



# LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

UNDER PRESIDENT  
HASSAN SHEIKH MOHAMUD

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A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT  
OF SOMALIA'S PROGRESS



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## Leadership and Governance Under President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud : A Critical Assessment of Somalia's Progress

### Executive Summary

This survey explores the perceptions of the Somali community regarding the leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. The findings, based on responses from 1,264 individuals, provide valuable insights into public opinion across various critical areas, including governance, security, economic development, national unity, foreign policy, and public trust. This data sheds light on the Somali people's views on how effectively President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has handled key national issues, highlighting areas of dissatisfaction, concern, and skepticism, as well as the expectations for future leadership. The survey's results reflect a complex and multifaceted public opinion, showcasing both the challenges and the expectations placed on President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's administration. The analysis reveals significant dissatisfaction in areas of governance, security, and economic management, with many respondents expressing concerns over corruption, transparency, and the president's handling of internal and external conflicts.

## Key Points

- 1** General Discontent with Leadership: The majority of respondents (55%) rated President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's overall performance as poor, indicating significant dissatisfaction with his leadership.
- 2** Weak National Unity Efforts: 85% of respondents felt that the president's efforts to promote national unity and reconciliation were ineffective, suggesting a lack of success in bridging political and social divides.
- 3** Corruption Concerns: A large portion of respondents (84%) doubt the president's ability to be free from corruption, reflecting widespread skepticism about his administration's transparency.
- 4** Ineffective Security Management: 77% of people felt the president has not effectively managed Somalia's security situation, under-lining concerns about the country's stability and safety.
- 5** Economic Discontent: 87% of respondents were dissatisfied with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's efforts to improve the economy and create job opportunities, pointing to concerns about economic progress under his leadership.
- 6** Lack of Transparency: 88% of people believed that the president does not make national decisions in a transparent and consultative manner, indicating a lack of trust in the decision-making process.
- 7** Handling of Ethiopia-Somaliland Tensions: A majority of 70% felt the president poorly managed the diplomatic tensions with Ethiopia and Somaliland, suggesting dissatisfaction with his foreign policy approach.
- 8** Conflict in SSC-Khaatumo and Somaliland: 76% of respondents felt that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud mismanaged the conflict between SSC-Khaatumo and Somaliland, pointing to concerns over his handling of internal conflicts.
- 9** Opposition to Foreign Security Agreements: 80% of respondents opposed the president's approach to signing security agreements with foreign countries like Turkey, Egypt, and the UAE, reflecting concerns about foreign influence on Somalia's national security.
- 10** Skepticism Over Electoral Reform: 88% of respondents do not expect the implementation of one-person, one-vote elections during President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's term, highlighting a lack of confidence in electoral reforms.





## Introduction

Somalia has experienced decades of political instability, armed conflict, economic hardship, and governance challenges. Since the collapse of the central government in 1991, the country has undergone various transitional processes aimed at restoring state institutions, fostering national reconciliation, and building a functioning democracy. Despite some progress, issues such as insecurity, corruption, weak institutions, and fragmented political structures continue to hinder Somalia's path to peace and development.

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who was re-elected in May 2022 for a second non-consecutive term, returned to power amid high public expectations for change and reform. His leadership has faced a complex landscape marked by internal political divisions, ongoing security threats from Al-Shabaab, economic instability, and foreign diplomatic pressures—most notably the controversial Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland.

The president's policy agenda has included efforts to improve national security, promote economic growth, advance electoral reform (particularly the transition to a one-person, one-vote system), and enhance Somalia's position in regional and international diplomacy. However, the degree to which these efforts have resonated with or benefited the public remains a critical question.

This research aims to explore the perceptions and opinions of ordinary Somali citizens regarding the leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Through a survey conducted with 1,264 respondents from across different regions and demographics, the study assesses public sentiment on a range of key governance areas including security, economy, anti-corruption, national unity, foreign policy, constitutional reform, and electoral expectations.

By analyzing this data, the research seeks to provide a grounded understanding of the public's trust, satisfaction, and concerns regarding the current administration. It also offers valuable insights into the priorities and expectations of the Somali people as the country continues to navigate its complex political journey. The findings serve as a vital tool for policymakers, civil society, and international partners working to support Somalia's democratic transition and state-building efforts.



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## Research Limitation

This study, based on primary data gathered directly from the population, faces several key limitations:

- 1. Data Accessibility and Reliability:** Although primary data was collected from the population, certain areas in Somalia remain difficult to access due to security concerns, and some data may still be incomplete or unreliable, which could affect the overall reliability of the findings.
- 2. Political Sensitivity and Bias:** The political environment in Somalia is highly sensitive, and responses from the population may be influenced by personal or political biases, which can impact the objectivity of the data and the interpretation of governance under President Mohamud.
- 3. Financial Constraints:** Limited financial resources constrained the scope of the research, particularly in terms of fieldwork and the ability to reach a broader population across various regions of Somalia, potentially limiting the comprehensiveness of the study.

## Research Scope

This research focuses on assessing public perceptions of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's leadership. The data was collected from 1,264 individuals between February 1, 2025, and May 20, 2025, covering respondents residing in various federal member states of Somalia including Puntland, Somaliland, Jubaland, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, South West, SSC-Khaatumo, and Banadir as well as members of the Somali diaspora living outside the country. The study aims to capture a diverse and representative snapshot of Somali citizens' views on key areas of governance, including security, economic development, national unity, transparency, and foreign policy. The research will primarily draw on primary data collected from the population to understand the public's perception of leadership, governance, and the progress made during President Mohamud's tenure. Secondary data, including reports from international organizations and government publications, will also be used to supplement the primary findings.



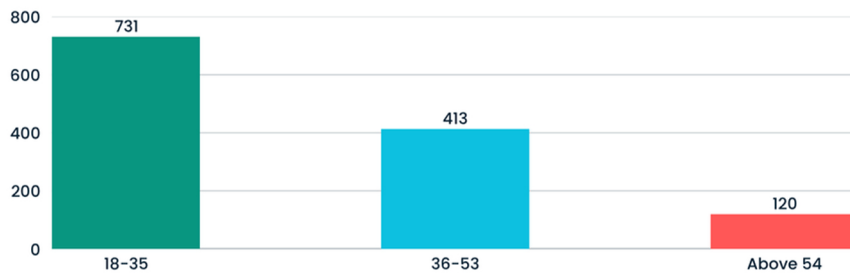
## Ethical Consideration

Before initiating this research, we ensured that all ethical considerations were rigorously addressed by submitting our study proposal to the Internal Ethics Review Board (IERB). The board thoroughly assessed our research design, methods, to confirm they aligned with ethical standards and safeguarded participants' rights. Following their review, the board granted approval, affirming that the research adheres to the principles of respect, beneficence, and justice. This approval underscores our commitment to conducting the study in a responsible and ethical manner, prioritizing the welfare and confidentiality of all participants.

## Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was utilized in this study. Initially, questionnaires were designed to gather data from the targeted participants. The collected data was then carefully cleaned and analyzed. Furthermore, prominent figures within the Somali community were consulted to offer expert insights and recommendations based on the analyzed data. This inclusive methodology was designed to provide a well-rounded understanding of the research topic and integrate important perspectives from community leaders.

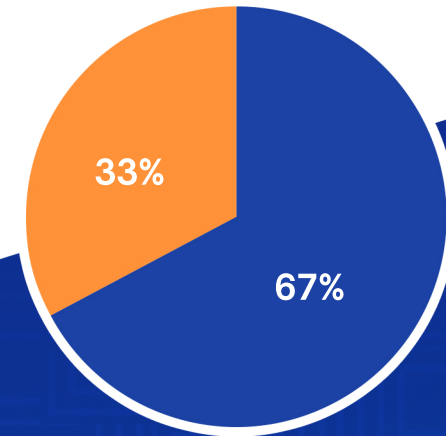
## Age Distribution



Source: Primary Data, 2025

The participation of both male (67%) and female (33%) respondents demonstrates that the research was inclusive, capturing perspectives from both genders. This gender representation ensures that the views and perceptions regarding Somali leadership are reflective of the broader society and incorporate insights from both men and women. By engaging both genders in the survey, the study allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how different segments of the population view the leadership of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud. Gender dynamics can influence perspectives on governance, security, and economic development, and this balanced representation ensures that the analysis captures a diverse range of experiences and expectations. As such, the findings offer a more holistic view of public opinion, highlighting the importance of considering both male and female viewpoints in evaluating national leadership.

## Gender



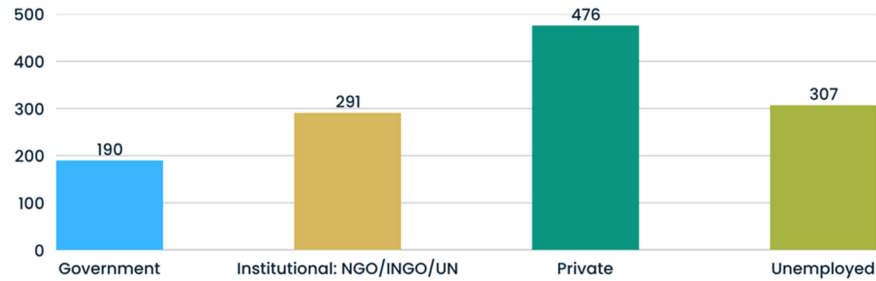
Source: Primary Data, 2025

Female Male

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## Employment Distribution



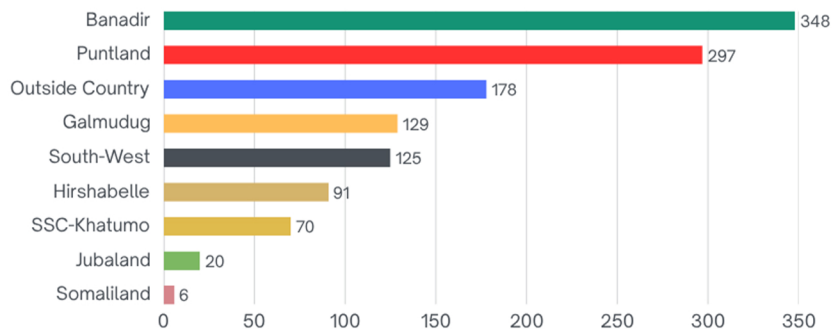
Source: Primary Data, 2025

The data reveals that 38% of respondents are employed in the private sector as businesspeople, highlighting a significant portion of the population that is likely focused on economic stability, investment opportunities, and government support for entrepreneurship. Of respondents 23% are employed in institutional roles, such as NGOs, INGOs, or the UN, indicating a group that may be more attuned to policy issues, international exposure, and development initiatives.

15% of respondents work in the government sector, offering insights from individuals within the public sector who may have a unique perspective on governance, policy implementation, and public service delivery. Meanwhile, 24% of respondents are unemployed, which suggests that issues such as job creation, economic hardship, and youth employment are likely to be central concerns in the overall assessment of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's leadership.

This employment distribution underscores the diverse professional backgrounds of the respondents and highlights the range of concerns, from economic growth and job creation to public policy and international engagement, that could influence perceptions of leadership in Somalia.

## Residence Distribution



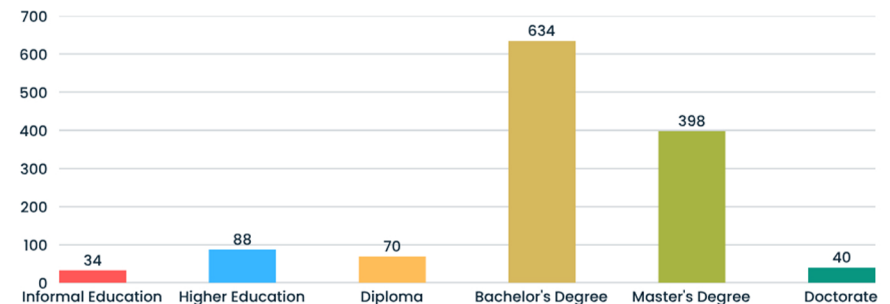
Source: Primary Data, 2025

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## Education Distribution



Source: Primary Data, 2025

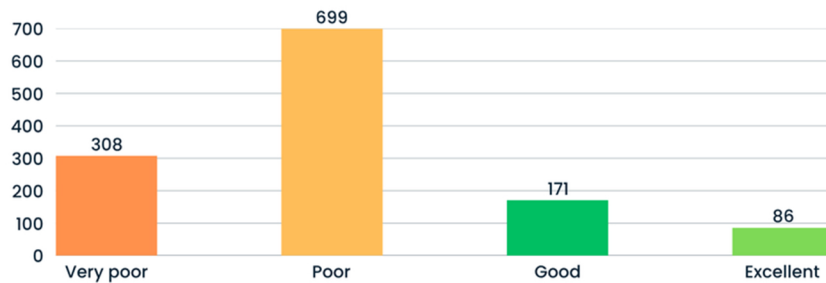
The respondent pool reflects a high level of education, with 84% of participants holding at least a Bachelor's degree or higher (50% with a Bachelor's, 31% with a Master's, and 3% with a Doctorate). This indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of individuals with strong educational backgrounds, which is likely to influence their perspectives on governance, leadership, and policy performance. These respondents are well-equipped to engage with complex political and economic issues and offer informed opinions based on their academic experiences.

A smaller portion of respondents reported having informal education (3%), with 13% having completed education below the Bachelor's level (3% with informal education, 6% with a Diploma, and 7% with unspecified higher education). While this group represents a smaller proportion of the sample, their perspectives still contribute valuable insights, particularly in understanding diverse educational backgrounds within Somali society.

Given the educational profile of the respondents, the sample likely includes individuals from diaspora communities and urban centers, who are often more involved in discussions about politics, governance, and national reforms. This highly educated group is likely to prioritize issues such as institutional reform, anti-corruption, education policy, and democratic accountability when evaluating President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's leadership.



## How would you rate the overall performance of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in leading Somalia?

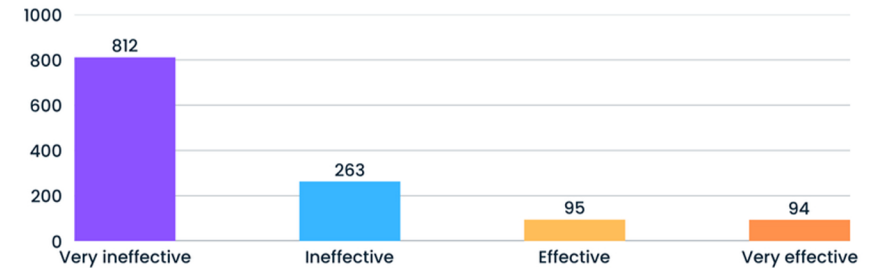


Source: Primary Data, 2025

Out of the total respondents, 308 people (24%) rated President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's leadership as "Very Poor," and 699 people (55%) rated it as "Poor." Meanwhile, 171 respondents (14%) considered his performance "Good," and 86 respondents (7%) rated it as "Excellent." Meanwhile, 14% (171 people) rated his performance as "Good," possibly acknowledging efforts in diplomacy or reform, even if results are slow to materialize. A smaller group 7% (86 people) saw his leadership as "Excellent," perhaps hopeful about the president's long-term vision or satisfied with specific areas like foreign policy or institution-building.

The data clearly shows that the majority 79% in total expressed dissatisfaction with the president's leadership. This widespread sentiment likely reflects growing public frustration with ongoing challenges such as insecurity, high unemployment, and slow progress on promised reforms. For many, day-to-day life remains difficult, and the lack of visible improvement in basic services, livelihoods, and national stability contributes to a sense of disappointment. These ratings suggest that a large portion of the population feels unheard or left behind, with expectations for leadership and governance unmet. The frustration seen in the responses may not only stem from current hardships but also from a sense of lost hope in political promises and the urgent desire for real, lasting change that directly impacts their lives.

## How would you rate President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's efforts in promoting national unity and reconciliation within Somalia?



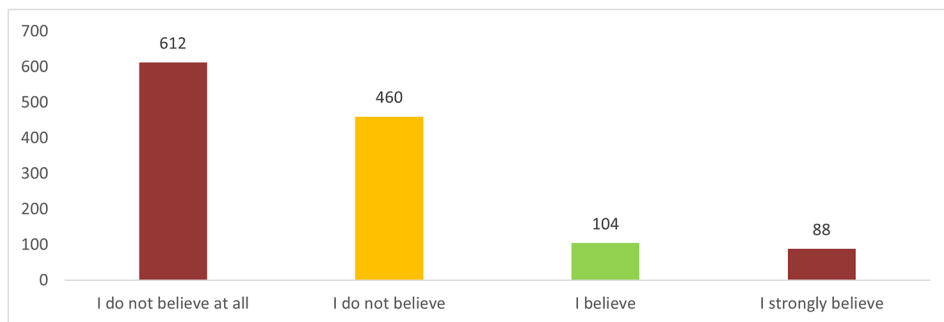
Source: Primary Data, 2025

Out of the total respondents, 812 individuals (64%) rated President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's efforts in promoting national unity and reconciliation as "Very Ineffective," and 263 individuals (21%) said they were "Ineffective." In contrast, only 95 respondents (8%) considered the efforts "Effective," while 94 respondents (7%) viewed them as "Very Effective."

These numbers clearly show that 85% of the participants believe the president has not been successful in uniting the country. This strong sense of dissatisfaction likely stems from unresolved political tensions, continued division among federal and regional states, and feelings of exclusion in national decision-making. For many Somalis, national unity is not just a political slogan it touches on real, lived experiences. It reflects whether people feel equally represented, heard, and included, regardless of where they live or which community they belong to. The data reveals a deep yearning for reconciliation, but also a shared frustration that this vision has yet to be fully realized in practice.



## Do you believe President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is free from Corruption?



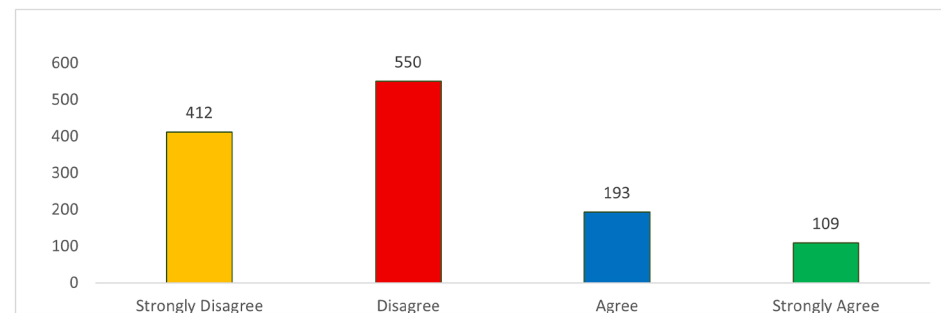
Source : Primary data, 2025

In response to whether President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is free from corruption, 612 respondents (48%) said they "do not believe at all," while 460 respondents (36%) stated "I do not believe." Meanwhile, 104 individuals (8%) answered "I believe," and 88 respondents (7%) said they "strongly believe" he is free from corruption. This means a total of 1,072 respondents (84%) expressed some level of distrust regarding the president's integrity, compared to just 192 respondents (15%) who expressed trust.

The majority of respondents, more than four out of every five, do not believe that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud is free from corruption. This overwhelming response points to a deeply rooted perception among the public that the current administration lacks transparency and accountability. For many, this belief may stem from real-life frustrations, such as limited access to basic services, perceived favoritism in government appointments, and a lack of clarity around the use of public funds or foreign aid. These are not just political opinions but reflections of lived experience where corruption is seen not as a distant issue, but as something that directly affects citizens' livelihoods and opportunities.

This significant trust deficit indicates a critical challenge for the president and his administration. Public trust is a cornerstone of legitimate governance, and when the majority believes that leadership is compromised by corruption, it can undermine confidence in institutions, policies, and reforms. The data suggests that people are not only skeptical of leadership but are also yearning for greater honesty, fairness, and openness from those in power. Addressing these concerns will require more than public messaging; it will demand visible action, transparency, and inclusive governance that rebuilds faith in leadership from the ground up.

## Do you believe that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has effectively managed the security situation in Somalia?



Source : Primary data, 2025

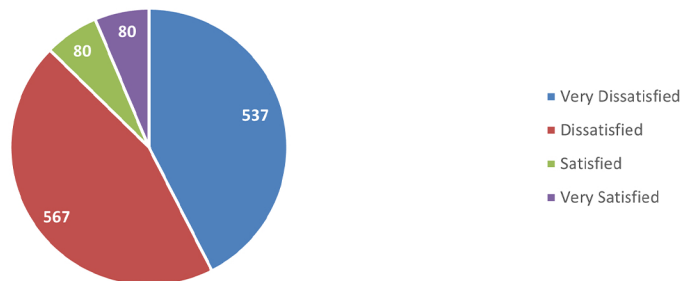
A combined 76% of respondents (962 individuals) expressed a lack of confidence in President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's ability to manage Somalia's security situation. Specifically, 550 people (44%) responded with "Disagree," and 412 people (33%) said they "Strongly Disagree" that he has effectively handled national security. In contrast, 193 respondents (15%) said they "Agree," and 109 respondents (9%) "Strongly Agree" that the president has effectively managed Somalia's security challenges.

These results reveal that the vast majority of the population surveyed, more than three out of every four respondents do not feel that the president's approach to national security has been effective. This widespread disapproval likely reflects the real and ongoing threats that continue to affect Somali citizens every day, including violence from Al-Shabaab, unresolved inter-clan conflicts, and fragile relations between federal and regional forces. For many respondents, the government's statements about reclaiming territories or reforming the security forces may feel distant or incomplete, especially if these efforts haven't translated into safer streets, secure homes, or reliable protection for civilians.

The data does not merely suggest dissatisfaction—it points to a crisis of public confidence in the government's most basic responsibility: ensuring safety. The responses reflect a country where too many people still live in fear, where displacement, armed clashes, or the threat of extremist attacks are part of everyday life.



## How satisfied are you with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's efforts to improve the economy and create job opportunities in Somalia?

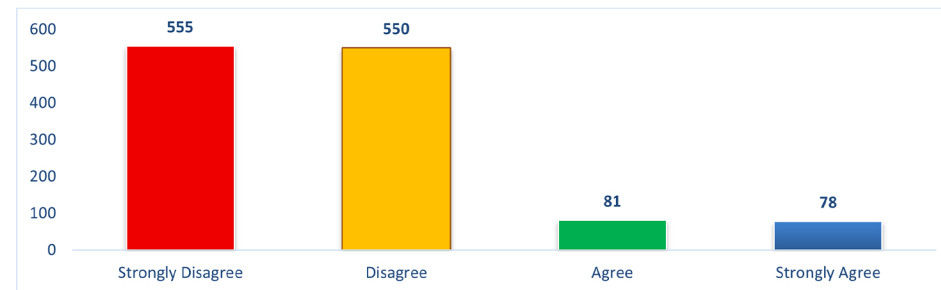


Source : Primary data, 2025

Economic hardship remains a pressing issue for many Somalis, and the survey data powerfully reflects this reality. A total of 1,104 respondents (88%) expressed dissatisfaction with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's efforts to improve the economy and create jobs. 567 individuals (45%) said they were "Dissatisfied," and 537 individuals (42%) said they were "Very Dissatisfied." In contrast, only 160 respondents (12%) reported positive views, with 80 people (6%) saying they were "Satisfied," and another 80 people (6%) indicating they were "Very Satisfied."

This overwhelming dissatisfaction points to real, everyday struggles faced by the population. For many young people, the job market remains inaccessible, with limited formal employment opportunities and growing frustration over unfulfilled promises. Small business owners and informal workers grapple with inflation, insecurity, and lack of infrastructure, while countless families depend on remittances from relatives abroad just to make ends meet. These challenges are not abstract economic terms; they are part of daily life, where survival often outweighs ambition. Despite plans and policy announcements, many Somalis feel that little has translated into tangible improvements in their daily lives. Promises of reform and recovery have yet to materialize in a way that genuinely addresses the widespread poverty, rising cost of living, and limited access to sustainable employment.

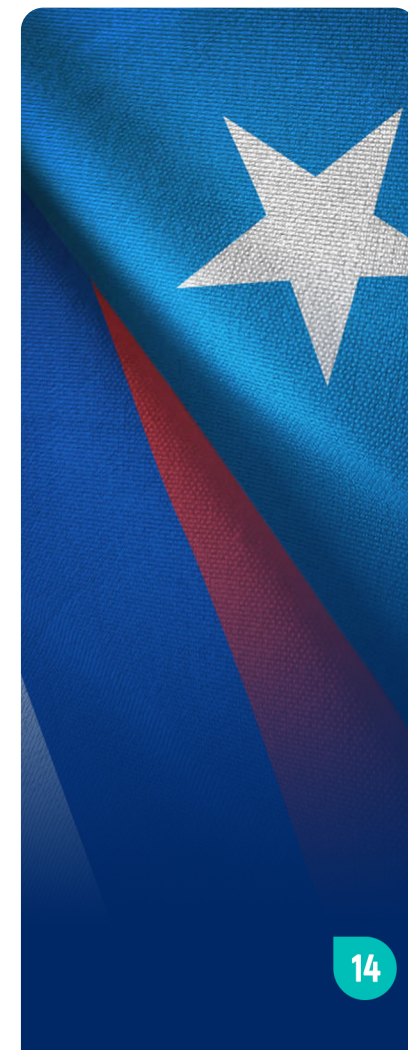
## Do you believe that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud makes critical national decisions in a transparent and consultative manner?



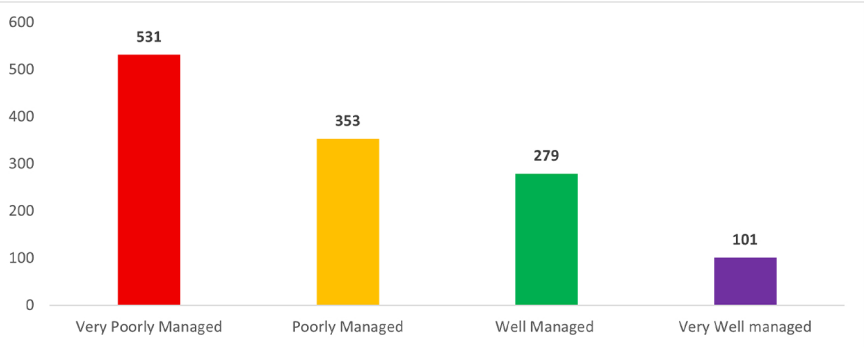
Source : Primary data, 2025

The data shows that 1,105 respondents (88%) expressed a lack of confidence in the transparency and consultative nature of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's decision-making. This includes 555 individuals (44%) who Strongly Disagree and 550 individuals (44%) who Disagree that the president makes critical national decisions transparently or with sufficient consultation. On the other hand, 81 respondents (6%) said they Agree, and 78 respondents (6%) Strongly Agree that his decision-making process is both transparent and inclusive. On the other hand, 81 respondents (6%) Agree and 78 respondents (6%) Strongly Agree that the president's decision-making process is transparent and consultative.

The vast majority of respondents feel excluded from the decisions that shape Somalia's future. Their strong disagreement points to a widespread belief that national issues are often decided behind closed doors, without meaningful involvement from the public, regional leaders, or civil society. This perception can deepen public frustration, weaken trust in leadership, and foster a growing sense of disconnect between the government and its citizens. For many, transparency is not just about access to information—it's about being consulted, listened to, and represented in decisions that affect everyday life.



How do you view the way President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has handled the tension between Somalia and Ethiopia, particularly regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that Ethiopia signed with Somaliland?



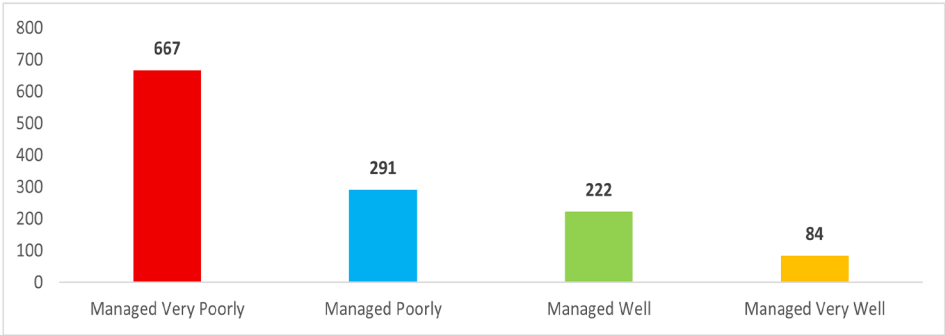
Source : Primary data, 2025

The data reveals a clear division in public opinion regarding President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud’s handling of the tension between Somalia and Ethiopia, particularly in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Ethiopia and Somaliland. Out of 1,264 respondents, 531 individuals (42%) rated the president’s handling as Very Poorly Managed, while 353 individuals (28%) said it was Poorly Managed, bringing the total negative assessment to 884 people (70%). In contrast, 279 respondents (22%) felt the situation was Well Managed, and 101 individuals (8%) rated it as Very Well Managed, representing a combined 30% positive response. However, 279 respondents (22%) believed the issue was “Well Managed,” and 101 (8%) felt it was “Very Well Managed.”

The overwhelming majority of the population see that the issue with Ethiopia was not managed at a national level, reflecting deep public concern over the government’s approach to a matter of sovereignty and national unity. For many respondents, the lack of transparent communication, limited consultation with the Federal Member States, and what they perceive as a delayed or insufficient diplomatic response to Ethiopia’s MoU with Somaliland signaled weak national coordination. This majority view suggests that Somalis expected a more assertive, unified strategy, one that firmly defended Somalia’s territorial integrity while rallying both internal consensus and international backing.



In your opinion, how did President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud handle the conflict between SSC-Khaatumo and Somaliland?



Source : Primary data, 2025

The majority of respondents 958 people (76%) believe that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud handled the SSC-Khaatumo and Somaliland conflict either poorly or very poorly. This strong sentiment likely reflects a sense of neglect or inadequate federal response at a time when civilians in the region were facing displacement, violence, and uncertainty. For many, the president’s actions may have seemed slow, limited, or overly cautious in addressing a long-standing struggle for recognition and autonomy.

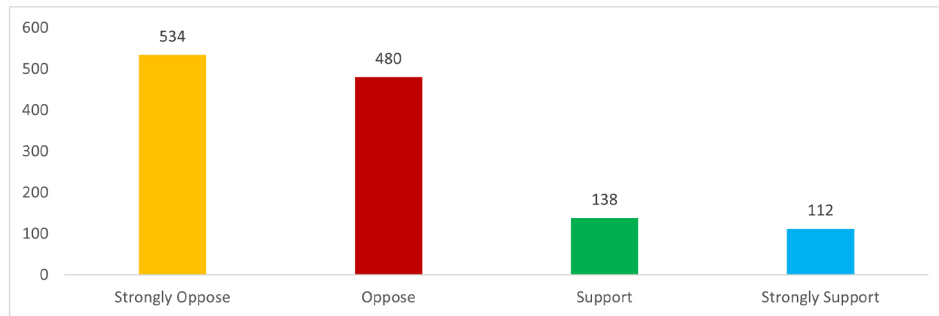
On the other hand, 222 respondents (18%) said the conflict was managed well, and 84 (7%) felt it was very well managed. These individuals may have seen the president’s handling as a necessary balancing act in a politically sensitive environment—one that required diplomacy and restraint.

Overall, the data reveals a population that feels the government has not done enough to protect or empower SSC-Khaatumo, highlighting the emotional and political weight the issue carries across Somalia.





## What is your opinion on the approach President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud takes when signing security agreements with foreign countries such as Turkey, Egypt, the UAE, Qatar, and others?



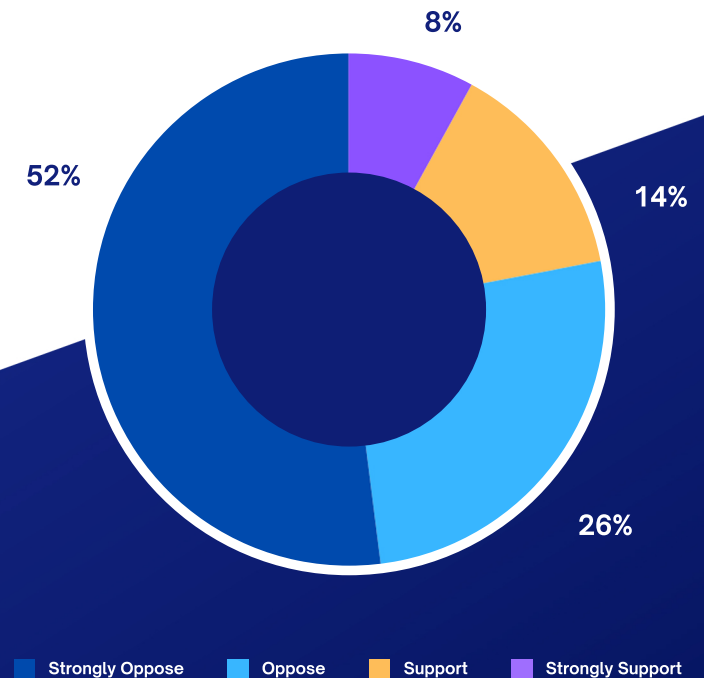
Source : Primary data, 2025

A clear majority of respondents 1,014 out of 1,264 people (80%) either strongly oppose (42% / 534 people) or oppose (38% / 480 people) President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's approach to signing security agreements with foreign nations like Turkey, Egypt, the UAE, and Qatar. This reflects deep public concern over sovereignty, lack of transparency, and the potential long-term impact of foreign military influence on Somalia's internal affairs.

Meanwhile, 250 people (20%) expressed support, with 138 (11%) supporting and 112 (9%) strongly supporting the president's actions. This minority may view such agreements as practical tools to strengthen Somalia's defense and build strategic alliances in a volatile region.

In essence, while a small segment sees foreign cooperation as necessary, the overwhelming sentiment is cautious and critical driven by fears of external control and unmet expectations around national self-reliance.

## How do you evaluate President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's decision regarding the amendment of Somalia's constitution?



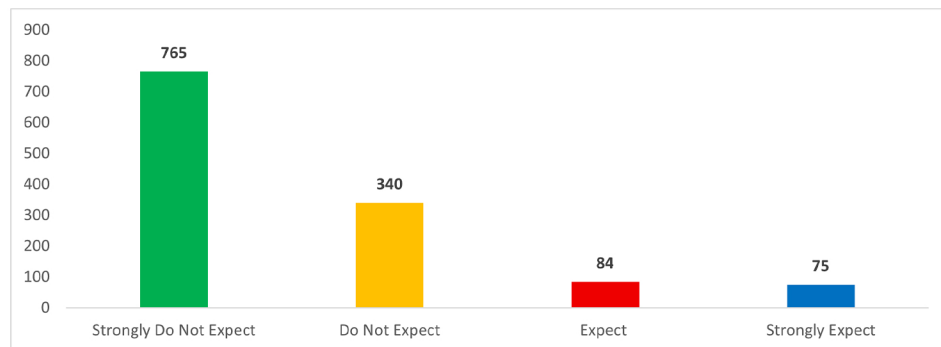
Source : Primary data, 2025

A significant majority of respondents 989 people (78%) oppose President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's decision to amend Somalia's constitution, with 52% (662 people) strongly opposing it. This widespread disapproval likely reflects public fears about the lack of transparency, limited consultation, or perceived political motives behind the proposed changes. Many may worry that constitutional amendments are being used to consolidate power or undermine federalism rather than to strengthen democratic governance.

On the other hand, 275 respondents (22%) support the decision, with 14% (178 people) expressing general support and 8% (97 people) strongly supporting it. These individuals may view constitutional reform as necessary for clarifying power structures, improving governance, or preparing Somalia for a more stable political future such as moving toward one-person, one-vote elections.

Overall, the data reflects a strong sense of caution and mistrust among the public regarding changes to the foundational legal document of the nation. For many, the stakes are high, and the process if not handled inclusively and transparently risks deepening political divisions.

## Do you believe that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud can implement a one-person, one-vote electoral system within the remainder of his term?



Source : Primary data, 2025

The majority of respondents, 88% (1,105 people), do not expect President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud to implement a one-person, one-vote electoral system before the end of his term. Specifically, 61% (765 people) strongly do not expect it, and 27% (340 people) do not expect it. This significant skepticism likely reflects concerns about the logistical challenges, political opposition, or security issues that have historically hindered Somalia from moving toward a fully democratic electoral system. Many may feel that the necessary infrastructure, voter education, and stability needed for such a system are lacking.

On the other hand, 159 respondents (13%) expressed more optimism, with 7% (84 people) expecting it and 6% (75 people) strongly expecting it. These individuals may see the implementation of this system as a critical step in Somalia's democratization process and believe that President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud could push through the necessary reforms if the right conditions are met.

In conclusion, the data reveals a strong sense of doubt among the public about the feasibility of one-person, one-vote elections happening within the current presidential term, highlighting the challenges of electoral reform in a complex, post-conflict society like Somalia.

## Strategic Challenges Undermining National Leadership, Unity, and Somalia's Progress

### Endemic Corruption and Declining Public Trust

The situation in Somalia reflects a society deeply burdened by corruption no longer whispered about behind closed doors, but openly witnessed and widely experienced. Across regions and communities, Somalis report that public resources are routinely diverted for personal gain, government land is seized and sold without transparency, and appointments to public office are driven more by political loyalty than by competence or merit. This perception is not theoretical; it is lived and visible, affecting every sector from education and health to infrastructure and the economy.

Bayan's research confirms that public trust in the integrity of the current administration has eroded significantly. Respondents consistently voiced concern about how national leadership, particularly under President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, has failed to uphold principles of transparency and public accountability. The misuse of state resources, especially the sale of government land has become a defining symbol of this corruption. Citizens report cases where land occupied by families for generations was sold off without notice, compensation, or due process. These transactions often bypass the legal requirements for oversight, such as public auctions or the involvement of an official government property disposal committee.

The corruption is not confined to the misuse of land. Government contracts have reportedly been awarded to entities with personal or familial ties to political leaders. In public service, positions are often filled based on affiliation rather than qualifications, further weakening institutions that are already under strain. The result is a vicious cycle where services remain inadequate, citizens grow more disenfranchised, and opportunities for reform are consistently undermined by self-interest.

According to the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index by Transparency International, Somalia ranks 179th out of 180 countries, with a score of just 9 out of 100. This international ranking reflects what Somalis already know from personal experience: corruption is not the exception; it is the system<sup>1</sup>.

In today's Somalia, the call for ethical leadership and transparent governance is no longer just a political ideal, it is a desperate plea for fairness, dignity, and national survival. Citizens are not demanding miracles; they are asking for a government that listens, serves, and protects rather than exploits. Rebuilding public trust will require more than symbolic gestures or anti-corruption rhetoric. It will demand genuine institutional reforms, independent oversight, open procurement processes, and a return to governance that prioritizes the public interest over private enrichment.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/somalia>





## Political Fragmentation and Electoral Disputes

Somalia's political landscape remains highly fragmented, with persistent rifts between the federal government and member states undermining efforts to build a stable and inclusive democratic system. Although the Somali Constitution lays the foundation for cooperative federalism, the practice of governance has too often reflected mistrust, unilateralism, and competition for control rather than shared responsibility. This fragmentation has become a defining obstacle to national progress, as political actors operate in silos rather than in coordination.

Bayan's research highlights this political dysfunction, revealing deep public concern over the absence of a unified national electoral vision. A significant number of respondents expressed doubt that the country can meaningfully transition to a "one person, one vote" electoral system under the current climate. Many Somalis view the political elite across both federal and state levels as prioritizing personal power, clan allegiance, or regional dominance over national unity and democratic reform. This perception is not abstract; it directly affects service delivery, national security coordination, and the legitimacy of elections.

Nowhere is this political fracture more visible than in the weakening function of the National Consultative Council (NCC), once considered a vital platform for dialogue between the federal government and regional states. For the past two years, Puntland, one of the country's most important federal member states, has abstained from participating in NCC meetings, citing concerns over marginalization and unilateral decision-making. Jubaland, too, boycotted the most recent meeting, underscoring the deepening mistrust and growing disconnect between the federal center and its regional partners.

Compounding the problem, the NCC, originally designed to be an impartial forum for intergovernmental consultation, has increasingly been viewed as an extension of the ruling political party. It is now chaired by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in his capacity as the head of a newly declared political party. This shift has raised alarms across the political spectrum, with critics arguing that the body has lost its neutrality and legitimacy. Instead of facilitating inclusive dialogue, it risks becoming a tool for consolidating executive power.

This erosion of trust and cooperation is further amplified by rhetoric from the president and his administration, which has often dismissed dissenting voices. Statements such as "we will not stop for anyone" reinforce fears that political centralization is being pursued at the expense of dialogue, federal principles, and national consensus. Such narratives deepen existing divisions and risk pushing the country toward authoritarian tendencies, rather than the inclusive governance envisioned in the federal constitution.

As a result, the failure to finalize an electoral framework acceptable to all stakeholders continues to stall progress. Many Somalis have come to view elections not as mechanisms of representation and accountability, but as flashpoints for political crises. Until a credible, inclusive, and transparent electoral roadmap is established, the country remains vulnerable to further fragmentation and democratic regression.

To reverse this trajectory, Somalia's leaders must recommit to cooperative federalism and inclusive governance. The NCC must be restored as a neutral platform, and all federal member states including Puntland and Jubaland must be brought back into the political process through genuine negotiation and respect for autonomy.

## Declining International Financial Support and Its Implications

In recent years, Somalia has experienced a significant decline in international financial support, leading to critical gaps across essential sectors such as humanitarian aid, security, and development. Once a top priority for global donors during periods of acute crisis, Somalia has gradually lost its standing on the global aid agenda due to shifting international interests, competing global emergencies, donor fatigue, and growing concerns over internal governance and accountability.

This financial withdrawal has deeply affected Somalia's ability to respond to some of the most urgent needs of its population. As of April 2025, projections show that 4.6 million people will face acute food insecurity by June, with nearly half a million children under five at risk of severe malnutrition and death without urgent support. Humanitarian agencies are struggling with underfunded operations, especially in food and nutrition sectors, forcing them to scale back or close life-saving programs. According to the World Food Programme, a \$297 million shortfall now jeopardizes critical operations over the next six months. The broader humanitarian response plan, which called for \$1.42 billion, remains barely funded at just over 12%.

The situation is equally concerning in the security sector. The African Union's peacekeeping mission in Somalia is also under severe financial strain. UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently highlighted this concern, warning that the mission lacks sustainable and predictable funding and calling for urgent international action. Without adequate support, the already fragile security architecture risks collapsing further, putting civilian lives and national stability at risk.

Beneath these crises lies a deeper governance challenge. Many international partners now question whether their contributions are meaningfully contributing to building a functioning state or are instead feeding into fragmented clan-based structures and elite patronage networks. Rather than uniting the country under a coherent national vision, the current leadership appears to be deepening division through partisan decision-making and centralization of power. The side-lining of key federal member states such as Puntland and Jubaland from recent National Consultative Council meetings, and the transformation of that council into an organ of the president's political party, are seen by many as undermining the principles of federalism and inclusion. Such moves not only strain internal relations but also shake the confidence of international partners who seek to support a stable, representative governance framework. The decline in international support, then, is not simply a result of global fatigue but a reflection of growing concern that Somalia lacks the leadership, systems, and vision to turn aid into lasting progress.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC\\_Somalia\\_Acute\\_Food\\_Insecurity\\_Malnutrition\\_Jan\\_Jun2025\\_Report.pdf](https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Somalia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Malnutrition_Jan_Jun2025_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.care.org/media-and-press/somalia-hunger-soars-and-funding-falls/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/somalia\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/where/africa/somalia_en)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.passblue.com/2025/04/15/will-the-us-leave-the-au-peacekeeping-mission-in-somalia-out-on-a-limb/>

## A Misaligned Foreign Policy and the Costs of Diplomatic Missteps

Somalia's foreign policy under the current administration has faced increasing scrutiny, both domestically and internationally, due to a series of diplomatic decisions that many view as poorly coordinated, reactive, and lacking national consensus. Instead of functioning as a strategic tool to advance Somalia's long-term national interests, foreign relations have too often been shaped by short-term political calculations, personal alliances, and a fragmented internal approach resulting in missed opportunities, diplomatic isolation, and growing regional tensions.

The diplomatic crisis triggered by the Ethiopia–Somaliland MoU highlighted serious flaws in Somalia's foreign policy under the current administration. The federal government's response was slow, unclear, and lacked coordination with key stakeholders, including regional states. Instead of asserting Somalia's territorial integrity with a unified strategy, the leadership appeared fragmented and reactive. Public concern grew even further when the Somali government suddenly announced a new agreement with Ethiopia without Ethiopia first nullifying its deal with Somaliland. This move, seen as lacking transparency and national consultation, fueled distrust and raised questions about the administration's commitment to sovereignty, accountability, and inclusive governance.

This incident further exposed the broader challenge of how Somalia engages on the world stage. While the federal government has signed various bilateral security and economic agreements with countries such as Turkey, Egypt, the UAE, and Qatar, these partnerships have been clouded by a lack of transparency and institutional oversight. Many of these deals were not brought before parliament or made public in sufficient detail, leading to concerns that they serve narrow political or factional interests rather than a cohesive national strategy. The absence of a unified foreign policy doctrine has also created confusion among international partners and weakened Somalia's negotiating power in multilateral forums. The situation is made worse by the increasing politicization of diplomatic posts and the use of foreign alliances to bolster internal political agendas rather than build long-term regional cooperation. Instead of serving as instruments of national development and strategic security, foreign relationships are often perceived as extensions of domestic rivalries, further eroding public trust and creating instability.

This misalignment between foreign policy actions and national interests underscores a more profound issue: the urgent need for Somalia to re-establish a coherent diplomatic vision. A viable foreign policy must be rooted in constitutional authority, aligned with national development goals, and reflective of broad-based consultation across federal and regional levels. Without these foundations, Somalia risks not only alienating key allies but also undermining its own sovereignty and security.

To restore credibility and ensure that international engagements genuinely support peace, state-building, and economic recovery, the federal government must embrace a foreign policy framework grounded in transparency, inclusivity, and long-term planning. Such a framework should prioritize the national interest over personal or political calculations, establish mechanisms for parliamentary review and public scrutiny, and build consensus across all levels of government. Only then can Somalia navigate an increasingly complex global environment with clarity, strength, and dignity.

## Conclusion

This research offers a timely and in-depth examination of the Somali public's perception of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's leadership, based on insights gathered from 1,264 respondents across all federal member states and the diaspora. The findings paint a sobering picture of widespread public dissatisfaction across critical areas of governance, including security, economic development, transparency, and national unity.

A key theme that emerged from the data is a significant trust deficit between the government and its citizens. The overwhelming majority of respondents expressed doubt in the president's integrity, dissatisfaction with his handling of national security, and disapproval of his efforts in addressing the economy, corruption, and the country's foreign policy. Furthermore, many feel excluded from important national decisions, reinforcing a sense of alienation and political disillusionment.

The research also highlights structural issues such as political fragmentation, endemic corruption, diplomatic missteps, and a lack of strategic direction, all of which have compounded national challenges. These internal weaknesses come at a time when international financial and diplomatic support is waning, and Somalia can no longer rely on global sympathy alone to secure its future. The shift in donor priorities and the shrinking space for humanitarian and development aid further exposes the country's vulnerability, especially as it struggles to provide basic services, maintain security, and prepare for democratic transitions.

What is particularly clear throughout this study is that the Somali people are not passive observers. They are engaged, informed, and eager to see meaningful change. Their voices reflect not only criticism but also hope for a government that listens, a political system that includes them, and a future where leadership is based on merit, accountability, and national interest. Across regions and communities, Somalis are calling for reform not as a political slogan, but as a basic requirement for survival and dignity.



Ultimately, the message from the Somali people is consistent and clear: Leadership must be responsive, inclusive, and accountable. If the current administration is to regain public confidence and effectively guide Somalia through its complex challenges, it must listen closely to these voices and take urgent, visible steps to build a governance model that reflects the needs, aspirations, and rights of all Somali citizens. The path forward must be one of honest reckoning, institutional reform, and unwavering commitment to public trust—because without the people, there can be no progress.



# Policy Recommendations

This research reflects a deep disconnect between the Somali people and the current leadership, highlighting widespread concerns about governance, economic hardship, national unity, and public trust. While expectations for leadership remain high, many citizens feel their voices are not being heard and their daily realities are not being reflected in national priorities. The following policy recommendations aim to bridge that gap and guide more inclusive, transparent, and responsive leadership :

- 1 Foster Transparent and Participatory Governance**  
Many citizens feel left out of national decision-making. To rebuild trust, government processes must become more transparent, consultative, and open to public scrutiny. Inclusive forums, civic engagement programs, and participatory leadership models should be encouraged to ensure that all communities feel represented.
- 2 Promote National Unity Through Dialogue and Inclusion**  
Reconciliation must move beyond political statements. Genuine efforts to engage regions, clans, and marginalized communities in national dialogue are essential. This includes listening to local grievances, empowering regional leaders, and addressing historical injustices through peaceful, inclusive platforms.
- 3 Strengthen Accountability and Combat Corruption**  
Restoring faith in public institutions requires a visible commitment to ethical leadership. Anti-corruption mechanisms must be reinforced with independent oversight, clear consequences, and a culture of openness. The public wants to see leaders held to the same standards they are asked to uphold.
- 4 Make Economic Growth Tangible for Ordinary Citizens**  
People want more than promises they want jobs, stability, and the ability to provide for their families. Economic strategies should focus on practical outcomes: supporting small businesses, investing in youth employment, and building infrastructure that benefits everyday lives. National development must be people-centered, not policy-driven alone.
- 5 Reform the Security Approach with Communities at the Core**  
While military responses remain important, security must also mean safety in homes, freedom of movement, and protection from violence. A people-first approach centered on trust, reconciliation, and community involvement can create a more sustainable path to national stability.
- 6 Ensure Foreign Policy Respects Sovereignty and Public Consent**  
Foreign agreements should never be made in isolation or secrecy. Citizens expect their leaders to defend Somalia's sovereignty while working transparently with international partners. National interest must remain at the heart of all diplomatic and security negotiations.
- 7 Advance Constitutional Reform Through Consensus**  
Any effort to amend Somalia's constitution must be inclusive and collaborative. It is vital that constitutional changes reflect the collective will of the people, respect the federal structure, and involve meaningful dialogue with all regions and communities.
- 8 Prepare for Democratic Elections by Building Institutional Trust**  
Democratic progress depends on public confidence. A clear, credible plan for elections based on fairness, transparency, and equal representation will be key to restoring faith in governance and encouraging peaceful political participation.

- 9 Empower Youth and Women in Leadership**  
Somalia's future depends on the engagement of its younger generation and the full inclusion of women. Expanding leadership opportunities, investing in civic education, and amplifying diverse voices will help shape a government that truly reflects the people it serves.
- 10 Lead with Accountability, Compassion, and Vision**  
Above all, leadership must be rooted in service not control. The Somali public is not just calling for reform; they are calling for leadership that listens, responds, and leads with integrity. Rebuilding this trust will require humility, consistent engagement, and a renewed commitment to the public good.

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