



Salvaging the Third Somali Republic

A Proposal for Action

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Somalia is facing a compounded crisis of legitimacy. On 5 March 2026, Somalia's federal parliament adopted **constitutional amendments** extending presidential and parliamentary terms from four to five years, eliminating the April 14th and May 15th, 2026, mandate deadlines for members of the Parliament and President, respectively. These amendments were adopted without the required two-thirds supermajority of total membership, without securing prior Federal Member State (FMS) consensus, and without publication of the full amendment record. They are, therefore, **constitutionally contested and have not been accepted by key political stakeholders and therefore are not binding.** Consequently, the **Third Somali Republic, established through a national reconciliation conference held in Arta, Djibouti in the year 2000 is hanging in the balance and may cease to exist** unless a new and inclusive political dispensation is reached before the end of the presidential mandate on May 15, 2026.

This proposal addresses and offers a path forward regarding the conflicting political stances held by the government, Federal Member State (FMS) leaders and the opposition on pressing constitutional and electoral transition issues. It proceeds from the recognition that the March 2026 constitutional amendments made in the Somali Parliament remain disputed and cannot substitute for an agreed electoral framework. **There is broad consensus that the completion of the provisional constitution is achievable if the approach, process, and outcomes are made clear, transparent and inclusive.** Furthermore, the transitional electoral process needs strong leadership commitment that can establish framework and a specific roadmap anchored with all the necessary legal and institutional mechanisms defined in the constitution.

This proposal is intended as a roadmap for delivering a political agreement and to initiate constructive national dialogue, thereby diffusing current political tensions and uncertainty arising from what happens when the mandate of the parliament expires on April 14, 2026, and the presidential mandate expires on May 15th, 2026. The proposal considers positions and contestations of all the issues thus presenting a compromise **enabling credible, inclusive parliamentary and presidential elections to be held no later than March 2028.**

1. Context

The following are social, political and constitutional contexts that form the basis of the proposal:

1. The constitutional mandate of the current Somali Parliament and president ends on April 14th and May 15, 2026, respectively.
2. The parliamentary amendment extending its mandate and that of the federal president by one year is politically contested, exclusionary and therefore unconstitutional.
3. According to the provisional constitution, there cannot be political vacuum in the country. The current government must continue its program until a political settlement is reached and its replacement is elected to office.
4. Somalia urgently needs comprehensive political agreement before May 15, 2026.
5. Regional presidents whose mandates expired will continue their public services until one-person one-vote elections are held in an agreed national elections timeline.
6. There is a general agreement that Somalia should move away from indirect elections altogether where MPs are handpicked by federal or regional leaders thereby undermining the integrity of the electoral process.
7. Universal suffrage and the right to vote by all citizens should replace indirect elections thus participating one-person one-vote elections to elect local councils, mayors of municipalities, candidates for regional parliaments and regional presidents.
8. The role of Somali women in government and their political participation must be visible, fair and reasonable.
9. The 4.5 power-sharing model created political inclusivity. However, it must be enhanced with merit-based system to establish an environment conducive to good governance, accountability, professionalism and transparency.
10. The country needs separation of powers enshrined in the constitution to be adhered to separating the executive, legislative and judiciary. The country needs effective judiciary and an independent constitutional court to adjudicate electoral problems and constitutional violations.

2. The Proposal

The **President and the opposition must in good faith reach a political agreement** to salvage the third republic and save the country from internal civil strife, instability and or dismemberment of the state.

To avoid a political vacuum, the government and opposition shall jointly agree on and appoint a **neutral professional as the Prime Minister of the Government of Establish a Government of National Unity for a maximum period of two years** commencing on May 15, 2026. The new PM will have complete independence from the president, opposition and parliament in fulfilling his or her mandate.

2.1 Transitional Governance Parameters

Mandate Extension

Term extensions are generally dreaded by the public but have become the norm for incumbents to delay transitional activities to the end hoping for a continuation of their sworn four-year mandate. **However, to avoid political vacuum and ensure orderly transition and political stability, limited term extension is crucial for the offices of the President and members of Parliament** beyond their current mandates and is a necessary starting point for reaching a political agreement. This term extension is limited within the framework of this proposal and is offered without prejudice to the contestants and a necessary bitter pill for all to save the country from another state failure or worse internal strife.

The president and members of the Parliament comprising of both the upper and lower houses shall get a **two-year term extension** from May 15, 2026, to May 14, 2028, which coincides with the period the Government of National Unity prepares the country for universal suffrage and the realization of the long awaited one-person one-vote elections.

Regional presidents whose terms expired or will expire during the transition period will serve until May 14, 2028, at which time elections will have already been held.

Restrictions

The **new PM and Cabinet members** of the Government of National Unity are **completely forbidden from contending for the presidency in the next election cycle only.**

The **President and the Speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses are prohibited from competing for office in this cycle of elections** and shall take no action that uses public resources/office, state resources, security forces, or government media to advance their preferred candidates for office on the upcoming national elections.

Any individual currently holding the office of the presidency, leader of the two houses who intends to stand as a candidate for national elections on the upcoming elections **must vacate their position** immediately before the commencement of the transitional mandate. As indicated above **anyone serving as president, speaker, PM or member of the GNU cabinet during the transition period is automatically disqualified** from candidacy for a higher office in the next election.

2.2 Government of National Unity: Composition, Mandate and Cabinet Level Appointments

Composition

Appoint a caretaker Government of National Unity (GNU) for a strictly limited period from May 15, 2026, to May 14, 2028, comprising the following:

- I. **Prime Minister:** Select a seasoned technocrat with proven statecraft skills and public trust management expertise. Both government and opposition must agree on the best candidate for the post.
- II. The cabinet shall consist of **25 ministers** (as it is currently).
 - a) The government and the opposition will each provide a list of 7 qualified ministerial candidates to the PM for consideration.
 - b) The PM will select 7 additional technocrat ministers.
 - c) 1 women rep. minister to be selected each by the government, opposition and 2 by the PM totaling 4 ministers.
- III. Cabinet portfolio **selections are solely made by the PM** without interventions from the president or the opposition with the PM holding consultations widely.
- IV. As much as practicable, nominations and portfolio selections of ministerial candidates must be based on a **mix of merit-based approaches and position qualifications** with a critical view to the 4.5 **clan power-sharing formula**.

Mandate

In addition to the constitutionally required mandate of the Prime Minister, the primary mandate of the Government of National Unity shall include the following:

- a. To prepare, conduct and conclude through gradual election rollouts both **local and federal** including **parliamentary and presidential elections** during the two-year transition period by no later than March 31, 2028. This timeline allows a period of 45 days for transitioning with the new president assuming responsibility by May 15, 2028.
- b. Develop **transitional Roadmap** consisting of:
 - i. Completion of the provisional constitution
 - ii. Establishment of electoral laws
 - iii. Facilitating inclusive dialogue and national reconciliation to strengthen national unity
 - iv. The GNU must function and be visible throughout the country and must not confine its activities to Mogadishu
 - v. To the extent practicable, Cabinet members shall spend time with their constituent communities, engaging them directly on the transitional roadmap issues and promoting the GNU's overall mission to the public
 - vi. Limit foreign travel and encourage in-country work related travels.

- c. Maintain **strong national security** and enhance training and preparedness of the Somali National Army with a clear plan to end foreign troop presence in the country by May 14, 2028, or before if practicable.
- d. Enhancing public institutions with good **governance, trust, transparency, professionalism and accountability**.
- e. Develop **zero tolerance policy for corruption and nepotism** and reestablish independent national anti-corruption commission.
- f. Provide **governmental services** to improve community safety, security, public health, education, agriculture, fishery and veterinary services.
- g. Enhance **collaboration with regional governments**, holding them to the same principles of trust, transparency and accountability.

Cabinet Level Appointments

Cabinet appoints the following governmental posts based on a mix of merit & clan-power sharing formula:

- Commander of the Somali Armed Forces
- Commissioner of National Police
- Commissioner of Somali Custodial Corps
- Chief Justice of the Supreme Court
- Attorney General
- Auditor General
- Independent Constitutional Review Commission
- Anti-Corruption Commission, and
- National Election Commission

2.3 Deadlock Resolution and Oversight

If the government and opposition fail to agree on the selection of a Prime Minister, the matter shall be referred to a newly formed **Somali National Mediation and Oversight Council**.

The Council shall be composed of 21 members representing

- 15 representatives of the government, opposition and Federal Member States
- 5 cross-sectoral constituencies such as traditional elders, religious leaders, youth representatives, business/private sector, diaspora, etc.)
- 1 mutually accepted independent Somali national figure of high standing to serve as the Chairman of Council.

Within 14 days, the Council shall broker agreement on a Prime Minister candidate. If consensus proves impossible, the Council shall submit a binding compromise recommendation, which all parties shall accept in advance as part of this transitional settlement. No party may use disagreement over the appointment of the Prime Minister as grounds to delay, suspend, or obstruct the transition.

The same Council shall also oversee the GNU throughout the transitional period to ensure compliance with its mandate, timelines, and commitments, and to address any drift from agreed obligations. Regional and international partners may support the process as witnesses and guarantors, but the mechanism itself shall remain Somali-led.

2.4 Transitional Governance and Constitutional Framework

The President and Parliament shall continue their current roles on a strictly transitional basis, solely for the purpose of enabling the formation of the Government of National Unity and the formulation process of a parliamentary and presidential elections.

This transitional proposal does not constitute a full constitutional extension of mandates, does not validate the contested March 2026 constitutional amendments, and assumes the provisional constitution of 2012 as the basis for moving forward with the new roadmap to be formulated by the Cabinet. Future constitutional amendments will only be made as part of the new roadmap developed by the Government of National Unity.

The Prime Minister is the head of the Government of National Unity and is fully responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the government.

As head of state during the transitional period, the President's functions shall be strictly ceremonial. The President shall focus exclusively on peace, reconciliation, and national unity, and shall not intervene in the day-to-day affairs of the GNU, shall not exercise executive authority over budgetary, security, or electoral matters, and shall not take any action that delays or obstructs the conduct of the new one-person one-vote activities in accordance to the GNU developed roadmap.

The parliament continues its constitutional functions and must be transparent and accountable to the public.

2.5 Tentative Timetable and Implementation Framework

The non-negotiable commitment of all parties under this proposal is that parliamentary and presidential elections must be conducted within a legitimate constitutional-political framework. March 31, 2028, is the binding outer deadline under all scenarios. An inclusive elections roadmap should guide the work of the GNU in fulfilling its primary mandate.

Elected offices	Managed by	Date
Local councils, Mayors, regional MPs, Regional Presidents	SEIT (State Electoral Independent Tribunal)	March 15, 2028
Federal MPs	FEIT (Federal Electoral Independent Tribunal)	March 31, 2028
Federal Presidential Elections	FEIT	March 31, 2028

Implementation Framework:

Activity	Responsible	Mandate	Deliverables	Outcome
Appoint a caretaker Government of National Unity (GNU)	Agreement between govt and opposition	Transitional period ending no later than May 14, 2028, with parliamentary and presidential elections ending March 31, 2028	Deliver parliamentary and presidential election by 31 March 2028	New Parliament and New President by May 15, 2028
Select and appoint Transitional Prime Minister	Government and opposition (joint agreement)	Roadmap for 1p1v elections in one year. Good governance and public service delivery	A clear Roadmap for universal suffrage and the realization of one person one vote. Political stability and national unity.	Somalia as legitimate state in peace with itself and with its neighbors.
Nominate Ministers	PM, input from Govt & Opposition	Good governance, technocracy and Two-year mandate to deliver elections	Functioning Government of National Unity	Political stability, good governance
Reconstitute National Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (NIEBC)	GNU Cabinet	No later than 30 days after GNU formation (June 2026)	Independent, fully constituted NIEBC operational; mandate and legal basis published	Credible electoral authority in place; voter registration and OPOV feasibility assessment can proceed

NIEBC feasibility assessment: certify OPOV viability	NIEBC; Government, FMS and opposition security assessment inputs	No later than September 2026 (certified public report)	Certified public report covering voter registration coverage, operational readiness, and security viability across all FMS	OPOV; no further ambiguity on election modality
Appoint key constitutional and security leadership (see above)	GNU Cabinet (merit and 4.5 clan power-sharing formula)	No later than 30 days after GNU formation (June 2026)	All nine positions filled and operational per Cabinet Level Appointments section	Constitutional institutions fully staffed and functional under GNU authority
Initiate and conduct inclusive national constitutional dialogue on disputed March 2026 amendments	GNU; opposition; FMS executives; Parliament	May 2026–May 2028 (throughout transitional period)	Agreed inclusive review process for disputed amendments; published dialogue roadmap endorsed by all FMS	Disputed amendments addressed through legitimate inclusive process; constitutional finalization pathway agreed for incoming elected government
Strengthen national security and develop foreign troop transition roadmap	GNU; Commander, Somali Armed Forces; FMS security forces	SNA preparedness: ongoing; foreign troop transition roadmap published by end of GNU mandate (September 2026)	Enhanced SNA training and preparedness; published plan to end foreign troop presence before end of GNU mandate	Stable security environment enabling March 2028 election; clear transition plan for foreign forces in compliance with mandate commitment
Secure international process guarantees and observer framework	GNU; FMS; US, UNTMIS, IGAD, AU, EU, UK	No later than 30 days after GNU formation (June 2026)	Signed process guarantee agreements; international monitoring and observer protocols activated; independent dispute mechanism agreed	International oversight of electoral process and transitional governance; deterrence against unilateral constitutional actions during transition
Conduct parliamentary and presidential elections	NIEBC; GNU; FMS; international witnesses	No later than 31 March 2028 (non-deferrable outer deadline)	Free, fair, and credible presidential election conducted; results certified by independent dispute mechanism; new president inaugurated	Democratic legitimacy restored; transitional GNU mandate terminates upon inauguration of elected president

3. Conclusion

Somalia's Third Republic stands at its most consequential juncture since its founding in Arta in the year 2000. The constitutional crisis triggered by the March 2026 parliamentary amendments has compounded years of accumulated mistrust between the federal government, the Federal Member States, and the political opposition. Without a negotiated agreement before May 15, 2026, the country faces the prospect of parallel legitimacy claims, fragmented governance, and an accelerated security deterioration that would set back a generation of state-building progress. Worse yet, some worry about spillover from the Middle East war and the current unpredictable global political and economic instabilities where new states and boundaries are created.

Moreover, politically unstable and socially fragmented Somalia may not survive as a nation in the current geopolitical climate, where thirty years of international community support did not yield a solid stable state and the global rivalry for access to and control of the Red Sea and Bab-al-Mandeb Strait is paramount.

This proposal offers a viable, inclusive path forward. It asks every stakeholder to accept less than their demands. Consequently, the federal government accepts a transfer of executive authority to the Prime Minister; the opposition accepts a March 2028 election timetable; Federal Member States accept re-engagement with federal institutions and a new roadmap for local and regional elections; and all incumbents accept an electoral contest in which no participant enjoys an institutional advantage. **These concessions are the price everyone pays for the survival of the state.**

Success depends on the speed and good faith with which Somalia's leaders act. The window for agreement is narrow. International partners stand ready to support a political agreement that is Somali-led and Somali-owned, constitutionally grounded, and transparently implemented. The people of Somalia, who will exercise their right to vote for the first time since the failure of the state three decades earlier under one-person one-vote elections, are the ultimate beneficiaries of this agreement. The legitimacy of the next government, and the durability of the Third Republic itself, rests on the integrity of the process that produces it.

For inquiries, please contact info@somtransition.com

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