

## PRESS RELEASE

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**Issued by:** The 2026 Aspiring Candidates Platform

**Title:** Concerns and Recommendations Regarding the Replacement of the Existing Voter Registration System in Somaliland

The 2026 Aspiring Candidates Platform, composed of over 450 prospective candidates from all regions of the Republic of Somaliland, expresses deep concern over the proposed plan to replace the current voter registration system especially at a time when the country is preparing for the upcoming local council and parliamentary elections.

For the past 25 years, Somaliland has peacefully conducted more than nine elections using a voter registration system that has been continuously improved. This system has cost more than \$50 million and is regularly updated every six months prior to elections.

The current voter registration process is fully implemented in all six regions of Somaliland, including Eastern Sanaag, Eastern Sool, and the Buhoodle district. This coverage stands as evidence of Somaliland's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Our primary concern with the proposed new registration system is that it could exclude areas of the country that are currently fully registered. This may result in the disenfranchisement of large populations, create political instability, and threaten the unity and borders of Somaliland.

**We would also like to highlight the following issues that demonstrate a lack of preparedness for replacing the current voter registration system:**

- The 2025 national budget does not allocate any funds for a complete overhaul of the voter registration system.
- The estimated cost of implementing a new system is close to \$15 million, and there is no clarity on the source of this funding.
- There is insufficient time to roll out a completely new voter registration process from scratch, especially given the proximity of the upcoming elections.
- The proposed changes risk creating public distrust and perceptions of deliberate exclusion of regions like Eastern Sool, Eastern Sanaag, and parts of Buhoodle District, which are currently registered.
- The shift could be viewed by citizens as a political maneuver to manipulate votes or serve specific interests.

### Recommendations and Suggestions

In light of these concerns, the 2026 Aspiring Candidates Platform strongly recommends the following:

- The decision to replace the current voter registration system should be halted until comprehensive consultations are conducted, and the 2026 elections are completed.
- A broad national consultation should be initiated, involving political parties, civil society organizations, the media, religious leaders, traditional elders, and community stakeholders to determine a well-considered and timely path forward.
- An independent technical assessment of the current system should be conducted to identify and fix existing flaws, instead of abruptly replacing the system.
- The upcoming elections should proceed using the current voter registry, with necessary technical improvements made beforehand.
- The gains made in voter registration across all parts of the country especially border areas should be preserved and protected.
- Community sentiments, particularly those from potentially affected regions, should be respected and taken seriously.
- National cohesion and sovereignty must be safeguarded to prevent fragmentation and internal division.

The 2026 Aspiring Candidates Platform believes that any changes to the electoral system must be consultative, deliberate, and trustworthy. Hasty decisions risk undermining Somaliland's democratic process and territorial integrity and could seriously harm national unity.

We therefore call upon all relevant stakeholders especially the President of the Republic of Somaliland, the National Electoral Commission, Parliament, political parties, and the broader public to protect public confidence by prioritizing stability, transparency, and inclusive participation.

Finally, we respectfully request a meeting with the President of the Republic of Somaliland, H.E. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdiillahi (Irro), and have selected a small delegation from the Platform to represent our concerns in line with our constitutional rights as citizens.

**End**