

Constitutional Ambiguity and Electoral Deadlock: Misunderstandings Between FGS & FMSs in the 2025–2026 Transition

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Introduction:

Somalia's trajectory toward a stable, federal democracy is recurrently undermined by escalating tensions between the Federal Government (FGS) and Federal Member States (FMSs), a critical political challenge that obstructs the pathway to the 2025/2026 electoral transition. The core issue lies in the unilateral nature of the FGS's constitutional and electoral reforms, which are widely viewed by FMSs as an attempt to centralize power and subvert the decentralized federal compact established to resolve historical grievances. This poster addresses the resulting political deadlock, placing it within the ACSOS theme of (Re)shaping Somali Society through Politics.

Questions:

1. How do differing interpretations of constitutional reform and electoral procedure fuel political deadlock between the FGS and FMSs, and
2. What are the implications for the legitimacy of Somalia's 2025/2026 electoral transition?

Methodology

The methodology is based on a content analysis such as documents of Constitutions, reports from the UN, International Crisis Group, and Somali think tanks. It employs a case-study approach, focusing specifically on the defiant actions of Puntland and Jubaland in late 2024 and early 2025.

Conclusion

- The poster highlights that misunderstandings between the FGS and the FMS, driven by constitutional ambiguity and rejection of unilateral amendments, pose the most immediate threat to Somalia's political stability.
- Without an inclusive political settlement that recognizes shared responsibility in advancing the federal system, the legitimacy of the 2025/2026 electoral outcome will remain uncertain and at risk.

Recommendations

- Urgently revitalize the National Consultative Council (NCC) to facilitate structured dialogue among political actors.
- Alternatively, initiate a third-party-mediated dialogue to create a neutral, trustworthy platform for negotiations.
- Reach consensus on contentious constitutional articles before the scheduling the 2025/2026 elections to prevent future political disputes.