

Republic of Somaliland
The President



جمهورية صوماليلاند
الرئيس

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Rt. Hon David Cameron MP
No. 10 Downing St
London SW1A 1AA

Dear Mr. Cameron,

Today is an important day for the people of the Republic of Somaliland. We are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the historic occasion on which our people decided to exercise their right to self-determination and to withdraw from the failed union with Somalia.

When we look back over the past quarter of a century, we can point to a number of significant achievements: a peace built through a bottom-up process instead of being imposed from outside; a democratic system which has seen power change hands through the ballot box; and a functioning governance structure through which the government raises taxes and provides services to our people, including free primary school education. Our pride in these successes is all the greater because Somaliland emerged in 1991 from a disastrous civil war, and because many of these achievements rested on the shoulders of our people including members of the Somaliland Diaspora abroad.

At the same time we acknowledge and are deeply grateful for the support which the UK has provided to Somaliland in recent years, especially the development assistance from DFID, the help given to our security forces, and the UK's role in facilitating the talks between Somaliland and Somalia in 2012. We are also thankful for the hospitality shown towards Somalilanders by the UK over many years.

Nevertheless, we feel the UK is in a position to do more. As the former colonial power, the UK has a special understanding of Somaliland and its history. Many Somalilanders have made the UK their home and are eager to contribute to modern British life. Yet the British government seems more concerned with the fate of the former Italian colony of Somalia than the former British Protectorate of Somaliland.



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Our people would like the UK to help them with their desire to be recognised as a sovereign state. Somaliland fulfills all the criteria for statehood enshrined in customary international law. In 2001, the people of Somaliland voted in favour of independence by 97.9%. In 2005, the African Union sent a fact-finding mission to Somaliland, which reported that the case for statehood should be viewed according to “the aspirations of the people”. A recent petition started by Somalilanders calling for recognition has already garnered, half a million signatures.

The lack of recognition infringes the human rights of the people of Somaliland. It also affects our ability to attract foreign direct investment, secure credits from International Financial Institutions and to speak up on issues that affect us in diplomatic fora such as the UN. Recognition would help create jobs, reducing the pressure for our young people to emigrate to Europe or succumb to the temptation to join extremist organisations. Failure of last year’s annual Spring rains due to manmade climate change led to a drought that killed thousands of livestock and many people, yet Somaliland was still unable to speak up for its pastoralists in Paris at COP21. The present injustice not only hurts Somaliland but denies a voice to the tens of millions of pastoral people across the globe.

With great respect, we do not think it is enough for the UK to say that recognition is a matter for African states. Instead we consider that the UK should exercise leadership and encourage African states to recognise Somaliland. After all, we became independent in 1960 before Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. We firmly believe that doing so is in the UK’s national interest – a recognised Somaliland will be a force for stability in the Horn and an exemplar to Somalia about how peace and democracy can be built within a Somali political culture.

In the meantime we invite you as a valued friend to join our 25th anniversary celebrations and reiterate our deep gratitude for the help and friendship which the UK has given our country.

Yours Sincerely,


Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo
President, Republic of Somaliland

