, and Hotel chains
- The Diaspora is coming to invest and live in Somalia
- Financial institutional Reform (PFM) underway
- International Investigators cleared Somalia Government of the UN Monitoring Group allegations of corruption
- We are rebuilding our armed forces
- We are restructuring and developing our police force
- We are reforming our justice sector. And we are revolutionizing our public finance management systems
- We are driving Somalia from emergency to recovery; and from recovery to development and reconstruction

Ultimately, however, it will be a Somali owned solution that will fix Somalia, but no country has ever recovered from such social and economic collapse without the help of the world.

**WDN: How do you see the future of Somalia and what would you like to convey to the Somali people?**

**President Hassan:** Somali people have suffered a lot and they deserve to live in dignity, respect, peace and stability, so they can improve their daily lives. The FGoS is trying very



hard to bring peace and stability throughout the country and while we are in the process we want our people to unite, and help the FGoS to fulfil its mandated responsibilities. We are very grateful for the level of support from the people and how they are making huge strides in rebuilding their homes, creating small businesses, and showing to the world that Somalis are entrepreneurs.

The FGoS understands the role and the importance of engaging with communities in decision-making process, an example of this is national conferences that we held on judiciary reform and education. We are now in the process to holding conference on political vision and another one on religious extremism. Our aim is to engage with people so that their recommendations will be considered in our strategies and implementation of these issues. Discussions will be Somali owned and Somali led, so the outcome will be one that comes from the communities and the FGoS will ensure to implement it.

Therefore, I urge my fellow citizens to continue supporting us. We so desperately need everyone's support in order to bring peace and stability in Somalia, to revive our economy, to combat corruption and to build strong institutions that can provide basic services to the people. It is our goal to hold elections in 2016 so that people will decide the future of this country.

I also would like to take this opportunity to appeal to the Diaspora and business communities to help the poor people, to find ways to sustain the humanitarian assistance to the people. I want all Somali Diaspora communities to do well in countries where they live and to be ambassadors of Somalia.

Finally, we have a lot of common interests that we need to focus on and to look outside of the box. Somalia is our beloved country, and the only way we can achieve our objectives and goals is to unite, to work together and to concentrate on the big picture of bringing peace and stability in Somalia.

**Thank you so much Mr. President for your time.**

**President Hassan:** Thank you WardheerNews.