



## Somaliland — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[officially known as the Republic of Somaliland]

03/15/1893 Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom]: Egypt occupied parts of the Somali coast since the 1860s. After the Mahdist Movement Uprising in 1885, Egypt had to withdraw its forces from the Somaliland coast (Issa-Salwe 1996). In 1884, the northern part of Somaliland became a British protectorate while the southern part was ruled by local leaders who accepted Italian protection in 1889. British Somaliland was administered by the British India colony until 1898 and then managed by the Foreign Office upon 10/01/1898.<sup>68F<sup>1</sup></sup> In 1905, it was transferred to the Colonial Office (Roberts 1986). In November 1909 the British colonial administration in British Somaliland was ordered to stay in three coastal towns on the red sea after a failed peace attempt with the Daraawiish. By 1913, the Daraawiish had control over the entire hinterland, leading the British to form the Camel Corps to police the area (Issa-Salwe 1996). In January 1920, a military expedition against Sayyid was launched, and by the end of February, the Dervish movement was destroyed. The Sayyid is believed to have died in the Ogaden in 1921 (Kakwenzire 1986). In 1925, the United Kingdom gifted Italy the Jubaland region as a reward for having joined the First World War and in 1926, it became part of Italian Somaliland.<sup>69F<sup>2</sup></sup> LIED does not provide any data during this colonial time. For the relevant period, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are moderate. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

08/18/1940 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy]/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Italy, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]: Within the context of the Second World War, Italy invaded British Somaliland. However, the occupation was short lived, as the allied forces seized Mogadishu on 02/25/1941, and in March advanced to win back British Somaliland. LIED does not list Somaliland. Because the occupation started after 01/07/1940 and ended before 01/07/1941 it is not present in the country-year-version of the dataset. In this timeframe, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as showing that political liberties are not really present. For the relevant period, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are moderate. Simultaneously, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive.

03/25/1941 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by Italy, Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy]/Start Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy]: The British offensive in 1941 was successful and within a few weeks, between February and March, the whole of Somalia was conquered; with Mogadishu falling on 03/25/1941 (Tripodi 1999). In March 1941 all Somali territories (with the exception of French Somaliland which remained under the Vichy rule) were under the British flag (Issa-Salwe 1996). The former Italian Part of Somalia was put under a British Military Administration, while British Somaliland had its own military government. Starting 1946, the British rebuild the territories' administrative system in the former Italian parts (Tripodi 1999) (Issa-Salwe 1996). On 04/01/1950, the United Nations made Italian Somaliland into a Trust Territory under Italian Administration (see 04/01/1950 Somalia) (Tripodi 1999).<sup>70F<sup>3</sup></sup> LIED does not provide any data during this colonial time. For 1942, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present. For, 1943-1958, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as an

ambiguous status of political liberties. For the year 1959, V-Dem's PCLI suggests that political liberties are somewhat present. V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate, while V-Dem's LCE indicates no value, as of parliament exists, and thus no legislative constraints on the executive are possible until 1957. From 1958 to 1959, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating moderate constraints on the executive.

06/26/1960 End Direct Rule Colonial Regime [of United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy]/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, the independence of British Somaliland was reached, and the State of Somaliland was formed. It only existed for five days, before merging with the Trust Territory of Somaliland on 07/01/1960.<sup>71F</sup><sup>4</sup>

07/01/1960 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Part of Other Country [of Somalia, Electoral Hybrid Regime]: see for the time between 07/01/1960 and 07/21/1991 Somalia.

07/21/1991 End Part of Other Country [of Somalia, Electoral Hybrid Regime]/Start Non-Electoral Transitional Regime: On this date, northern groups of Somalia proclaimed Somaliland Republic. On 05/17/1991, the primary insurgent faction in the northern region of the nation, the Somali National Movement, announced the secession of an autonomous entity named the Somaliland Republic (Turner 2004). The Republic is internationally not recognized and therefore officially still part of the Somalian State. It had different types of government, which all crumbled due to fighting in the 1990s. In 1996, peace was established, which is relatively stable up to today.<sup>72F</sup><sup>5</sup> Tuur assumed the presidency of Somaliland as its inaugural leader, initially championing separatism. However, by 1994, he shifted his stance, advocating instead for reconciliation within a federal governance framework. During his tenure, an armed conflict erupted, reaching resolution in 1992 through the Sheikh conference. Muhammad Haji Ibrahim Egal succeeded Tuur in 1993, overseeing a period marked by enhanced security measures and territorial consolidation. In 1994, Egal's administration confronted another conflict precipitated by rebel militias occupying Hargeisa airport, which was ultimately quelled by government forces by 1995. Simultaneously, Djibouti-backed Issa forces endeavored, albeit unsuccessfully, to assert control over certain regions of Somaliland. Egal continued his presidency until his demise in 2002, succeeded by Dahir Riyale Kahin, who assumed office as Somaliland's inaugural elected president in 2003.<sup>73F</sup><sup>6</sup> LIED does not provide any data during this specified time. V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as suggesting that political liberties are somewhat present. From 1991 to 1992, V-Dem's JCE indicates that judicial constraints on the executive are limited. At the same time, V-Dem's LCE shows no value, which, with appropriate caution, can be interpreted as an absence of legislative constraints on the executive. From 1993 to 1998, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, and V-Dem's LCE is similarly interpreted as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were also limited. For the remaining years, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate.

04/14/2003 End Non-Electoral Transitional Regime/Start Electoral Hybrid Regime: In 2001, a new constitution was agreed upon, in which Somaliland Republic regarded itself as a democracy. This constitution was approved by referendum on 05/31/2001.<sup>74F</sup><sup>7</sup> The first elections that were held were the municipal elections on 12/15/2002.<sup>75F</sup><sup>8</sup> The following year, presidential elections were held on 04/14/2003 and saw Danir Riyale Kahin victorious. His victory was rejected by the opposition, leading to protests. Nevertheless, the elections were considered democratic.<sup>76F</sup><sup>9</sup> The first parliamentary elections took place in 2005. The next presidential elections were scheduled for August 2008. However, they were delayed multiple times, due to political instability. This was heavily criticized by the opposition. After multiple pushbacks, the elections were held on 06/26/2010. The elections were internationally described as fair and free, only the violence and fighting in some parts of the country did set a hurdle.<sup>77F</sup><sup>10</sup> The next parliamentary elections took place in 2021, 16 years after the last one took place. They were delayed for numerous reasons, droughts, delayed voter registration and political conflicts. However, the elections on 05/31/2021 were considered free and democratic by international observers.<sup>78F</sup><sup>11</sup> The general elections of 11/13/2022 were postponed due to the Lac Anod

conflict<sup>12</sup> and held on 11/13/2024. This election marked a significant political turning point: opposition candidate Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi "Irro" of the Waddani party won the election by a clear margin against the incumbent President Muse Bihi Abdi. This marked Somaliland's first transfer of power from the ruling party to the opposition in 14 years.<sup>13</sup> Based on our observations, multiparty, executive and legislative elections were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Between 2003 and 2005, V-Dem's CEI scores the elections of Somaliland with a not really electoral cleanliness. Since 2006, the cleanliness is classified as ambiguous. Regarding the overall election conditions, they are considered as somewhat free and fair (V-Dem EF&FI). From 2008 onwards, the territory scores per FH between 8 and 10 as partly free, which we interpret as rather not free. V-Dem's PCLI suggests that political liberties were somewhat present in this period. From 2003 to 2004, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate. Since 2005, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were robust. However, their LDI remains at a not really score. Based on all information we have, we classify Somaliland as an Electoral Hybrid Regime. This classification is also due to the long gaps between elections, which undermine the reliability and frequency of power transitions. A regime that conducts elections irregularly, sometimes with more than a decade between them, cannot be considered a democracy. LIED does not list Somaliland in its dataset.

Electoral Hybrid Regime as of 07/01/2025 continued.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> [https://en-m-wikipedia-org.translate.google/wiki/British\\_Somaliland?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=en&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=de&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=de&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=sc](https://en-m-wikipedia-org.translate.google/wiki/British_Somaliland?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=de&_x_tr_hl=de&_x_tr_pto=sc)

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jubaland>

<sup>3</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia>; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trust\\_Territory\\_of\\_Somaliland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trust_Territory_of_Somaliland)

<sup>4</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence\\_Day\\_\(State\\_of\\_Somaliland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_(State_of_Somaliland))

<sup>5</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somaliland>

<sup>6</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somaliland#State\\_of\\_Somaliland\\_\(Independence\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somaliland#State_of_Somaliland_(Independence))

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001\\_Somaliland\\_constitutional\\_referendum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2001_Somaliland_constitutional_referendum)

<sup>8</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002\\_Somaliland\\_municipal\\_elections](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2002_Somaliland_municipal_elections)

<sup>9</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003\\_Somaliland\\_presidential\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2003_Somaliland_presidential_election)

<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010\\_Somaliland\\_presidential\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2010_Somaliland_presidential_election)

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021\\_Somaliland\\_parliamentary\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Somaliland_parliamentary_election)

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las\\_Anod\\_conflict\\_\(2023%E2%80%93present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Anod_conflict_(2023%E2%80%93present))

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024\\_Somaliland\\_presidential\\_election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Somaliland_presidential_election)

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