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Center for Democracy & Governance

"Making Power Accountable."

PRE-ELECTION RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE UPCOMING PRESIDENTIAL

AND PARTY/ ASSOCIATIONS ELECTIONS IN SOMALILAND

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Six Regions of Somaliland

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OXFAM

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Acknowledgement

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the participants who contributed to the Pre-Election Risk Assessment for the upcoming presidential and political party elections in Somaliland. Your insights and perspectives were invaluable to this comprehensive study, helping us to understand the complexities and challenges of the current electoral landscape.

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Regards,

Abdirahman Warsame

CDG Country Director

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BVR- Biometric Voter Registration

FGD-Focus Group Discussion

HBS- Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Horn of Africa

KII-Key informant interview

PWDs-People Living with Disabilities

NEC-National Electoral Commission

SDWG-Dialogue Working Group

SOLJA- Somaliland Journalist Association

SPSS-Statistical Package for Social Sciences

Executive Summary

Background: The forthcoming presidential and political association elections in Somaliland are important given the country's strides towards creating an inclusive multiparty democratic system. However, concerns about potential risks and threats could impact the electoral process. The following report studies the pre-election risks and threats associated with the coming presidential and party elections scheduled for November 13, 2024.

Purpose of the study: The main purpose of the risk assessment was to assess the potential risks pre- and post-election and to identify potential risks and threats to the electoral process, including political tensions and grievances among clans that could result in violent conflict.

Methodology: The study employed a mixed-method approach to simultaneously collect quantitative and qualitative data from the targeted groups. It used participatory data collection techniques and tools, including semi-structured household questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KII).

Findings: A notable majority of 63.1% comprised male participants, while the remaining 36.9%% were female. A significant portion, 45% believe that the current political landscape is good, 17% very good, and10% excellent. However, 13% of the respondents rated the current political landscape as fair while 15% believe it is bad. The largest group, 42%, perceived the situation as not stable, indicating a significant concern among respondents. A clear majority, 73.7%, expressed their intention to participate in the election. Meanwhile, 9.1% indicated that they would not participate, and 17.2% remained undecided or unsure about their participation at the time of the survey. The majority of the respondents, 42%, expressed the belief that there were no such tensions. A majority, 49%, expressed optimism by indicating they did not foresee any potential risks or challenges. However, a notable 32% of respondents believed there were indeed risks or challenges ahead for the elections. Meanwhile, 19% remained unsure about the potential obstacles that could affect the electoral process. A significant portion of respondents rated the security situation positively, with 61.8% describing it as good, 18.9% fair and 19.3% poor. A significant portion, 49% of respondents noted that the freedom of media is poor, 31% good and 20% fair. Respondents identified several potential risks and challenges they believe might influence the upcoming elections in Somaliland as follow; dispute over voter registration 24%, insecurity in certain regions 19% (Eastern regions including Sool and Sanaag) as the major risk drivers that could potentially disrupt the electoral process. A majority, 59%, reported not witnessing any such incidents. However, 26% of the respondents indicated they had observed instances of media censorship or harassment. A significant portion, 51%, considered the media to be influential. The study findings indicate that majority of respondents, totaling 66%, expressed belief that the electoral process in Somaliland is inclusive of all citizens (men, women, youths, PWDs, minority clans).

Conclusions: The political landscape in Somaliland leading up to the upcoming elections is characterized by a mix of internal dynamics, challenges, and security concerns. The predominant sentiment revolves around the anticipation and potential for instability due to delays in the electoral schedule, originally slated for late 2022. The security environment in Somaliland is generally stable, although significant regional and clan-based tensions could impact the electoral process. Proactive measures, including enhanced security protocols, transparency in the electoral

process, and strategic community engagement, are essential to ensure a peaceful and credible election outcome. Despite the critical role of the media in disseminating information and shaping public opinion, challenges such as intimidation, legal restrictions, and ownership influence persist. Addressing these issues through enhanced regulatory frameworks and promoting ethical journalism practices is crucial for safeguarding media freedom and ensuring a transparent electoral process in Somaliland. Finally, the efforts to enhance the inclusiveness of the electoral process in Somaliland must prioritize addressing existing disparities in representation and participation among various societal groups.

Recommendations: The National Electoral Commission (NEC) should be transparent in implementing biometric operations and fostering consensus among political parties on election dates and procedures. Additionally, the NEC should form committees and task forces dedicated to overseeing electoral preparations and ensuring adherence to established protocols as crucial steps to safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process. The NEC should recruit professional electoral experts from external sources, such as Interpeace, to supplement the current team's expertise and ensure a smooth electoral process. NEC should invite international observers to monitor the electoral process to enhance transparency by providing an additional layer of oversight, contributing to the credibility of the electoral outcomes, and promoting adherence to international electoral standards. The Somaliland Journalist Association (SOLJA) should conduct regular training programs for journalists on ethical reporting practices, fact-checking techniques, and the responsible use of sources to promote professional standards in reporting the election process in Somaliland. The civil society organizations should sensitize minority groups include women, PLWDs, IDPs to participate in the upcoming political parties and presidential elections in Somaliland; The Ministry of Interior and Security should and increasing the number of security personnel in Eastern regions of Somaliland during the electoral process; NEC should conduct fair and transparent electoral processes to build trust amongst the general public and political aspirants across the country. Finally, the political associations and presidential candidates should be ready to be willing to accept the election results to minimize possible clan unrest;

1. Introduction

This section of the report comprises of the background, purpose, specific objectives and thematic areas covered in the risk assessment report.

1.1   Background of the study

The upcoming presidential and party elections in Somaliland, scheduled for November 13, 2024, are surrounded by several risks and concerns, including pre- and post-election risks such as absence of code of ethics, fierce competition among political associations and parties, lack of stakeholders' commitment to democracy and freedom of speech, financial risks, poor civic education, unrest in the eastern regions of Somaliland and division of the Somaliland community.

Post-election risks include the potential rejection of election results by all stakeholders and the potential for civil unrest from disagreement. The postponement of the 2022 presidential and political associations' elections and the subsequent violent crackdown by security forces has jeopardized Somaliland's reputation for political compromise and stability. This has raised concerns about the acceptance of the election results and the potential for unrest if the outcome is disputed. The forthcoming presidential and political associations elections in Somaliland, scheduled for November 13, 2024, is of importance given the country's strides towards creating an inclusive multiparty democratic system. However, there are concerns about potential risks and threats that could impact the electoral process. The following report studies the pre-election risk and threat associated with the forth coming presidential and party elections scheduled for November 13, 2024.

1.2   Purpose of the Pre-Election Risk Assessment

The main purpose of the risk assessment was to assess the potential risks pre- and post-election and to identify potential risks and threats to the electoral process, including political tensions, and grievances among clans that could result in violent conflict.

1.3   Specific Objectives

- To evaluate the current political landscape and identify potential sources of tension that could impact the electoral process, including grievances among clans and the relationship between the government and opposition parties.
- To identify potential security threats from inside and outside, such as the risk of violent conflict, and assess the availability of security measures to mitigate these risks
- To assess the inclusivity of the electoral process, particularly in promoting the representation of women, minorities.

2 Methodology

2.1 Risk Assessment Design

The study employed a mixed-method approach to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the targeted groups simultaneously. The study used participatory data collection techniques and tools, including semi-structured household questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guides, Key Informant Interview guides (KII), and desk reviews.

2.2 Study Area

The pre-election risk assessment was conducted in Hargeisa, Burao, Borama, Berbera, Ainabo and Erigavo districts located in Togdheer, Maroodijex, Awdal, Sahil, Sool and Sanaag regions respectively in Somaliland.

2.3 Target Population

The study targeted multi-stakeholders comprising of government officials, political parties, civil society organizations, community leaders, security personnel's, international observers, women's groups, youth organizations, minority representatives, and media professionals.

2.3 Sampling Method

2.3.1 Sample Size Determination

The study estimated the sampling size using Fischer's formula. The formula is widely applied to estimate a representative sample for an infinite population.

$$n = P\left(\frac{1-P}{E^2}\right)Z^2$$

Where n= Sample size

P= Proportion of the population having similar characteristics. In this case, P comprised of the general population across different regions (male and female) estimated to be 50%.

Z= Confidence Interval is given to be 1.96 at 95% confidence level.

E= Margin of error estimated to be 4%

$$n = 0.5\left(\frac{1-0.5}{0.04^2}\right)1.96^2 = 627 \text{ respondents}$$

2.3.2 Sampling Frame

This section of the study summarized the distribution of respondents based on regions and data collection techniques applied during the field data collection phase of the study.

Table 2.1 Sampling frame

S/N	Locations	KII	FGD	Individual Interviews
1.	Hargeisa	10	4	180
2.	Burao	6	3	110
3.	Borama	4	3	110
4.	Berbera	4	2	68
5.	Ainabo	2	1	45
6.	Erigavo	4	2	114
	Total	**26**	**15**	**627**

2.3.3 Sampling Procedure

The study used a multi-stage proportional sampling technique involving two main stages. In the first stage, the study used purposive sampling method to select the targeted respondents in study locations. In the second stage, the study applied stratified sampling based on geographical regions, demographics, and socio-economic factors to ensure adequate representation across different segments of society. The study employed multi-stage approach to assess the electoral environment comprehensively, aiming to inform strategies for ensuring free, fair, and credible presidential and party elections in Somaliland.

2.4 Data Collection Plan

2.4.1 Desk Review of Project Documents

The study conducted in-depth desk review to elicit background information regarding previous presidential and political parties elections, political landscape, historical context, and recent events leading up to the presidential and party elections were collected and analyzed.

2.4.2 Quantitative Data Collection Methods and Tools

The study used a semi-structured survey questionnaire as the primary tool to collect quantitative data from general populations in Hargeisa, Borama, Burao, Berbera, Ainabo and Erigavo districts. The questionnaires were programmed using KOBO-Collect software and administered to the respondents electronically using android supported smartphones. The field data collection team issued an aggregate of 627 questionnaires to the targeted respondents in all the selected regions.

2.4.3 Qualitative Data Collection Methods and Tools

The study adopted the use of participatory qualitative data methods including focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. A detailed procedure and tools are described below:

2.4.3.1 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

The qualitative data collection team conducted **15 FGDs** with the members from different clans and communities, women's groups, youth organizations, minority representatives, and media professionals the discuss study thematic topics such as perceptions of fairness, inclusivity, and potential sources of tension or conflict.

2.4.3.2 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

The qualitative data collection team conducted **26 KII sessions** with the government officials, political party representatives, civil society leaders, community elders, international observers, and media personnel to gather expert insights on various aspects of the electoral process, including risks, challenges, and mitigation strategies.

2.5 Training of Field Data Collection Team

The study conducted **2 days** of training to build the capacity of the field data collection team on the scope, deliverables, and quality of the data required in this assignment. In particular, the enumerators were trained on how to complete the semi-structured survey questionnaires. At the same time, the moderator/facilitator and note-taker were trained on how to collect qualitative data using FGDs and the KII guide. The second day of the training session entailed practical demonstrations and a pre-test to provide the feedback to modify the questionnaire, FGDs, and KII interview guide, thus, minimizing the field data collection challenges and improvement of the content validity of the assessment tools. Moreover, the pre-test provided a suitable environment for the field data collection team to familiarize themselves with the data collection protocols.

2.6 Data Analysis

The study reviewed and verified the raw data from the field for completeness and extracted them from the KOBO software in a compatible Microsoft Excel and SPSS format. The study team conducted descriptive analysis techniques using SPSS version 26 to generate evidence-based findings. The study team presented the findings in tables, figures, and charts.

In addition, the study team analysed qualitative data from FGDs and KIIs' using thematic approach. The study team worked closely with the qualitative data collection team to transcribe the audio-recorded data by note-takers during the FGDs and KIIs sessions in English translation and type them using Microsoft Word version 13. The study technical team counterchecked the transcribed qualitative data with the hard copy backup and audio recordings to ensure the study findings' validity, accuracy, and reliability. The study employed a thematic matrix approach and deductive analysis around the thematic areas. The study team triangulated qualitative findings with the

quantitative results to elicit critical insights and explanations to supplement the quantitative findings from the individual surveys.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical issues were considered during the study process:

- **Voluntary participation**: The research team were open and truthful when asking people to participate in the study. We ensured that the survey was clearly explained to the respondents and was not associated with any groups: political, religious, or other interest groups. All the respondents signed a consent form to prove they were not coerced into giving out information.
- **Privacy/data security**: The study restricted access to the pre-election risk assessment data by using a strong password for soft-copy data. Moreover, the research team stored the hard copy material in a lockable place to avoid access by unauthorized persons.
- **Adapted participation**: The study adapted the tools and processes to increase access to persons with disabilities.
- **Informed consent:** The study prepared informed consent forms which were filled and signed in duplicate by the research participants before the data collection exercise was completed. Moreover, the field data collection team also used oral consent for respondents with difficulty in reading and writing.

3 Findings

3.1 Response Rate

The profile of the individual respondents was the common Somaliland citizen who were approached randomly in the target locations of Hargeisa, Borama, and Burao. The participants who gave consent to be interviewed, were interviewed accordingly. The study obtained 97.61% response rate generated from 612 completed questionnaires out of 627 questionnaires issued.

3.2 Socio-demographics of Respondents.

This section of the study describes the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, age and occupations as detailed below.

3.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The survey findings indicate that the majority of respondents 63.1% comprised male participants, while the remaining 36.9%% were female. This breakdown offered insights into the gender representation among those who participated, hinting at potential variations in perspectives and experiences across different genders within the surveyed population.

Table 3.1 Gender of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	386	63.1
Female	226	36.9
Total	**612**	**100.0**

3.2.2 Age Group of Respondents

The age distribution of the respondents in the survey presented a varied landscape. The largest age group was those aged 45-55 years, making up 40% of the participants followed by 55-65 years 22%; 35-45 years 15%; 25-35 years 10%; 65 years and above 9% and 15-25 years 4%. This range of ages highlighted the diverse generational perspectives captured in the survey.
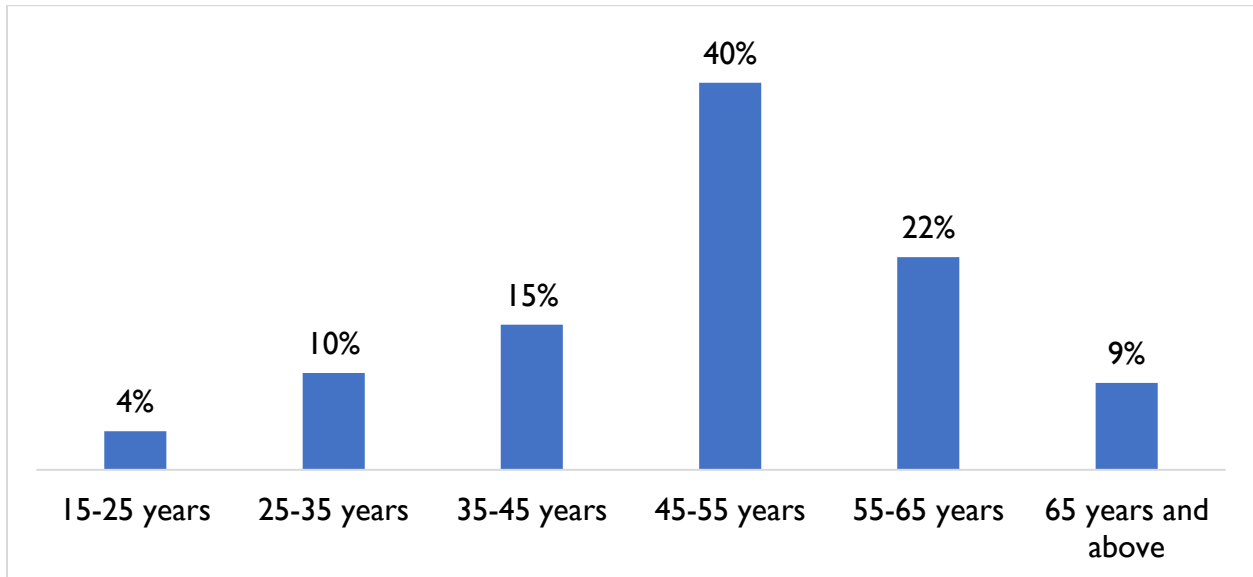
Figure 3.1 Age categories of respondents

3.2.3 Occupation of Respondents

The survey also explored the occupational distribution of the respondents. The study results showed that majority of the respondents 37% were not employed followed by; 23% manual labors/unskilled labors, 17% self-employed, 12% private sector workers, 8% government employees and 3% students. This occupational breakdown highlighted the varied professional backgrounds of the respondents across the six regions of Somaliland.
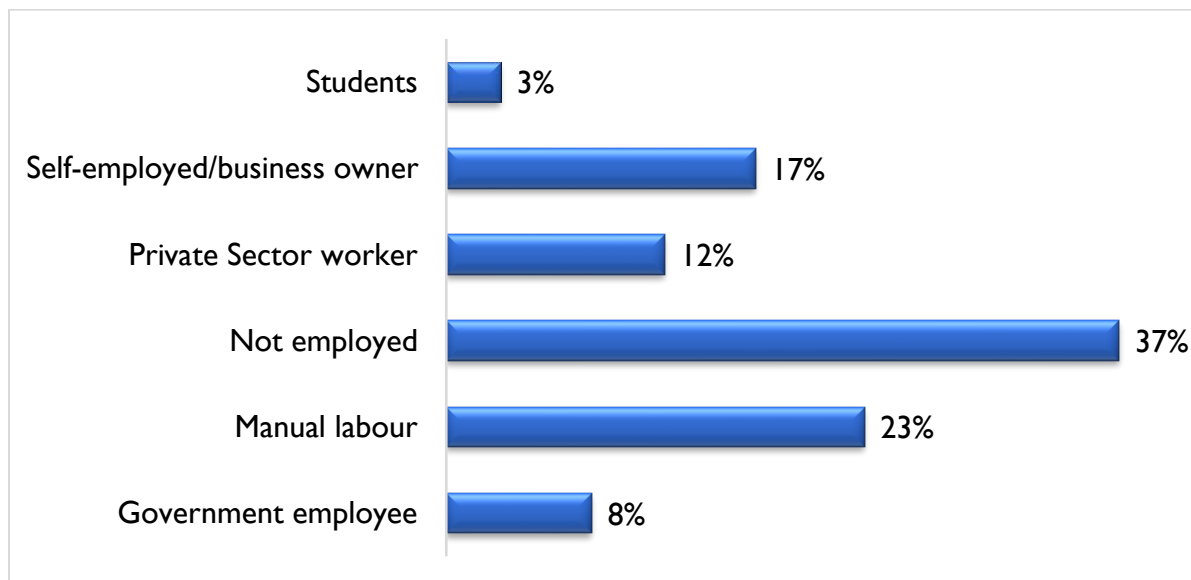
Figure 3.2 Occupation of respondents

3.2.4 Vulnerable Groups

The study findings reveal that 65.4% of the respondents were not from vulnerable groups in the community while 34.6% of the respondents belonged to different categories on vulnerable people in the community. In addition, the venerable groups in the targeted districts included people from the minority clans, people with disabilities as well as internally displaced people (IDPs). Inclusion of these categories of respondents provided insight into the perception of the vulnerable groups in regards to the upcoming presidential and political parties' elections in the country.

Table 1.2 vulnerable groups

	Frequency	Percent
No	400	65.4
Yes	212	34.6
Total	**612**	**100.0**

3.3 Understanding Political Landscape in Somaliland

This section of the report entails description of current political landscape, tensions among different entities or clans/communities that could impact the upcoming presidential and political parties' elections as described below:

3.3.1 Current Political Landscape

The survey respondents provided insights into their perceptions of Somaliland's political landscape. A significant portion, 45% believe that the current political landscape is good, 17% very good, and10% excellent. However, 13% of the respondents rated the current political landscape as fair while 15% believe it is bad. Notably, none of the respondents rated their understanding as very bad. These responses collectively depicted a generally favorable view of the political situation in Somaliland among the surveyed individuals.
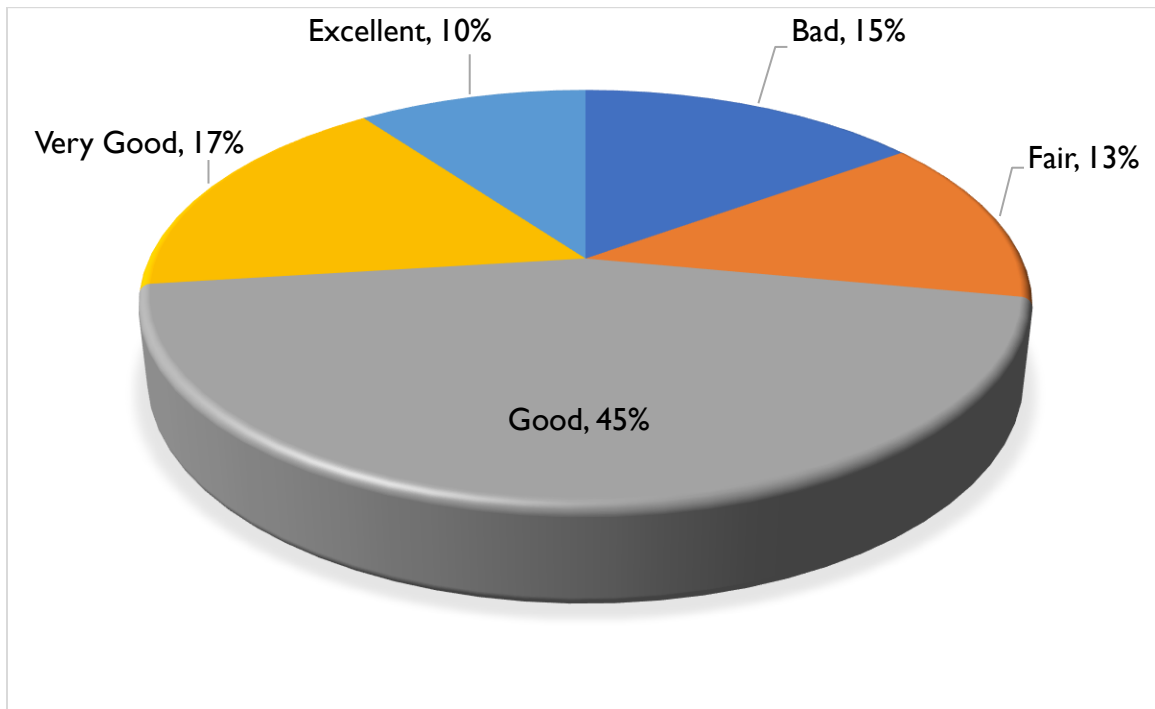
Figure 3.3 Understanding of current Political landscape in Somaliland

3.3.2 Current Political Situation in Somaliland

The survey participants expressed varied opinions regarding the current political situation in Somaliland leading up to the upcoming Presidential and party Elections. The largest group, 42%, perceived the situation as not stable, indicating a significant concern among respondents. Meanwhile, 30% considered the situation stable, and 12% viewed it as somehow stable, suggesting a cautious optimism. A smaller proportion, 9%, described the political environment as very stable, highlighting a degree of confidence. Only 7% characterized the situation as very unstable, indicating a minority view of heightened instability. These responses provided a nuanced snapshot of public perception regarding the political climate ahead of the elections in Somaliland.
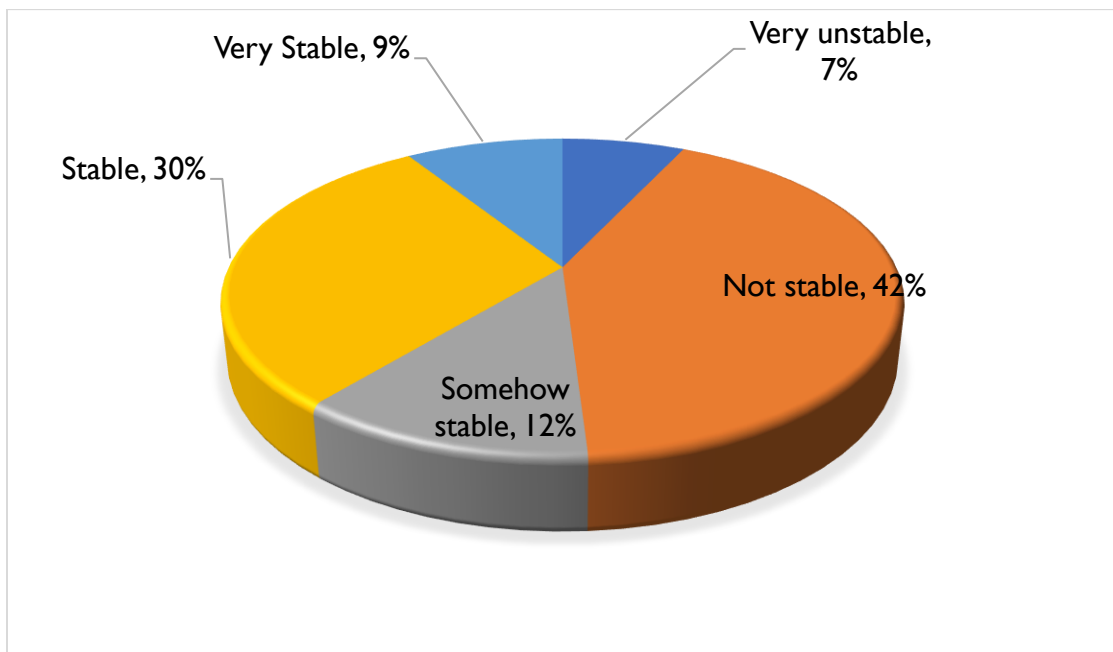
Figure 3. 4 Current political situation in Somaliland

3.3.3 Level of Respondents' Intention to Participate in Presidential and Party Elections

The survey revealed varying levels of intent among respondents regarding their participation in the upcoming Presidential and party Elections in Somaliland. A clear majority, 73.7%, expressed their intention to participate in the election. Meanwhile, 9.1% indicated that they would not participate, and 17.2% remained undecided or unsure about their participation at the time of the survey. These responses reflected a mix of certainty and indecision among the surveyed population regarding their engagement in the electoral process.

Table 3.3 Respondents' intention to participate in presidential and party elections

	Frequency	**Percent**
No	55	9.1
Not sure	104	17.2
Yes	453	73.7
Total	**612**	**100.0**

3.3.4 Level of Contentment in Political Parties in Somaliland

According to the survey results, a substantial majority of respondents, 61%, expressed contentment with the three political parties participating in the election process in Somaliland. Conversely, 29% indicated that they were not contented with the available political options, while a smaller percentage, 10%, remained unsure about their satisfaction with the parties. These findings suggest a generally positive reception toward the political parties involved in the upcoming election, albeit with a notable minority expressing reservations or uncertainty.
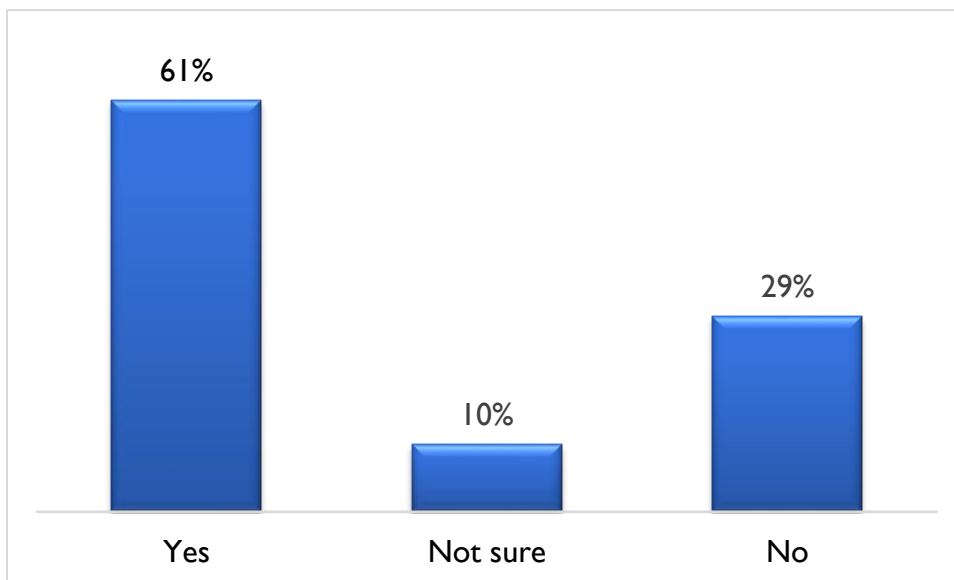
Figure 3.5 Level of Contentment in Political Parties in Somaliland

3.3.5 Potential Tensions among Different Entities or Clans/Communities

The survey respondents shared their perspectives on potential tensions among different entities or clans/communities that could affect the upcoming elections in Somaliland. The majority of the respondents, 42%, expressed the belief that there were no such tensions. However, 37%, indicated their belief that tensions did exist and could impact the elections. Additionally, 21% of respondents were unsure about the presence or potential impact of these tensions. These results underscored varying levels of awareness and concern among the surveyed population regarding the political dynamics leading up to the elections.
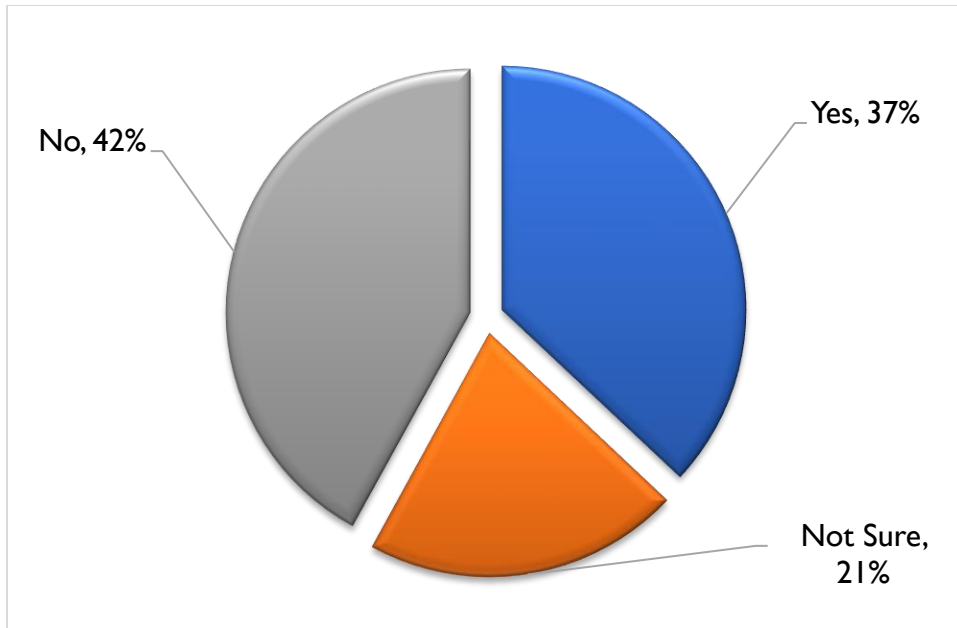
Figure 3.6 Potential tensions among different entities or clans/communities

3.4.6 Sources of tension that could impact the upcoming elections in Somaliland

The survey results revealed that respondents perceived various sources of tension that could impact the upcoming elections in Somaliland. A significant portion, 26%, identified issues related to the ruling party as a potential source of tension like dictating and delaying the election dates. Historical conflicts were cited by 19% of respondents, while 22% pointed to clan rivalries as another significant factor. Additionally, 13% believed disputes over leadership within clans could contribute to tensions surrounding the elections. External influences, such as agreements between Somaliland and Ethiopia, were also noted, with 6% of respondents expressing concerns about their potential impact on the electoral environment and recent incidences of violence. Only 2% of the respondents cited government electoral polies/laws as a potential source of tension that could impact the upcoming elections in the country. Moreover, 3% of the respondents cited lack of trust in the electoral system and 9% mentioned recent incidents of violence. These findings underscored the complex array of internal and external factors that respondents perceived as influencing the political dynamics leading up to the elections.
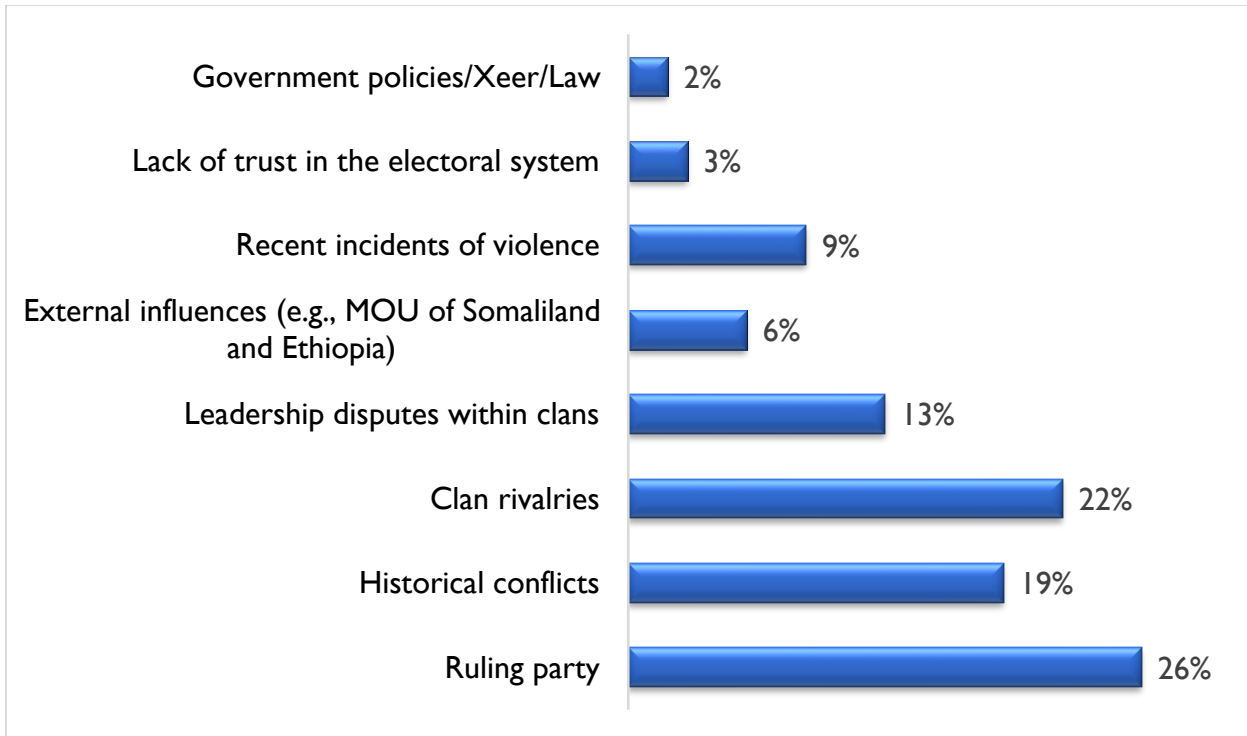
Figure 3.7 Sources of tension that could impact the upcoming elections in Somaliland

3.4 Potential Risks and Threats

This section of the study describes the potential risks or challenges you foresee in the upcoming elections, perceptions regarding potential risks or challenges in the upcoming elections, drivers of potential risks or challenges in the upcoming elections, and concerns about the potential for civil unrest or violence during the electoral period.

3.4.1 Potential Risks Foreseen in the Upcoming Elections

The survey delved into respondents' perceptions regarding potential risks or challenges in the upcoming elections in Somaliland. A majority, 49%, expressed optimism by indicating they did not foresee any potential risks or challenges. However, a notable 32% of respondents believed there were indeed risks or challenges ahead for the elections. Meanwhile, 19% remained unsure about the potential obstacles that could affect the electoral process. These responses indicated a spectrum of confidence and uncertainty among the surveyed population regarding the smooth conduct of the upcoming elections.
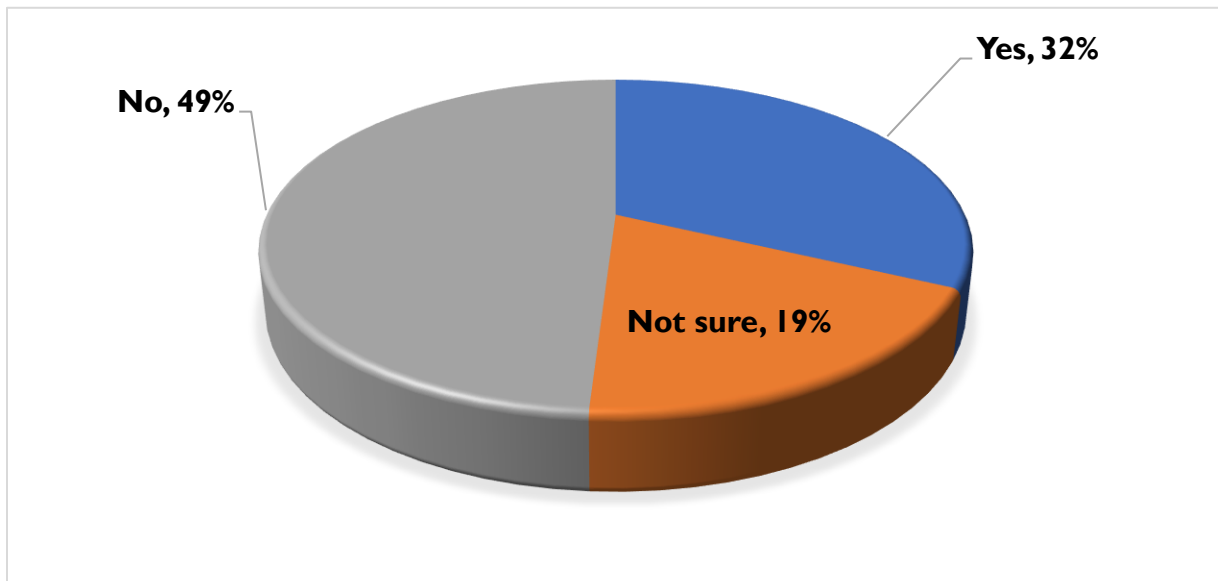
Figure 3.8 Potential risks or challenges you foresee in the upcoming elections

3.4.3 Drivers of Potential Risks Foreseen in the Upcoming Elections

According to the survey findings, respondents identified several potential risks and challenges they believe might influence the upcoming elections in Somaliland as follow; dispute over voter registration 24%, insecurity in certain regions 19% (Eastern regions including Sool and Sanaag) as risk drivers that could potentially disrupt the electoral process, electoral fraud 17%, clan-based conflicts 15%, lack of trust in the electoral commission 11%, delay in the electoral process 9% and interference from political actors 5%. These findings underscored the perceived vulnerabilities and challenges that respondents believed could affect the upcoming elections in Somaliland.
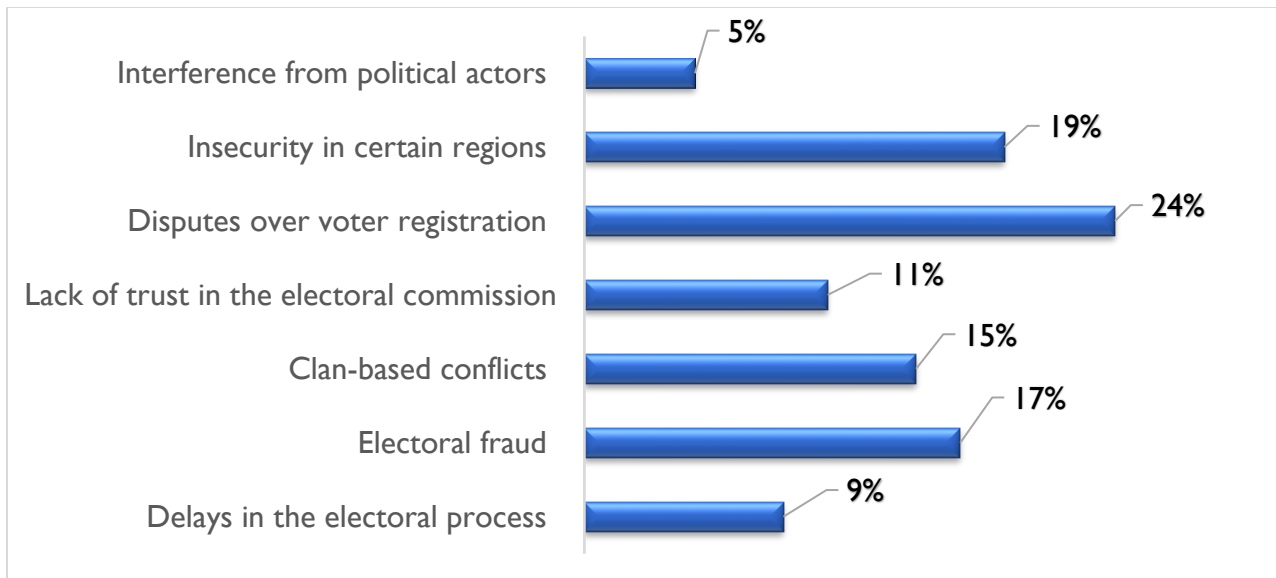
Figure 3.9 Drivers of potential risks or challenges in the upcoming elections

3.5 Current Security Situation

This section of the report describes the opinions of respondents regarding the current security situation in Somaliland, regional security threats, security threats and electoral process in Somaliland, and main security threats or concerns that could impact the electoral process in Somaliland.

3.5.1 Respondents Opinion Regarding the Current security situation in Somaliland

According to the survey respondents, there was a diverse range of opinions regarding the current security situation in Somaliland. A significant portion of respondents rated the security situation positively, with 61.8% describing it as good, 18.9% fair and 19.3% poor. These responses provided a nuanced view of how the surveyed individuals perceived the overall security environment in Somaliland at the time of the survey.

Table 3.4 Current security situation

	Frequency	Percent
Fair	116	18.9
Good	378	61.8
Poor	118	19.3
Total	**612**	**100.0**

3.5.2 Current Regional Security Trends in Somaliland

In assessing the regions of Somaliland for their potential security risks during the presidential and party elections period, the survey data provided insights into varying perceptions across different areas. Respondents believed that Sanaag and Sool regions were particularly susceptible to insecurity. 95% of respondents believe that Sool region is unsafe, followed by Sanaag 70% and Togdheer 67%. However, three Maroodijex, Sahil and regions were rated relatively safe including Maroodijex 79%, Sahil 72% and Awdal 65%.
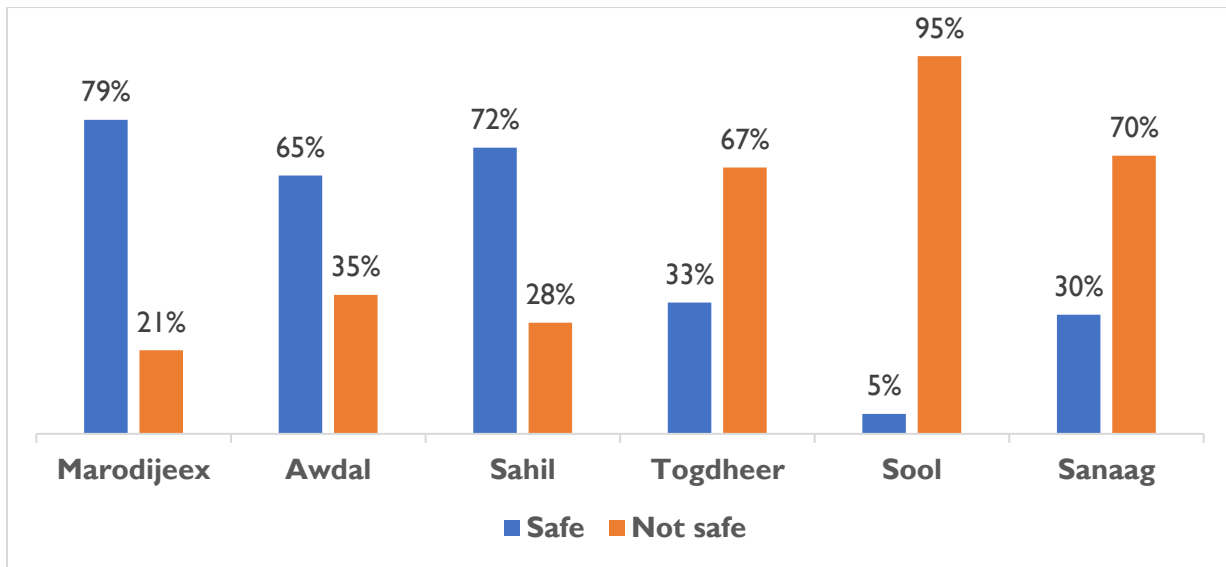
Figure 3.10 Current regional security trends in Somaliland

3.5.3 Security Threats and Electoral Process in Somaliland

According to the survey results, a significant majority of respondents, totaling 51%, expressed the belief that security threats could indeed impact the electoral process in certain regions of Somaliland. In contrast, 33% of respondents did not believe security threats would affect the electoral process, and 16% remained unsure about the potential impact of security threats on the upcoming elections. These findings underscored widespread concerns among the surveyed population regarding the influence of security challenges on the electoral dynamics in specific regions of Somaliland.
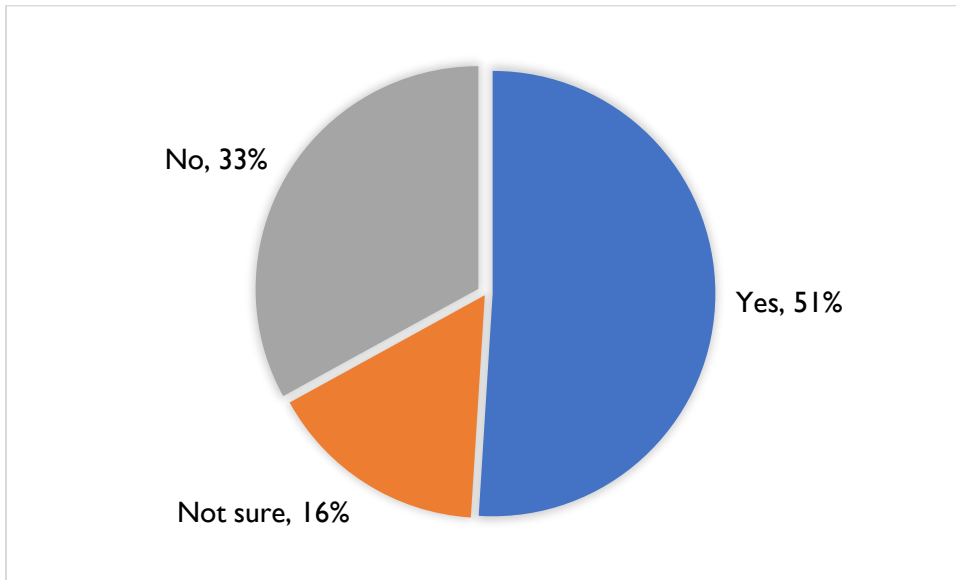
Figure 3.10 Security threats and electoral process in Somaliland

3.6 Current Media Situation and Freedom of Speech

This section of the report entails discussion on freedom of media in Somaliland, media censorship or harassment of journalists related to the upcoming presidential and party elections in Somaliland,

3.6.1 Freedom of Media and Speech in Somaliland

The survey results provided varied perspectives on the freedom of media and speech in Somaliland. A significant portion, 49% of respondents noted that the freedom of media is poor, 31% good and 20% fair. The responses depicted limited freedom of media in Somaliland.
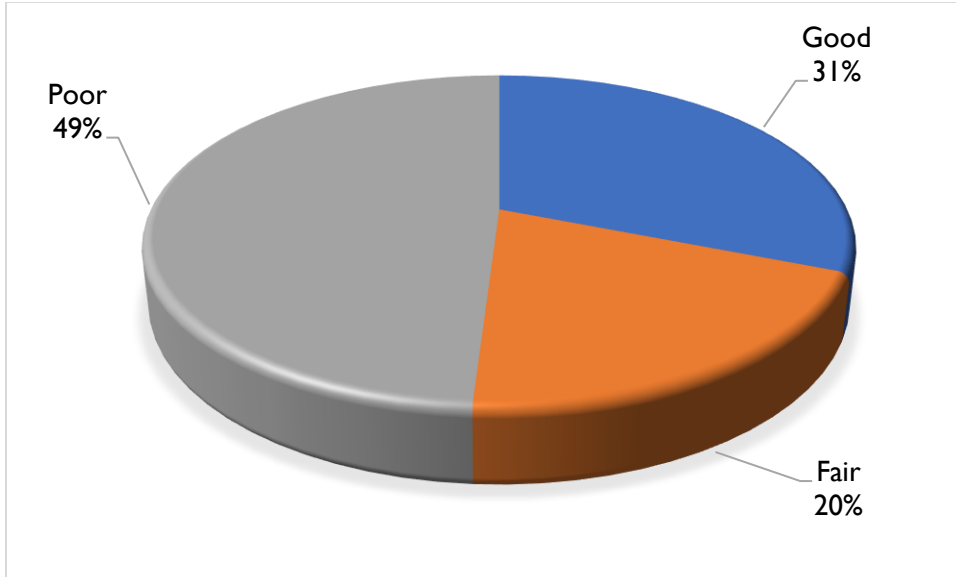
Figure 3.11 Freedom of media and speech in Somaliland

3.6.2 Media Censorship or Harassment

The survey revealed mixed responses regarding instances of media censorship or harassment of journalists related to the upcoming presidential and party elections in Somaliland. A majority, 59%, reported not witnessing any such incidents. However, 26% of the respondents indicated they had observed instances of media censorship or harassment. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents were unsure about whether such incidents had occurred. These findings underscored varying levels of awareness and certainty among the surveyed population regarding media freedoms and challenges during the electoral period in Somaliland.
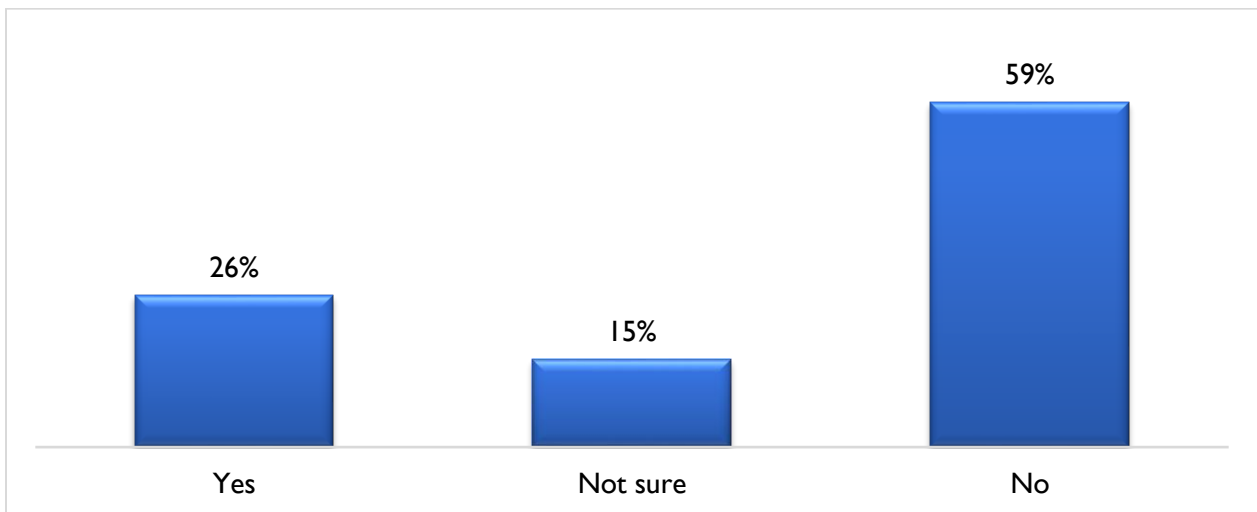
Figure 3.12 Media Censorship or Harassment

3.7 Role of Media during the Electoral Period

According to the survey, respondents held varying rated on the role of the media in shaping public opinion during the electoral period in Somaliland. A significant portion, 51%, considered the media to be influential. Meanwhile, 12% perceived the media's role as neutral, suggesting a more balanced or less impactful role in shaping public opinion. However, 37% of respondents, believed that the media was not influential in influencing public opinion during the electoral period. These findings reflected divergent perceptions about the media's impact on public sentiment during significant political events in Somaliland.
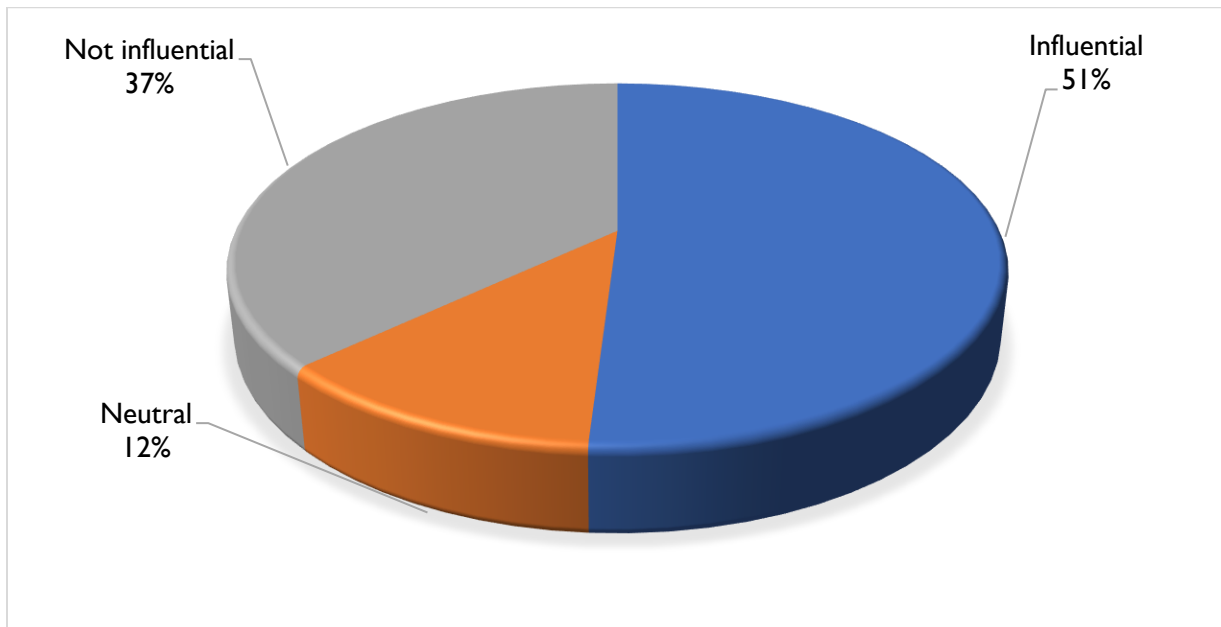
Figure 3.13 Freedom of Speech and Role of Media

3.8 Citizen Perception on Inclusion and Participation in the Electoral process

According to the survey results, a majority of respondents, totaling 66%, expressed belief that the electoral process in Somaliland is inclusive of all citizens (men, women, youths, PLW, minority clans). Conversely, 13% of respondents disagreed, indicating they do not believe the electoral process is inclusive. Additionally, 21% of respondents were unsure about the inclusivity of the electoral process. These responses highlight a range of perceptions regarding the extent to which all citizens are included in the electoral process in Somaliland.
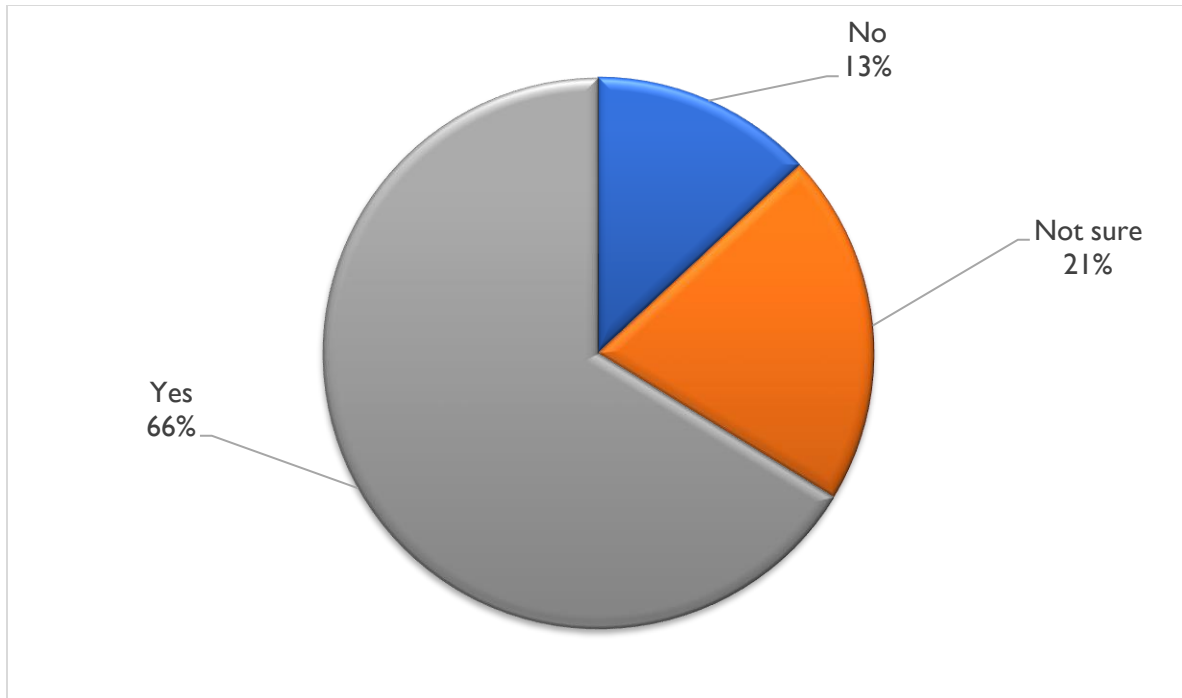
Figure 3.14 Citizen Perception on Inclusion and Participation in the Electoral process

3.9 Citizen Perception on the Electoral Process

The survey respondents exhibited varied levels of confidence regarding the integrity of the electoral process in Somaliland, particularly concerning the issue of card duplication.

3.9.1 Integrity of the electoral process in Somaliland

A notable 45% of respondents believe that the upcoming presidential and political parties' election will be free and fair. Nevertheless, 37% of respondents have a feeling that political actors' interference may comprise the integrity of the electoral process. Meanwhile, 18% remained unsure about the integrity of the electoral process.
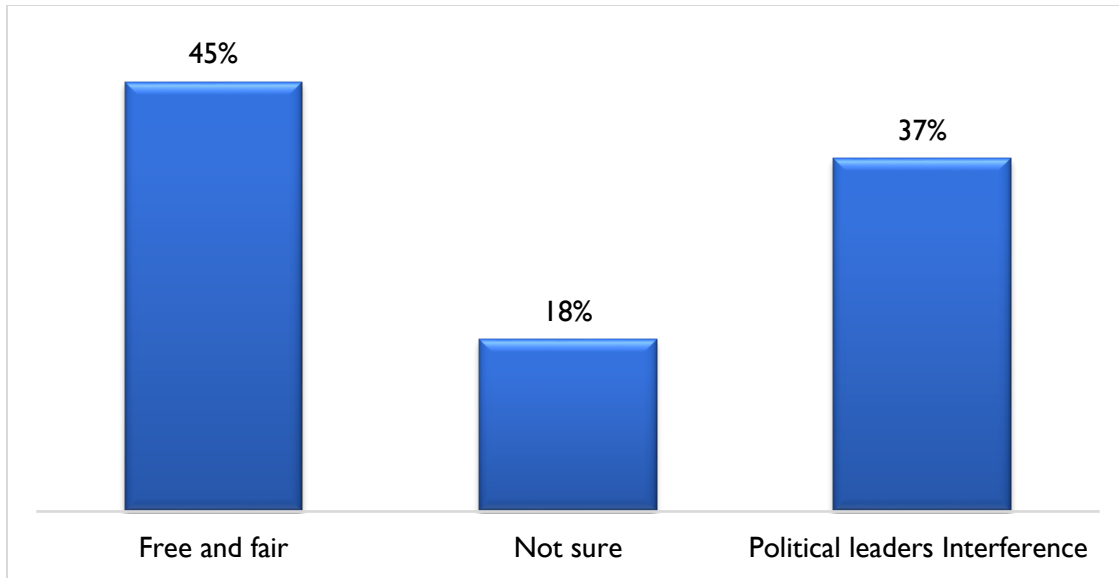
Figure 3.15 Integrity of the electoral process in Somaliland

4 Qualitative Key Findings

This section of the report discusses the key thematic findings from FGD and KIIs as described below:

4.1 Current Political Landscape

The current political landscape in Somaliland leading up to the upcoming elections is characterized by a mix of internal dynamics, challenges, and security concerns, as highlighted by various key informant interviews. The predominant sentiment revolves around the anticipation and potential for instability due to delays in the electoral schedule, originally slated for late 2022. This delay has raised doubts about the democratic process and contributed to political tensions.

Specific grievances and tensions among different clans or communities pose potential challenges to the electoral process. Respondents expressed concerns about clan rivalries and the spread of misinformation, which could exacerbate social divisions and impact voter turnout or electoral outcomes. While some respondents downplayed these tensions as manageable or non-existent in certain areas, others acknowledged the potential for unrest if not properly addressed.

"Clan affiliations continue to play a significant role in shaping Somaliland's political landscape, influencing party alliances and voter sentiments. While Somaliland prepares for its upcoming elections amidst a complex political landscape, addressing these grievances and tensions through proactive measures will be essential to ensuring a credible, inclusive, and peaceful electoral process." FGD006: Male participant-Focus group discussion session with religious leaders and clan elders in Borama.

"The main political parties participating in the electoral process are Kulmiye, Waddani, and UCID. Each party has distinct strengths and weaknesses that shape its role and influence within the political arena. Kulmiye, as the ruling party led by President Muse Bihi Abdi, benefits from state resources and incumbency

advantages but faces criticism for issues such as corruption and authoritarianism. Waddani, the leading opposition party under Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi (Irro), presents itself as a viable alternative to Kulmiye, advocating for transparency and accountability despite resource limitations. UCID, led by Faisal Ali Warabe, boasts a long-standing legacy but struggles with electoral success and lacks substantial influence in major policy decisions.” KII003- Male Participant, Deputy Chairman-Barwaaqo Political Association.

4.2 Potential Risks and Threats

Several key informant interviews provided a comprehensive overview of the potential risks and threats that could impact the credibility and integrity of the upcoming elections in Somaliland. According to one respondent, concerns primarily centered on security vulnerabilities in the eastern regions of Somaliland, where a perceived poor security system could lead to dangers and threats within communities. The respondent highlighted potential tensions arising from electoral law violations, particularly those involving the electoral commission, which could escalate into broader political unrest. Moreover, financial constraints were noted, with the election facing a significant shortfall from the initial budget allocation of 18 million to the current 4 million, potentially leading to delays or disruptions.

Another interviewee categorized risks into community and political factors. They noted the innocence and susceptibility of the Somaliland community to political manipulations, especially through emotional media responses. Conversely, they expressed concern over politicians using media platforms to spread divisive rhetoric, potentially fracturing community cohesion and exacerbating tensions during the election period.

Addressing the factors contributing to these risks, FGD respondents highlighted specific regions like Caynabo, Oog, and Ceerigabo as particularly vulnerable due to historical clan tensions and civil-military dynamics. They pointed out challenges such as inadequate time for public awareness and education on the electoral process, declining international support diverted to Somalia's Stability Fund instead of Somaliland, and unresolved political issues like territorial disputes.

Regarding the likelihood of these risks materializing, concerns were raised over the electoral commission's lack of prior experience conducting elections in certain regions, exacerbating the potential for tensions and disruptions. Issues such as budgetary constraints affecting the procurement of essential election equipment and incomplete documentation processes further compounded these risks.

“While the upcoming elections in Somaliland face significant challenges and risks, proactive measures such as enhanced security protocols, transparency in electoral operations, and stakeholder consensus-building are seen as essential for mitigating these risks and ensuring a credible electoral outcome.” KII005- Male Participant, Foreign Policy Expert- Former Somaliland Ethiopia Ambassador.

“As we know, the election will be held in the coming months, so challenges can affect it. First, the racing political parties use different ideologies to get their needed support. Also, different political issues affect the ecosystem, whether from the local context or the external, in which everyone is interested, including

Ethiopia and Somalia. Local conflicts are major challenges, so I hope all these will be overcome." KII012 Male participants, University Teacher, Berbera

"Many challenges can affect the coming elections, which are two elections: the parties and the presidential. These include biometric voting for the bigger cities and the old version of voting in the rural areas, which can make the people mistrust the election system. Also, some areas were polling stations previously but now cannot be voted. Also, the polling stations from these areas are placed in another area, which can make the voters insecure as there are clan-based conflicts between people in these areas. The other challenges are wars led by Somalia and Puntland, which can affect the election process later in the year." KII017- Male participant, Wadani Party, Erigavo.

"The situation of the country is difficult currently but I wish the election will be safe and electoral process will be peaceful especially in the East regions of Somaliland." KII010-Male participants, Head of Social Affairs - Local Government Berbera.

4.3 Current Security Situation

The current security situation in Somaliland, particularly in areas prone to potential tension during the electoral period, reflects a complex landscape of stability alongside underlying concerns. While overall peace prevails, there are lingering fears within the country, exacerbated by incidents such as contentious media broadcasts, such as those occurring on August 25, 2023, which heightened tensions involving opposition parties isolated in the Gacan Libax Mountains. Specifically, security is described as fair, with notable tensions observed, particularly in the Sool regions. Despite these challenges, the general security situation is deemed stable, albeit with indicators of underlying anxieties.

"The current situation of these elections is different from the previous elections, when the country was safe and secure, and there weren't any conflicts in any areas where elections were held all across the country. However, now there are security issues, and there are regions that cannot be voted in. The political factors and candidates are different; the country's security is not good, and more cities cannot be voted on due to security issues." KII010-Male participants, Head of Social Affairs - Local Government Berbera.

"Several specific security threats loom over the electoral process, prominently including the unresolved issues in Sool and Sanaag where agreements have not been reached. Additionally, concerns persist regarding the full alignment of electoral process documents with Somaliland's laws and policies. The presence of adversaries posing threats to Somaliland's stability further compounds these concerns. While instances of ballot box theft have not been reported, potential security threats are anticipated if electoral agreements are disrupted or altered, exacerbated by funding channeled through Somalia." KII002- Famale Participant, Former member of National Electoral Commission (NEC).

"Security issues, particularly in regions like Sool where there are ongoing deployments of troops amid displacement and instability, pose a significant threat. This could lead to violence, intimidation, and hinder the ability to conduct elections effectively in affected areas. Such security threats may deter voters from

participating and result in uneven election outcomes." FGD006: Male participant-Focus group discussion session with religious leaders and clan elders in Borama

"During the electoral campaign, political rallies, demonstrations, or protests have the potential to escalate into violence, especially if there are confrontations between supporters of different political parties. Such incidents could undermine public safety and the credibility of the electoral process." KII003- Male Participant, Deputy Chairman-Barwaaqo Political Association.

"At this time, the entire population is ready for elections in Somaliland, and there shouldn't be any concerns that could disrupt the elections. If the government does not create problems, the public is prepared to participate in the elections, so there is no security situation that could hinder the elections." KII009 Male participants, clan elder, Ainabo district.

"The unrest in certain regions, such as the eastern regions, could also be a factor that can compromise the electoral process in Sanaag, Sool and even part of Togdheer regions of Somaliland. In addition, fear of the military can also influence the electoral process." KII008: Male participants, government staff, Ainabo district.

4.4 Media Landscape

The current media landscape in Somaliland presents a complex picture characterized by varying degrees of freedom of speech and independence among media outlets. Several key informant interviews underscored significant challenges, noting instances where media outlets have been accused of spreading misinformation or selectively withholding information. There is a perception that some media groups operate with their own agendas, influencing public opinion in favor of specific political entities or agendas. This situation has led to concerns over impartiality and professionalism within the media sector, particularly exacerbated by the rise of social media platforms that may not adhere to established codes of conduct or regulatory oversight.

"Regarding media censorship or harassment impacting the electoral process, journalists have faced harassment or even arrest, compromising media freedoms and potentially influencing the fairness and transparency of electoral reporting. Despite these challenges, efforts to regulate media conduct through codes of conduct and ethical guidelines have been suggested to mitigate biases and ensure responsible reporting during the electoral period. However, enforcement and adherence to these standards remain inconsistent, contributing to ongoing concerns about the media's role in shaping public opinion and electoral outcomes." KII007- Male Participant, Media professional- Somaliland National Television.

"While the media in Somaliland plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion during elections, significant challenges such as bias, harassment, and misinformation persist. Addressing these challenges through enhanced regulatory frameworks and promoting ethical journalism practices are crucial steps to safeguarding media freedom and ensuring a fair and transparent electoral process in Somaliland." FGD005: Female participant-Focus group discussion session with University of Hargeisa students.

"The role of the media in shaping public opinion during elections was widely acknowledged by respondents, emphasizing its influential power in disseminating information and influencing voter perceptions. However, concerns persist regarding the dissemination of misinformation and hate speech,

which could exacerbate tensions and undermine trust in the electoral process. These issues are compounded by the presence of media outlets aligned with specific political interests, potentially skewing public discourse and electoral outcomes." KII006- Male Participant, Traditional Elder- Member of Somaliland Elders.

"Media outlets host debates, interviews, and forums where candidates can present their views and engage in discourse with voters. These platforms foster public debate and allow voters to compare different perspectives. The media also plays a role in educating voters about their rights, the electoral process, and the importance of civic participation. This includes voter education campaigns aimed at encouraging voter registration and turnout." FGD008: Female participant-Focus group discussion session with media professionals in Hargeisa.

"I can assess that people can talk freely, such as using social media and voicing their complaints there. So, restricting people's ideas would cause conflicts. People can also get political information from them. However, media accessibility is low in rural areas and villages; it is only available in the big cities." KII013: Female participants, community leader, Berbera

"The media cannot produce what they want; they only produce what they are told to produce. So, the media don't have freedom of speech as they only release what they are told to release, and they are responsible for the platforms they work for, such as the government." KII009- Male participants, clan elder, Ainabo district.

"The media landscape in terms of freedom of speech and transmission of the election process is low as there is much misinformation going on, and no one can get the correct information. However, the freedom of speech of the media in Somaliland is neutral. They didn't face any severe restrictions." FGD 010- Focus group discussion with community leaders in Erigavo.

"The freedom of speech in the media of Somaliland has become in the last seven years, and reporters become unable to express their freedom of speech and use it in their work. Many reporters fled from the country because they were afraid of being harmed. Similarly, some youths who published news on social media were injured in this region. So, the freedom of speech in the country is very low." FGD 010-Male participant, focus group discussion session with community leaders in Berbera.

"There is no independent media operating within Somaliland, apart from specific individuals who are outside the country and speak independently about the situation. Therefore, it cannot be said that independent media exists within Somaliland. Media tends to lean towards whichever government is in power and is controlled by them" A male participant, FGD 010- Focus group discussion session with community leaders in Erigavo.

"In my opinion, there are no journalists who can speak freely or prepare articles, especially regarding the government. Additionally, I believe that journalists lack a deep understanding of the meaning of journalism, apart from a few who have limited knowledge. A journalist might take a camera and record a video and later write an article, but they are not well-informed in terms of journalistic standards. There is no free press, and censorship is prevalent. I agree with Mohamed that both the current government and the opposition may act similarly when they come to power, with no real change occurring. The media itself is

part of the problems we face, and they play a significant role in silencing voices." A female participant, FGD 012- Focus group discussion session with community members in Ainabo.

"I think media is doing good work be sensitizing the general public about what is happening in the country. Nevertheless, in government always censor the medial professionals and even take them to jail for no good reasons" KII013 Female participants, community leader, Berbera.

4.5 Free and Fair Presidential and party Election Process in Somaliland

Ensuring free, fair, and credible elections in Somaliland requires addressing several critical preconditions. According to key informant interviews, establishing comprehensive documentation and electoral processes through the National Electoral Commission (NEC) is fundamental. This includes forming task forces to oversee election procedures and ensuring adequate financial support. Additionally, there's a strong emphasis on conducting widespread awareness campaigns and voter education initiatives to empower all citizens with knowledge of their electoral rights and responsibilities.

On the confidence in the electoral process. Views on Fairness - Some respondents expressed confidence in the fairness of the electoral process, citing technological measures like biometric voter registration (BVR), voter card use, and inked finger verification to prevent fraud and duplication.

However, concerns remain about the inclusivity of the electoral process, particularly in promoting the representation of women, youth, and vulnerable groups. While some respondents believe these groups are adequately represented, others highlight legal and institutional barriers that could hinder their participation. These barriers include a lack of specific arrangements and legal commitments to ensure inclusivity, potentially reinforcing exclusionary voting practices.

"Representation of Women - Despite being the majority of voters, women in Somaliland lack adequate political representation. Minorities and Marginalized Groups - Minority and marginalized groups also face challenges in terms of both representation and voter turnout. Efforts to enhance inclusiveness should address legal, social, and economic barriers, ensuring these groups have equal opportunities to participate in the political process." FGD001: Female participant-Focus group discussion session with women groups in Hargeisa, Somaliland.

"Minority and marginalized groups also face challenges in terms of both representation and voter turnout. Efforts to enhance inclusiveness should address legal, social, and economic barriers, ensuring these groups have equal opportunities to participate in the political process." FGD004: Male participant-Focus group discussion session with minority representatives in Hargeisa.

Regarding confidence in the electoral process being free and fair, opinions vary among respondents. While some express confidence contingent on full participation and acceptance from all parties, others stress the need for transparency and accountability measures to mitigate existing challenges and build public trust.

International observers and the broader international community are seen as pivotal in supporting free and fair elections in Somaliland. Their roles include providing technical expertise, monitoring electoral activities, and advocating for democratic principles. However, there are mixed sentiments about their effectiveness and vigilance, with calls for increased scrutiny over international funding and engagement in the electoral process.

"While Somaliland prepares for upcoming elections, addressing these preconditions and implementing recommended measures will be essential to ensuring a transparent, inclusive, and credible electoral process that upholds democratic values and promotes public confidence." KII004- Male Participant, Lecturer- University of Hargeisa.

"I suggest that the electoral commission should be fair and balanced among all competing parties and organizations, and should be very cautious while having both a short-term and long-term vision for the electoral process taking place, to eliminate conflicts and misunderstandings. I also recommend that the people of Somaliland, who are hoping for change, should be attentive to the laws and directives of the National Electoral Commission to achieve a fair and legitimate election. Additionally, the public should be prepared for elections to facilitate the commission's work, and the commission should ensure security, especially as ballot boxes are deployed everywhere and they are new to this task." KII014-Male participant, NGO Worker, Erigavo.

"To achieve a trustworthy election, it is crucial that the government conducts the elections on time so that future elections can be trusted. The most important thing is that every incoming president must hold the elections on time to ensure a legitimate election that is trusted and accepted by everyone." KII017 Male participant, Wadani Party, Erigavo.

5   Conclusions

This section of the study describes conclusion of the study as explained in the subsequent sections below:

5.1 Political Landscape

The survey findings offer a comprehensive analysis of public perceptions regarding Somaliland's political landscape and the impending Presidential and party Elections. Notably, no respondents rated their understanding as very bad, suggesting a predominantly positive outlook. In the lead-up to the Presidential and party Elections, the survey reveals diverse opinions on political stability. The varied perspectives highlight a nuanced public sentiment regarding political stability ahead of the elections. Voter participation intentions also vary among respondents indicated a blend of certainty and indecision underscores differing levels of engagement and commitment to the upcoming election, reflecting a complex voter landscape.

Contentment with the political parties involved in the election is predominantly positive. This suggests a general approval of the political options available, though a notable minority expresses dissatisfaction or uncertainty, indicating areas where political parties might need to address public concerns more effectively.

The political landscape in Somaliland leading up to the upcoming elections is characterized by a mix of internal dynamics, challenges, and security concerns, as highlighted by various key informant interviews. The predominant sentiment revolves around the anticipation and potential for instability due to delays in the electoral schedule, originally slated for late 2022. This delay has raised doubts about the democratic process and contributed to political tensions. Clan affiliations continue to play a significant role in shaping Somaliland's political landscape, influencing party alliances and voter sentiments. The main political parties participating in the electoral process are Kulmiye, Waddani, and UCID. Each party has distinct strengths and weaknesses that shape its role and influence within the political arena.

Specific grievances and tensions among different clans or communities pose potential challenges to the electoral process. Respondents expressed concerns about clan rivalries and the spread of misinformation, which could exacerbate social divisions and impact voter turnout or electoral outcomes. As Somaliland prepares for its upcoming elections amidst a complex political landscape, addressing these grievances and tensions through proactive measures will be essential to ensuring a credible, inclusive, and peaceful electoral process.

5.2 Potential Risks and Threats

The survey results revealed a complex array of perceived sources of tension that could impact the upcoming elections in Somaliland. Half of the respondents identified issues related to the ruling party as a potential source of tension. Other potential sources of conflict include historical conflicts, clan rivalries, and disputes over leadership within clans as well as external influences, such as agreements between Somaliland and Ethiopia, highlighting the multifaceted nature of perceived threats.

Concerns about specific risks were also prominent. Respondents expressed worries about delays in the electoral process, electoral fraud, and clan-based conflicts as a potential disruptor. These findings underscore the vulnerabilities and challenges perceived by the respondents, which could affect the integrity and success of the electoral process.

Regarding the potential for civil unrest or violence, the survey revealed that respondents had minimal concerns although some respondents were very concerned about the possibility of civil unrest or violence during the elections. These varied perspectives reflect differing levels of anxiety about the stability of the electoral period.

Key informant interviews provided additional insights into the potential risks and threats that could undermine the elections' credibility and integrity. Concerns were raised about security vulnerabilities in the Eastern regions, financial constraints, and electoral law violations. Specific areas like Caynabo, Oog, and Ceerigabo were highlighted as particularly vulnerable due to historical clan tensions. The lack of experience of the electoral commission in certain regions and budgetary constraints further compounded these risks. Despite these challenges, proactive measures such as enhanced security protocols and transparency in electoral operations are seen as crucial to ensuring a credible electoral outcome.

5.3 Security Situation

The survey data provides a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the current security situation in Somaliland, particularly as it relates to the upcoming presidential and party elections. A significant portion of respondents noted that the overall security situation is good. However, some respondents indicated that the current security is poor. This general perception of security varies considerably across different regions, reflecting a mixed outlook on safety during the election period. The regions of Sanaag and Sool are perceived as particularly vulnerable to insecurity. These regional perceptions underscore the diverse security dynamics that could influence the electoral process in Somaliland.

Specific incidents, such as contentious media broadcasts on August 25, 2023, which heightened tensions among opposition parties in the Gacan Libax Mountains, reflect underlying security concerns. The general security situation is described as stable but with notable tensions, particularly in the Sool regions. Unresolved issues in Sool and Sanaag, concerns about the alignment of electoral process documents with Somaliland's laws, and potential adversaries posing threats to stability further compound these issues. While there have been no reports of ballot box theft, the possibility of security threats remains if electoral agreements are disrupted.

The security environment in Somaliland is generally stable, there are significant regional and clan-based tensions that could impact the electoral process. Proactive measures, including enhanced security protocols, transparency in the electoral process, and strategic community engagement, are essential to ensure a peaceful and credible election outcome. Addressing these potential risks and threats through coordinated efforts will be crucial in maintaining stability and public confidence during the upcoming elections.

5.4 Media Landscape in Somaliland

The current media landscape in Somaliland is characterized by challenges such as misinformation, selective reporting, and media outlets with political biases. Key informants noted issues of harassment and arrest of journalists, affecting media freedom and potentially the fairness of electoral reporting. While efforts have been made to enforce ethical guidelines and codes of conduct, adherence remains inconsistent, contributing to ongoing concerns about the media's role in elections.

Despite the critical role of the media in disseminating information and shaping public opinion, challenges such as intimidation, legal restrictions, and ownership influence persist. Addressing these issues through enhanced regulatory frameworks and promoting ethical journalism practices is crucial for safeguarding media freedom and ensuring a transparent electoral process in Somaliland. Ensuring a fair and credible election also requires an independent electoral commission, sufficient security measures, transparent ballot boxes, observer engagement, civic education, and well-trained election officials.

5.5 Inclusion and Integrity of Electoral process

The findings revealed varied perceptions about the inclusivity of the electoral process in Somaliland. The study highlighted a divide in public perception regarding inclusivity in Somaliland's elections where some respondents believed there is inclusivity while some participants noted that women, youths, PWDs and minority groups are not equally represented in electoral process in the country.

There was a strong consensus on the importance of promoting the participation of women, minorities, and marginalized groups. This widespread acknowledgment underscores the recognition of the crucial role that inclusive participation plays in fostering a democratic environment in Somaliland, suggesting a public mandate for more inclusive electoral policies.

However, concerns about the integrity of the electoral process, particularly regarding card duplication, were notable. Awareness of underage individuals being issued electoral cards and political parties buying cards from voters also varied, reflecting mixed levels of confidence and awareness about potential electoral irregularities. These issues highlight ongoing challenges and underscore the need for measures to enhance transparency and trust in the electoral system.

Finally, the efforts to enhance the inclusiveness of the electoral process in Somaliland must prioritize addressing existing disparities in representation and participation among various societal groups. Despite comprising the majority of voters, women continue to face significant barriers to achieving adequate political representation. Similarly, minority and marginalized groups encounter challenges in both representation and voter turnout, reflecting broader societal inequalities. To promote inclusivity, comprehensive measures should be implemented to tackle legal, social, and economic barriers that limit these groups' opportunities to engage meaningfully in the political process. By fostering an environment that ensures equal access and participation, Somaliland can strengthen its democratic foundations and enhance the legitimacy of its electoral outcomes.

6 Recommendations

- The civil society organizations should sensitize minority groups include women, PLWDs, IDPs to participate in the upcoming political parties and presidential elections in Somaliland;
- The Ministry of Interior and Security should and increasing the number of security personnel in Eastern regions of Somaliland during the electoral process;
- NEC should conduct fair and transparent electoral processes to build trust amongst the general public and political aspirants across the country;
- The political associations and presidential candidates should be ready to be willing to accept the election results to minimize possible clan unrest;
- NEC should ensure equality during the voting process by providing the required electoral gears and staffs to all pulling stations across the country without delay;
- NEC should be transparent, implement BVR, and foster consensus among political parties on election dates and procedures.

- NEC should form committees and task forces dedicated to overseeing electoral preparations and ensuring adherence to established protocols, which are crucial steps to safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process.
- Political parties should embrace inclusivity by ensuring adequate representation of all women, youths, and minority groups in high-ranking political positions, building trust among stakeholders, and demonstrating fairness in the party electoral process.
- NEC should conduct civic education and voter awareness to mitigate misinformation and empower voters to make informed decisions for upcoming presidential and party elections.
- NEC should allocate resources to support the implementation of conflict resolution measures through inclusive dialogue forums in all regions of the country to promote stability, transparency, and unity among political parties and clan tensions, especially in the eastern regions of Somaliland.
- NEC should strengthen existing security awareness efforts by coordinating with the security forces and fostering dialogue among community leaders, political parties, and civil society organizations.
- The government should allocate adequate resources to deploy additional security personnel, including police and military forces, in vulnerable areas such as polling stations, counting centers, and areas prone to clan conflicts. This presence should aim to deter violence, protect voters and election personnel, and maintain public order.
- NEC should recruit professional electoral experts from external sources, such as Interpeace, to supplement the current team's expertise and ensure a smooth electoral process.
- NEC should invite international observers to monitor the electoral process. This would enhance transparency by providing an additional layer of oversight, contribute to the credibility of the electoral outcomes, and promote adherence to international electoral standards.
- NEC should promote media freedom and ensure responsible reporting during the electoral period by encouraging media independence, reinforcing ethical standards through signed codes of conduct, and enhancing awareness among media practitioners about their role in promoting peace and electoral integrity.
- The SOLJA should liaise with the NEC to conduct regular training programs for journalists on ethical reporting practices, fact-checking techniques, and the responsible use of sources to promote professional standards in reporting the election process in Somaliland.

List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this survey. The main purpose of the risk assessment is to assess the potential risks pre- and post-election and to identify potential risks and threats to the electoral process, including political tensions, and grievances among clans that could result in violent conflict.

Anonymity: Despite the information being noted down, I would like to assure you that the information collected will be anonymous. The data collected will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. Please answer as accurately as possible and truthfully. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so; however please try to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.

We appreciate your consideration to take part in this study. The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete.

Do you consent to take part in this survey? 1=Yes [ ], 2= No [ ]

Guiding Questions

S/NO	Questions	Options/Responses	Coding instructions
		Identifiers	
1)	Questionnaire No.	_____	-A maximum of three digits -Mandatory
2)	Date of the interview	____ /____/ _____	-To be picked automatically by tablet --Mandatory
3)	Name of the village		To be typed by the enumerator
4)	Name of the district	1=Berbera, 2=Ainabo	-Single response -Mandatory

		3=Erigavo	
5)	Name of the enumerator		-Single response -Mandatory

Section A: Socio-Demographics Profiles of Répondants

1.1	What is the gender of the respondent?	1. Male 2. Female	-Single response -Mandatory
1.2	What is the level of education of the respondent?	1. None 2. Primary 3. Secondary 4. College 5. University	Single response -Mandatory
1.3	What is the age of the respondent in completed years?	1. 15-25 years 2. 25-35 years 3. 35-45 years 4. 45-55 years 5. 55-65 years 6. 65 years and above	Single response -Mandatory
1.4	What is your occupation?	1. Students 2. Manual labour 3. Private Sector worker 4. Government employee 5. Self-employed/business owner 6. Not employed	Single response -Mandatory
1.5 a)	Are you currently living with a disability?	1. Yes 2. No	-Single response -Mandatory If YES answer Q

			1.5 b. If NO, skip to Q 2.1
b)	If Yes, What type of disability?	1- Vision Impairment/ Garoonka aragtida 2- Deaf or hard of hearing/ Buuxda 3- Mental health conditions/ Xaaladaha caafimaadka mac 4- Intellectual disability/ Naafada aqoonsiga 5- -Physical disability/ Naafada jirka 7-Other (specify)	-Single response -Mandatory
1.6	Do you belong to a minority clan in your community?	1. Yes 2. No	-Single response -Mandatory

SECTION B: Understanding of the Political Landscape

2.1	What is the current situation of the politics in Somaliland in relation to the upcoming Presidential Elections?	1. Stable 2. Not stable 3. Somehow stable	-Single response -Mandatory
2.2	Are you going to participate in the upcoming Presidential and Political Parties Election?	1. No 2. Not sure 3. Yes	Single response -Mandatory
2.2	Are you contented with the 3 political parties that are going to participate in the upcoming election process?	1. No 2. Not sure 3. Yes	-Multiple response -Mandatory
2.3	Do you believe there are political tensions among different entities or clans/communities that could impact the upcoming presidential and political parties elections in Somaliland	1. Yes 2. Not sure 3. No	Single response -Mandatory
2.4	What do you think can be the major	1. Ruling party Interference 2. Historical conflicts	Multiple response

	determinant of political parties' tension ahead of upcoming election process?	3. Clan rivalries 4. Leadership disputes among political parties 5. External influences (e.g., MOU of Somaliland and Ethiopia) 6. Recent incidents of violence in the Eastern regions 7. Lack of trust in the electoral system/ Government policies/Xeer/Law	-Mandatory

Section C: Assessing Potential Risks and Threats

3.1	Do you think there are potential risks or challenges you foresee in the upcoming elections?	1. Yes 2. Not sure 3. No	Single response -Mandatory
3.2	What is the main cause of potential risks and threats in the upcoming political parties and presidential elections in the country?	1. Delays in the electoral process 2. Electoral fraud 3. Limited civic education 4. Lack of trust in the electoral commission 5. Disputes over voter registration 6. Insecurity in certain regions 7. Interference from political actors 8. Inadequate resources for election management.	Multiple response -Mandatory
3.3	How concerned are you about the potential for civil unrest or violence during the electoral period?	1. Concern 2. Somehow concern 3. Not concerned	Single response -Mandatory

Section D: Examining Security Situation

4.1	In your opinion, how would you rate the current security situation in Somaliland?	1. Good 2. Fair 3. Poor	-Single response -Mandatory
4.2	Which regions of Somaliland are more prone to insecurity during the political parties and presidential election period?	1. Maroodijex 2. Awdal 3. Sahil 4. Togdheer 5. Sool 6. Sanaag	Multiple response -Mandatory

4.3	Do you believe that security threats could impact the electoral process in certain regions of Somaliland?	1. Yes 2. Not sure 3. No	Single response -Mandatory
4.4	What are the main causes of security threats or concerns that could impact the electoral process?	1. Political violence 2. Clan violence 3. Armed conflict 4. Misinformation campaigns 5. Criminal activities (e.g., banditry, theft) 6. Attacks on polling stations	Multiple response -Mandatory
Section E: Evaluating Media and Freedom of Speech			
5.1	How would you rate the freedom of media and speech in Somaliland?	1. Good 2. Fair 3. Poor	Single response -Mandatory
5.2	How would you describe the role of the media in shaping public opinion during the electoral period?	1. Influential 2. Neutral 3. Not influential	Single response -Mandatory
5.3	Do you think there will be cases of media censorship or harassment of journalists in relation to the upcoming political parties and presidential elections?	1. No 2. Not sure 3. Yes	Single response -Mandatory
Section F: Enhancing Inclusivity and Integrity			
6.1	Do you believe the electoral process in Somaliland is inclusive of all citizens?	1. No 2. Not sure 3. Yes	Single response -Mandatory
6.2	Do you think the participation of women, minorities, PLWD, and marginalized groups are being promoted in the electoral process?	1. No 2. Not sure 3. Yes	Single response -Mandatory

6.3	How do you think civil societies can support the participation of women, minorities, and marginalized groups to actively take part in the in the electoral process?	1. Organizing training workshops 2. Conduct civic education 3. Organize open dialogue forums 4. Conduct sanitization and awareness raising using media platforms	Multiple response -Mandatory

Appendix 11: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Description of Identifiers	Response Section
Name of the Facilitator	
Name of the Note-taker	
Name of the district	
Name of the village/ community	
Date of interview:	
Number of FGD participants	
FGD Code	

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this FGD. You have been asked to participate as your point of view is important. We realize you are busy and I appreciate your time.

Introduction: We are (1) ---------and (2) ----------   and on behalf   of CDG team, we are conducting pre-election survey in your community.

This FGD will take no more than 1hr 30 minutes, and I will be taking notes on what we are discussing.

Anonymity: Despite the discussion being noted down, I would like to assure you that the discussion will be anonymous. The notes will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. Please answer as accurately as possible and truthfully. If there are any questions or discussions that you do not wish to answer or participate in, you do not have to do so; however please try to answer the questions to the best of your knowledge.

Ground rules

a) The most important rule is that only one person speaks at a time. There may be a temptation to jump in when someone is talking but please wait until they have finished.
b) There are no right or wrong answers.
c) You do not have to speak in any particular order.
d) When you do have something to say, please do so. There are many of you in the group and it is important that I obtain the views of each of you.
e) You do not have to agree with the views of other people in the group
f) Does anyone have any questions? (Answers). OK, let's begin. I will be facilitating the discussion sessions and my colleague will taking notes.

Guiding Questions

1. How can you describe the current political landscape ahead of the upcoming political parties and presidential elections in Somaliland?
2. What are the key factors contributing to these potential risks or threats?
3. How would you describe the current security situation in Somaliland, particularly in areas where there is a likelihood of security tension during the electoral process?
4. Are there any specific security threats or concerns that you believe could affect the electoral process, such as violent conflict or intimidation?
5. What measures are currently in place to address these security threats, and do you think they are sufficient?
6. What is your assessment of the current media landscape in Somaliland, particularly in terms of freedom of speech and independence in transmission of electoral process?
7. How do you perceive the role of the media in shaping public opinion and facilitating informed decision-making during the electoral period?
8. How can you describe the level of participation of the following groups (women, minorities, PLWD, and marginalized groups) are being promoted in the electoral process?
9. How do you think civil societies can support the participation of women, minorities, and marginalized groups to actively take part in the in the electoral process?
10. What is your additional recommendation for ensuring free, fair, and credible elections in Somaliland?

Appendix III: Key Informant Interview Guide

Description of Identifiers	Response Section
Interviewer's name:	
Position of the Key Informant	
Name of the Institution:	
Name of the district	
Date of interview:	

Welcome and thank you for volunteering to take part in this KII. You have been asked to participate as you are a key stakeholder in the Pre-Election survey in your district.

This KII will take no more than 45 minutes, and I will be taking notes on what we are discussing.

Anonymity: Despite the discussion being noted down, I would like to assure you that the discussion will be anonymous. The notes will contain no information that would allow individual subjects to be linked to specific statements. Please answer as accurately and truthfully as possible.

Guiding Questions

1. How can you describe the current political landscape ahead of the upcoming political parties and presidential elections in Somaliland?
2. What are the key factors contributing to these potential risks or threats?
3. How would you describe the current security situation in Somaliland, particularly in areas where there is a likelihood of security tension during the electoral process?
4. Are there any specific security threats or concerns that you believe could affect the electoral process, such as violent conflict or intimidation?
5. What measures are currently in place to address these security threats, and do you think they are sufficient?
6. What is your assessment of the current media landscape in Somaliland, particularly in terms of freedom of speech and independence in transmission of electoral process?
7. How do you perceive the role of the media in shaping public opinion and facilitating informed decision-making during the electoral period?
8. How can you describe the level of participation of the following groups (women, minorities, PLWD, and marginalized groups) are being promoted in the electoral process?
9. How do you think civil societies can support the participation of women, minorities, and marginalized groups to actively take part in the in the electoral process?
10. What is your additional recommendation for ensuring free, fair, and credible elections in Somaliland?