



Inspire Group
the ideal solutions

SOMALILAND DEBATES

**Somaliland & Somalia Dialogue:
Should the talks resume?**



As part of Inspire Group's **#SomalilandDebates Series**, we are proud to have had the opportunity to conduct the Debate on **"Somaliland and Somalia Dialogue: should the Talks resume?"**. We are grateful to have a diverse audience from all walks of life, ranging from Government officials, Parliament members, Political Parties, Intellectuals, youth and women representatives, to objectively debate and share their views on this crucial topic.

Over the past two decades and a half, Somaliland has been committed rebuilding state institutions, social and political reconciliations, the bottom up to the state-building process, and internationally commended democratic elections has demonstrated some credible results of peace and political stability. However, the international isolation, or rather the lack of recognition, of Somaliland has undermined the ultimate goal of the country to be an active of the regional player.

On the other hand, this international isolation has also undermined the economic success of Somaliland to attract international investment and bilateral aid that it would otherwise got from the international community. Lack of serious negotiations between Somaliland and Somalia, and the continuous instability and insecurity of the latter, has created an unparalleled challenge to resolve their dispute. Nonetheless, still there is a noticeable tendency from the international regional powers – Turkey, US, EU, Ethiopia and others - efforts towards Somaliland and Somalia Dialogue. The talked started in 2012, but they were stalled after seven rounds of meetings, mainly in Turkey, UAE, and Djibouti.

Our #SomalilandDebates series was started in 2017, it normally covers a wide-range of topics, including, but not limited to, governance, elections, employment, foreign policy and economic development. This time, we are focusing on the the "Somaliland- Somalia Dialogue: Should the talks continue?". This is going to be a scholarly contribution to bridge the gap between policy and practice and make attempt to stimulate objective discussions about how Somaliland should prepare for the next phase of negotiations. The debate was focused on the possibility of negotiations' success by highlighting Somaliland views within Somaliland intellectuals, politicians and public perspectives on the resumption of the Talks.

After the opening remarks by Inspire Group's chairman Jama Nuur, the Debate started with keynote speeches by prominent speakers, including professors, politicians and civil society representatives.

The first key note speaker was Eng. Mohamed Hashi, Ex-Minister of Finance, was another speaker on the Debate. Eng. Hashi's argument was: Somaliland should not talk to Somalia - we had very bad experience with them and it's not worth, citing the Ziyad's regime and the history that associate with it. He also believes that there is no legitimate government to talk to in Mogadishu, but a regime that is under the armed protection of AMISOM.





Prof. Ahmed Ismail Samatar, professor and former dean of the Institute for Global Citizenship at Macalester College, the architect of Kulmiye Party's campaign manifesto in 2017 Presidential Elections that helped President Muse Bihi to power. Prof. Samatar's argument was: Somaliland should talk to #Somalia to settle its case, however, Somaliland need to assign those talks to a team of experts and well-prepared historic legal and arguments that can be clearly articulated, something he suggest isn't available at the moment. The prof. also noted that Somaliland needs to have its own Plan B if the negotiations fail to materialize.

Mr. Hersi H. Hassan, Ex-minister of Presidency and the Leader of Waddani Party, also spoke about the "Somaliland and Somali Dialogue" Debate. Mr. Hassan was instrumental in starting Somaliland - Somalia negotiations. Having participated all the seven rounds of negations between the two parts since 2012, Mr. Hersi's argument was for the Talks to continue, defending his then Siilanyo government's initiative to start the Dialogue. Throughout the Debate, he has consistently hailed the progress made in the Talks under the government he was part of. He suggested that both parties implement what was agreed before and resume the talks in good faith.



Miss Suad Armiye of Civil Society Organizations has also participated the Debate. She argues that Somaliland has handed over its keys to the London Conference at the start of the negotiations. She was largely in favour of serious Talks, but doubted whether the Somaliland and Somalia governments were serious about it. She argued that Somaliland need to think about other options and that the Somaliland governments should be fully transparent and accountable.

Mr. Mohamoud Hashi, Ex-minister of Presidency/Aviation and a member of Kulmiye Party appeared on the stage. Although he supports the talks, he thinks the previous negotiations were fruitless so far. While he strongly backed the current President, Musa Biihi's position – there should be a mediation between Somaliland & Somalia which is not limited to Turkey (Mr. Biihi's Government has been skeptical of Turkey's impartiality in the Talks since coming to power).



Prof. Abyan of UCID Party, the Party's Vice-Presidential Candidate for 2017 Elections, also noted his firm belief that the Talks are inevitable and that we have so much between the two sides - shared recognition which Somalia still enjoys alone, postal & country codes, etc. He argued that we can't sort these things out unless we talk. He also revisited Ziyad Barre regime's atrocities beyond Somaliland and the need to make the Somaliland argument more inclusive.

Throughout the Debate, the moderator scrutinized the arguments of the debaters, and the asked critical questions to each of the key note speakers. Finally, the Session was concluded with open Q&A session between the audience/participants and the speakers. Members of the audience asked them some tough question ranging from the practicality and sincerity of the two sides; preparedness of Somaliland; the process of negotiations; and the record of the previous negotiations so far. The Debate also highlighted lessons learned from previous talks, including unfulfilled commitments and the way forward.



NB: Inspire Group will produce a paper on the "Somaliland-Somaliland Dialogue" in due course.