



## **From proposal to Implementation**

# **The legal, institutional, and civic architecture of Somalia's two-year technocratic transition**

## **Somalia: The way forward — Fourteen years later**

### **Phase II**

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## **ACRONYMS**

DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia
FMS	Federal Member State
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IECI	The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq
IFES	The International Foundation for Electoral Systems
JEMB	Joint Electoral Management Body
NIEC	National Independent Election Commission
NIRA	National Identification and Registration Authority
NLC	National Leadership Council
NTC	National Transition Compact
OPOV	One-Person-One-Vote
TEA	Transitional Enabling Act
TSB	Technocratic Selection Board
UNAMSIL	The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UN	United Nations
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

## **AUTHORIAL NOTE: FROM DIAGNOSIS TO IMPLEMENTATION**

The first paper, *Somalia: The Way Forward – Fourteen Years Later*, established the moral, constitutional, and political case for a two-year technocratic transition. It argued that Somalia cannot continue recycling indirect 4.5 politics, nor can it credibly rush into one-person-one-vote elections without the institutional, security, judicial, and electoral foundations required to make such elections meaningful. The paper also insisted that a genuine technocratic transition cannot be “4.5 in disguise,” cannot be controlled by political appointees selected through clan arithmetic, and must instead be rooted in qualification, law, neutrality, public trust, and accountability. [1]

This second paper moves from diagnosis to design. Its purpose is to answer the implementation question most likely to determine whether the proposal can become politically viable:

If the incumbent government cannot be trusted to supervise the transition, if the opposition cannot be allowed to capture it, if elders alone cannot select it, and if international partners cannot own it — then who chooses the transitional government?

That question cannot be answered by slogans. It requires institutional design. A technocratic transition will succeed only if Somalis can see how it is legally authorized, politically legitimized, federally accepted, professionally staffed, publicly monitored, protected from capture, and ended on time.

This paper therefore proposes a hybrid model moving forward to be called the **Hybrid Somali Model** as the central mechanism for creating and supervising the two-year technocratic transition. The model combines Somali political legitimacy with professional selection, constitutional oversight, federal consent, public transparency, and international guarantees without surrendering Somali ownership.

The purpose is not to delay democracy. It is to build the minimum conditions under which democracy can finally become real.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Somalia does not lack proposals. It lacks enforceable implementation architecture.

The argument for a two-year technocratic transition is now clear. Somalia cannot remain trapped in 4.5 indirect selection. It cannot accept unilateral mandate extensions. It cannot allow incumbents to supervise elections in which they have a direct survival interest.

It cannot fake one-person-one-vote elections without voter registration, security, public trust, constitutional adjudication, federal consent, and credible electoral administration.

The next task is therefore not to repeat the case for transition. The next task is to design the transition so that it cannot be captured.

As noted above, the **Hybrid Somali Model** is designed to avoid five inadequate pathways: exclusive incumbent control, opposition capture, elders-only selection, external trusteeship, and reliance on a purely parliamentary process where the legitimacy of parliament itself remains contested.

The **Hybrid Somali Model** rests on two layers.

First, **political legitimacy** is provided through a **National Leadership Council** (NLC) representing the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), Federal Member States (FMS), opposition groups, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, women, youth, business, professional associations, and diaspora representatives.

Second, **professional selection** is conducted through a **Technocratic Selection Board** (TSB) composed of respected non-partisan Somalis, including former judges, auditors, central bank officials, constitutional lawyers, university leaders, economists, public administrators, security professionals, and integrity figures.

The NLC does not govern. It confirms, oversees, and protects the transition. The Technocratic Selection Board does not rule. It advertises positions, receives applications, conducts vetting, verifies qualifications, holds public interviews for senior posts, and submits ranked nominees.

The transitional government itself should be led by a neutral technocratic prime minister and a small cabinet operating under a self-denying mandate. Transitional officials shall not contest the next election or accept senior political office in the first post-transition administration.

This paper also draws comparative lessons from Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. These cases demonstrate that fragile states do not wait for perfect stability before beginning democratic transition. Rather, they build progressive inclusion through negotiated settlements, independent electoral bodies, international technical support, security stabilization where necessary, special voting arrangements for insecure and displaced populations, public finance safeguards, and repeated electoral cycles that improve over time.

In Iraq, elections proceeded under insurgency and uneven participation, but later cycles improved political inclusion. In Afghanistan, the 2004 and 2005 elections show the value of hybrid domestic-international election management, while the 2009 election warns against premature transfer of control to weak or captured institutions. In Liberia, elections were linked to anti-corruption safeguards, concession review, and public employment measures. In Sierra Leone, post-war elections were conducted after civil war under strong international observation and UN security stabilization.

These cases do not provide a template for Somalia. They provide a comparative grammar for phased democratic recovery.

The central conclusion is simple:

Somalia does not need a delay of democracy. It needs a disciplined, self-denying, Somali-owned transition that builds the conditions under which democracy becomes real.

## I. INTRODUCTION: WHY PHASE TWO IS NECESSARY

The first paper argued that Somalia's crisis is not simply a contest between government and opposition, nor merely a dispute over electoral timing. It is a systemic crisis created by the prolonged survival of provisional arrangements, the institutionalization of 4.5 politics, the absence of a Constitutional Court, contested federal relations, politicized security forces, and repeated failure to prepare for genuine citizen-based elections. [1]

Phase Two begins from a different but related premise: even the strongest proposal will fail if Somalis do not trust the mechanism that creates it.

A two-year technocratic transition will be attacked as an extension, a coup, an elite bargain, a foreign project, or a disguised 4.5 arrangement. These criticisms cannot be answered by rhetoric alone. They must be answered through institutional design.

The implementation plan must therefore answer five questions:

1. What is the legal basis of the transition?
2. Who selects the transitional leadership?
3. How is technocratic competence verified?
4. Who prevents capture by incumbents, opposition groups, clan brokers, or foreign actors?
5. How does the transition end automatically and irreversibly?

The purpose of this paper is to answer those questions through a practical institutional design.

Somalia's challenge is not that one-person-one-vote is undesirable. It is that one-person-one-vote cannot become credible **unless the necessary conditions are built**. The transition proposed here is therefore not an alternative to democracy. It is a **bridge** to democracy.

## II. THE IMPLEMENTATION: WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO CREATE THE TRANSITION?

The first objection to any transitional proposal is authority.

In a stable constitutional system, this question would be answered by courts, parliament, electoral law, and established succession rules. Somalia's difficulty is that the very institutions that should resolve the crisis are themselves contested. The parliament's legitimacy is disputed. The constitutional amendments are contested. The FMSs are divided. The Constitutional Court is absent. The electoral framework is not broadly accepted. The incumbent is not viewed as a neutral administrator of the transition. The opposition is not trusted to replace the incumbent through another elite bargain.

A purely incumbent-led process lacks neutrality. A purely opposition-led process lacks constitutional continuity. A purely elders-led process risks reproducing the same gatekeeping logic that 4.5 institutionalized. A purely international process would violate Somali sovereignty and generate nationalist resistance. A purely parliamentary process may be insufficient where the mandate, composition, or legitimacy of parliament is itself disputed.

The transition must therefore derive legitimacy from several distinct but complementary sources. These sources should not be confused with one another.

**Legal authority** should come, where possible, through a **Transitional Enabling Act (TEA)** adopted by the existing legislative framework.

**Political consent** should come through a National Transition Compact signed by the principal Somali stakeholders, including the FGS, FMSs, recognized opposition groups, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, women, youth, business, and professional associations.

**Federal acceptance** should come through formal endorsement by FMSs.

**Constitutional review** should be provided by the Constitutional Court, or, until such a court is operational, by an interim constitutional arbitration panel.

**Public legitimacy and civic consent** should be built through transparency, civic consultation, public vetting, published benchmarks, and regular reporting.

This layered legitimacy model does not claim that every source has the same legal status. Rather, it recognizes Somalia's fragmented constitutional reality and seeks to combine legal authorization, political consent, federal acceptance, constitutional review, and public trust into one coherent transitional framework. [13]-[15]

This is not institutional confusion. It is constitutional prudence in a fragmented state.

### III. COMPARATIVE LESSONS FROM FRAGILE DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

Somalia's debate is often framed in absolute terms: either the country is ready for one-person-one-vote, or it is not. Comparative experience suggests a more useful question:

How have fragile states begun democratic transition before full territorial control, and how did they expand access, legitimacy, and participation over successive electoral cycles?

Four cases are particularly useful: Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

#### A. Iraq: Progressive Inclusion Under Insurgency

Iraq is relevant to Somalia because it held elections under insurgency, terrorism, sectarian distrust, foreign military presence, incomplete territorial security, and uneven political participation. The January 2005 elections were not universally accepted by all communities. Sunni Arab participation was especially weak in several areas. Yet the election was not abandoned. Instead, the process proceeded while political actors and international advisers worked to expand participation in later referenda and elections. [2]

The **Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq** (IECI) had responsibility for organizing the January 2005 transitional elections, while the United Nations and international electoral advisers provided technical support. IFES later supported Iraqi electoral institutions in areas such as voter registration, operations, outreach, procurement, poll-worker training, and continuous voter registration. [3]

The principal lesson for Somalia is not that Iraq's experience should be copied. Iraq's political and military circumstances were specific. The lesson is that initial imperfection does not permanently invalidate a transition if the process is legally grounded, technically administered, independently supported, and progressively improved.

Iraq also demonstrates that communities that initially boycott or participate weakly may later re-enter the electoral field when incentives, security, and political guarantees improve.

Sunni participation increased significantly in later electoral cycles, including provincial elections after the 2005 boycott experience. [4]

For Somalia, Iraq supports a doctrine of **progressive universalization**: one-person-one-vote should be the destination, but implementation may require phased access, special arrangements for insecure districts, IDP voting rules, secure-district voting, and credible legal contingencies for areas temporarily inaccessible because of Al-Shabaab.

### **B. Afghanistan: Hybrid Election Management and the Dangers of Premature Nationalization**

Afghanistan is even closer to Somalia in several respects: civil war, Muslim-majority society, insurgency, weak institutions, international intervention, contested central authority, and the need to move from political settlement to electoral legitimacy.

Afghanistan's 2004 presidential election and 2005 parliamentary elections were administered through the **Joint Electoral Management Body** (JEMB), a hybrid institution composed of Afghan and international members. The model preserved Afghan legal authority while relying on substantial international technical participation. [5]

This is precisely the balance Somalia should study: domestic sovereignty with structured international technical support.

However, Afghanistan also provides a cautionary tale. The 2004 and 2005 elections were administered with strong hybrid support. By contrast, the 2009 elections were run by Afghan institutions in a more nationalized framework, but serious concerns emerged regarding fraud, institutional weakness, insecurity, and loss of confidence. [6]

The lesson is that national ownership is not enough if domestic institutions are politically captured, underprepared, or insufficiently independent.

For Somalia, Afghanistan teaches two lessons at once.

First, a Somali-owned mechanism may legitimately include structured international technical assistance if Somali legal authority remains primary.

Second, transferring electoral control to weak or partisan institutions before they are independent may damage legitimacy more than it protects sovereignty.

The question is not whether Somalia should own its elections. It must. The question is whether Somalia's electoral institutions can be insulated from political capture before they are asked to deliver the first credible national vote.

### **C. Liberia: Elections, Economic Governance, and the Peace Dividend**

Liberia is useful not because its society mirrors Somalia's, but because its post-war transition linked elections to economic governance, anti-corruption safeguards, concession review, and short-term employment.

The World Bank case study  *Holding on to Monrovia*  argues that international actors accepted unusual stabilization responsibilities in Liberia because corruption and youth unemployment could have threatened the fragile peace before democratic elections. [7]

The Liberia experience is especially relevant to Somalia's natural-resource and public-finance problem. Liberia's Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program used temporary oversight mechanisms, including international co-signing authority in sensitive public finance areas, to prevent state capture and protect public resources during a fragile transition. The same case study describes the "Roads-with-UNMIL" initiative, which combined employment generation and infrastructure repair as a peace dividend. [7]

The broader lesson is that elections cannot be separated from governance. A population that sees no improvement in public services, employment, corruption control, or security will not experience elections as a democratic transition. It will experience them as another elite contest.

For Somalia, Liberia supports three measures:

1. Public finance controls during the transition.
2. Strategic contract review and a moratorium on opaque long-term concessions.
3. Emergency employment and public works as a peace dividend.

## **D. Sierra Leone: Post-War Elections Under Peacekeeping Protection**

Sierra Leone's 2002 elections were conducted shortly after the end of a devastating civil war. They were not held in conditions of perfect stability. Refugees, displaced persons, former combatants, trauma, illiteracy, weak infrastructure, and intimidation remained serious concerns. Yet the elections proceeded with the support of the National Electoral Commission, UNAMSIL's stabilization role, international observers, and civic education efforts. [8]

The Carter Center observed Sierra Leone's May 2002 presidential and parliamentary elections, the first since the end of the civil war. International observers and domestic institutions played important roles in supporting public confidence. [8]

For Somalia, Sierra Leone demonstrates that elections after conflict require more than ballot boxes. They require security stabilization, civic education, observer confidence, arrangements for displaced or vulnerable populations, and mechanisms to prevent former combatants or armed groups from determining political outcomes.

## **E. Lessons for Somalia**

The comparative cases produce five strategic conclusions.

First, **perfect stability is not a precondition for beginning democratic transition.** Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone all began electoral processes amid insecurity, distrust, or institutional weakness.

Second, **initial elections may be imperfect but must be designed to improve.** Iraq's experience shows that access and participation may expand over successive cycles.

Third, **hybrid administration can protect legitimacy when domestic institutions are weak.** Afghanistan's JEMB shows that national authority and international technical support can coexist.

Fourth, **elections must be paired with governance safeguards.** Liberia shows that anti-corruption measures and peace dividends can be as important as electoral logistics.

Fifth, **security and civic trust are electoral infrastructure.** Sierra Leone demonstrates that peacekeeping, DDR, and observation can create conditions under which post-war populations accept the electoral process.

The lesson for Somalia is therefore not to postpone democracy indefinitely. It is to sequence democracy intelligently.

#### IV. POSSIBLE MODELS FOR SELECTING THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT

The selection mechanism is the heart of implementation. A technocratic transition selected through a discredited process will fail before it begins.

Several models are possible. Each contains **advantages** and **dangers**.

Model	Description	Advantages	Risks	Suitability for Somalia
<b>National Transitional Conference</b>	A broad national conference of FGS, FMS, opposition, elders, religious leaders, civil society, women, youth, business, diaspora, and professional groups.	High symbolic legitimacy; allows broad ownership; can produce a National Transition Compact.	May become too large, slow, performative, clan-driven, or vulnerable to elite bargaining.	Useful as a founding moment, but not sufficient to select technocrats directly.
<b>Independent Selection Commission</b>	A small professional body advertises positions, vets candidates, and selects technocrats.	Merit-focused; faster; reduces political bargaining; creates measurable criteria.	May lack political legitimacy if not anchored in a national compact; vulnerable to accusations of elitism.	Strong as a technical mechanism but must be politically authorized.
<b>Hybrid Somali Model</b>	A National Leadership Council provides political legitimacy and oversight; a Technocratic Selection Board conducts professional vetting and nomination.	Balances legitimacy and competence; prevents incumbent control, opposition capture, elders-only gatekeeping, and foreign ownership.	Requires strict rules to prevent the Leadership Council from becoming another bargaining table.	Best option if rules, timelines, voting thresholds, public vetting, and deadlock mechanisms are clearly defined.
<b>Council of Elders Model</b>	Traditional elders select or approve transitional leaders.	Culturally familiar; may reduce immediate clan resistance; historically recognized in Somali politics.	Reproduces 4.5 gatekeeping; excludes youth, women, professionals, and citizens; vulnerable to manipulation.	Elders should play an advisory and reputational role, but not a controlling role.
<b>Internationally Guaranteed Process</b>	International partners guarantee funding, observation, technical support,	Provides resources, pressure, monitoring, and	Risks appearing foreign-owned; may trigger sovereignty concerns; external	Necessary as support, not ownership. International partners should

Model	Description	Advantages	Risks	Suitability for Somalia
	mediation, and consequences for spoilers.	credibility; can deter spoilers.	actors may be divided.	guarantee process, not appoint leaders.

For Somalia’s present circumstances, the Hybrid Somali Model is the strongest option because it recognizes Somalia’s political reality without surrendering to it.

It gives political actors a structured role but denies them unilateral control. It gives professionals real authority but anchors their work in national consent. It includes elders and religious leaders but does not allow an elders-only mechanism to reproduce the old gatekeeping system. It allows international partners to support and guarantee the process without owning it.[14][16]

**V. THE HYBRID SOMALI MODEL: A SOMALI-OWNED MECHANISM FOR LEGITIMACY AND COMPETENCE**

The Hybrid Somali Model is the heart of the Phase Two implementation plan.

Its core principle is:

The transitional government must not be selected by the incumbent alone, captured by the opposition, controlled by elders alone, or owned by foreign partners. It must be politically legitimized through a national compact and professionally staffed through transparent merit-based vetting.

The model has four institutional components.[14][15]

**1. National Transition Compact**

The National Transition Compact is the founding legal-political instrument of the transition.

It should be signed by:

- the Federal Government;
- Federal Member States;
- recognized opposition groups;
- civil society organizations;
- traditional elders;
- religious scholars;
- women’s organizations;
- youth representatives;
- business associations;
- professional associations;
- diaspora representatives; and
- international partners as witnesses and guarantors.

The Compact should define:

- the legal basis of the transition;
- the duration of the transition;
- the mandate and limits of the transitional government;
- the selection process;
- the self-denying rule;
- the powers of the National Leadership Council;
- the powers of the Technocratic Selection Board;
- the role of the Constitutional Court or interim arbitration panel;
- the federal compact process;
- security neutrality rules;
- public finance controls;
- electoral milestones;
- dispute-resolution procedures; and
- the binding exit date.

The Compact must be public. Secrecy would destroy trust before the transition begins.

## **2. National Leadership Council**

The National Leadership Council should consist of approximately 15–20 members. It should not govern the country. It should not appoint ministers by clan bargaining. It should not interfere in day-to-day administration.

Its functions should be limited to:

confirming nominees submitted by the Technocratic Selection Board; monitoring compliance with the Transition Compact; receiving quarterly compliance reports; referring disputes to the Constitutional Court or interim arbitration panel; protecting the no-extension rule; and serving as the political guardian of the transition.[14][15]

The Council should include representatives from:

- FGS;
- FMS;
- opposition;
- civil society;
- traditional authorities;
- religious scholars;
- women;
- youth;
- business;
- professional associations; and
- diaspora.

No bloc should possess a unilateral veto. Decisions should be made by qualified majority, not unanimity. A unanimity rule would reproduce Somalia’s culture of indefinite deadlock.

If the Council rejects a nominee submitted by the Technocratic Selection Board, it must provide written reasons. The Board may then submit one alternative nominee. If deadlock continues, the issue should be referred to the Constitutional Court or interim constitutional arbitration panel. No actor should have an indefinite veto.

### **3. Technocratic Selection Board (TSB)**

The Technocratic Selection Board should consist of 7–9 respected non-partisan Somalis. Members may include:

- former judges;
- former auditors general;
- central bank officials;
- constitutional lawyers;
- economists;
- university leaders;
- public administration experts;
- former senior civil servants with clean records;
- security-sector professionals;
- and integrity figures.

The Board should:

- publish job descriptions;
- receive applications and nominations;
- verify degrees and professional records;
- conduct background checks;
- require asset declarations;
- require conflict-of-interest disclosures;
- conduct public interviews for senior posts;
- submit ranked nominees to the National Leadership Council; and
- publish reasons for nomination.

The Board should not be a political committee. Its authority must rest on professional standards, transparent procedures, written criteria, and public accountability.

### **4. Constitutional Court or Interim Constitutional Arbitration Panel**

Because the Constitutional Court is not yet operational, the transition should establish either: a fast-tracked Constitutional Court appointment process; or an interim constitutional arbitration panel until the Court is established.

This body should resolve disputes over compact interpretation, eligibility, selection deadlocks, mandate limits, electoral disputes, and violations of the no-extension clause.

The interim arbitration panel must be temporary. It cannot become a substitute for the Constitutional Court. Its purpose is to prevent legal paralysis while the permanent constitutional adjudication system is being established.

## VI. ELIGIBILITY, DISQUALIFICATION, AND SOMALI-ADAPTED VETTING RULES

A technocratic transition must be measurable. It cannot rest on reputation alone.

The word “technocratic” has no meaning unless appointment is governed by published qualifications, integrity checks, conflict-of-interest rules, transparent selection, and enforceable removal procedures.

At the same time, vetting should not be reduced to imported bureaucratic screening. Somalia has its own moral and social mechanisms for assessing character, public conduct, reconciliation history, and social trust. These should be used carefully, but they must not become a backdoor for clan entitlement.

The vetting process should therefore combine professional verification with Somali social legitimacy.

### Minimum Eligibility Requirements

Candidates for prime minister, minister, electoral commissioner, or major oversight office should demonstrate:

- advanced education or equivalent professional experience;
- at least 10–15 years of relevant public, legal, financial, security, administrative, electoral, judicial, academic, or technical experience;
- no current senior partisan office;
- no active militia role;
- no unresolved serious corruption allegation;
- no direct financial conflict with the state;
- commitment to constitutional governance; and
- acceptance of the self-denying pledge.

### Three-Track Vetting Process

Each candidate should undergo a three-track review.[18]

**First, documentary verification:** education, professional experience, employment history, publications where relevant, assets, financial interests, and conflicts of interest.

**Second, legal and security-risk review:** corruption allegations, militia links, abuse of office, involvement in political violence, serious unresolved criminal allegations, and risks to national security.

**Third, community integrity attestation:** input from respected elders, religious figures, professional bodies, civil society actors, and community leaders familiar with the candidate’s public reputation.

Traditional and religious leaders should therefore contribute to the integrity review, but they should not possess a unilateral veto and should not select candidates on the basis of clan entitlement. Their role is to identify reputational risks, reconciliation concerns, and public trust issues that formal documents may not reveal. Final nomination must remain merit-based, transparent, and subject to written reasons.

### **Mandatory Disclosures**

Each candidate should submit:

- CV;
- identity verification;
- educational and professional credentials;
- asset declaration;
- conflict-of-interest statement;
- tax or financial disclosure where available;
- integrity and security-risk review;
- litigation and criminal-record disclosure; and
- signed self-denying pledge.

### **Disqualifications**

The following should be disqualified from transitional executive posts:

- current president, prime minister, ministers, deputy ministers, and MPs;
- current party leaders;
- declared presidential or parliamentary candidates;
- clan militia leaders;
- individuals commanding armed groups outside lawful structures;
- major state contractors with unresolved conflicts of interest;
- persons under credible corruption investigation; and
- anyone refusing asset disclosure or the self-denying pledge.

False disclosure should trigger removal, public notice, and possible prosecution.

## VII. LEGAL AND FEDERAL COMPACT ARCHITECTURE

The transition cannot rest on political understanding alone. It must be translated into legal instruments.

Where parliamentary action remains possible, the transition should be authorized through a Transitional Enabling Act. The Act should recognize the National Transition Compact, define the powers and limits of the transitional government, protect the self-denying rule, establish the selection process, create the interim arbitration mechanism if necessary, and prohibit extension beyond the agreed end date. [13], [14], [17], and [19]

The Act should not create a blank cheque. It should create a limited fiduciary mandate.

The transitional authority is not sovereign in itself. It is custodial. Its purpose is to preserve continuity, complete foundational tasks, and return authority to citizens through credible elections.

### 1. Federal Member State Endorsement

The transition cannot be a Mogadishu project. No genuine one-person-one-vote election can be prepared without Federal Member State participation.

Federal Member States should endorse the Transition Compact through their executive and legislative mechanisms where possible. If formal legislative endorsement is not immediately feasible, FMS presidents, speakers, civil society representatives, and traditional authorities should jointly sign the Compact as a political commitment pending formal ratification.

### 2. Federal Compact Mechanism

The transition should include a structured Federal Compact Mechanism. This mechanism should address:

- division of federal and state powers;
- resource-sharing;
- rules governing FMS elections;
- security coordination and
- command structures;
- status of Mogadishu;
- dispute resolution between FGS and FMS;
- intergovernmental fiscal transfers; and
- the role of FMS in voter registration and election security.

The Federal Compact Mechanism should proceed in stages:

**Stage One: Non-escalation declaration.**

- FGS, FMS, and opposition actors commit not to use force, unilateral elections, arrests, or administrative coercion to settle constitutional disputes.

**Stage Two: Federal Dialogue Conference.**

- A structured conference is convened with FGS, FMS, opposition, civil society, elders, religious leaders, women, youth, professional associations, and business representatives.

**Stage Three: Technical committees.**

- Specialized committees address security, fiscal federalism, constitutional powers, electoral sequencing, resource-sharing, and dispute resolution.

**Stage Four: Federal Compact Agreement.**

- The final agreement becomes part of the Transition Compact and is subject to constitutional review.

**Stage Five: Enforcement and incentives.**

- Budget support, security coordination, election administration, and international technical assistance should be tied to compliance with the Compact.

If an FMS refuses to participate, the transition should avoid military coercion. Instead, it should use mediation, public reporting, budgetary transparency, and international guarantees to encourage participation. Forced federalism will destroy the very trust the transition is meant to rebuild.

## VIII. INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT

The transitional government must be small, disciplined, and functional. It should not reproduce the bloated patronage machinery of ordinary Somali governments.

### CORE INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Mandate	Selection Method	Term	Oversight
<b>Technocratic Prime Minister</b>	Leads transitional government and coordinates implementation of the Compact.	Nominated by Technocratic Selection Board; confirmed by National Leadership Council.	Duration of transition only.	Constitutional Court/interim panel; National Leadership Council; public reporting.
<b>Transitional Cabinet</b>	Implements constitutional, security, electoral, finance, justice, and stabilization tasks.	Merit-based nomination by Selection Board; confirmation by Leadership Council.	Duration of transition only.	PM, Leadership Council, Auditor General, court/panel.
<b>National Leadership Council</b>	Provides political legitimacy, oversight, confirmation, and protection of the no-extension rule.	Established through Transition Compact.	Duration of transition only.	Public reporting; court/panel review.
<b>Technocratic Selection Board</b>	Conducts merit-based selection and vetting.	Established through Transition Compact and Enabling Act.	Initial selection period plus replacement nominations.	Leadership Council; court/panel; public rules.
<b>Constitutional Court or Interim Arbitration Panel</b>	Resolves constitutional and transition disputes.	Fast-tracked constitutional appointment or temporary compact-based mechanism.	Court permanent; panel temporary.	Public decisions; legal reasoning.
<b>Election Commission and Complaints Body</b>	Prepares and administers elections; resolves complaints.	Reconstituted through merit and stakeholder confidence process.	Protected through law.	Court/panel; observers; public results system.
<b>Public Finance and Contracts</b>	Protects public funds and reviews strategic contracts.	Independent appointment with	Duration of transition, with	Auditor General; public reporting; court/panel.

Institution	Mandate	Selection Method	Term	Oversight
Oversight Mechanism		merit and integrity rules.	institutional continuity.	

### Cabinet Size and Portfolios

The cabinet should be limited to approximately 12–15 ministers. It should focus on essential transitional tasks, including:

- constitutional affairs and justice;
- interior and federal affairs;
- security coordination;
- finance and public administration;
- elections and civic registration;
- planning and economic stabilization;
- public works and employment;
- education, youth, and civic education;
- women and social inclusion;
- humanitarian affairs and displacement;
- natural resources and strategic contracts; and
- foreign affairs and international coordination.

The cabinet should not be formed to satisfy clan arithmetic. Clan and regional sensitivities must be considered to prevent exclusion, but competence must be the primary standard.

### IX. THE FIRST 100 DAYS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The first 100 days must prove that the transition is not an extension, not a coup, and not an elite bargain.

The first 100 days should include:

1. Signing of the National Transition Compact.
2. Passage of the Transitional Enabling Act where possible.
3. Formation of the National Leadership Council.
4. Formation of the Technocratic Selection Board.
5. Publication of selection criteria and disqualification rules.
6. Public advertisement of transitional offices.
7. Selection of the neutral technocratic prime minister.
8. Formation of a small cabinet of 12–15 ministers.
9. Launch of the Constitutional Court

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| establishment process.   | partisan use of federal or regional forces.    | 15. Federal Dialogue Conference.                                  |
| 10. Creation of an interim constitutional arbitration panel if the Court is not yet operational. | 12. Public Finance Protection Order.           | 16. Creation of a public transition dashboard.                    |
| 11. Security Neutrality Order prohibiting  | 13. Strategic Contracts Moratorium.            | 17. Weekly public briefings on milestones, risks, and next steps. |
|  | 14. National Electoral Feasibility Assessment. |   |

The first 100 days should not be treated as a magical period in which all institutions can be completed. It should be treated as the period in which the transition proves its seriousness by creating the legal, selection, oversight, and transparency mechanisms that prevent capture.

## **X. TWENTY-FOUR-MONTH ROAD MAP TO ONE-PERSON-ONE-VOTE**

The two-year transition must be governed by deadlines. Somalia cannot afford another open-ended process. But deadline discipline must be different from deadline fiction.

### **Phase One: First 100 Days — Legal and Institutional Foundation**

The Compact is signed. The Enabling Act is passed where possible. The National Leadership Council and Technocratic Selection Board are created. Transitional officials are vetted. Security neutrality rules are issued. Public finance controls begin. Contract review begins. Constitutional Court appointment procedures are launched. The public dashboard is activated.

### **Phase Two: Months 4–12 — Constitution and Federal Settlement**

The provisional constitution is finalized through an inclusive process. Federal powers, resource-sharing, FMS election rules, security coordination, Mogadishu’s status, and dispute-resolution mechanisms are clarified. Independent commissions are reconstituted. The Constitutional Court becomes operational, or the interim panel continues only until the Court is ready.

### **Phase Three: Months 12–18 — Electoral Infrastructure**

Voter registration begins where security permits. NIRA data is assessed as a civil identity backbone but not automatically converted into a voter roll without safeguards. Political parties are registered under clear rules. Civic education begins. Women’s representation mechanisms are defined. IDP voting rules are drafted. Polling-station security standards are established. Election-dispute procedures are published.

Somalia has a useful starting asset in NIRA, the National Identification and Registration Authority. NIRA is legally mandated under Somalia’s Identification and Registration Act, Law No. 009 of March 2023, to provide citizens and legal residents with secure, verifiable identity through a unique National Identification Number. [9] In 2025, NIRA launched a foundational ID mass-registration pilot in Shangani and Boondheere, with plans to expand coverage in Banadir and eventually nationwide. [10]

This gives Somalia an important identity infrastructure that Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, and Sierra Leone had to build under far greater pressure. However, civil identification and voter registration must not be merged carelessly. NIRA can support voter eligibility verification, but the voter roll must remain subject to electoral law, independent audit, privacy safeguards, appeals, and political neutrality.

#### **Phase Four: Months 18–24 — Elections and Transfer of Power**

One-person-one-vote elections are conducted wherever minimum conditions are met. For inaccessible areas, legally defined contingency mechanisms should be used, including displaced-voter arrangements, secure-district voting, delayed polling in narrowly defined locations, or temporary representation mechanisms approved in advance by the Constitutional Court.

The transition dissolves upon inauguration of the elected government.

No official may extend the transition.

### **XI. ELECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROGRESSIVE UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE**

Somalia should adopt the principle of **progressive universal suffrage**.

This means that one-person-one-vote remains the constitutional destination, while its implementation is phased, safeguarded, and made credible through law, institutional preparation, and public consent rather than political slogans.

Somalia’s own recent experience demonstrates that direct elections are no longer merely theoretical or technically beyond reach. On 25 December 2025, Mogadishu conducted local council elections across all sixteen districts of the capital. More than 900,000 voters were registered, 523 polling stations were established, and candidates representing multiple political organizations competed for district council seats. The exercise demonstrated that large-scale voter registration, polling-station deployment, election staffing, security coordination, balloting, and vote counting can be organized within Somalia.

The Mogadishu process nevertheless suffered from a significant political legitimacy deficit. Major opposition actors rejected it as unilateral and insufficiently consensual, alleged that the electoral framework favored the incumbent administration, and questioned whether the process could credibly serve as the foundation for national elections. These objections are serious, but they concern political consent, institutional neutrality, and constitutional legitimacy rather than the basic technical capacity to conduct direct voting.[11]

Puntland provides an even more sustained and geographically dispersed example. Following pilot one-person-one-vote elections in Qardho, Eyl, and Ufeyn in October 2021, the Puntland electoral authorities developed a biometric voter-registration system and conducted direct local council elections in thirty additional districts on 25 May 2023. The exercise involved more than 387,000 registered voters, hundreds of polling stations, thousands of candidates, trained election personnel, domestic observers, voter-education programs, and formal dispute-resolution mechanisms. The remaining districts of Garowe, Dangorayo, and Godobjiiran subsequently held their local council elections in July 2024.

Puntland's experience was not free from political disagreements, postponements, or institutional challenges. Nevertheless, it demonstrated that Somali institutions could register voters, administer competitive multiparty elections across extensive territory, deploy election materials and personnel, manage polling and counting, and resolve electoral complaints through locally developed mechanisms.[12]

Taken together, the Mogadishu and Puntland experiences shift the central question. The issue is no longer whether direct elections are technically possible in Somalia. They are. The challenge is how to scale these existing Somali capabilities nationally while ensuring political consent, institutional neutrality, federal participation, security preparedness, inclusion, and broad public legitimacy.

The transitional government should therefore establish a national voter-registration plan; a legal and technical firewall between NIRA's civil-identification database and the electoral register; biometric and paper-backed voter verification; voting arrangements for internally displaced persons; accessible registration mechanisms for women and marginalized communities; a study of feasible diaspora participation; transparent political-party registration standards; a national polling-security map; an independent election-dispute mechanism; a transparent results-transmission and publication system; independent domestic and international observation; and clearly defined contingency rules for districts that remain temporarily inaccessible.

## MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR CREDIBLE OPOV

Requirement	Purpose
<b>Voter Registry</b>	Identifies eligible voters and prevents duplicate voting.
<b>Data Protection Firewall</b>	Prevents misuse of civil identity data for partisan control.
<b>Polling Security Map</b>	Determines where voting can safely occur and what contingency rules apply.
<b>National Independent Election Commission</b>	Administers elections without incumbent control.
<b>Independent Complaints Body</b>	Resolves disputes and prevents political violence.
<b>Women's Participation Safeguards</b>	Protects registration, candidacy, quota enforcement, and access.
<b>IDP Voting Rules</b>	Prevents displacement from becoming disenfranchisement.
<b>Observer Access</b>	Builds domestic and international confidence.
<b>Public Results System</b>	Reduces manipulation and rumor.
<b>Constitutional Adjudication</b>	Provides legal finality for electoral disputes.

A rushed vote without these conditions would not be democracy. It would be a contested political event dressed in democratic language.

## XII. PUBLIC FINANCE, SECURITY NEUTRALITY, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND STRATEGIC CONTRACTS

A transition without financial and security safeguards will be captured.

### Public Finance Controls

The transitional government should establish:

- Treasury Single Account protection;
- monthly budget publication;
- procurement transparency portal;
- emergency audit powers;
- beneficial ownership disclosure;
- asset declarations for senior officials;
- independent Auditor General protection;
- anti-corruption enforcement unit; and a Public Finance Oversight Mechanism.

Liberia’s experience shows that economic governance can be a peace-preserving tool. In a fragile transition, corruption is not merely a financial problem. It is a security threat. Public money can be converted into militias, patronage, vote buying, media manipulation, and institutional capture. [7]

### **Security Neutrality**

Security neutrality must be more than a slogan. The transitional government should issue binding rules prohibiting the use of federal or regional forces in electoral or constitutional disputes.

A Joint Federal-State Election Security Coordination Cell should be established with participation from federal security institutions, FMS security representatives, police, electoral officials, and neutral observers.

The security neutrality framework should include:

- prohibition on partisan deployment of armed forces;
- rules governing NISA, police, military, and regional forces;
- protection of polling sites and registration centers;
- vetting of senior commanders involved in election security;
- clear chain of command for election periods;
- prohibition on arrests of political actors without judicial process;
- prohibition on using security forces to impose FMS elections; and
- public reporting of security incidents.

The purpose is not to weaken national security. It is to prevent security institutions from becoming tools of political survival.

### **Natural Resources and Strategic Contracts**

The transitional government should establish a National Resources and Strategic Contracts Review Commission.

The Commission should review major agreements involving:

- petroleum;
- ports;
- airports;
- fisheries;
- public land;
- telecommunication s;
- defense cooperation;
- natural resources; and
- and strategic infrastructure.

Its purpose should not be reckless cancellation. Its purpose should be legality, fairness, transparency, and national interest.

The transition should also impose a Strategic Contracts Moratorium. No new long-term agreement involving oil, gas, minerals, ports, airports, public land, fisheries, telecommunications, or national security should be signed during the transition unless approved through transparent legal procedures and reviewed for constitutional compliance.

Somalia must welcome investment. But investment must serve Somalia's people, not the survival strategies of temporary officeholders.

### **Peace Dividend, Jobs, and Public Works**

Political transition will fail if ordinary Somalis see no improvement in daily life.

The transitional government should launch an emergency employment and public works program focused on:

- road repair;
- water systems;
- schools and clinics;
- fisheries infrastructure;
- agricultural canals;
- livestock markets;
- vocational training;
- ports and airports rehabilitation; and
- public works in liberated districts.

This is not merely economic policy. It is stabilization policy. Young people who see no future become vulnerable to recruitment by extremists, militias, traffickers, and political spoilers. A transition that produces visible services and employment will be harder to sabotage.

## **XIII. COMMUNICATION, RISK, AND DEADLOCK RESOLUTION STRATEGY**

### **Communication and National Mobilization Strategy**

The transition will fail if it remains an elite paper.

Somalia is a deeply oral, poetic, religious, clan-sensitive, and politically emotional society. Therefore, the communication strategy must translate technical design into national meaning.

The communication strategy should not operate as a campaign for personalities. Its purpose is to protect the transition from misrepresentation. Opponents will attempt to describe the proposal as an extension, a soft coup, a foreign project, or 4.5 in technocratic clothing. The communication strategy must therefore repeat a simple message:

This is not an extension of power. It is a limited and self-denying bridge to real one-person-one-vote elections.

The public frame should be:

Two accountable years to give every Somali citizen a real vote.

Or:

Not an extension. Not another 4.5 bargain. A disciplined two-year bridge from elite selection to citizen election.

The communication strategy should proceed through three phases.[28]

**First, quiet validation.**

Before public launch, the proposal should be reviewed by constitutional lawyers, respected elders, FMS-linked figures, religious scholars, women leaders, business leaders, youth representatives, diaspora professionals, and civil society actors.

**Second, public explanation.**

The proposal should be released with a short executive summary, Somali-language public version, and simplified explanation of the Hybrid Model.

**Third, milestone reporting.**

During implementation, the transition should publish weekly or biweekly updates, quarterly compliance reports, and a public dashboard tracking the first 100 days, constitutional process, electoral preparation, public finance controls, and exit timeline.

The tone should be pro-citizen, pro-constitution, pro-peace, pro-OPOV, and pro-Somalia. It should not be written as an attack on one person, one clan, one region, or one political faction.

Somalis are warriors and poets, but at this stage Somalia needs guardians: leaders brave enough not to seize power, wise enough not to inflame the nation, and disciplined enough to build the institutions that will allow every Somali citizen to vote.

## RISK MATRIX

Risk	Mitigation
<b>Incumbent refuses transition</b>	Coordinated Somali political pressure, FMS alignment, international guarantees, public communication, and non-escalation framework.
<b>Opposition tries to capture process</b>	Self-denying rule, disqualification of candidates, balanced Leadership Council, and transparent selection.
<b>Elders reproduce 4.5 gatekeeping</b>	Elders included as legitimacy and integrity actors, not sole selectors.
<b>FMS boycott</b>	Federal Compact Mechanism, neutral mediation, no forced centralization, and incentives for participation.
<b>Al-Shabaab attacks</b>	Election-security plan, phased access, secure-district voting, contingency mechanisms, and public security reporting.
<b>Fake technocrats</b>	Public vetting, credentials verification, asset disclosure, conflict checks, and community integrity attestation.
<b>Donor fragmentation</b>	Single transition support framework with Somali ownership and coordinated international guarantees.
<b>Constitutional Court delay</b>	Interim constitutional arbitration panel with automatic sunset upon Court formation.
<b>Selection deadlock</b>	Written reasons for rejection, ten-day confirmation window, alternative nominee list, and arbitration if deadlock persists.
<b>Two-year deadline slippage</b>	Automatic sunset clause, no-extension rule, public dashboard, quarterly compliance reports, and legal penalties.
<b>Misinformation campaign</b>	Lean communication strategy, public briefings, Somali-language explanations, and rapid correction of false claims.
<b>Public finance abuse</b>	Treasury controls, audits, procurement transparency, and removal for violations.

## **Deadlock Resolution**

No actor should possess an indefinite veto.

If the National Leadership Council fails to confirm a nominee within ten days, it must issue written reasons. The Technocratic Selection Board may submit one alternative nominee. If the Council again fails to confirm without sufficient legal basis, the matter should go to the Constitutional Court or interim constitutional arbitration panel.

If the Federal Compact process stalls, technical committees should continue work while political mediation proceeds. If one actor withdraws, the process should remain open but not be frozen indefinitely.

If the Constitutional Court is delayed, the interim arbitration panel should function temporarily, but its mandate must automatically expire once the Court becomes operational.

Deadlock rules are essential because Somalia's political crises often become permanent when every actor can block action but no actor is responsible for failure.

## **XIV. EXIT STRATEGY AND POST-TRANSITION SAFEGUARDS**

The transition must end by law, not by goodwill.

The exit mechanism should include:

- automatic sunset clause;
- no-extension provision;
- self-denying rule;
- final compliance report;
- handover law;
- protection of Constitutional Court tenure;
- protection of electoral commission independence;
- archiving and publication of transition records;
- post-transition 100-day continuity plan; and
- criminal penalties for unconstitutional extension attempts.

The transitional government should dissolve upon the inauguration of the elected administration. No transitional official should have authority to extend the mandate. Any extension attempt should be treated as unconstitutional.

The post-transition government should inherit reformed institutions, not a blank slate. The Constitutional Court, electoral commission, public finance controls, and strategic contract review mechanisms should be protected by law so that the next administration cannot immediately dismantle them for partisan advantage.

The transition should end with a public final report explaining:

- what was completed;
- what remains unfinished;
- what funds were spent;
- what contracts were reviewed;
- what electoral mechanisms were built;
- what disputes were resolved; and
- what safeguards remain in place.

A transition that does not report to the public is not self-denying. It is merely another government.

### **CONCLUSION: FROM CLAN ARITHMETIC TO CITIZENSHIP**

The first paper made the case that Somalia must escape the 4.5 trap and build a disciplined two-year bridge to citizenship-based democracy. This paper explains how that bridge can be built.

Somalia does not need another elite bargain. It does not need an incumbent extension. It does not need elders-only gatekeeping. It does not need foreign trusteeship. It does not need technocracy by title.

It needs technocracy by law, competence, neutrality, integrity, and public accountability.

The Hybrid Model offers a credible path. It recognizes that political legitimacy and professional competence are both necessary. It gives political actors a role without allowing them to capture the process. It gives professionals authority without detaching them from national consent. It allows international partners to support without owning. It respects traditional legitimacy without surrendering the future to clan arithmetic.

The purpose of the transition is not to delay democracy. It is to make democracy possible.

The objective is not merely to hold an election. It is to build the conditions under which the Somali people can finally choose their leaders directly, safely, credibly, and as citizens of one republic.

Somalia must now move from diagnosis to implementation, from 4.5 bargaining to citizen sovereignty, and from repeated political improvisation to a lawful national rescue plan.

The question is no longer whether Somalia should reach one-person-one-vote. It must.

The question is whether Somalia will fake it through another unilateral project, postpone it through another 4.5 bargain, or build it through a disciplined, self-denying, Somali-owned transition. The way forward is implementation.

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