



# WOMEN & POLITICS

**Overcoming Barriers of Political Representation in Somalia**



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## Cover Photo

The cover photo features the two women who attained the highest political positions in Somalia. On the left, MP. Sadia Yasin H. Samatar is the current Deputy Speaker of the House of the People of the Federal Parliament of Somalia – the highest elected position for women so far. On the right, MP. Fawzia Yusuf H. Adam is the former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia – the highest appointed political position for women so far.

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# 1. Executive summary

Generally, Somali women have been under-represented at all levels of government administration since the Somali Republic was established in 1960. In 2012, As Somalia ended the transition period, women were promised 30% representation in all sectors of government. Yet this remains a gentlemen's agreement and the gender quota remains excluded from the provisional constitution. This lack of incorporation of the gender quota is reflected in the uneven representation of women in parliament in the last three indirect elections, in 2012 (14% representation); 2016 (24% representation), and 2021/22 (20% representation).

Combining a survey and interviews, this research examined the public perception of women's political participation as well as the opportunities and challenges they face in their pursuit of political representations. The survey was carried out in seven large urban cities across Somalia (Kismayo, Baidoa, Mogadishu, Beledweyne, Galkayo, Garowe and Bosaso) to determine the societal views on gender quota and women's political participation and obtained 1,000 responses.

This study employed qualitative research methods utilizing a mix of online and in person one-on-one interviews. Sixteen women were interviewed consisting of women's rights and non-governmental activists; members of current and former parliaments (both the Senate and the House of the People); Member of Parliament (MP) candidates and former candidates; public sector workers at the federal, regional, and local levels; and cabinet ministers. Those interviewees were a highly educated mix of local and returned diaspora and who came from all regions of Somalia: Galmudug; Hirshabelle; Jubbaland; Puntland; Somaliland; South West; and the Benadir Regional Administration.

This research further discussed the challenges and opportunities that women candidates and politicians encounter once elected. It looked at the origins of their interest in politics; why they seek political office and the opportunities and challenges they face in running for office and after being elected. The study also compared differences and similarities between the last three indirect elections in 2012, 2016, and 2021-2022.

The study found that:

- The civil war changed Somali society in profound ways, transforming the role of both men and women. The war served as “defining moments, turning points, and catalysts.”<sup>1</sup> Women's societal responsibilities expanded, with the majority becoming heads of households. Many women also took on jobs outside the family, often becoming the sole breadwinners.

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1. Hughes, Melanie M (2009) “Armed Conflict, International Linkages, and Women's Parliamentary Representation in Developing Nations” *Social Problems*, Vol.56, Issue 1, pp.175.

- Since the anti-colonial struggle for independence began, Somali women have been politically active, from a complete absence in parliament in the first decade after independence, to almost 20% in the most recent election. This was a decrease from 24% in 2016 and below the global average of 26.1%, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Somali women continue to face many obstacles in their pursuit of political representation and participation.
- Many elites such as clan elders, some religious actors, and male politicians advance the narrative that Somali society opposes women's political participation and representation. However, a survey of 1000 participants across seven major cities in Somalia shows that there is an openness to and acceptance of women's political participation. In fact, 80% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that women have the right to take part in the governance of their country.
- When politicians and traditional leaders came together to create states, first in Somaliland and then in Puntland, women took charge of the logistics of the conference, hosting hundreds of delegates and were responsible for housing and feeding the male delegates. Women were also peacemakers when disagreements occurred, convincing the male delegates to come back to the peace tent. Yet, women were excluded from being official delegates.
- Many of the women candidates ran due to their personal experiences with some believing that they could improve the governance. Some of the women candidates had worked in government and saw gaps in existing laws and service delivery, and others witnessed the community's needs through their involvement in peacebuilding and development operations at the grassroots level through community organizations and NGOs.
- Women aspiring to enter politics face a variety of challenges which are structurally entrenched in the culture, society, economy and political institutions. Two major hurdles are identified in this study. First is access to economic support for women running for office. While men relied on clan members and wealthy business owners for financial assistance, women self-funded their campaigns, selling property or jewelry. The second hurdle for women's political participation is the 4.5 clan power-sharing agreement and the collusion between clan elders, religious actors and male politicians. Other challenges included weak institutionalization of the parliament and women MPs inability to collaborate with each other.
- Women candidates and advocates employed a variety of strategies to overcome these challenges. Before every election, women lobbied to ensure that the gender quota was implemented. Prominent civil society activists were appointed as Goodwill Ambassadors in the 2016 and 2021/22 elections to monitor the implementation of the gender quota and call attention and action to election bodies, federal and regional governments, and the international community.

- Women also lobbied political leaders and clan elders with mixed results. In the Senate, women's representation in the 2021/22 election increased from 24% to 26%, while it decreased in the House of the People from 24% to 20%. Once elected, women confronted a parliament, where the laws and policies were inconsistently applied by the largely male leadership, and they were sidelined and relegated to committees that were considered irrelevant. In the last election, women made some headway as **MP Sadia Yasin H. Samatar** was elected as first deputy speaker of the House of the People, the first time a woman has held this position. In the presidential election, a woman Member of parliament, and former deputy prime minister, **MP Fawzia Yusuf H. Adam** competed against 38 men.
- Survey participants identified taking care of family (43%); peacebuilding (23%); economy (20%) and politics (13%) as the most important ways women contribute to their country. Some participants said that women were better off remaining at home while others believed that women contributed to the economy; peacebuilding and politics because they are the foundation of society.
- A large majority of survey respondents (80%) believed that Somali women should take part in the governance of their country. This was a surprising finding and in contrast to the elite narrative that there is societal opposition to women's political participation. Survey participants also identified raising awareness, civic education and financial support as the most important initiatives to encourage and promote women's political participation.
- The majority of survey respondents conveyed positive views of women politicians finding that they represent society (58%); other women (24%); clan (9%) and personal interests (8%). They said that male politicians represent society (53%); personal interest (22%) and clan (20%).
- Cultural practices also hinder women's struggle for political representation and leadership. Somali society is patrilineal and patriarchal that believes men uphold the clan lineage and gives authority and leadership to men. The clan patriarchal institutions, especially the 4.5 clan power-sharing agreement, is biased against women. This manifests itself with high levels of gender inequality, inequity, injustice and opposition to women's political participation.
- The safeguarding mechanisms as well as tremendous advocacy and lobbying efforts of the women's movements, civil society organizations and pressure from the international community during the 2016-17 electoral process, resulted in female representation rising from 14% to 24% in each of the houses of the parliament.

- Women who are in an interclan marriage, however, struggle even more to get into politics. Male candidates are never questioned about their marital status or the clan connection of their wives. Female candidates are routinely asked about the clan affiliation of their husbands and children.
- Lack of resources is a major obstacle. Even though women are the breadwinners and the backbone of household finances, they are not part of the market economy. Women are underrepresented in fields that are dominated by men such as telecommunications, online and physical banking, money wiring firms, healthcare and education.
- Until the 2021/2022 election, there were no women in the leadership of the bicameral parliament. From the beginning, women MPs were marginalized. This lack of representation at the leadership level affected even which parliamentary committee were assigned. This changed with the election of MP Sadia Yasin H. Samatar.
- Women parliamentarians do not have office spaces, staff and advisors to support them, allowing them to work for their constituencies. Many expressed frustrations at not being able to return to their constituencies with development projects or to discuss communities' concerns. Women MPs believed that they are sabotaged, undermined and sidelined in addition to being excluded from leadership posts.
- Younger and middle-aged women reported they had experienced sexual harassment in parliament and other government offices.
- Some participants questioned the legitimacy of the 2021 elections as most of the seats were designated for a specific person who brought along his/her own competitor, or "malxiis", who immediately stepped aside, leaving one candidate to run unopposed. In many cases, these designated candidates won all or most of the votes. Particularly striking was the number of women who acted as "malxiis" since they only had to pay half the usual registration fee and the person designated to win also got a 50% discount.
- Women's representation declined in all member states and in Somaliland during the 2021/22 poll. In Galmudug the number of total seats increased by one, but the number of female parliamentarians remained the same at nine, resulting in a percentage decline from 25% in 2016 to 24% in 2021/22. Hirshabelle's total seats increased by one, but the number of female MPs declined by 50%, from 10 to 5 seats. Of all the FMS and Benadir Region, Hirshabelle is the lowest at 13%. In Puntland, the total number of seats allocated remained the same at 37, but women's representation declined from 7 to 6. Puntland is currently at 16%, the second lowest in meeting the gender quota.

## 2. Introduction

There has been a dramatic increase in women's political participation globally over the past three decades. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), by the end of 2021, women held 26.1% of seats in parliament.<sup>2</sup> This increase was largely due to the adoption of the electoral gender quota by many countries, which replaced the incremental approach.<sup>3</sup> This resulted in a significant increase in the number of women in parliament within a short period of time. This has been notably evident in post-conflict countries such as Uganda, Liberia, Burundi and Rwanda, which adopted gender quotas, leading to high levels of representation of women in those countries' legislative bodies. Today, more than 130 countries have implemented gender quotas.



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Throughout the 1990s, political reconciliation conferences in Somalia included only the warring factions. The 2000 Arta Conference held in Djibouti was the first-time delegates were primarily drawn from civil society groups, including intellectuals, youth, traditional and religious elders, women's groups and members of the diaspora.<sup>4</sup> The warring groups were invited as individuals, but some of them did not attend the conference, rejecting their reduced influence in the state rebuilding process. Unlike previous conferences that failed, Arta succeeded in restarting the reconstruction of the Somali state from the bottom-up, 10 years after its collapse. Women actively participated and sought inclusion in the rebuilding of the state. Citizenship argument aside, they often had to remind the male participants that they had a right to participate based on their suffering during the war, as well as the contributions they made in saving their families and communities and the traditionally male responsibilities they took on. Women insisted that they deserved inclusion in the new government being formed. In the Transitional Federal Charter, women were guaranteed at least 12%, or 33 out of 275 of the seats, but only obtained 25, or 9.1%.<sup>5</sup>



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The simultaneous introduction of the 4.5 power-sharing agreement ensured that women would be subordinated to the clan. This new clan power-sharing gave the four largest, armed clan families an equal share of political positions while all unarmed groups got only half that amount.<sup>6</sup> Many Somalis, particularly women and unarmed clans, consider the 4.5 power-sharing agreement to be offensive because it reduces political representation to a clan-basis. Bringing the clan back into the political system indicated that it would be up to the elders to determine who could represent the clan. Because of its patriarchal nature, clans prioritize male representation and women find it extremely difficult to represent the clan. The gatekeeping role of the elders ensured that women's quest for political participation and representation remained an uphill battle.

2. Women in Parliament 2021: The Year in Review. Available at: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2022-03/women-in-parliament-in-2021>

3. Dahlerup, Drude and Lenita Friedenvall (2005). "Quotas as a Fast Track to Equal Representation for Women: Why Scandinavia Is No Longer the Model" International Feminist Journal of Politics; Vol. 7, Issue 1, pp.26-48

4. Elmi, Afyare (2010) Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam, and Peacebuilding. London: Pluto Press; pp.99.

5. Transitional Federal Charter of the Somali Republic (2004). Nairobi. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/somalia-transitionalcharter2004>

6. Eno, Mohamed A. and Eno, Omar A. (2011) "Intellectualism amid Ethnocentrism: Mukhtar and the 4.5 Factor," Bildhaan: An International Journal of Somali Studies: Vol. 9, Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.maclester.edu/bildhaan/vol9/iss1/13>; Elmi, Afyare (2021) "The Politics of the Electoral System in Somalia: An Assessment".



In 2012, Somalia transitioned into a federal system. In that first indirect election where clan elders selected/appointed members of the parliament for their respected clans. Pressure from women's groups and the international community, Somali leaders signed the Garowe Principles, initially promising women a 20% gender quota across all government positions at the federal, regional, and local levels. This was later increased to 30%.<sup>7</sup> Yet the gender quota remained informal, notably absent from the country's legal instruments such as the Provisional Federal Constitution, the Electoral Law and the Political Party Law. This lack of institutionalization of the gender quota meant that in the last three elections, women had to negotiate with male political leaders and clan elders to ensure that the 30% quota was implemented. In 2012, women attained 14% of the seats, increasing to 24% in the 2016 indirect election. In the 2021/2022 political dispensation, unsurprisingly women's representation declined and is around 20% in the House of the People of parliament. In the Senate, women's representation increased by 2% to 26%.

In contrast, the Somali Women's Charter stipulates 50% representation at all levels of government, reflecting their numbers in the population.<sup>8</sup> Paxton and Hughes (2014) identified three types of representation: formal, descriptive, and substantive representations.<sup>9</sup> This argument for women's equal representation is based on the fact that women have contributed a great deal to their country at a critical time, that they are 50% of the population and that men cannot represent women's policy needs.

This research examines the public perception of women's political participation as well as the opportunities and challenges they face in their pursuit of political representations. Since the anti-colonial struggle for independence began, Somali women have been politically active, from a complete absence in parliament in the first decade after independence, to almost 20% in the most recent election. This was a decrease from 24% in 2016 and below the global average of 26.1%, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union. However, Somali women continue to face many obstacles in their pursuit of political representation and participation.

This research further examines the challenges and opportunities that women candidates and politicians encounter once elected. It looks at the origins of their interest in politics; why they seek political office and the opportunities and challenges they face in running for office and after being elected. The study also compares differences and similarities between the last three indirect elections in 2012, 2016, and 2021-2022.

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7. Somali National Consultative Constitutional Conference Garowe Principles Conference, (Garowe Principles I 21 – 23 December 2011) and the Second Somali National Consultative Constitutional Conference (Garowe Principles II 15 – 17 February, 2012).

8. The Somali Women's Charter builds on the UN Women, Peace and Security Agenda. This Charter came out of a 2019 convention organized by the Federal Ministry of Women and included participants from parliament, civil society including women's groups, the private sector and religious actors. The Charter has a list of demands for women's rights in Somalia.

Somali Women's Charter (2019) Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development, Federal Republic of Somalia; Available at: <https://www.mwhrd.gov.so/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Somali-Womens-Charter-MoWHRD-April-8-2019-1.pdf>

9. Paxton, Pamela, and Melanie Hughes (2014) *Women, Politics and Power: A Global Perspective*. Sage Publications.

The study focused on the following questions:

- How do people perceive women's political participation?
- What was the experience of women candidates running for political seats in the 2012 and 2016 indirect federal elections?
- Have there been any changes in the 2021/2022 indirect election improving or hindering women's political engagement?
- What strategies did female candidates use to win elections in 2012, 2016 and 2021/2022?
- What were some of the challenges and opportunities that women members of parliament encountered once elected?

### 3. Methodology

This research used mixed methods by combining a survey and interviews. The survey was carried out in seven large urban cities across Somalia including Baidoa, Beledweyne, Bosaso, Galkayo, Garowe, Mogadishu and Kismayo. The goal of the survey, conducted in 2021, was to make sense of the societal views on gender quota and women's political participation, and obtained 1,000 responses. However, one limitation is that the survey focused only on seven of the big cities of the country. For political and security reasons, the researchers were not able to reach some regions and rural areas. Therefore, caution should be exercised in drawing overly generalized conclusions. It is also essential to note that this report's findings draw primarily on descriptive statistics which limits the precise relationship between societal perception and women political participation. The findings from the survey indicates the trends in the society.

This research also carried out qualitative research utilizing a mix of online and in person one-on-one interviews. Sixteen women were interviewed consisting of women's rights and non-governmental activists; members of current and former parliaments (both the Senate and the House of the People); MP candidates and former candidates; public sector workers at the federal, regional, and local levels; and cabinet ministers. Those interviewees were a highly educated mix of local and returned diaspora, ranging in age from their 30s to 60s. Interviewees came from all regions of Somalia: Galmudug; Hirshabelle; Jubbaland; Puntland; Somaliland; Southwest; and the Benadir Regional Administration. Some of the women interviewed had been involved in Somalia's political process for decades, including MPs who first joined parliament in 2000 and others who were elected in 2012 or 2016. In terms of professional experience, they worked in the financial sector; education; healthcare; NGOs; and the public and private sectors.

## 4. History

Women's role in society radically transformed after the collapse of the Somali state and the breakout of the civil war. Women took on traditionally male responsibilities such as earning money for the family despite society's highly patriarchal nature, based on segmentary clan relations. Historically, in the rural areas, women's economic contributions were valued and necessary for the survival of their family. In contrast, many women in urban areas were economically reliant on the male members of their family although some engaged in small-scale businesses or worked as domestic workers. Their economic participation slowly changed under the Siad Barre government, which opened up educational and employment opportunities for women.<sup>10</sup>

Shoring up support for his government by mobilizing women, President Mohamed Siyad Barre opened up educational opportunities for women and improved healthcare access, particularly in the large cities. Barre also politically mobilized women through the creation of the Somali Women's Democratic Organization (SWDO), which had offices both in the urban and rural areas. SWDO's membership numbered in the thousands, but their agenda and the policies they promoted were driven by government priorities. Barre also appointed women to high political positions including a member of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Party, deputy ministers, and directors. This top-down process ended with the collapse of the state. The ensuing civil war, which began in 1991, transformed gender norms and expectations and women's presence in the economy dramatically increased.

The civil war changed Somali society in profound ways, transforming the role of both men and women. The war served as “defining moments, turning points, and catalysts.”<sup>11</sup> Women's societal responsibilities expanded, with the majority becoming heads of households. Many women also took on jobs outside the family, often becoming the sole breadwinners. A Somalia-wide survey carried out by the federal Ministry of Women and Human Rights (2020) of 10,000 women found that 74% were the primary breadwinners for their families, of which 62.4% were the sole breadwinner.<sup>12</sup>

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10. Aideed, Safia (2020) “Women in Somalia” Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History.

11. Hughes, Melanie M (2009) “Armed Conflict, International Linkages, and Women's Parliamentary Representation in Developing Nations” Social Problems, Vol.56, Issue 1, pp.175.

12. Somali Women Forging Alliances to Safeguard Equal Rights for All (2020). Mogadishu: Somali Women and Human Rights Development.



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The important role they played can be seen in the number of Somali women given international awards for their work promoting peace, gender equality and human rights such as Hawa Abdi, Zahra Mohamed, Hawa Aden, and others. It was through their peacebuilding activities that women activists entered the political space, utilizing a variety of strategies to promote peace, often calling on the warring parties to stop fighting and lay down their weapons. Because they were often viewed as impartial in the clan conflicts, these women activists were able to enter into different hostile clan territories, carrying messages between warring groups. They also cared for the injured and buried the dead regardless of clan affiliation. Women utilized demonstrations, songs and poetry, appealing to the warring clans and militias, and calling for peace.

## 5. Women and Peacebuilding

Women's peacebuilding activities led to their demands for political equality through the adoption of a gender quota, resulting in a higher number of women within the legislative bodies of some post-conflict countries. For this to occur, Tripp (2015) identified three issues: gender disruptions; the existence of women's movements; and the acceptance of international gender norms.<sup>13</sup> Women's participation in commissions drafting a new constitution as well as other laws and policies have also positively impacted the likelihood that an electoral gender quota will be adopted.<sup>14</sup> These disruptions come as a result of the conflict, but it is the transition from war to peace that creates opportunities for women.<sup>15</sup>

Tripp (2015) suggested that gender disruptions occur through the increased presence of women in the economy and when they have financial responsibility for their families. Their peacebuilding work gave women a voice within their communities, which allowed them to visualize taking part in the governance of their country. Secondly, there is a need for a women's movement that will continue to advocate for women's rights once the conflict winds down and to demand women's inclusion in peace and reconstruction conferences. These conferences often include power-sharing agreements and new constitutions. Therefore, women's presence is crucial in pushing for their rights, such as political participation through the adoption of a gender quota. This can be seen in South Sudan where women were left out of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, once the civil war broke out in 2012, women pushed for their inclusion in the peace process through groups like the South Sudan Women's Coalition for Peace. It had over 50 organizations as members, linking women at the peace talks and those at the grassroots.<sup>16</sup>

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13. Tripp, Aili Mari (2015) *Women and Power in Post-Conflict Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Muriaas, Ragnhild L.; Liv Tonnessen and Vibeke Wang (2013) "Exploring the relationship between democratization and quota policies in Africa" *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol.41, Part 2.

14. Bauer, Gretchen (2012) "Let There Be a Balance: Women in African Parliaments" *Political Studies Review*, Vol. 10, pp.370-384.

15. Tripp (2015).

16. Kezie-Nwoha, Helen and Juliet Were (2021) *Women Activists' Informal Peacebuilding Strategies in South Sudan* *Women and Peacebuilding in Africa*. Affi, Ladan; Liv Tonnessen and Aili Mari Tripp, Eds. James Currey.

Similarly in Liberia, women worked across ethnic and religious divides, and their campaigning for peace eventually resulted in the ouster of Charles Taylor and the ending of the civil war. Women continued their activism until Ellen Sirleaf became the first elected female president of an African country.<sup>17</sup>

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Another important factor is the role of the international community in pushing for women’s rights as well as the increasing adoption of international legal instruments such as the CEDAW, which promotes women’s full inclusion into society. In Somalia, the international community’s role appeared to be limited to issuing statements encouraging the inclusion of women into politics, as there were concerns over whether more direct and public support would undermine women who might be seen as carrying out a ‘western agenda.’ The UN Special Representatives to Somalia, Augustine Mahiga and Nicholas Kay, met with women activists and civil society separately, and according to one activist, Mahiga would routinely ask “where are the women” when meeting with Somali political elites to highlight the importance of including women. Even though it was Somali women demanding their inclusion into the political process, religious and traditional elders who opposed women’s involvement in politics, accused the activists of being a tool of western countries trying to bring Somali women out of their homes.

## 6. Reconstituting the State and the Push for Gender Quota

Post-conflict countries tend to adopt gender quotas at higher rates than countries that have not experienced conflict. The changes in women’s societal position, men’s failed leadership, women’s increased responsibilities, both economic and peacebuilding, created opportunities for women to demand a share in the political leadership. The return of peace often leads to the creation of new institutions designed to prevent the outbreak of new conflict. In Africa, this liberalization has led to a “a transition from male-dominated political institutions to institutional setups that guarantee the presence of a certain number of women in the legislatures.”<sup>18</sup>

Women’s inclusion in political institutions has taken place through the adoption of gender quotas. There are three types of gender quotas: legislative quotas; political party quotas; and reserved seats. But it is not enough to adopt a gender quota. It is critical that quotas also be included in the legal framework of a country such as the constitution, the Electoral Law and the Political Party Law.

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17. Burnet, Jennie E. (2008) “Gender Balance and the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda” *African Affairs* 107/428, 361–386.

18. Muriaas et al 2013:90.

Effectively designed gender quotas result in more women being elected to parliament than in countries without a gender quota. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the adoption of well-designed quotas and electoral systems reduce barriers to women's political participation and increase the number of women in legislatures by seven points in the lower and 17 points in the upper houses respectively.

Rwanda is an example of a country with well-designed gender quota, one of multiple methods it has used to increase women's political participation. It is also an example of the ways in which countries emerging from conflict can provide opportunities for women to participate in politics. Previously, female representation in Rwanda's Chamber of Deputies was similar to the global average at 25%. This changed in 2003 when Rwanda included a gender quota in the form of reserved seats in its constitution. This was done in conjunction with the adoption of a voluntary quota by the political parties. The government also established a Ministry of Gender and created women's councils at all levels of government.<sup>19</sup> Rwanda now leads the world in the number of women it has in parliament at 61.3%.<sup>20</sup>

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When politicians and traditional leaders came together to create states, first in Somaliland and then in Puntland, women took charge of the logistics of the conference, hosting hundreds of delegates and were responsible for housing and feeding the male delegates. Women were also peacemakers when disagreements occurred, convincing the male delegates to come back to the peace tent. Yet, women were excluded from being official delegates.

In Somaliland, women were given unofficial status in the state-building conference, but were often silenced and sometimes ejected from the meeting when they attempted to advocate for women's rights such as a gender quota.<sup>21</sup> In 2020, a 20% quota of women in parliament was passed by the cabinet, but rejected by the Somaliland parliament as being unconstitutional because it violated the rights of men.<sup>22</sup> Article 22(2) of the Somaliland constitution gives women equal rights with men to vote and run for office while Article 36 guarantees economic and educational rights.<sup>23</sup> However, the political representation of women in Somaliland remains the lowest of all the Somali regions, stark for the near total absence of women, who comprise an abysmal 1.5% (9 out of 600) of all elected and appointed political positions. This absence can be partially explained by the incorporation of the clan elders into the Somaliland parliament within the upper house, or the Guurti.<sup>24</sup>

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19. Burnett (2008).

20. Women in Parliament 2021: The Year in Review.

21. Affi, Ladan (2020) “The Old Men Who Hold Us Back: Clan Elders, Elite Bargaining and Exclusionary Politics” *Journal of Somali Studies*; Vol. 7, Number 2 pp.125-145.

22. Affi, Ladan (2020).

23. Somaliland constitution (2000) Available at: [http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body\\_somaliland\\_constitution.htm](http://www.somalilandlaw.com/body_somaliland_constitution.htm)

24. Somaliland Constitution, Article 57.

The formal presence of traditional elders in politics is not unique to Somaliland. In the past 20 years, the presence and influence of traditional chiefs has increased in many African countries including democratic ones such as Botswana, Malawi, Liberia, South Africa and Kenya. But within those countries, traditional leaders' influence is mostly limited to the local levels, and they are primarily responsible for land allocation, resolving local disputes and collecting income tax.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, in Somaliland, the Guurti allocated itself the responsibility for legislation related to security, culture and religion. Women's demands, whether for political participation or for legislation dealing with violence against women fall under the purview of the Guurti.<sup>26</sup>

At the formation conference of Puntland state in 1998, women were denied the opportunity to take part even informally. But after complaining bitterly in poems about their exclusion, they were successful in obtaining five out of 66 seats in the newly formed Puntland parliament. Twenty-four years later, that has dwindled to two. Like Somaliland, the clan elders, although not formally incorporated into the government, remain a powerful social and political force.

At the national level, the very source of the conflict – the clan – became central to the reconstitution of the Somali state. This created challenges for women in their pursuit of political participation. Post-conflict countries like Somalia and Iraq that have given a dominant role to the clan, find that it presents a severe hurdle to post-conflict stabilization efforts and in fact contributes to the instability and insecurity at the state level.<sup>27</sup> Additionally, the integration of the patriarchal authority in the form of clan, particularly in the economic and political institutions, comes at the expense of women. An improvement in women's rights and positions within society is therefore contingent on weakening the position and power of the clan.<sup>28</sup>

The inclusion of the clan and the adoption of the 4.5 power-sharing agreement gave a role for the clan elders in the political system. Since 2012, Somalia has utilized indirect elections, where the clan elders were the powerbrokers and gatekeepers, deciding on who would represent the clan. Most of the elders were united in their opposition to having women in that role, doing their best to ensure that the seats allocated to them were not designated as women's seats. Garowe Principles I and II, the transitional president, prime minister, and the regional presidents of Puntland and Galmudug agreed to allocate a 30% gender quota for women, which to date remains an informal gentleman's agreement.<sup>29</sup> It is for this reason that women aspiring to political office have had to bargain every four years for the clan elders to respect and honor the 30% quota.

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25. Baldwin, Kate (2016) *The Paradox of Chiefs in Democratic Africa* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

26. Somaliland constitution (2000), Article 57.

27. Hudson, Valerie, Donna Lee Bowen, and Perpetua Lynne Nielsen (2015) "Clan Governance and State Stability: The Relationship Between Female Subordination and Political Order" *American Political Science Review* Vol. 109, No. 3, pp. 535 – 555.

28. Hudson et al. (2015) pp. 540/551.

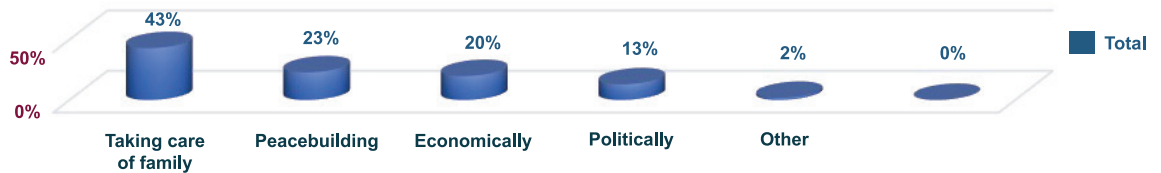
29. Garowe Principles II; Peace Agreements Database; Available at: <https://www.peaceagreements.org/view/1680/>

Women political candidates adopted a variety of strategies every election to counter the opposition to their demands for political participation. While they increased their representation in 2012 to 14% and 24% in 2016, in the latest election, women's representation declined to about 20% in the House of the People.

## 7. Survey Findings: Societal View of Women and Politics

Surveys were conducted with 1,000 Somalis in seven major cities across south and central Somalia: Baidoa, Beledweyne, Bosaso, Galkayo, Garowe, Kismayo and Mogadishu. The survey participants were asked a series of questions designed to establish their views on women's contribution to Somali society, their political participation and a gender quota. Almost half (49%) of the participants were women, and the majority (79%) had high school or university degrees. One-third of the participants were unemployed, 23% were students, 20% worked for CSOs and NGOs, while 19% and 7% worked in the private and public sectors respectively.

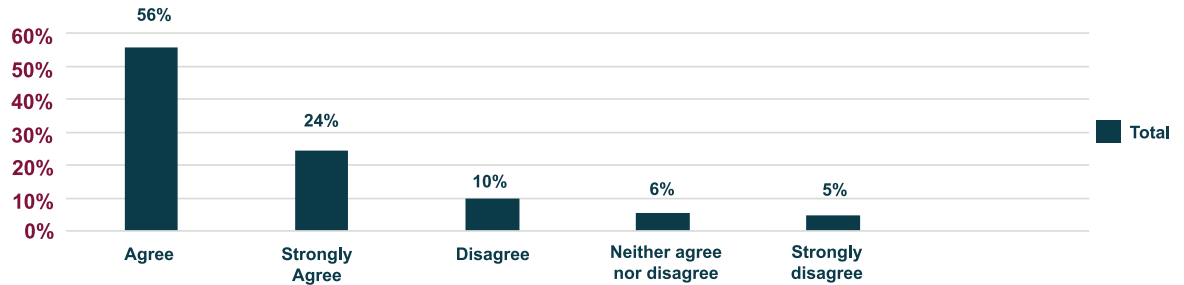
What are the three important ways that Somali women contribute to their country and society?



Survey participants identified taking care of family (43%); peacebuilding (23%); economy (20%) and politics (13%) as the most important ways women could contribute to their country. Some participants said that women were better off remaining at home while others believed that women contributed to the economy; peacebuilding and politics because they are the foundation of society.

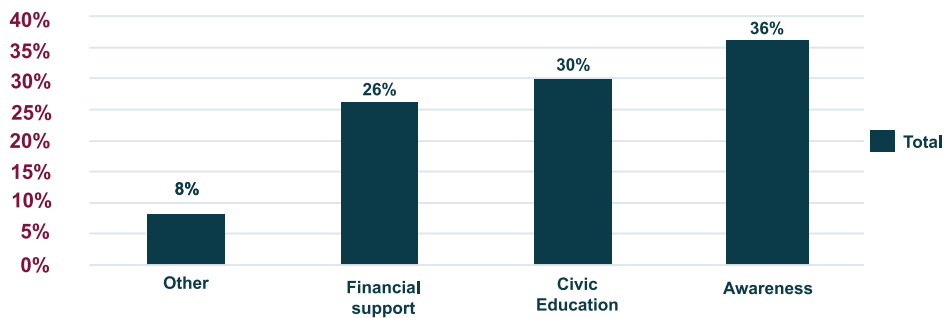


## Women should take part in the governance of Somalia



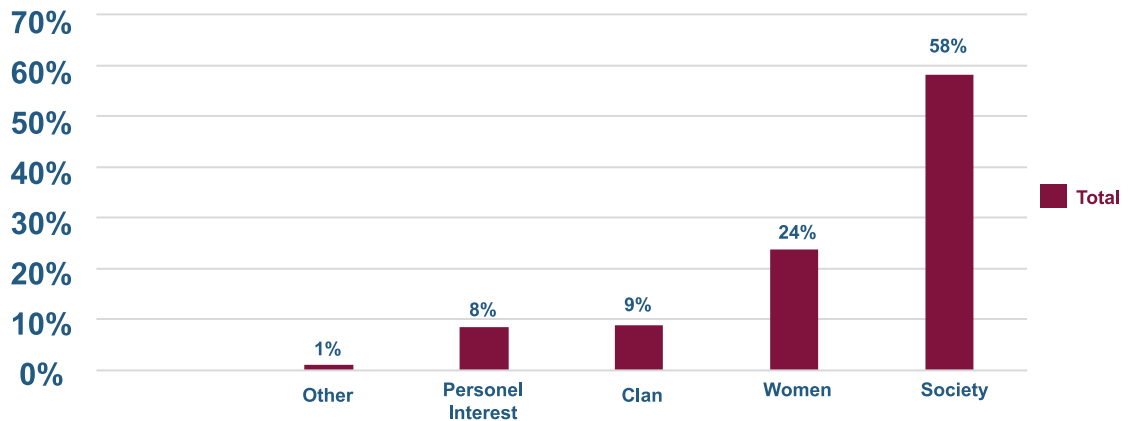
A large majority of survey respondents (80%) believed that Somali women should take part in the governance of their country. This was a surprising finding and in contrast to the elite narrative that there is societal opposition to women's political participation.

## What can the society do to encourage/promote women's political participation?



Survey participants identified raising awareness, civic education and financial support as the most important initiatives to encourage and promote women's political participation.

## Women politicians

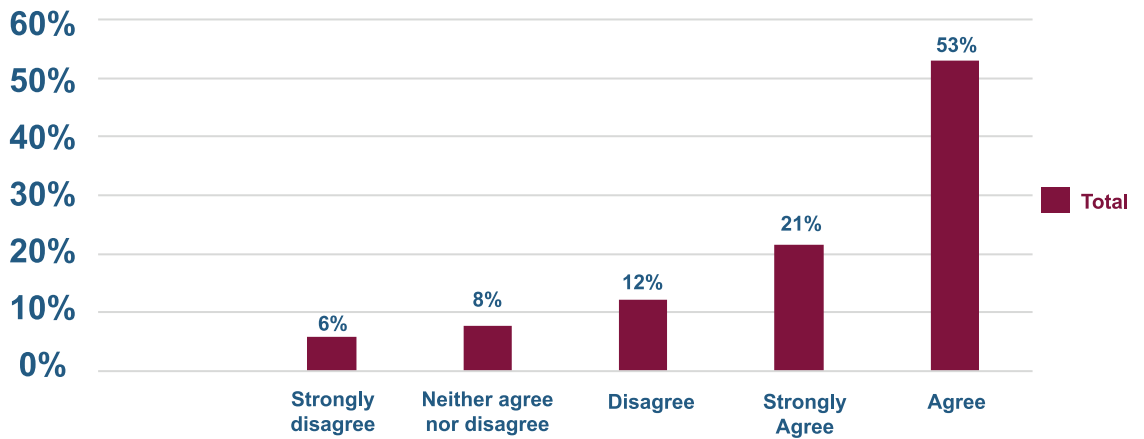


The majority of participants conveyed positive views of women politicians finding that they represent society (58%); other women (24%); clan (9%) and personal interests (8%). They said that male politicians represent society (53%); personal interest (22%) and clan (20%). One of the survey participants wrote:

In contrast, female politicians are “thought to represent the society although their contributions have not reached the desired level”.

Survey participants were also positive about women’s political representation with 38.5% believing that women can serve at all levels of government. Specifically, survey participants believed that women could take part in politics at the federal (31.7%), regional (11.9%) and local (17.9%) levels. When participants of the survey were asked whether the gender quota should be institutionalized and included in the constitution, the response was highly positive and encouraging with at least 74% of the respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

## The gender quota should be institutionalized and be included in the constitution



This finding revealed that male leaders of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), political elites and traditional clan elders are not in line with the opinion of the society. As evidenced in the survey, Somalis appear to be more open, positive and accepting of female political leadership than male elites. For more than 20 years, Somali women have been advocating for a minimum 30% quota, but the lack of legal framework that protects or ensures women's political participation and representation has been a major challenge.

## 8. Women's Political Representation

Somali women had been advocating for representation since independence when they were denied equal access to leadership and decision-making positions. However, the civil war dramatically changed the role of Somali women in society. Somali women were caregivers, breadwinners and played an integral role in community development and social welfare, providing humanitarian and medical assistance, building schools and mediating between warring clans. Women also established and led NGOs that effectively engaged in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes and provided humanitarian support. Through their community work, advocacy and organizing efforts, women became important stakeholders in peacebuilding, reconciliation and state building processes, and started advocating for political participation and representation.

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*Women activists declared themselves as the sixth clan, expecting to get their seats as a unit rather than be treated as transient and second-class members of the clan*

Women and civil society groups were the pillars of the Arta Conference held in Djibouti in 2000 which created the first Transitional National Government (TNG) since the collapse of the state. The male political elites and traditional elders agreed on a 4.5 clan power-sharing system, which gave the four major clans – Darod, Digil and Mirifle, Dir, and Hawiye – 61 seats each. The remaining 0.5 were an amalgamation of unarmed clans, not belonging to the four major clans and were allocated 31 seats.<sup>30</sup>

Women activists declared themselves as the sixth clan, expecting to get their seats as a unit rather than be treated as transient and second-class members of the clan.<sup>31</sup> It was unsuccessful, and women got 25 out of 245 seats in the TNG through their clan, 9% of the total.

According to a female civil society delegate who became a member of parliament in 2000, each clan was initially to have five female seats for each of the four major clans, and three seats for the female members of the 5th clan. Clans which would have totaled 23 seats. The women delegates decided to give two extra seats to the 5th clan, meaning that female representation was distributed equally among the five clans. The TNG charter became the first legal document that allocated seats for women, and it was the first time in Somali history that women were represented in parliament.

The next transitional government process that started in Eldoret in 2002, ended in Mbagathi, Kenya, leading to a transitional federal charter which was adopted in 2004 and allocated 12% of the seats for women. But women only received about 8% of the parliament. Their representation fluctuated between 2004 and 2009, as some political elites and traditional elders refused to allocate the agreed upon 12% quota for women.<sup>32</sup>

The transitional federal parliament was expanded in Djibouti in 2009 after the government and the opposition agreed to share power. Parliament doubled in size from 275 seats to 550, and the number of women dropped from 8% to 5%.<sup>33</sup> During this transitional period, a new constitution was being written, governance structures were being set up, and a roadmap for the future of Somalia as a federal state were on-going. Consultations between the TFG and regional stakeholders produced the Garowe I Principles. According to a female civil society member:

After the Garowe I communique came out at the end of 2011, it outlined a 20% quota for women. Since we were lobbying for a 30% quota, we organized and held 3,000 women march in Mogadishu at a time when most of its districts were controlled by al-Shabaab militants. With the support and pressure of the international community, the Garowe II Principles agreement in 2012 established a commitment to reserve 30% of the seats for women.

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30. Affi (2020).

31. Timmons, D. M., & King, M. E. (2004). *The Sixth Clan: Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: a Review of Published Literature*. University for Peace.

32. Affi (2020).

33. Affi (2020).

The 30% quota included the National Constituent Assembly which had 825 members.<sup>34</sup> These delegates approved the new federal provisional constitution of Somalia. Though the text of the provisional constitution did not contain any legal provisions guaranteeing the 30% quota for women, Article 3 (5) stipulated that “Women must be included, in an effective way, in all national institutions, in particular all elected and appointed positions across the three branches of government and in national independent commissions.”<sup>35</sup>

During the 2012 election, 135 male clan elders were responsible for the selection of the 275 MPs. The names were then submitted for vetting by a technical selection committee.<sup>36</sup> Since power sharing was along the 4.5 clan formula, Somali women were disproportionately under-represented in parliament, receiving only 14% of the seats rather than the 30% that was promised. The failure to meet the agreed quota was largely due to opposition from the traditional clan elders and male elites such as businessmen, religious actors and politicians representing their clans. The House of the People of the Federal Parliament was inaugurated in August 2012 in Mogadishu, ending the transitional period.

The FGS was established on August 20, 2012 for a four-year term. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected as the president and he appointed Abdi Farah Shirdon as the prime minister. Shirdon appointed a small cabinet of 10 ministers, with women given two prominent ministries. Fawzia Yusuf Haji Aden was appointed as the deputy prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs, a first for women in Somalia and the Horn of Africa. Dr Maryan Qassim was appointed as the minister of human development and public service, a massive ministry comprising of health, education, culture and higher education, labor and social affairs, women’s and human rights and sports and youth. When Qassim’s term ended abruptly in 2014, her ministry was split into six.<sup>37</sup>

Part of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud’s mandate was to secure a democratic transition and lead the country towards free and fair elections by the end of his term in 2016. In 2015, the leaders of the federal parliament and the government declared that a direct election could not be held in 2016 due to the political and security situation. A National Consultative Forum consisting of the president, the speaker of the house, the heads of Galmudug, Puntland, Jubbaland and South West and the governor of Benadir Regional Administration, was established in 2015. After a long consultative and political negotiation process, an agreement was made to again hold indirect elections in April 2016. Clan elders would select 51 clan members who would serve as delegates to the electoral college.

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34. Osman, Abdullahi A. (2015) “The End of Transition in Somalia and the Role of the Technical Selection Experience” *Journal of Somali Studies*; Vol. 2, Number 1 &2, pp. 99- 126

35. Federal provisional constitution of Somalia.

36. Osman (2015).

37. Affi (2020).

These delegates would be responsible for voting for the parliamentary candidate for each seat. This new selection model expanded the number of delegates from the 135 traditional leaders in 2012 to 14,025 electoral college delegates. In the 2016 election, parliament was expanded to include an upper house consisting of 54 senators who would be elected by the parliaments of the member states.

The agreement also included a minimum 30% quota for women. It said that each clan/subclan with three seats must allocate one for a woman. The agreement further highlighted that female seats must be contested by women from that clan only. The registration fees for women were reduced to half that of male candidates to increase their political engagement and representation. Women's registration fees were \$2,500 for the house of people and \$5,000 for the senate. Prominent female and male advocates were appointed as Goodwill Ambassadors Committee by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to oversee and ensure the implementation of the quota.<sup>38</sup>

The safeguarding mechanisms as well as tremendous advocacy and lobbying efforts of the women's movements, civil society organizations and pressure from the international community during the 2016-17 electoral process, resulted in female representation rising from 14% to 24% in each of the houses of the parliament.

In 2016, the Political Parties Law was passed, which addressed gender equality and inclusion as a general principle but did not include specific quotas for women. Article 2 (5) stipulated that all people, including minorities, had the right to participate in the political process. Article 2 (6) addressed rights and equality and promoted human rights, basic freedoms and gender equality.<sup>39</sup>

A Somali Women's Charter (SWC) approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in 2019 affirmed that Somali women were "equal partners working for peace and political processes, leading us towards security, stability and sustainable development for all" and called for the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia "to enshrine the unconditional commitment to gender equality, human rights and empowerment of women."<sup>40</sup>

Specific demands included special representation of women in all public institutions through a 50% quota; zero tolerance for gender-based violence; the passage of pending legislation on sexual offenses; the promotion and protection of women's socio-economic rights; and other steps to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

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The safeguarding mechanisms as well as tremendous advocacy and lobbying efforts of the women's movements, civil society organizations and pressure from the international community during the 2016-17 electoral process, resulted in female representation rising from 14% to 24% in each of the houses of the parliament

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38. "Goodwill Ambassador Lobbies for Women's Greater Representation in Politics" (28 July 2016) UNSOM; Available at: <https://unsom.unmissions.org/goodwill-ambassador-lobbies-women%E2%80%99s-greater-representation-politics>

39. Political Parties Law (2020); National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC): Federal Republic of Somalia; Available at: <https://niec.so/en/>

40. Somali Women's Charter (2019) Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development; Available at: <https://www.mwhrd.gov.so/en/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Somali-Womens-Charter-MoWHRD-April-8-2019-1.pdf>



*The ministries of women of Galmudug and South West adopted and launched the Somali Women's Charter, however, the federal parliament and the remaining three member states – Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and Puntland – have yet to adopt it*

The ministries of women of Galmudug and South West adopted and launched the Somali Women's Charter, however, the federal parliament and the remaining three member states – Hirshabelle, Jubbaland and Puntland – have yet to adopt it.



*Article 23 (4) proposes a 30% quota. It states, "when nominating candidates, parties shall safeguard women's quota, which is at least minimum 30% of candidates of each party. The Parliament of the Somali Federal Republic shall ensure through regulation the women's quota"*

In February 2020, in preparation for the next election cycle, parliament passed an electoral bill, which President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed signed into law on February 21, 2020.<sup>41</sup> This bill was intended to transition the country into universal suffrage before the end of the mandate of that administration in 2020 and to compel political parties to nominate women. Article 12 (1) of the bill states "the Election Process of the two Houses of Parliament shall respect the balance of sections of the communities - women, youth, minorities, people with disabilities, and Somali clans - in accordance with Articles 64 (3) and (72) (c) of the Constitution." Article 12 (5) emphasizes that in accordance with Articles (72) (c) of the constitution, political parties must also ensure there are power-sharing mechanisms and balanced representation of society for senate seats. Article 23 (4) proposes a 30% quota. It states, "when nominating candidates, parties shall safeguard women's quota, which is at least minimum 30% of candidates of each party. The Parliament of the Somali Federal Republic shall ensure through regulation the women's quota."

The National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) is tasked with the implementation of the one-person, one-vote should have been responsible for ensuring the quota was upheld rather than leaving it up to the parliament, which is majority male, to implement. Conversely, the Electoral Bill included the 4.5 clan power-sharing formula that has created impediments for women. It also denied many citizens hailing from clans that are currently not represented in the parliament the right to be elected. However, opposition groups and some federal members states rejected the bill arguing that the Bill should not be implemented. In addition, there were security and logistical challenges.<sup>42</sup>

After a long dialogue and gridlock between the FGS and the FMS, the National Consultative Council agreed on September 17, 2020 that the 2021-22 election would be indirect. The number of delegates to elect each member of the federal parliament was increased to 101. The districts where elections would take place was increased to two per member state. Registration fees that were previously \$5,000 for the house of the people and \$10,000 for the senate were doubled. State and federal electoral bodies and a dispute resolution committee were appointed. A minimum 30% quota for women was included in the agreement. Though there was no enforcement mechanism attached, Prime Minister Mohamed Roble appointed Goodwill Ambassadors to oversee the implementation of the quota.

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41. Hassan, Mohamed Olad (February 11, 2021) "Somali President Signs Historic Bill into Law" Voice of America; Available at: [https://www.voanews.com/a/africa\\_somali-president-signs-historic-election-bill-law/6184655.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/africa_somali-president-signs-historic-election-bill-law/6184655.html)  
 42. Elmi (2021).



*Women's representation in the senate increased by 2% in the 2021-22, from 24% to 26%. This was due to Jubbaland, which elected two female senators compared with one previously. Jubbaland was complying with the requirement that for every three seats, one must be a woman*

The federal election was delayed multiple times due to conflicts between the FGS and some of the FMSs; conflict between the president and the prime minister; and disagreements over who should be responsible for the selection of MPs representing the northern Dir clans of Somaliland. In large part, the conflict was based on politicians who were interested in running for the presidency and who were intent on controlling the outcome of the electoral process. Since the House of the People of the federal parliament elected the president, those interested in running for office were intent on ensuring that only their allies were elected.

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## 9. Barriers to Women's Participation in Politics

The survey results showed that society in general supports women's political participation. However, the interviews and the survey revealed Somali women encounter challenges to exercising their political rights and leadership positions, as they seek to participate in the political processes. The interviewees for this research highlighted that woman aspiring to enter politics face a variety of challenges which are structurally entrenched in the culture, society, economy and political institutions.

Despite these barriers, many women want to run for office. Some of the informants were inspired to run in the last election as they came from politically engaged families, and usually had fathers who were involved in politics. A long-time activist who was interviewed for the study said, "after 10 years in the country, I thought I could make changes and contribute...whether it is in development or politics. Parliament is where changes and accountability of government institutions starts."<sup>43</sup>

Others witnessed the community's needs through their work at NGOs, and in the public and private sectors. One female candidate who owned her own business saw first-hand the effects of a weak government unable to pass policies and regulations to protect the business community and consumers. She said: "I decided to become a parliamentarian and make laws on quality control. No one checks on our medicine, food, the gas, the buildings that collapse because no one checks the soil and expired cement is bought. The reason I want to join parliament is for the development of the country because the country needs many laws regarding business and commerce."<sup>44</sup>

43. Interview with women activist, January, 2022, Mogadishu, Somalia.

44. Interview with a woman business owner, January, 2022, Mogadishu, Somalia



Some had worked in government and saw gaps in existing laws and service delivery, while others were involved in peacebuilding and development operations at the grassroots level. One candidate who had spent the previous two decades resolving clan conflicts, advocating for peace and bringing development projects to her Community including the construction of schools, hospitals and police stations, expected to be elected in 2022 by her clan. Instead, her traditional elders were suspicious and questioned her intentions in seeking office.

Another activist was questioned why she was not running for office herself rather than recruiting other women. Despite security fears about Al-Shabaab surrounding their city, she decided to run after the election had already begun. She said, “I did a town hall meeting, and all the elders came. Some said, ‘we knew your grandfather’ and others ‘we knew your father, and we liked the way you talked ... you know the language and how to speak to people’. I think my age and being a single woman helped. It impressed them because I was not as they expected. They always underestimate you.”<sup>45</sup>

Another candidate who ran unsuccessfully for the House of the People in the 2016 elections, and had lived for decades in the diaspora wanted to promote civic education in the election process. She stated, “I looked at it as an exercise to teach those that I was interacting with that you shouldn’t sell your votes and what it means when you sell your vote. It means they no longer have to be accountable to you when they are making decisions in government.”<sup>46</sup>

Cultural practices also hinder women’s struggle for political representation and leadership. Somali society is patrilineal and patriarchal. It believes that men uphold the clan lineage and gives authority and leadership to men. The clan patriarchal institutions, especially the 4.5 clan power-sharing agreement, is biased against women. This manifests itself with high levels of gender inequality, inequity, injustice and opposition to women’s political participation. One female candidate who ran for the 2016 federal parliament but failed to win a seat said: “The biggest barrier I had was the clan patriarchy dynamic. It was meeting with elders who say, ‘you are fantastic person. We know you and we know your family, but we’re also working towards making sure the women’s seat is not our subclan. So that was the barrier.”<sup>47</sup>

Some female candidates and civil society advocates felt that the situation was worse for women in the 2021-22 electoral process. According to one female MP from 2016: “It bothers me that we are begging every day to be given the 30% quota. Why are we begging? We are part of the society and we have a right to be sitting at the decision-making table without begging.”<sup>48</sup>

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45. Interview with a former woman parliamentarian, December, 2021, Online Zoom Interview, Somalia

46. Interview with a woman candidate, December, 2021, Online Zoom Interview, Somalia

47. Interview with a woman candidate, December, 2021, Online Zoom Interview, Somalia

48. Interview with former woman parliamentarian, 12, 2021, Online Zoom Interview, Somalia

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*In an interesting twist, if the male candidates were not to the liking of those controlling the electoral outcome, their seats were converted to women's seats*

The clans represented by women in 2016 insisted that other subclans take their turn and allocate seats for women in the 2021/22 poll. However, the subclans did not want these female seats. In the 2021/22 election, even the traditional elders were sidelined, leaving the heads of the member states largely responsible for the election. This was particularly evident in the senate election, where women increased their seats from 13 to 14. This was not because the FMS leaders were pro-women, but according to one candidate, they chose those who represented their personal interests. In an interesting twist, if the male candidates were not to the liking of those controlling the electoral outcome, their seats were converted to women's seats.

The belief held by many men that a woman would not fight as hard for the clan remains a barrier to women's political engagement. According to a woman running in the 2021-22 election, the 'average Somali' does not want female political leaders. She said, "they believe when they are sitting outside at armchair politics (Fadhi ku dirir) places they can't sit with their male peers, have a discussion with them and drink tea with them if their seat is wearing a headscarf. It is considered a weak seat." She added, "female seats are 1,000 times better than male seats. Women don't pursue only their own interests, they don't see only themselves because they are sisters, aunts and mothers-in-law. Whatever they have, isn't only for them."<sup>49</sup>

This is reflected by a majority of the survey respondents who believed that women represent the society as a whole rather than the clan or personal interests.

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*Women who are in an interclan marriage, however, struggle even more to get into politics. Male candidates are never questioned about their marital status or the clan connection of their wives. Female candidates are routinely asked about the clan affiliation of their husbands and children*

In Somali culture, a women's clan membership is used when it is useful, such as cross-clan marriage, for example, which is seen as a link between different clans in peacebuilding efforts. Inter-marriage between the warring parties is typically employed as a settlement during periods of persistent conflict between clans or sub-clans. Warring clans exchange brides, becoming in-laws and bringing an end to the conflict.

Women who are in an interclan marriage, however, struggle even more to get into politics. Male candidates are never questioned about their marital status or the clan connection of their wives. Female candidates are routinely asked about the clan affiliation of their husbands and children. Some single female candidates have developed their own strategies to combat the patriarchy. When asked by the clan elders, how can they represent the clan when it is not known whether they will marry outside the clan, one of the single female candidates who ran in 2016 responded "bring five single men from the sub-clan of your choice, and I will choose one."<sup>50</sup> Another candidate who ran for the 2021-22 indirect election reported, telling the traditional elders "give me both the man you want me to marry and the MP seat, and I will take both."<sup>51</sup>

49. Interview with a former woman candidate, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

50. Interview with a woman candidate, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

51. Interview with a woman candidate, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

The majority of the interviewees said, in the last indirect election, male political elites rather than traditional elders were the main barriers to women in politics. The male elites often conspire with each other and clan elders to exclude women. Male politicians see women as a risk to their electoral chances or that of their male relatives or friends and view politics as a zero-sum game. According to 2021 candidate: “there is also another from the political leaders, if the FMS leader doesn’t think he will benefit from appointing you, regardless of how effective you are or how educated and experienced you are, you will not get appointed.”<sup>52</sup>

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*Politics is seen as a man’s game and no place for women. Some communities believe that it is a taboo for a woman to engage in leadership positions*

Discriminatory cultural beliefs and stereotyping such as men are superior to women also hinders their political participation. These include proverbs and sayings that are derogatory to women. Politics is seen as a man’s game and no place for women. Some communities believe that it is a taboo for a woman to engage in leadership positions. One young woman in the private sector said: “There are wrong perceptions in society like the proverbs ‘a lady should remain in the house or in the grave’ or ‘a women’s university education ends up in the kitchen.’ All these things will be eliminated when women are in politics because they will speak about women’s issues. They will speak about the national interest.”<sup>53</sup>

An MP who served in the tenth parliament and was re-elected for the eleventh parliament said: “Stop complaining and fight. There will be difficulties, and men will elbow you. Don’t allow it, and don’t hold a grudge. Move forward.”<sup>54</sup>

This was echoed by a candidate who lost the 2021-22 election. She thought if women cannot fight like men, they do not deserve to win.

## 9.1 Religious Actors and Women’s Political Participation

Some men use misinterpretation of religion and other forms of structural barriers as a tool to discriminate against women and prevent them from competing for political and leadership positions. Study participants revealed that misinterpretation of religion has been another challenge. Religious actors who hold significant moral authority within the community frequently interpret participation in politics as inappropriate for Muslim women, telling them to stay at home instead. Activists who support the quota have questioned why women who work to support their family are not also told to stay home. In 2016, some of the religious actors condemned the agreement by the National Consultative Forum (NCF) to reserve a minimum of 30% of the seats for women. They maintained that they were not against women in politics, only the gender quota, which they alleged is part of an international effort to change Somali culture and religion.<sup>55</sup>

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52. Interview with a woman candidate, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

53. Interview with a woman in the private sector, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

54. Interview with a former woman MP, 01, 2022, Mogadishu, Somalia

55. “Dood kulul: Sheekh Nur Baaruud iyo Batuulo Guddoomiyaha Ururka Haweenka Soomaaliya - Qoondada Haweenka” (October 2016); Voice of America; Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQ6Ni1nI8OE&t=265s>

Some women activists and politicians have suggested that female politicians would be more readily accepted if they had to compete with men on equal footing, without the gender quota. This argument ignores the obvious fact that men and women are not competing on equal footing. One 2016 female candidate who opposed the gender quota, viewing it as driven by the international community said: “The International Community gives Somalia funding, in return women are allocated seats. If the international Community doesn’t invest, then women are not elected. I wanted an end to that...and if that takes us 300 years (to get representation) well and good, I don’t mind. But we need to start somewhere that is grounded in our own struggle.”<sup>56</sup>

Even after women were elected to the parliament, they continued to face opposition from some religious actors. According to one female 2016 MP: “Because gender and human rights are not a priority in the Somali context, anything to do with women and human rights are interesting to some religious actors who watch it like eagles.”<sup>57</sup>

The same MP noted that not all the religious actors hold similar views, and women should reach out to the more broad-minded.

## 9.2 Funding Political Campaigns

Lack of money was mentioned by all the participants in this study as one of the impediments to women’s political participation and representation. Even though women are the breadwinners and the backbone of household finances, they are not part of the market economy. Women are underrepresented in fields that are dominated by men such as telecommunications, online and physical banking, money wiring firms, healthcare and education. Women dominate micro and small businesses, as well as medium-sized businesses on a lesser scale. None of Somalia’s major commercial sectors and businesses are owned or dominated by women, and there are just a few women serving as CEOs and in upper-level managerial positions. As a result, women lack the financial resources to compete in politics.

Politics is an expensive business. The required fees for registration as a candidate in the electoral process as well as political party membership are enormous. The implementation of the indirect election has led to widespread corruption as both male and female candidates are expected to pay in exchange for votes.

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*Even though women are the breadwinners and the backbone of household finances, they are not part of the market economy. Women are underrepresented in fields that are dominated by men such as telecommunications, online and physical banking, money wiring firms, healthcare and education*

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56. Interview with a woman candidate, December, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

57. Interview with former women parliamentarian, December, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

The electoral college in the 2012 election consisted of 135 traditional elders who expected payment in exchange for their vote. The electoral college was increased to 14,025 in 2016 and 27,775 in 2021/2022. Men relied on clan members and wealthy business owners for assistance, while women self-funded their campaigns by selling property or jewelry. Young women working in the private sector said:

There is no one who offers to pay for their registration fee and campaign and other expenses. The help they get is their own assets. The minor things like holding a meeting, she must count on herself and go back to her savings, assets and sell her real estate. That is the only way she can move forward. The only support they receive is ideas, encouragement, and moral support, but there is no financial support coming from her subclan, society or the international community.<sup>58</sup>

Some of the the interviewees noted that the disparity in wealth is mainly based on culture and lack of opportunities for women in generating or attracting investment capital and wealthy investors. Women, on the whole, lack wealth networks, and their earnings are mostly used to support their families. For example, affluent corporate executives do not consider women to be viable candidates and do not support them. Some of the interviewees also mentioned that there is a link between women's economic growth and their political participation. There is need for a systematic assistance to invest in women owned businesses, which would open avenues for them to participate in the political process.



*In Somalia's elections, where systematic corruption is rampant and candidates are expected to pay tens of thousands of dollars from registration fees to delegates in order to be elected, businessmen's preference to funding male politicians creates a significant barrier for women from even running for elections*

There is a body of evidence that women are less corrupt than men and do not accumulate wealth through corruption. This is significant because Somali politics is marred by systemic corruption which determines who gets elected. Since women lack the capital and resources, they are disadvantaged as candidates. Through consultative meetings, stakeholders discussed the 2016 election where large amounts of money were paid by parliamentary candidates, sometimes in the tens of thousands, to secure their seats. In Somalia's elections, where systematic corruption is rampant and candidates are expected to pay tens of thousands of dollars from registration fees to delegates in order to be elected, businessmen's preference to funding male politicians creates a significant barrier for women from even running for elections. According to a former woman parliamentarian, "the majority of women don't have a strong budget like men. Women shy away from corruption. Maybe only 2% are greedy."<sup>59</sup>

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58. Interview with women working in the private sector, December, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

59. Interview with a former woman parliamentarian, December, 2021, Online Zoom Interview

Another challenge for many women who would have participated in politics, instead stay behind due to lack of finances needed to compete in political campaigns and lobbying as well as covering the registration fee. A participant from the civil society said: “they don’t have financial means and can’t even afford the \$5,000/\$10,000 registration fee, and in order to get that \$5,000, she might sell her gold jewelry or real estate assets, and to do that in order to get into politics. Even though she did all that, she might not win.”<sup>60</sup>

## 10. Challenges Faced by Women After Election

Female MPs and civil society activists agreed that the barriers women encounter do not end once they are elected. The women MPs identified lack of institutionalization of the parliament as a challenge, which they attributed to the parliamentary leadership preferring the flexibility to do as they wished without being held accountable. Former woman parliamentarian said, “we debate for a short while and, at the end of the day, even those issues on which we recommended changes are monopolized by the parliamentary leadership who treat the laws as they wish. So, why am I here?”<sup>61</sup>

For one woman, who was a member of the tenth parliament, institutionalization in Somalia was largely driven by the international community. The complete collapse of the state necessitated a complete reconstruction of the state, rebuilding institutions from the bottom up, and creating laws and policies needed for the government to function. The International Community has been heavily involved in this process. She said, “Somalia is a project-based country. And whatever work the government is doing, it has to come from the donor community. The international community will say in order to access funds, you are missing these laws, pass them and you can get it.”<sup>62</sup>

Until the 2021/2022 election, there were no women in the leadership of the bicameral parliament. From the beginning, women MPs were marginalized. This lack of representation at the leadership level affected even which parliamentary committee were assigned. In every new parliament, each incoming MP selects three committees that he/she is interested in and ranks them in order of priority. The parliamentary membership should reflect the 4.5 system, gender, experience and interests. However, 70% of women MPs were assigned to two committees – Human Rights, Women, and Humanitarian Affairs; and Social Affairs. The work of these committees was not valued and limited women to issues to which they had traditionally been assigned.

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60. Interview with a civil society member, 12, 2021, Online Zoom Interview

61. Interview with a former woman parliamentarian, December, 2021, Online Zoom Interview

62. Interview with a former woman parliamentarian, December, 2021, Online Zoom Interview

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*There were no women on committees considered to be doing important work such as the joint constitution review and implementation oversight committee. Women fared no better in the upper house*

In the tenth parliament, women were committee chairpersons of only two of the 14 committees in the house of the people, the Human Rights, Women and Humanitarian Affairs committee, and the Social Affairs committee. The committee members were exclusively women, in line with traditional female roles. One man refused to be part of a committee that were all women, even though parliamentary rule in the assigning of members to committees requires utilizing the 4.5 formula. There were no women on committees considered to be doing important work such as the joint constitution review and implementation oversight committee. Women fared no better in the upper house. Women senators who complained were told there was nothing that could be done this time, but perhaps changes could be made in future elections. According to a former women parliamentarian,

Some women MPs told me that the male colleagues in the committees will take all the technical work and make you a passive person who is irrelevant. They will brag about the work they did and want us to admire them. When it comes to speaking or sharing opinions, they will try to silence you or attack your views. Also, when it comes to higher positions, the men in the clan will say ‘replace her with this man from the subclan’, advocating for the man against you.

For the elected female MPs, it was evident that parliament’s real business was done behind closed doors, and that access was impossible because the leadership was entirely male. The system was frequently manipulated. For example, one MP interviewed for this research said that bills are voted on without a formal reading, and the number of people voting is frequently greater than the number of legislators who signed the attendance register for that day. Votes can also be cast simply by raising one’s hand. She said, “for a short while and at the end of the day, and even those issues that we debated and recommended changes, are monopolized by the parliamentary leadership who treat the laws as they wish, and things go along.”<sup>63</sup> But their presence in parliament was important as some female MPs and civil society actors spoke out against the passage of harmful laws such as the Sexual Offenses Bill.

Women parliamentarians do not have office spaces, staff and advisors to support them, allowing them to work for their constituencies. Many expressed frustrations at not being able to return to their constituencies with development plans or to discuss communities’ concerns. Women MPs are sabotaged, undermined and sidelined in addition to being excluded from leadership posts. Male MPs and the parliamentary leadership do not view them as equal colleagues. Former women MP said, “there is a lot of undermining. The men don’t give you a chance or listen to your opinion. If they do, they don’t trust you. Whatever agenda you discussed, they will erase your contributions.”<sup>64</sup>

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63. Interview with a former woman parliamentarian, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

64. Interview with a former woman parliamentarian, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

Women in positions of power at the regional and federal levels feel trapped in male-dominated environments and are confronted by structural impediments. It is considerably more difficult for women to sit at the decision-making table when they are in higher or equal ranking positions to men. Men undercut their leadership and sabotage their work. One woman compared her workplace to a toxic landmine for which she was unprepared. Well-intentioned women who want to make a difference find themselves in a space that is hostile to their existence and not favorable to any constructive changes. Woman who works in the media said, “The men in politics never want women to be equal or ahead of them. They want them to be behind them. They are doing this to sabotage women by taking away work they can do, and they also use gender stereotyping. Some of the men are applying cultural norms to the workplace. Others are misogynists and don’t want women to advance ahead of them or be equal.”<sup>65</sup>

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women parliamentarians across the globe have experienced sexism, harassment and violence. In a study of 50 African countries, women MPs and parliamentary staff faced online sexist attacks (46%) and threats of beating, abduction, rape and death (42%). Others were subjected to sexual violence (39%) and physical violence (23%).<sup>66</sup>

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In the interviews, some of the younger and middle-aged women reported they had experienced sexual harassment in parliament and other government offices. Article 24 (5) of the provisional constitution stipulates that all workers, particularly women, have a special right of protection from sexual abuse, segregation and discrimination in the workplace

In the interviews, some of the younger and middle-aged women reported they had experienced sexual harassment in parliament and other government offices. Article 24 (5) of the provisional constitution stipulates that all workers, particularly women, have a special right of protection from sexual abuse, segregation and discrimination in the workplace. Every labor law and practice should comply with gender equality in the workplace.

This protection is not enforced. Sexual harassment is particularly common among unmarried women. One female MP said that she was sent indecent films by male parliamentarians. Married female politicians and civil servants were not exempt from sexual harassment. One female civil servant at the regional level reported the attempted rape of senior official. Despite filing a report with the relevant authorities, he was never charged, prosecuted or even investigated. She said, “the environment we are in is not set up for women and it isn’t women friendly. There is no sexual harassment bill that protects you even as a female MP. Your speaker can harass you and you can’t say anything. When it happens, where would you go? If you report to the committees, there is no privacy, so you would think, ‘why would I shame myself?’”<sup>67</sup>

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65. Interview with a woman who works in the media, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia

66. “Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa” Issue Brief, November 2021. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Available at: <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/issue-briefs/2021-11/sexism-harassment-and-violence-against-women-in-parliaments-in-africa>

67. Interview with former women parliamentarian, 12, 2021, Mogadishu, Somalia



Both male and female MPs have also been killed. Amina Mohamed Abdi who was first elected in 2012 was killed in a suicide bombing inside the state house in Beledweyne, along with dozens of others. There were reports that she was specifically targeted, while campaigning for the 2021/2022 election.<sup>68</sup> Amina Abdi had been a passionate spokesperson in getting to the bottom of the disappearance and possible killing of Ikraan Tahliil, a National Security Agency employee whose disappearance was linked to the top leadership within the security sector. Similarly, Saado Ali Warsame, a well-known singer, was assassinated in 2014 because she was a member of parliament.<sup>69</sup>

## 11. Role of the International Community

Without support and pressure from the international community, the quota for women in politics would have been significantly lower, according to most interviewees for this study. As the international community provides monetary and development assistance, their call for inclusive politics was taken seriously. However, there are some that believe the international community is simply box ticking on the issue of women's political participation. Some of the study participants noted that if the international community was serious about women's leadership, political participation and representation, they would understand that building a base that helps politically active and productive women is needed. They said that women's political participation needs to be nurtured and developed organically and pointed out that the international community has invested in very few significant programs of women's political participation and leadership led by women.

Many women activists believed that the international community is not serious about supporting women's leadership and political participation. They said the international community has the power and capacity to ensure 50% of every dollar invested in Somalia is allocated for gender inclusivity programming led by women and supporting women's meaningful political participation, representation and leadership. The activists believed that if international community set an example with how they spend their investment funds, it could encourage the government to follow suit. This is essential as the patriarchal system and male-dominated society is not culturally sensitive or designed to enhance women's political participation and representation.

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68. "Female opposition MP among dozens killed in Somalia bombings" (24 March, 2022); The Guardian; Available at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/mar/24/female-opposition-mp-among-dozens-killed-in-somalia-bombings>

69. "Somali musician and MP Saado Ali Warsame shot dead" (July 23, 2014) BBC News; Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-28446489>

Some female elected officials described being elected as akin to being “thrown into the ocean”. They said other women MPs, particularly in the House of the People, often pursued other agendas that were detrimental to women and did not collaborate with each other. The only time the women MPs worked together was if their personal interests were threatened.

The lack of institutionalization of the gender quota was one issue that some women MPs were determined to tackle if they were elected to the eleventh parliament. One female MP said if re-elected her focus would be on broadening the implementation of the 30% gender quota across the board, including the cabinet, ministries, security and police services.

## 12. Differences Between 2016/17 and 2021/22

There was a stark difference between the 2016 and 2021 elections though both were indirect. For most of the interviewees, when it comes to women participation, the 2016 indirect election was more open, while in 2021 some sitting MPs were prevented from even competing for the seats they occupied. In 2016, the quota was enforced and there were more implementation mechanisms. In both election cycles, goodwill ambassadors comprising mainly of women activists were appointed to ensure the implementation of the 30% gender quota. Women’s groups such as the Somali Gender Equity Movement (SGEM), Somali Women Leadership Initiative (SWLI), Somali Women’s Study Center (SWSC) as well as civil society umbrella organization Somali Non-State Actors (SONSA) and others mobilized to advocate for women’s representation and meeting the 30% quota.

However, in 2021, the political will to implement the quota was lacking at both the FGS and FMS levels. Some participants questioned the legitimacy of the 2021 elections as most of the seats were designated for a specific person who brought along his/her own competitor, or “malxiis”, who immediately steps aside, leaving one candidate to run unopposed. In many cases, these designated candidates won all or most of the votes. Particularly striking was the number of women who acted as “malxiis” since they only had to pay half the usual registration fee and the person designated to win also got a 50% discount.

Another hallmark of the 2021/2022 election was the sidelining of traditional leaders and civil society members who were supposed to be selecting the delegates by politicians at the regional levels.

The senate elections were largely managed by the FMS leaders who blocked those they did not want from even being certified to run.<sup>70</sup> Surprisingly, this resulted in an increase in women's representation in the senate to 26%. This is not an indication of support for women's political participation but rather those in charge ensuring the election of those most likely to support their goals.

Women's representation had declined by 4% in the House of the People. This can be partially attributed to the overly delayed electoral process, fear of civil war and the conflict between member states and opposition groups and the federal government.



*However, for the first time in Somali history, a woman, MP Sadia Yasin H. Samatar was elected as the first deputy speaker of the House of the People in April 2022*

In 2016, the Federal Indirect Electoral Team (FIET) was largely in charge of managing the election. In the recent election, the State Indirect Electoral Team (SIET) took over, allowing federal member states to have an outsized influence on who was elected to the parliament. However, for the first time in Somali history, a woman, MP Sadia Yasin H. Samatar was elected as the first deputy speaker of the House of the People in April 2022.



*Men who wanted the seats designated for women mobilized their clans against the female candidates who were told that their lives would be at risk if they participated. At least one female MP was physically assaulted, while others were threatened directly and told to stay away from the election*

Another difference between the two election cycles was the level of violence against female candidates in 2021/22 compared to 2016 which was largely peaceful.<sup>71</sup> Men who wanted the seats designated for women mobilized their clans against the female candidates who were told that their lives would be at risk if they participated. At least one female MP was physically assaulted, while others were threatened directly and told to stay away from the election. Some of the informants indicated that although there were some abuses that took place in the 2016 election, including arrests and detentions, it was much worse in 2021/22 election. For example, some sitting MPs were not allowed to compete for their seats. Some female MPs who insisted on running for their seats were told that there might be bombing on the road to the election venue, to dissuade them from contesting.

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70. For example, the vice-president of Hirshabelle, Yusuf Dabageed, publicly announced that only candidates approved by his administration would be elected. "Hirshabelle State VP Dabageed says only candidates we approve will win the lower house polls" (December 18, 2021); Available at: [https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Dec/184864/hirshabelle\\_state\\_vp\\_dabageed\\_says\\_only\\_candidates\\_we\\_approve\\_will\\_win\\_in\\_the\\_lower\\_house\\_polls.aspx](https://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2021/Dec/184864/hirshabelle_state_vp_dabageed_says_only_candidates_we_approve_will_win_in_the_lower_house_polls.aspx)

71. Somalia's 2016 Electoral Process: Preliminary Report of the Domestic Election Observer Mission (March 2017); Saferworld, PUNSA and SOSSENSA.

**Table 1: Female Representation in 2016 and 2021-22**

State	2016 Number of seats	2016 Number of female MPs	2016 % Of female MPs	2021-22 Number of seats	2021/2022 Number of female MPs	2021/2022 % of female MPs
Benadir	7	2	28%	5	1	20%
Galmudug	36	9	25%	37	9	24%
Hirshabelle	37	10	27%	38	5	13%
Jubbaland	43	10	23%	46	8	17%
Puntland	37	7	19%	37	6	16%
Somaliland	46	15	33%	46	13	28%
South West	69	14	20%	66	13	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>20%</b>

Women’s representation declined in all member states and in Somaliland during the 2021/22 poll. In Galmudug the number of total seats increased by one, but the number of female parliamentarians remained the same at nine, resulting in a percentage decline from 25% in 2016 to 24% in 2021/22. Hirshabelle’s total seats increased by one, but the number of female MPs declined by 50%, from 10 to 5 seats. Of all the FMS and Benadir Region, Hirshabelle is the lowest at 13%. In Puntland, the total number of seats allocated remained the same at 37 but women’s representation declined from 7 to 6. Puntland is currently at 16%, the second lowest in meeting the gender quota.

Jubbaland’s total representation increased by three seats from 43 to 46, but the number of women MPs decreased from 10 to 8, meaning just 17% were woman compared with 23% in 2016. In 2016, Somalilanders exceeded the gender quota at 33%, but declined to 28% in the 2021/22 election. They retain the highest representation of women in the parliament. Benadir Region lost two of their total seats in 2021/22, reducing their representation from 7 to 5 seats. Women’s representation also declined from 28% to 20% in 2021/22, leaving them with only one female MP.

## 13. Conclusions

The struggle for women's inclusion in Somalia's governance has been ongoing for decades. This fight has been marked by progress followed by setbacks and reversals. This study found that society is more liberal than male elites about women's political participation and representation. Women's organizations and women interested in participating in the political process may have a better chance of successfully advocating for the shift to one person, one vote. To avoid a near-complete absence of women in politics, women's rights activists need to ensure that the gender quota is included in all the country's legal instruments.

Women's political participation and representation is important at the substantial level for its positive and widespread effects on peacebuilding and laws that affects families and betterment of the society. Their presence also has symbolic value, leading to cascading changes in societal beliefs of women's participation in politics and women's leadership.<sup>72</sup> However, it is not sufficient to elect women to parliament. Women should assume leadership positions, push for the implementation of the 50% gender quota as enshrined in the Somali Women's Charter and ensure it is institutionalized in government. The experiences of women elected to parliament demonstrates the importance of continuing civil society support and accountability for women legislators. Women's political participation and representation issues are surmountable, but they require implementation, legislation and institutionalization. The election of MP Sadia Yasin H. Samatar to the leadership of the House of the People is a step in the right direction.

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72. Bauer, Gretchen (2012) pp.380.

## 14. Recommendations

In ensuring women's inclusion and participation into the governance of Somalia, the study recommends:

- Prioritize women to access educational and economic opportunities, including access and assistance to loans, training and mentoring as well as scholarships. This will lead to increased participation of women in top civil service offices and political positions.
- Institutionalize the gender quota. The quota must be included in the Constitution, the Political Party Law and the Electoral Law. This is particularly important as Somalia moves towards one person, one vote.
- The 4.5 clan sharing agreement should be removed when it comes women's political representation. The gender quota should be in line with the Somali Women's Charter, which was passed by the Federal Cabinet. The charter calls for 50% quota.
- Strengthen and support the Women's Caucus in the parliament. Women members of parliament (MPs and senators) should be trained to help them succeed and be effective advocates for women's issues and their constituency. It is also critical to expand women's political participation in the parliament. It is equally vital that the quota should be applied throughout the government including Cabinet of Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and Director Generals and Ambassadors at all levels of government.
- Considering the high level of gender-based violence faced by women and girls in Somalia, it is critical that women are protected from harassment, abuse and rape. The study recommends that parliament should debate and adopt the Sexual Offenses Bill, and other laws that protect women and girls.
- The leadership of the Senate and the House of the People should facilitate women to lead and/or join high profile committees. In particular, women must lead or be members of the Oversight Committee, foreign affairs, economics committee and human rights committee.
- When it comes to ensuring women's participation in politics, a lot depends on the electoral system chosen for the country. Given the experiences of Somaliland and Puntland, it is clear that the closed-list proportional representation will ensure the political representation of women and other discriminated groups. The 11th parliament must revisit the debate on the electoral system for the country.
- During President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's first term and Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon, women had the highest representation at the ministerial level. At the time, two of the ten ministers Fawzia Yusuf H. Adam and Dr. Maryan Qasim led key ministries. The study recommends/calls for president Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre to implement the 30% quota for women at the ministerial and other levels of their government. Hopefully, the leadership of subsequent Pulural governments will do the same as well.

# HERITAGE

I N S T I T U T E