



info@onejubaland.com

Thursday, March 19, 2020

To: Hon. Abdirahman Dualeh Beileh, Minister of Finance of the Federal Government of Somalia  
Mr. Abdirahman Mohamed Abdullahi, Governor of Central Bank of Somalia  
Members of the Board Directors of the Central Bank of Somalia  
Hon. Mohamed Abdullahi Sheikh Siraji, Chairman of House Committee Budget, Finance, Planning and Financial Overview  
Mr. Mohamed Mohamud Ali, Auditor General of the Federal Government of Somalia  
Ms. Fatuma Osman Farah, Accountant General of the Federal Government of Somalia  
Mr. Ibrahim Mahadale Dhuhulow, Deputy Mayor Administration and Finance of BRA  
Mr. Hassan Shire Abdi, Minister of Finance of the State of Puntland Somalia  
Mr. Sa'ed Siad Shirwa, Minister of Finance of the State of Galmudug Somalia  
Mr. Abdishakur Abukar Hassan, Minister of Finance of the State of HirShabelle Somalia  
Mr. Ahmed Mohamed Hussein, Minister of Finance of the State of Southwest Somalia  
Mr. Abdirashid Jire Khalinle, Minister of Finance of the State of Jubaland Somalia  
Mr. Ali Isse, Executive Director of the National Economic Council  
Former Finance Ministers of the Transitional Federal Governments of Somalia  
Former Governors of Central Bank of the Transitional Federal Governments of Somalia  
Former Members of the Board Directors of the Central Bank of Somalia  
Dr. Saad Ali Shire, Minister of Finance of the Republic of Somaliland  
Mr. Ali Ibrahim Jama, Governor of Central Bank of the Republic of Somaliland  
Mr. Ahmed Yusuf Dirir, Auditor General of the Republic of Somaliland  
Mr. Ahmed Da'ud Gedi, Accountant General of the Republic of Somaliland  
Mr. Omar Ahmed Saleban, Chairman of the House Finance Committee of the Republic of Somaliland

My Fellow Somalis,

In these times, difficult for many reasons, with the fate of the country in question and unfolding month by month, I wish to raise for our shared consideration an issue that will affect, if not determine, the next economic and political cycles in Somalia. This is the issue of the politicization and mismanagement of debt relief.

As a candidate and a professional financial analyst, I would be the first to champion the genuine economic development of Somalia, and as part of this getting the country past the debt burden that has severed global credit opportunities since the late days before the collapse of the State. However, as I am sure many of you have acutely understood, the issue of Somalia's debt has been captured since 2013 by agendas working at cross-purposes to economic development in the public interest. **The capture of the debt issue coincides with the onset of a new geopolitical scramble for control of Somalia's petroleum resources, both onshore and offshore.** In fact, international actors and current Somali authorities (Farmaajo and Khaire) have conspired to exploit the debt relief issue to access financing for ulterior motives, including to control natural resources and political power.

To date, despite the institutional packaging of the debt relief process in Somalia, the actual content of that process has lacked the logic or standards as set by international practice and the rules of debt relief governing implementation in other places in the world. Normally, two years of economic performance should be a requirement for eligibility of any kind of debt relief process.

**ABDIRAZAK**  
*Fartaag*



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In fact, the patterns and scale of corruption in Somalia have not in any way diminished. **If there is any new trend whatsoever, it is the increasing and direct involvement of the international community in Somalia's corruption.** Furthermore, following proven economic performance, the Somali Government should be able to demonstrate a decade of responsible management of grant funds before being eligible for credit.

**Instead of a technical and professional process, the debt relief process has been dominated by those international donors with an explicit petroleum interest in Somalia—particularly, first by the United Kingdom and then by the United States—in collaboration with oil partners in Somali Government.** Nowhere in this equation do the Somali people fit. In fact, the rapid and inexplicably urgent pace of debt relief in Somalia has corresponded to events surrounding decisions about control of recently discovered oil blocks, including passage of petroleum legislation, preparation of auctioning of offshore oil blocks, and less transparent division of spoils onshore. **Rather than alleviating the pressures of the daily lives of Somalis, the clearing of arrears by creditors has become a vehicle for extracting a return through foreign control of national resources.**

More troubling still is the notion of a bridging loan for debt relief to Somalia, specifically from Norway, with a more than decade's old oil agenda in Somalia. In October 2019, one day after the Auditor-General of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) delivered his report describing theft of on-budget support funds from the World Bank, the European Union, amongst other donors, Norway announced its bridging loan to the FGS to be channeled through the World Bank. **Far from being a responsible step in a debt relief process, these funds now coming on line in an election year provide a Norwegian national, Hassan Khaire, the Prime Minister of Somalia, with a war chest for political campaigning and for securing an electoral outcome. Meanwhile, Norway has been financing a team to establish a sovereign wealth fund that will control future oil revenues, thereby securing a political candidate and a critical financial flow by all means necessary.**

For its part, the United States was the first to recognize a Somali Government after the end of the transition, another required ingredient in debt relief. **Since 2018, it has pursued a petroleum agenda aggressively in Somalia to the detriment of Somalis and its international competitors, utilizing the debt relief process in pursuit of its objectives.**

Nowhere to be seen is an international or Somali-sponsored effort to combat corruption. Logically, given the high stakes of this critical moment. **The term "mutual accountability" between donors and Somalis has simply become the terms of a conspiracy seeking to control the nation's resources in the private interest of a few—a few Somali individuals and foreign companies.**

In the public interest of accountability of finances being unlocked by the debt relief process I address you, my fellow Somalis who are knowledgeable and expert in the country's financial matters and the evolution and history of these financial matters. **To this end, therefore, I wish to propose the convening of a neutral forum with the single agenda item of establishing a mechanism to ensure debt relief finances are not used for political purposes, to ensure such funds are not diverted, and to seek measures for disconnecting debt relief from the global scramble for petroleum resources in Somalia.**

I have been in contact with many of you, and in the coming days we will finalize the specifics of the forum and the practical steps to be taken. I welcome the contributions and participation of any relevant individual or group that I have not explicitly addressed in this letter.

Together, we can build a responsible future with Somali political independence, rather than being recolonized by the reincarnation of companies scrambling for Africa's resources in the past.

Sincerely,

  
Abdirazak Fartaag  
Gubernatorial Candidate, State of Jubaland Somalia

cc: H.E. Former President and Chair of National Reconciliation, Ali Mahdi Muhammad,  
H.E. Former President, Abdiqasim Salad Hassan  
H.E. Former President, Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, Chairman of the Forum for National Parties  
H.E. Former President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Member of the Forum for National Parties  
H.E. Muse Bihi Abdi, President of the Republic of Somaliland  
All Somali Political Parties  
Ms. Halima Mohamed Ma'alin, Chairman of Somali Bar Associations  
Avv. Omar Addou, Chairman of Addou Law Office  
Mr. Abdiaziz Mohamed Takar, Chairman of Reform Alliance for Justice and Openness (RAJO)  
Prof. Yahya Amir Hagi, Economist  
Mr. Abukar Arman, Political Analyst, Writer, and Former Special Envoy to the United States

#### SOMALI COMMERCIAL BANKS (HAWALA)

Mr. Abdirashid Duale, Chairman of Dahabshil  
Dr. Said Ali Shire, CEO Amal Bank Somalia  
Mr. Mahat Mohamed Ahmed, CEO, International Bank of Somalia  
Mr. Osman Duale Ahmed, Managing Director, Premier Bank  
Mr. Shuayb Haji-Nor, Managing Director of Salaam Somali Bank  
Dara-Salaam Bank of Somaliland

#### AFRICAN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

H.E. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group  
H.E. Erastus J. O. Mwencha, Chair of the Executive Board, the African Capacity Building Foundation

Finance Ministers of the North African States  
Finance Ministers of the West African States  
Finance Ministers of the Central African States  
Finance Ministers of the Horn of African States  
Finance Ministers of the East African States  
Finance Ministers of the Southern African States

Governors of Central Bank of the North African States  
Governors of Central Bank of the West African States  
Governors of Central Bank of the Central African States  
Governors of Central Bank of the Horn of African States  
Governors of Central Bank of the East African States  
Governors of Central Bank of the Southern African States

#### AFRICAN PHILANTHROPHISTS

Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim, Founder and Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation  
H.E. Aliko Dangote, President Dangote Group  
H.E. Jim Ovia, Founder, Zenith Bank  
H.E. Strive Masiyiwa, Founder, Econet Wireless  
H.E. Tony Elumelu, Chairman, Heirs Holdings  
H.E. Arthur Eze, Chairman, Atlas Oranto Petroleum  
H.E. Mike Adenuga, Chairman, Globacom  
H.E. Naushad Merali, Chairman, Sameer Group  
H.E. Manu Chandaria, Chairman, Comcraft Group  
H.E. Ashish J. Thakkar, CEO, Mara Group

#### BRICS COUNTRIES

H.E. Paulo Guedes, Minister of the Economy of Brazil  
H.E. Anton Siluanov, Minister of Finance and First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia  
H.E. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance of India  
H.E. Liu Kun, Minister of Finance of the People's Republic of China  
H.E. Tito Titus Mboweni, Minister of Finance of South Africa

#### WESTERN FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, IMF Managing Director and Chairman of the Executive Board  
H.E. David Malpass, President of World Bank Group

#### WESTERN DONORS

Mr. Roberto Gualtieri, Minister of the Economy and Finance of Italy  
Mr. Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer of United Kingdom  
Mr. Bruno Le Maire, Minister of the Economy and Finance of France  
Mr. Steven Mnuchin, United States Secretary of the Treasury  
Mr. Olaf Scholz, Minister of Finance and Vice Chancellor of Germany  
Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance of Canada  
Ms. Magdalena Andersson, Minister of Finance of Sweden  
Mr. Jan Tore Sanner, Minister of Finance of Norway  
Mr. Kristian Jensen, Minister of Finance of Denmark  
Ms. Katri Kulmuni, Minister of Finance of Finland

#### ARABIAN GULF and TURKEY

Mr. Mohammed Al-Jadaan, Finance Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia  
His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Minister of Finance of UAE  
Mr. Ali Sharif Al Emadi, Minister of Finance of Qatar  
Mr. Barak Ali Al-Shitan, Minister of Finance of Kuwait  
Mr. Darwish bin Ismail al-Balushi, Minister of Finance of the Sultanate of Oman  
Hon. Berat Albayrak, Minister of Finance and Treasury of Turkey

Mr. Bandar M. H. Hajjar, President of the Islamic Development Bank Group