

## You Must Know: Somalia or the Somali Republic?

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### Abstract

*The Somali Republic was the result of a political marriage between Somaliland, a former British protectorate that was the first Somali territory to become independent on 26th June 1960, and Italian Somalia in the south, which gained its independence from Italy four days later, 1st July 1960. As International Crisis Group (2003) indicates, Somaliland is the third incarnation of the territory established by the British in the Horn of Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century. It covers a land area of 137,600 square kilometers, roughly equivalent to 22% of the former Somali Republic. Due to nationalist sentiment at the time of independence, and the broader goal of uniting all Somalis, a political marriage was adopted and the Somali Republic was formed on 1st July 1960, four days after Somaliland's independence from Britain, and the day that southern Somalia gained independence from Italy. Frequently, however, academic literature confuses the name 'Somalia' with 'the Somali Republic,' the latter which was the official name adopted at the time of this union. This study examines the origins of this name and the differences between 'Somalia' and 'The Somali Republic'. It also sheds the light on the difference between the first Somali Republic and the following governments that was formed later. The study mainly relied on desk research. From legal and official perspective, the findings of this study are that there were huge variations on the nation's name and structure. In addition, the current 'Somalia' is different from the Republic that was formed by the two Somali Republics that gained their independence from the British and Italian governments back in 1960. The study suggests a solid solution to end the confusion on the difference between 'Somalia' and 'The Somali Republic' which have an adversary impact on the academic work.*

**Keywords:** Somaliland, Somalia, independence, union, colony, UN, Somali.

### 1. Introduction

Frequently, academic literature confuses the name 'Somalia' with 'the Somali Republic,' the latter which was the official name adopted at the time of the two Somali Nations' union. In this study I examine the origins of this name, and the differences between 'Somalia' and 'The Somali Republic'. Since most academicians see Somalia as the nation of all Somalis in the Horn of Africa, which it is not, it is very vital to be clear on this. Somalis inhabit most of the Horn of Africa nations, including Kenya, Somalia, Somaliland, Ethiopia and Djibouti. To shed the light on this topic is what driven me to write this paper and that is why I am trying to discover and discuss where historically the nations of Somalia and Somaliland had come from. In this study, I will deeply look at Somalia and Somaliland's pre-colonial era, in which I will be discussing who were in control over these areas, particularly in Somalia. Where the name of 'Somalia' had been derived from will follow. I will also be discussing in this study where the theory of 'United Somalis' had come from and who proposed it. As a reader, you will get a clear picture of how the International powers reacted towards this theory. The discussion of the pro-union activities that had started in Somali-inhabited regions is also part of this study and the results of their activism in the region. How the first elections that had been held in Somaliland and its results had contributed to the pro-union activities and how the union of the two Somali independent how republics came up will be then follow in the discussion of this study. The commencement of Somalis belonged and independent nations also includes in these discussions. Above all, what happened in these areas as the result of the Union is also what I am trying to examine and explain in this paper.

## ***2. Somalia and Somaliland: A Glimpse to the Colonial Period:***

Before the Italian arrival in Somalia, the territory was better known as the Benadir and the Sultan of Zanzibar had exercised control over the Ports of that area, including the ports of Merca, Mogadishu and Warsheikh. In the north, however, the two sultans of Majertenia and Obbia (Hoby) were rivals and had been fighting for the control of Nugal Valley. In 1892, the Italian government hired the Benadir ports from the Sultan of Zanzibar. As Trunji (2015) has remarked, at that time there were no single self-administration political unit rather Somalis were separated into rival clans. As Trunji (2015) noted, historically there has no been such name as "Somalia" to describe the today's geographical area of the modern Somalia. After the Italian arrival in Somalia, the country came under one central authority forming one single entity known as 'Somalia'. The name Somalia was given to the country by the Italians under decree n. 161 of April 5th 1908. In addition, in 1927, the Italian Governor Cesare Maria De Vecchi Di Val Cismon had completed the occupation of southern Somalia, including the Sultanates of Obbia and Majertenia and created what he called 'Somalia Italiana'. Following Italy's defeat in the Second World War, all the former Italian colonies, including Somalia Italiana, Somaliland's reserved Area and Haud fell under British Military occupation. The Somalia Italiana and other territories inhabited by ethnic Somalis were placed under the Command of East Africa, based in Nairobi: This was known as the Occupied Enemy Territories Administration (OETA). That name was slightly changed in 1942, with the removal of any references to 'enmity' and became the Occupied Territory Administration (OTA). It was changed again later to British Military Administration (BMA).

## ***3. Unionizing Theory***

At the meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers, an organization of the foreign ministers of the World War Two Allies, the USA, UK, FRANCE AND USSR that had attempted to reach a political settlements after the war, in Paris in April 1946. As recounted in Ambassador Awil's book *The Footprints on Somali History* (2016), the British foreign Secretary Mr Ernest Bevis raised the issue of united Somalis known as 'United Somalia'. Mr. Bevis proposed that since they took over all Somali-inhabited areas in the Horn of Africa from Italy, it is the time for Somalis to be united. As Trunji (2015) stated, The Soviet Union foreign Minister V. M. Motolov rejected the idea and voted against that proposal describing it as a trick to expand British rule in the Horn. He quoted a Russian proverb: "A child with seven nurses does not get nursed at all". The UN had voted for forming a four-country committee to pay a visit to Mogadishu and ask the will of the Somalis. The conference was held in Mogadishu with the presence of delegations from all Somali regions in the Horn, excluding Somaliland and NFD (Northern Frontier District) in Kenya, which were under the British rule. As Lewis (1963) stated, the Somalis of NFD in Kenya has been struggling to unite with the other Somalis to make 'United Somalis'. The two African nationalist parties of Kenya, KANU and KADU had opposed these movements arguing for the territorial integrity of Kenya established by colonization. As Awil (2016) explains, since the people of Somaliland had the dream of uniting Somalis under one flag, they formed a committee to convince the traditional leaders and the other Somali delegates in Mogadishu to vote for a united government; unfortunately they failed.

In December 1949, A UN General Assembly resolution named 'Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization on the disposal of the former Italian Colonies' had recommended that the Somalis under Italian rule be sovereign state. Article B (2) of that resolution states: "This independence shall become effective at the end of ten years from the date of approval of the Trusteeship Agreement by the General Assembly." Article B (3) of the same resolution also stated that the Somalis under Italian rule shall be placed under the International Trusteeship System, with Italy as the Administrating Authority. On December 1949, delegates from five countries were selected to be the special committee to draft the 'Trusteeship Agreement.' The Committee included representatives from the Dominican Republic, France, Iraq, the Philippines, Britain and USA.

Representatives from Egypt and Colombia were invited to attend with no rights to vote as members of the Advisory Council for Somalia, appointed by the United Nations Assembly. Representatives appointed by Italy were also invited to take part in the work of the Committee and to negotiate on Italy's behalf. An invitation to send observers without the right to vote was also addressed to Ethiopia (Pankhurst 1969). Between 1950-1960, a huge political and social change happened in the Horn of Africa, particularly the Somali inhabited regions, including the nationalist Somalis campaigning for the restoration of the Haud grazing area, which had just been surrendered by the British to Ethiopia (Lewis, 2002, pp. 150-151).

After a long period as an Italian colony, Italian Somalia was placed under a UN trusteeship period, administered on behalf of the UN by Italy on November 21, 1949. After ten years of self-administration under UN Trusteeship, Italy's Foreign Affairs undersecretary Alberto Folchi declared in Rome on August, 30 1959 that his government was prepared for the progression of Somalia's independence. The issue of Somalia's independence was later discussed at the UN in November of the same year during the XIV session of the General Assembly. The date of Somalia's independence was fixed for July 1st 1960 (Trunji 2015). As Walls (2014) asserts, on December 1950, the Trusteeship Agreement established the Amministrazione Fiduciaria Italiana della Somalia (AFIS) as the primary administrative body for the territory. After the Trusteeship period, the UN General Assembly voted for a clear date for southern autonomy. The people from Somaliland were the only Somalis that had campaigned for 'United Somalis'; the Somalis from NFD were the second. The pressure from the public for Independence and union with Italian Somalia had been increasing, particularly during the elections in the Somaliland protectorate in February which innovated for the first time a legislative council and ministerial government in Somaliland (Trunji 2015). Four main political parties took part in the elections, running for 33 seats. The Somali National League (SNL), a pro-union party, won the vast majority of the votes with 52.10% or 20 seats out of 33. The United Somali Party (USP) became the second with 16.41% of the votes and won 12 seats of the legislative council out of 33. Finally, the Somali Youth League (SYL) got 1 seat out of 33 seats (Kaariye 2015). The pro-union party of SNL had voted in their General Assembly on January of the same year to campaign for the Somali union, but the opposition party, the National United Front (NUF) had opposed Somaliland's immediate union with the Somalis under the rule of Italy (AmbAwil 2016). The movement for Somali unity, which was started by the people of Somaliland, aimed to unite the five Somali territories – British Somaliland, Somalis under Italian colony, NDF, the Ethiopian Somali territory and French Somaliland. The five points on the Somali star represents these five Somali territories (Lewis 1963).

In between 2nd to 4th May 1960, Somaliland delegates in London for the Independence talks were asked by the British government if the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) could continue to broadcast from the relay station in Berbera. It also agreed to work towards Somaliland's independence on or before 1st July 1960. Finally, Somalia became independent state on 1st July 1960 with a decade of self-governance experience. It had president, executive and legislation organs of the government system. In 1964, the African Union's summit in Cairo, Tanzania's president Julius Nyerere had proposed the African countries' borders to remain as the colonial powers had structured otherwise it will cause the continent's fragmentation.

#### ***4. The Five Days Republic***

As the result of the sovereignty movement of Somaliland's people, a delegation from Somaliland was sent to London for independence talks with the British government. The British government had allowed and assigned the 'Independence date' on June the 26th 1960 at Lancaster Conference Hall, London. Somaliland had been as independent nation in four days and later it joined with Somalia. The two countries were united on 1 st July 1960, which added Somaliland to the list of internationally short-lived Republics. I. M. Lewis (1972) had described the union between the two sides as follows: "The formation of this new state left many Somalis outside the fold and still under foreign rule, as part of eastern Ethiopia, northern Kenya, and French Somaliland-known since 1967 as the 'French Territory of the Afars and Isas'." As Pijovic (2014) stated, during the five days of Somaliland's sovereignty in 1960, thirty-five other states including the US (which sent a congratulatory message) and the UK (which signed several bilateral agreements with Somaliland) had recognized it as a sovereign and independent state. On July 5 1960, Abdillahi Isse's government of newly independent Italian Somalia had step down as did Mohamed H Ibrahim Egal, the former Premier of the Independent country of Somaliland (Trunji 2015).

#### ***5. Hasty Union***

Following The Somaliland Protectorate's Legislative Council approval of the Union resolution that had been exacting independence and union with Italian Somalia, the both sides, Somaliland and Italian Somalia, On June 28th 1960, two days before Union day, a Somaliland delegation led by Mohamed H. Ibrahim Egal, the first Somaliland president flew to Mogadishu for talks about the Union of Somalis under one government (Amb Awil 2016). As Trunji (2015) mentioned, Italian Somalia's political leaders at the time had warned Somaliland's political leaders against a hurried decision on unification of both sides.

In addition, Abdillahi Isse of Italian Somalia had asked Mohamed H Ibrahim Egal, Somaliland's Premier, to postpone discussions on the Act of Union. In reference to a British secret document referred to by Trunji (2015), the Somaliland Legislative Council had ignored this request and completely approved all the bill to present Italian Somalia with unconditional unification. As Trunji (2015) stated, on June 27, the day after Somaliland's independence, the Legislative Assembly approved the 'Union of Somaliland and Somalia Law' merging the previously sent Act of Union to Mogadishu to be signed by both sides' representatives. It was not signed on July 1 1960 by Somalia but it was adopted 'In principle' by the Trust Territory on the evening of June 30. In addition, there has been a difference between the Somaliland's Legislative Council's approved Act of Union and in which that has been adopted 'In principle' by the Trust Territory. The later act has been requesting the government of Somalia to establish with their counterpart of Somaliland 'A definitive single text of the Act of Union to be submitted to the National Assembly for approval. 'Unfortunately, no single text was submitted to the National Assembly for approval. In reference to Trunji (2015), from a legal perspective, that means the Union was 'De facto' rather than 'De Jour'. The independent Republic of Somaliland became similar with the other six regions of the former Trust Territory of Somalia. Despite Somaliland's longstanding support for United Somalis up until the union date, mismanagement of the United Republic by the southern led to dissatisfaction. In December 1961 a coup by Somaliland military officials was launched, though it ultimately failed (Amb Awil 2016). The widespread economic decline, the growing political influence of Mogadishu and Southern Somalia's dominance in politics had generated the coup attempted by British-trained officers (Trunji 2015). In October 1962, Northern ministers resigned from the government, and several days later Northern deputies walked out of the National Assembly and threatened to boycott it. In reference to ICG (2006) the Union should have been worked and be made to work as a stepping stone to Somaliland's vision of having a united Somalis.

## **6. Renamed State**

Somaliland and Somalia had united under one nation as per the article one of The Unenforced Union Law proposed and passed by Somaliland legislative but ignored by the government in the south and published in the Somaliland Gazette on 5th July 1960. In reference to that Law, Somaliland and Somalia shall be united with the name of 'The Somali Republic'. Article 3 (1) of that law also had recognized all the Somali people under that new government to be 'The citizens of the Somali Republic'. Although that name survived awhile, after nine years of civil administration in the Somali Republic, the army under the command of Mohamed Siad Barre overthrew the elected government in a bloodless coup d'état in 21 October 1969 and took over the power, following the killing of president Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke on October the 15th, 1969 by his bodyguard. As Mohamed-Rashiid Sh Hassan (2011) stated, the prime minister of Somalia Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Egal was in USA for an official visit when the president got assassinated. Following the coup by the army led by Mohamed Barre, the military government attracted a measure of support from Somalilanders in part because of its revival of the Greater Somali dream, which had been abandoned by the civilian government in 1967. In a short period, however, Barre's regime acted contrary to this goal. According to Lewis (1981), The country's name was known as 'The Somali Republic' until the military coup of 1969 when the military regime led by Mohamed Siad Barre changed its name and added 'Democratic,' which made the name of the country 'The Democratic Somali Republic'. The nation's name was unofficially renamed in to 'Somalia' after 1991 when the central government collapsed. Even though Mohammed Said Barre had pursued the Policy of bringing together all the missing Somali-inhabited regions – the dream of Somaliland's unionists, his ambition ended with Somalia's catastrophic defeat by Ethiopia in the 1977-1978 war. In reference to article one of the Federal constitution of the Somali Republic in 2012, the country's name was once more changed to 'The Federal Republic of Somalia'.

## **7. No One Disobeys**

Due to the repression and extrajudicial killings on the people from Somaliland by military the regime in Somalia, the Somali National Movement (SNM) was established in London on 6th April 1981 by scholars from the northern part of the country (Kaariye 2014). After an eight year-long war, the SNM defeated the military government in 1991 and took over the administration of the northern part of the country. In the same year, the southern part of the country went in to chaos that prevails in most of Somalia, which has been engulfed in warlordism and banditry ever since the collapse of the state. The SNM held simultaneous clan conferences, including Buraao Conference in 1991, where they declared on 18th May in that year Somaliland's withdrawal from the union between Somaliland and Somalia that made The Somali Republic, after three decades of unsuccessful attempt at creating a unified country with the latter.

In reference to the results of that conference, a six-points declaration had been announced;

- 1- North [Somaliland] should not re-unite with Somalia and stand as an independent state.
- 2-Sharia Law should be implemented in north.
- 3-To build and sustain peace in North.
- 4-To build a new government for North immediately.
- 5-To fairly divide the governmental positions to Northern clans.
- 6-To prepare a reconciliation conference specific for Sanaag region clans.

SNM formed a new government in Somaliland and that was where the modern democratic and peaceful Somaliland began. Even though Somaliland went into chaos and civil war after succession declaration in 1993-1995, finally they managed to come together and talk about the situation and what the clans had been fighting for. Following that war, the government of that time held a national conference for the Somaliland traditional leaders in Hargeisa in 1997 – that was where the re-democratization of Somaliland began. In 1994, Somaliland managed to disarm well-organized and powerful militiamen that had been loyal to their clans without external support. Somaliland held six different democratic elections; two presidential that led a peaceful power transfer from a defeated president to succeeded on in 2010. Two local government election and parliamentary election were also held in 2002, 2013 and 2005 respectively. Somaliland has achieved stability and some political analysts now describe it as 'a beacon of peace and stability in very turbulent region of Horn of Africa' (Kaariye 2014, 2016). In reference to the AU's own Somaliland fact-finding mission in 2005 headed by then deputy chairperson of the AU Commission, Patrick Mazimhaka (Pijovic 2014), the "union between Somaliland and Somalia was never ratified" and also malfunctioned when it went into action from 1960 to 1990.

## **8. Conclusion**

In 1960, (British) Somaliland and (Italian) Somalia united under one government, one name and one flag, with the hope of other Somalis would join later. However, that union collapsed because of numerous issues, including the brutal actions by the military regime that led Somaliland to reclaim its independence. As I mentioned above, the country took the name of 'Somalia' but the name of the union, The Somali Republic, was different from the current name, Somalia. The Somali Republic should have been neutral for all Somalis, but history showed otherwise. Since the name of the Republic that represented the original vision of having united Somalis was demolished by changing it several times, the 'Unionizing theory' was aborted. In addition to British Somaliland and Italian Somalia, the dream of a Greater United Somalia would also have encompassed French Somaliland (currently Djibouti), the Northern-Frontier District of Kenya (Somali-inhabited region of Kenya) and the Somali-inhabited region of Ethiopia. Putting all the above-mentioned territories together would have made 'Greater and United Somalis', but that vision was destroyed. In addition, International Crisis Group (ICG 2006) pointed out the unification disadvantage to Somaliland, 'Somalia retained the capital city and obtained two-thirds of the seats in parliament, while Southern leaders (including the president and prime minister) dominated the first unitary cabinet.' Most of the current unionists claims that the united Somali Independent Republics – Somaliland and Somalia, are still under one government and have the name of 'Somalia' together but those who believe that this union has been abolished argue the opposite by using the above-mentioned factors as the basis of their argument. The reasons that Somaliland should have its independence reclaimed include the systematic discrimination, injustice, destruction and massacre on a grand scale by state, itself the population faced during the union with Somalia. In addition, as the Academy for Peace and Development (2008) stated despite Somaliland declared the withdrawal of the union on 18th May 1991, a new constitution was approved by nation-wide referendum on 31 May 2001 by 97.1% of voters. This study is arguing that the pillars that the union were built on were wiped out and that Somalia is no longer 'the Somali Republic', since the Somalis had could have been make 'United Somalis' are in other countries like Djibouti (Former French Somaliland), Somalis in Ethiopia, Somalis in northeast province of Kenya, and finally Somaliland. Somalia is different from 'The Somali Republic'.

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