



The sole purpose of these 13 easy pieces (the sky is not the limit briefing notes) that I intend to publish during Dec 2018 – Dec 2019 is to share my ideas with all Somali Citizens around the world. The goal is to encourage discussion among Concerned Somalis, those who really care about Somalia, as we move towards the National Somali Elections of 2020 (2021?). These briefing notes are apolitical as I have no intention to promote any political agenda, but only to assist promulgating at a personal level any credible idea, platform or national agenda that will move Somalia forward to a stable, progressive, peaceful country This and related documents are also available on som-isoc.org, ayuub.org, Somaliaaway.com, on twitter ([@MISomalia](https://twitter.com/MISomalia)), [youtube \(MI2020\)](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMI2020), Instagram ([mwze2020](https://www.instagram.com/mwze2020)) and [linkedIn \(MI2000\)](https://www.linkedin.com/company/MI2000).

SOMALIA IS BACK ... FROM WHERE? SOMALIA IS *on the move* ... TO WHERE?

The overwhelming message that recently dominated the local media as well as the social media, that many Somalia rely on for news and views, seems to be that *Somalia is back*, without ever mentioning from where? Because to mention movement, speed and direction of any human project requires a clear demonstration of origin and destination. Movement and speed alone is not enough, sometimes a slow but forward moving national strategy is better than hastily formulated policies; and we have seen many in Somalia recently; the State elections, the UNSG representative's persona non-grata kerfuffle, and even the response to President's Masivini's alleged comment re Somalia, just to mention a few.

This is a not a new phenomenon in Somalia. We have been there before, from 1969 to 1990, and are now witnessing a different theme but the same music. Regardless of whether history rhymes or repeats itself for you, not learning from it, is just not an acceptable option anymore.

My focus in the last briefing note (Dec 2018) was on ICT's contribution to the national economy, and I have recommended the following:

1. The Ministry and NCA must show credible leadership by convincing us, Somali citizens, they are impartial and working towards rapid solution to redistribute the dividends from the National ICT resources in an equitable way, in the form of tax, etc. A brief policy paper with a timeline would get things started.
2. If taxation is complicated and as argued over the years has security implication for the telecos, there are other ways, i.e. giving scholarships to say 1000 students to study medicine and STEM subject over the next few years. Contributing to a Universal Service Fund, just like all other countries do, to make telecom services available beyond the big cities and towns.
3. Interconnection makes sense, and, this has been done before, even without a telecommunication law and the NCA. Communication is a human right and forcing Somali citizens to carry multiple mobile phones is a violation. Delaying implementing this does not make sense.
4. Millions of telephone numbers are in use in Somalia and millions more are reserved and are in the hands of just a few telecom companies. Millions of dollars are transmitted via mobile phones. By charging 1 cent per call and per mobile money transaction, enough revenue will probably be collected to pay for all Somali public servants, reducing the need for the EU or others to support us in this area.

It seems the Somalia government has responded in the following way: The Ministry of Telecommunication posted an article which in summary pointed out that, after two years of their hard work we are now ready to receive the benefits of the telecommunication law that the minister helped through Parliament. Interconnection will happen sometime soon. More on this see visit the link below.

[https://www.hiiraan.com/op4/2019/feb/162135/waxaa la soo gaaray waqtigii shacabku guran lahaayeen miraha sharciga isgaarsiinta.aspx](https://www.hiiraan.com/op4/2019/feb/162135/waxaa%20la%20soo%20gaaray%20waqtigii%20shacabku%20guran%20lahaayeen%20miraha%20sharciga%20isgaarsiinta.aspx) . This is good news, although interconnection has been done before without a telecommunication law, and there is no technical reason why this cannot be done anytime, yesterday, now or tomorrow.

On the budget and finance issues, the minister of Finance HE Mr. Bayle has complained that big companies in Mogadishu were not paying their fair share of tax. The Minister mentioned that the government needs \$20 million a month to run its business, \$14million of that is received from Puntland in the form of tax. So far so good, *Taxes must be paid*¹! This is true, however, there could have been better approaches to convince taxpayers to do the right thing than the method he employed. See the following URLs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFwatOiQtig&app=desktop>. Dismantling the Parliamentary oversight committee was unwise, which now makes accountability and transparency hard to achieve. This might be the reason the big companies in Mogadishu he is complaining about, are allegedly refusing to pay tax. In any case, both Ministers have tried their best, even if their best is not delivering the expected outcome.

This January briefing note will now attempt to highlight missed opportunities, and warning signs of the dangers ahead, concluding with recommendation and possible ways for the government to avoid them.

The UNSG's persona non grata kerfuffle- was this necessary? Who won, who lost? What can we learn from this? The short answer is, this was unnecessary. We can learn a good lesson for this, diplomacy 101 so to speak, and move on.

Federal States' election- should the Federal government be involved? In hindsight this was unnecessary and hopefully lessons learnt from this will be applied in the upcoming Jubba State elections.

Somali Central Bank – who should run this important institution? What should it do? Are just some of the questions many of us in Somalia would like to see answered. The Central bank, <http://centralbank.gov.so/> mentions that its primary responsibility is to provide payments and banking services to the government and other stakeholders. The central bank reports the exchange rates of a variety of foreign currency, but not the Somali Shilling; for that, one must rely on information from the Bakaaraha market as published on <http://somaliaaway.com/>

This Month's recommendation is to highlight government processes such as payments of salaries, and national institution building in general.

Since the use of mobile money is so common in Somalia, and it is fair to assume that almost all government employees, including the armed forces will have a mobile phone, is there any logical reason why they cannot be paid via government-developed mobile money solutions, or even one of the existing mobile money solutions?

Institutions built using dubious, and in some cases, corrupted processes, will not last long, nor will they deliver the expected outcomes. If the Somali president can sign the wrong version of a law, not the correct legislation approved by parliament. Or a Minister can cancel a contract, such as the production of passports, before setting up an alternative solution, it is a clear sign that government business processes are not being followed, which will continue the past chaos and prevent Somalia from moving forward anytime soon.

¹ "Taxes are what we pay for a civilized society." - Inscription on the IRevenue Service building, Washington, D.C.