



## TPEC QUARTERLY BULLETIN

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### Message from TPEC: Overview of the Electoral legal framework

One of the key elements of a successful, legitimate, and peaceful electoral process is a coherent and harmonized electoral legal framework.. An electoral legal framework consists of the Constitution and other relevant laws and is complemented by internal TPEC rules and regulations and codes of conduct that together govern the electoral process. In Puntland State of Somalia, the legal instruments that have relevance to voter registration and the local government elections include:

1. The Constitution of the Puntland State of Somalia;
2. Local Councils of Puntland State of Somalia (Regulations) Law;
3. Puntland Election Commission Law;
4. Local Councils Election Law of Puntland;
5. Political Parties & Political Association Law;
6. Voter Registration Law (Draft currently being assessed by cabinet )

In addition to these formal legal instruments, there are a number of internal guidelines and regulations for the process. In preparation for the upcoming Early Local Government Elections (ELGE), TPEC has already started preparing and drafting these guidelines, which include:

#### Codes of Conduct

TPEC will develop codes of conduct for the voter registration process and for the ELGE process, and there will be separate codes of conduct for political associations and for the media. The codes of conduct will lay out standards that stakeholders should abide by throughout each process and can be subject to penalties if they do not follow the agreed rules. Codes of conduct are intended to ensure that the voter registration and election processes proceed peacefully and legitimately and that all stakeholders are treated fairly. The codes of conduct will also be widely publicized so the public is aware of the standards governing behaviour of the media and political associations.

#### Dispute Resolution Mechanism

The dispute resolution mechanism will be informed by the legal framework and will be the system used by TPEC to handle all complaints that are submitted during voter registration and the election. The laws will guide TPEC on the handling of complaints from the Voter Registration Centre/Polling Station level to the Headquarters level, and if necessary, to the courts.



Image 1: TPEC Commissioner addresses the media

#### Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines

TPEC is committed to the equal opportunity and participation of women in the election process, and is therefore developing guidelines to encourage women's participation. This includes both at the TPEC institutional level (headquarters and field staff), and through participation as candidates in the ELGE process.

#### Voter Education Guidelines

Voter education is one of the most important tools to make sure that everyone can participate in the electoral process and everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities. TPEC is developing voter education guidelines to ensure that accurate and timely information reaches everyone across Puntland.

#### Election Observation Guidelines

Local and international election observers monitor the process and help to ensure its credibility and legitimacy. Their reports and observations can also be an important conflict mitigation tool in the post-election period. In order to this play this role, election observers are also guided by strict guidelines about what they can and cannot do inside the polling station and voter registration centre. TPEC is currently developing those guidelines.

#### Voter registration and ELGE procedures manuals

Finally, the upcoming Voter Registration and ELGE processes will require the recruitment of hundreds of staff that must follow the same policies and procedures. TPEC will develop detailed training manuals for all staff to ensure all staff are aware and able to implement all relevant rules and regulations.

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## Main Achievements

### Vetting of political associations

From 1 – 15 July, TPEC visited all nine administrative regions of Puntland to inspect the newly opened offices of provisionally registered political associations. During that period, the commission inspected more than 80 offices, filled assessment forms and signed them on the spot to promote openness and transparency.

Following the inspection visits, from 2- 22 July commission has called more 26000 political association supporters from TPEC HQ to confirm with them that they had endorsed a given political association. This phone call verifications were due to covid-19 which made impossible to visit in person. These calls also ensured that supporters had not endorsed more than one political association, and confirmed ages and locations of political association supporters.



Image 2: TPEC Commissioners vetting political associations

As a final step, TPEC observed the General Meetings held by each provisionally registered political association, as required by Puntland law. The commission then combined all the findings and documents submitted by the political associations to confirm if they had fulfilled the legal requirements.

### Announcement and Certification of Political Associations

Following the vetting process, on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 TPEC announced that 10 political associations met the legal requirements to register. The following political associations are now formally registered:

1. Truth and Justice political association (TJPA)
2. Labour Political association (LPA)
3. Youth political association (YPA)
4. Justice and Equality political association (JEPA)
5. Kaah Political association (KPA)
6. Mideeye Political association (MPA)
7. Mustaqbal Political Association (MQPA)
8. Himilo Political association (HPA)
9. Horseed Political association (HRPA)
10. Ifiye political association (IPA)

President Abdirahman Mohamed Faroole. The ceremony was also attended by political association representatives, members of the House of the People, Cabinet, and civil society organisations. Following speeches by all of the political associations, the TPEC Chairman, Guled Salah Barre, awarded the certificates.



Image 4: Political associations certified by TPEC



Image 3: Political associations announced

The 10 political associations were certified in a formal ceremony organised by the Transitional Puntland electoral commission and held Garowe on 15 august 2020. The ceremony was attended by the Vice President of Puntland, His Excellency Ahmed Elmi Osman, and two former Presidents of Puntland, President Abdiweli Mohamed Ali and

### Induction Training for Registered Political Associations

On 18-19 August TPEC, in cooperation with Puntland Development Research Centre (PDRC) organized a 2-day induction workshop for the newly registered political associations. The workshop was attended by 50 participants from the executive of all political associations. The aim of the induction workshop was to allow the political associations to develop a greater understanding of how political parties work, and the legal frameworks that govern them. The different sessions (as listed below) generated a lot of discussion over the course of the two days.

There were several key presentations in the workshop, including:

1. History of Political Parties in Somalia in the 1960s - Presented by Ahmed Abaas from PDRC
2. Political Parties in a Federal Set-up - Presented by Abdulkatir Yusuf from MAX Planck foundation
3. Overview of the Legal Framework from a Puntland Perspective - Presented by Abdirisak Ahmed from TPEC
4. Electoral Cycle of Puntland Local Council Elections - Presented by Hassan Isse Sharmarke from Interpeace
5. Women's Participation for Local Council Elections - Presented by Amina Mohamed from PDRC



Image 6: TPEC engages with Puntland civil society during monthly meeting

### Launch of Biometric Voter Registration Supplies Tender

On 6 October, TPEC launched the tender for the biometric voter registration system. The tender is open to all local and international companies. Those that are interested must submit their proposals for the supply of hardware, equipment, and software by 5 November 2020. Details and tender documents can be found at <https://tpec.pl.so/jobs-and-announcements/>.

accurate information is provided to Puntland citizens. Finally, universities and research institutions also pledged their support to hold forums with university students to develop their understanding of the Puntland Local Government Election cycle.

TPEC also held its first monthly meeting with political associations to discuss the way forward and hear their concerns and suggestions.

### Civil Society and Political Associations Monthly Meeting

On 6 September TPEC held its first face to face monthly meeting with civil society in four months due to Covid-19. The commission briefed civil society members on the progress made on the election preparations and requested their support and contributions to awareness-raising and civic engagement. Civil society members, lead by Puntland Non-State Actors (PUNSA), committed to awareness-raising through forums and sharing of key messages. Participants also agreed on the importance of developing the voter education guidelines and manual to ensure

### Donor engagements

On 4 September 2020 TPEC Chairman Mr Guled Salah met with donors in Nairobi and presented the commission's key achievements, goals and planned activities. Donors were encouraged by the efforts of the Puntland government to hold the first one person one vote local government elections. The meeting was attended by European Union, Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, SAHAN and Somali stability Fund. The chairman also held bilateral meetings with donors and all parties agree to continue supporting the Puntland path to one person one vote elections in decades



Image 7: TPEC Chairman with Donor Representatives in Nairobi

### Civic engagements

From 20 September to 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2020, TPEC organized awareness campaigns in Qardho district of Karkaar region, and Badhan district of Sanaag region. The Commission held forums with civil society organizations, university students, women, and youth groups. In these forums, the Commission shared with civil society the steps to be taken before, during, and post-election. The Commission also encouraged women and youth to join political associations and to participate in the upcoming local council elections.



Image 8: A section of young women attend a TPEC engagement



Image 8: TPEC Chairman with some of the key stakeholders



Image 9: A section of youth getting involved in TPEC discussions

### NEXT STEPS:

- Finalization of District demarcation process
- Voter registration for early election districts
- Preparation for the Early elections