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ISIR INSTITUTE ANNUAL REPORT



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The Annual Report

Each year brings new developments, insights, and challenges within the policy and governance landscape of the Horn of Africa. In this context, **The Institute for Strategic Insights and Research (ISIR)** conducts research to generate new knowledge and inform its policy advocacy work. ISIR undertakes policy research, data and trends analysis, and training, to support organizations and decision-makers who are striving to foster innovative thinking and promote the formulation of sound public policies. These efforts contribute to positive outcomes in the areas of peace and security, sound governance, the safeguarding of human rights, and the strengthening of democracy.

The annual Report serves as a comprehensive review of the past year's major trends, key findings, and policy developments. It provides an in-depth outlook of the region's governance landscape, and highlights the opportunities this evolution offers for informed, evidence-based policymaking. For a detailed look at our previous analysis, please see our [2024 Annual Report](#).

WHAT WE DO

Research



Civic/Expert Forums



Training/ Consulting



Message from the Managing Director



Hassan Suudi - Managing Director

2025 has been an impactful year for The Institute for Strategic Insights and Research (ISIR) in the complex landscape of the Horn of Africa. The Institute fulfilled its mandate in 2025 by producing new knowledge, engaging in robust civic forums, undertaking public policy analyses, and recommending policy options.

Among the most notable developments in 2025 were the continued geopolitical confrontations between Ethiopia and Eritrea over Red Sea access, the escalating competition for influence from external actors like China, Russia, and Gulf states, and the new US administration's policy shifts regarding foreign aid. This environment upended an already fragile regional order.

At the country level, most of the countries in the Horn of Africa demonstrated fragility. In Somaliland for instance, the conflict between the Somaliland National Army and the SSC- Khatumo intensified, while the policy feasibility of a new sales tax remained uncertain given the country's

predominantly informal economy. On the other hand, Ethiopia continued to face challenges stemming from the MoU with Somaliland, coupled with instances of internal insecurity. In Sudan, the civil war, which has been ongoing for the last 3 years, persisted, while in South Sudan, the endless political transition pushed the country to a heightened risk of renewed conflict. In Somalia, political deadlock and uncertainty persisted.

In response to those issues, ISIR proffered possible redress strategies. The analyses were covered in **eleven publications** in the form of study reports, policy briefs, digests, and other publications, and were further deliberated in a major **Civic Forum** on the Somaliland 2025 Annual Budget. We further advanced governance by successfully hosting **2 Good Governance Summits and Awards** and training the next generation of analysts through the **Research Skills and Culture Training Cohort #4**.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude, as the Managing Director of the Institute for Strategic Insights and Research, to our dedicated researchers, fellows, and the amazing team at the Institute. Thank you also to our valuable contributors and audiences for their positive feedback and collaborative spirit throughout the year.

Publications in 2025

- **Commentary:** The Ethiopia–Somaliland MoU, One Year On: Prospects, Pitfalls, and Security Implications
 - Budget Analysis: Somaliland 2025 Budget How Decentralized is it?
 - Article: Can Sales Tax Be Effective in Somaliland's Informal Economy? Challenges, Impacts, and Policy Solutions
 - A follow-up on South Sudan's Endless Political Transitions
 - The ISIR Digest: Trump's Second Term: Implications for the Horn of Africa
 - Study Report: Digital and social media in Somaliland's Electoral Landscape: Stakeholder Insights
 - Policy Brief: Somaliland–Khatumo Conflict Dynamics and Pathways to Peace
 - Research Paper: Somaliland's Banking System: Challenges and Mitigation Strategies
 - Discussion Paper: The Vanishing Pastures: Rangeland Degradation and The Imperiled Future of Somaliland's Pastoral Communities
 - ISIR Digest: Outlook on Peace and Conflict in the HoA
 - ISIR Institute: Strategy Summary 2026-2030
-

Thematic focus

1. Regional Peace and Security

The Horn of Africa region faces some of the most critical peace and security challenges, due, in part, to socio-political crises. The region is fraught with governance challenges, economic underdevelopment, environmental catastrophes, and resource/territory-based conflicts. The Institute of Strategic Insights and Research contributes to the strengthening of peace and security in the region by conducting relevant, issue-based research on regional peace and security, keeping abreast of and connecting to relevant conflict transformation and peace building studies, and participating in key regional research and practice exchanges. In 2025 ISIR commissioned various

research studies into the peace and security situation in the region, the drivers of instability, and policy recommendations for tackling these challenges.

One of these papers was a Commentary: [The Ethiopia–Somaliland MoU, One Year On: Prospects, Pitfalls, and Security Implications.](#) In January 2024, Somaliland's Former President Muse Bihi Abdi signed an MoU with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, granting Ethiopia access to a coastal strip in exchange for formal recognition of Somaliland as a sovereign state. For the two leaders, the agreement seemingly fulfilled their respective manifest destinies—Ethiopia's pursuit of Red Sea access, and Somaliland's quest for statehood. Yet, for the Horn of Africa, it

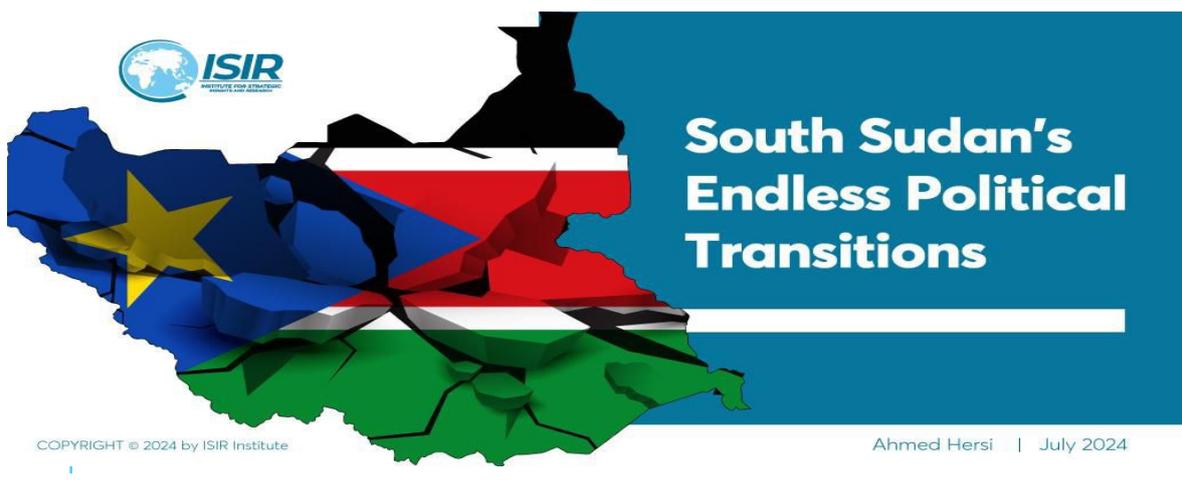
upended an already fragile order, reigniting territorial disputes, unleashing nationalist irredentism, and heightening the risk of regional war.

This commentary situated the MoU within the broader context of Somaliland, Somalia, and Ethiopia's existential dilemmas, the challenge of deterring

hostile non-state actors, and the Horn's role as a battleground for external geopolitical competition. It called on policymakers in the Horn, multilateral blocs, and foreign capitals to navigate this zero-sum game with measured engagement—prioritizing dialogue, diplomacy, and cooperation to safeguard fragile economies and regional stability.



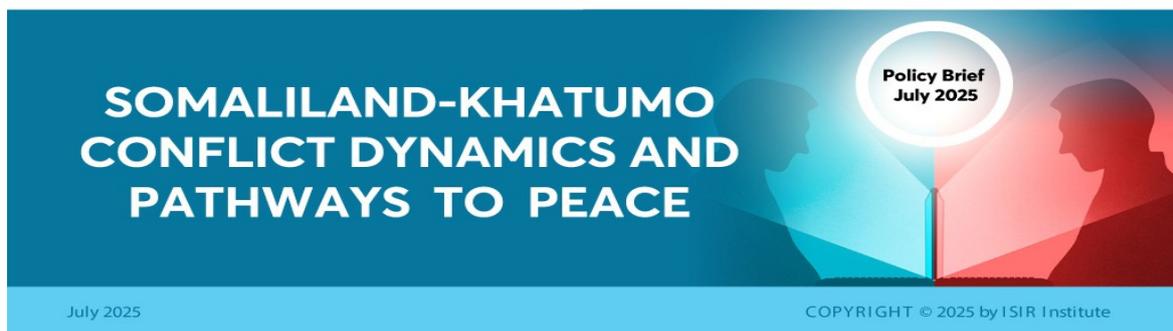
In March 2025, the Institute made a follow-up on [South Sudan's Endless Political Transitions](#) paper published in July 2024. The follow-up was necessitated by the endless transitions in South Sudan which threatened to push the country back to renewed conflict. In September 2025, the country's vice-president was arrested, which intensified the potential for renewed conflicts. This comes at a time when the conflict in Sudan (to the north) is taking on new momentum, and the tension in Congo (to the south) is rising. Some of the external actors involved in the Congo conflict are also believed to have involvement in South Sudan.



ISIR INSTITUTE: ANNUAL REPORT | 2025

In June 2025, the Institute published a Policy Brief titled: [Somaliland-Khatumo Conflict Dynamics and Pathways to Peace](#). This policy brief examined the Somalia-Somaliland conflict, intensified by Somaliland's 2024 port deal with Ethiopia and Somalia's recent push to integrate the breakaway Khatumo region into its federal system. This move, aimed at undermining Somaliland's claim over the east, risks triggering broader regional instability.

External actors like the UAE, Turkey, Egypt, and the U.S. have further complicated the landscape. Despite escalating violence, especially in the Khatumo region, the brief highlighted the potential of grassroots-led peace efforts. It urged inclusive dialogue, support for Somaliland's Peace Commission, and coordinated international engagement to prevent further fragmentation and promote lasting stability.



In August 2025, the Institute published a Discussion Paper titled : [The Vanishing Pastures: Rangeland Degradation and the Imperilled Future of Somaliland's Pastoral Communities](#). The rangelands of Somaliland are the primary resource base for pastoral livelihoods, offering forage and water which are critical for livestock survival. However, these systems are under increasing threat. Rangeland management in Somaliland is not merely an environmental issue. It is a foundational pillar of the country's economic resilience, food security, social stability, and ecological survival.

A Discussion Paper



This paper sought to investigate the state of rangelands, including the current challenges facing the pastoralist community in Somaliland. The study employed participatory approaches, combining field observations, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. Qualitative data collection was conducted in three ecologically diverse regions—Maroodijeex, Togdheer, and Sool—chosen for their reliance on pastoralism and evident signs of land degradation. Specific sites included Balli-gubadle and Sallahley in Maroodijeex; Bookh and Ban-awl in Togdheer; and Waylo-koriye in Sool. These areas face acute pressures from drought, bush encroachment, and breakdowns in communal land use governance.

2. Democratic Governance

Governments in the Horn of Africa face many complex challenges as they have to meet the demands and expectations of an increasingly growing population. While each country struggles with its specific challenges, there is often value in understanding other countries' interventions and drawing insights from best practices through intra-regional learning. ISIR has long sought to strengthen public institutions to promote "responsible governance", where leaders establish accountability mechanisms to ensure political transparency and economic stability. Throughout the year, ISIR played a key role in regional development through "transformative democratization" which is the foundation of flourishing, prosperous nations. Overcoming governance challenges unlocks the region's potential

to achieve sustainable development and national prosperity.

The ISIR Institute Published the [Budget Analysis: Somaliland 2025 Budget — How Decentralized Is It?](#). The 2025 Somaliland National Budget was released in late January 2025, totaling \$556.3 million, which was an 11.3% increase from the \$499.8 million budget in 2024. This growth reflected the government's ongoing efforts to expand fiscal capacity, improve public services, and invest in infrastructure. However, it also highlighted shifts in spending priorities and an increasing reliance on external funding sources. To provide a comprehensive assessment of this budget, the ISIR Institute conducted a detailed analysis, structured across five key areas.

The first level examined macroeconomic indicators, including GDP growth, inflation, exchange rates, and trade performance, offering insights into Somaliland's broader economic stability. The second level provided a national budget overview, highlighting allocation trends and financial priorities. The third level focused on the central government's budget analysis, assessing both revenue generation and expenditure patterns, including a breakdown of sectoral allocations. The fourth level explored the local government's budget, analyzing fiscal decentralization and regional resource distribution. Finally, the fifth level examined Public Enterprise funding and Foreign Aid, evaluating the role of state-owned enterprises and donor contributions in Somaliland's fiscal framework.

March



2025

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*Budget Analysis:
How Decentralized is it?*

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In May 2025, the Institute published a study report titled : **Digital and Social Media in Somaliland's Electoral Landscape: Stakeholder Insights**

The 2024 Somaliland elections marked a pivotal moment in the nation's political evolution, underscoring the increasing importance of digital and social media in shaping public discourse

and political participation. This report examined how various stakeholders including political

parties, candidates, Civil Society Organizations, journalists, and voters utilized digital platforms during and after

the 2024 election period.

The analysis revealed a growing reliance on social media for campaign messaging, voter engagement, pre-election debates, and overall electoral oversight while highlighting challenges within the electoral process. Immediately after the election, digital platforms continued to play a critical role in fostering dialogue, addressing grievances, and sustaining democratic accountability. The findings underscored the transformative power of digital media in Somaliland's democratization and electoral processes and offer insights into its potential for future consolidation into democratic processes.

Study Report



DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN SOMALILAND'S ELECTORAL LANDSCAPE: STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS

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April 2025

On the same theme, in July 2025, the Institute published a research paper: **Somaliland's Banking System: Challenges and Mitigation Strategies.**

The paper explored the banking sector in Somaliland, which has its roots in traditional Hawala (remittance) systems, which historically served as the primary financial institutions for cash deposit-taking, credit, and lending. Over the past ten years, Somaliland has experienced significant growth in its banking industry, marked by the emergence of commercial banks. Today, the sector comprises the Central Bank of Somaliland and five fully operational commercial banks, playing a crucial role in the country's financial landscape.

The Somaliland Constitution mandates that the country's financial industry adhere to Sharia-compliant principles, ensuring that both the Central Bank of Somaliland and the commercial banks operate in accordance with Islamic finance

regulations. This framework prohibits *Riba* (interest), *Gharar* (excessive uncertainty), and other activities considered Haram under Islamic law. Despite significant progress in recent years, Somaliland's entire banking sector, including the Central Bank of Somaliland and commercial banks, remains in its early stages of development, facing the challenges of inadequate regulatory frameworks, limited financial infrastructure, and low public trust.

This paper critically examined the key challenges and structural gaps facing Somaliland's banking sector and explored reform strategies aimed at enhancing its stability, efficiency, and growth. The paper recommended some necessary policy interventions and financial infrastructure improvements needed to strengthen the sector. Furthermore, it highlighted global best practices and their applicability to Somaliland's unique Sharia-compliant banking framework, offering a roadmap for sustainable financial sector development.



3. Cross-Cutting Themes

ISIR publishes research papers, opinion pieces, and analyses on crosscutting themes. In 2025, the Institute published the **article: Can Sales Tax Be Effective in Somaliland's Informal Economy?**. This followed the new president of Somaliland Mr. Abdirahman Cirro's proposal to introduce a sales tax, the first proposal of its kind in the country. The proposal included taxation on sales conducted through merchant accounts linked to mobile money platforms such as Zaad, E-Dahab, MyCash, and Sahal, as well as transactions made via bank e-wallet systems. Additionally, if adopted, the policy would have extended to taxing telephone calls, SMS, and internet data usage. This ambitious initiative was intended to expand the country's tax base, enabling the government to generate the revenue necessary to finance essential public services and development projects.

Sales tax is a consumption-based tax levied on goods and services at the point of sale. It is typically paid by the customer and collected by businesses, which are responsible for remitting the tax to the government. A standard sales tax applies a flat rate to all goods and services, making it straightforward but potentially

regressive. Value Added Tax (VAT) is a multi-stage tax imposed at each stage of production and distribution, ensuring that taxation is based on the value added at every step. Another widely used system is the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which functions similarly to VAT but often applies a single uniform rate across all goods and services.

Given Somaliland's predominantly informal economy, where a vast majority of businesses and individuals operate outside the formal banking system, the feasibility and effectiveness of the sales tax policy remains uncertain. The absence of a structured financial reporting system, limited tax enforcement mechanisms, and weak integration between mobile money payment platforms and formal banking institutions pose significant challenges to the implementation and compliance of the new sales tax.

In this article, the ISIR Institute examined the viability of the proposed taxation framework, assessing its potential economic impact, key challenges, and broader implications for businesses and consumers. Furthermore, it identified fundamental reforms necessary to establish a more efficient and transparent tax administration system.



CAN SALES TAX BE EFFECTIVE IN SOMALILAND'S INFORMAL ECONOMY? CHALLENGES, IMPACTS, AND POLICY SOLUTIONS

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4. ISIR Digest & Institutional / Strategic Documents

The Horn of Africa remains a critical geopolitical hotspot, influencing global trade, security, and power dynamics. In his second term, U.S. President Donald Trump introduced a wave of executive orders, reshaping U.S. policy on economic deregulation, military strategy, and immigration, including a potential travel ban affecting countries in the Horn of Africa region.

His administration's approach outlined a conservative policy agenda to reshape the U.S. government and shift focus from aid to private-sector investment, while deprioritising Africa in favour of strategic interests elsewhere.

The Institute addressed these developments in April 2025 with the ISIR digest: [Trump's Second Term: Implications](#)

[for the Horn of Africa](#). The region faces escalating competition as China, Russia, and Gulf states are expanding their influence, heightening competition in the Horn of Africa region. Trump's "transactional" diplomacy risks weakening the U.S.'s influence in the long term, creating security gaps that rival powers could exploit. For the U.S. administration, the challenge remains balancing short-term strategic interests with sustainable engagement to maintain stability in the Horn of Africa region.

In this digest, Ahmed Hersi, Senior Researcher at the ISIR Institute, assessed Trump's second term in office and particularly the possible policy implications for the Horn of Africa. The Horn of Africa is a vital geopolitical region with significant influence over global trade, security, and international power dynamics.

Digest



April 2025

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On Dec 1, 2025 the Institute published [The ISIR Digest: Outlook on Peace and Conflict in the HoA](#)

The publication focused on the convergence of interconnected political, security, and environmental catastrophes facing the Horn of Africa region currently. The three primary fault lines at the time were the geopolitical confrontation

between Ethiopia and Eritrea over Red Sea access; the internal fragmentation exemplified by Sudan's civil war, the endless political transition in South Sudan, and Somalia's political deadlock and future uncertainty; and the structural challenges of climate shocks and economic instability throughout the region.

ISIR Digest



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Historically in the region, a significant trend of political entrenchment is evident, with long-serving leaders, for example in Uganda and Djibouti, leveraging constitutional amendments to extend their rule. The potential for broader regional conflicts is strong, and the choices made by key leaders in the coming months will determine whether the Horn descends into a new era of conflict or begins a painstaking climb toward peace.

The final edition of the ISIR Digest in 2025 integrated critical updates from verified sources to provide a comprehensive, multi-dimensional analysis of the peace and conflict situation in the Horn of Africa. Key political, peace, security, economic, and humanitarian insights were incorporated from ongoing regional monitoring to ensure that the report reflected the most current assessment of the region.

Research Skills and Culture Training Cohort #4, May 6-8 2025

A three-day training program aimed at building the capacity of young researchers in Hargeisa was successfully held at the Ambassador Hotel from May 6th to 8th, 2025. The training focused on the various stages of the research cycle. Facilitated by Fardous Ali

and Dr. SarahJoy Leitch, with Deeq Osman also in attendance, the course saw 14 participants out of 16 registered students attend all three days. The standard of work demonstrated by the participants was high. Prior to the course, students were given a pre-course assignment to design a research project relevant to their work and interests. Throughout the training, they applied the methods taught to continuously build upon and refine their initial designs. The workshop culminated on the final day with students presenting their improved work, which clearly demonstrated a substantial level of learning had occurred.

Course Content and Methodology

The research training course began with a welcome from Dr. Hassan Suudi and a talk by Dr. Leitch on decolonizing the research agenda, urging students to be mindful of potential Eurocentric biases in international research methods.

Day one covered the research process, starting with paradigms (ontology, epistemology), the positivism/interpretivism approaches, and their relation to quantitative/qualitative data. This was followed by defining a research concept, using Dr. Leitch's work as an example, and its role in a conceptual framework. The session then discussed theory, variables, hypotheses, and concluded with guidance on literature reviews and avoiding common pitfalls. After a break, Ms. Ali led a successful 'Bingo' exercise for revision and networking. Her subsequent session focused on selecting and pitching a topic, research planning,

formulating good research questions, constructing a research proposal, using open/closed-ended questions, and abstract writing. The day ended with a final term-definition exercise and homework applying the concepts to students' own projects. Facilitator reflection led to a decision to incorporate more practical, project-related exercises on day two.

Day two began with a warm-up exercise where students successfully narrowed down five research topics to make them more focused. The session then covered methodology, the difference between quantitative and qualitative data, sampling, and questionnaire construction, including various question types and their application to student projects. After the break, the focus shifted to data collection methods (interviews), a brief mention of data analysis, and then in-depth writing instruction, including the constructive use of AI. Students completed a writing exercise (abstract). The day concluded with a deep dive into citation, accurate referencing, avoiding plagiarism, and homework to prepare a project presentation for the next day. The second day incorporated more practical exercises, resulting in students gaining a clearer understanding of the research stages and how to proceed with their own projects.

The third day focused on student research project presentations, which demonstrated substantial learning achieved over the preceding two days. The high standard of the presentations indicated significant progress on their personal projects. Notably, many projects were directly relevant to the students' professional work,

and they expressed a strong desire to implement their findings after the course. The overall quality of the presentations was good, covering a range of topics including:

- **Rahma Ismail:** Financial inclusion and resilience in the aftermath of disaster: a socio-cultural examination of the Waheen Market fire in Hargeisa.
- **Mohammed Hassan:** The impact of websites on legal awareness in Somaliland after 2010.
- **Muna Rashid:** The impact of practical skills training on student employability and academic motivation in Somaliland.
- **Abdifatah Mohamed:** Local governance and public service delivery in Hargeisa, Somaliland.
- **Mohamed Yusuf:** Sustaining survival or perpetuating dependency? Humanitarian interventions and IDPs reliance on aid at Burao.
- **Abdihakim Jama:** Optimising nutritional strategies for improved livestock health and productivity in Somaliland.
- **Yahye Mohamed:** To examine the role of public transport accessibility in enhancing employment.
- **Osman Hersi:** The effect of procurement practices on the performance of road projects in Hargeisa; a case of study of Hargeisa local government municipality.
- **Khadar Osman:** Assessing the socioeconomic impact of recurrent droughts on pastoral communities in Somaliland.
- **Balkisa Abdirahman:** Assessing the role of the ICJ in resolving maritime disputes.
- **Idil Osman:** Parental education level and its relationship to tooth decay in children aged 6-12 visiting Burao General Hospital.
- **Khadra Ali:** Early warning system (Qaylo dhaan in Somali).
- **Hannah Jamal:** Effect of climate change on crop production in Gabiley.
- **Zamzam Hassan:** Influence of clan leaders on family law in Hargeisa.

The course was concluded with closing remarks delivered by Mr. Hamdi Ismael Abdullahi and Dr. Hassan Suudi.



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The Good Governance Hero Campaign 2025 Film Fellowship

The intensive 5-day Good Governance 2025 Film Fellowship training, a collaborative effort between ISIR Institute and [Accountability Lab](#), commenced on Sunday, September 7, 2025. The program engaged eleven enthusiastic participants, along with the 2024 Good Governance Hero, Hawa Kodah. Day one of the training featured various exercises covering journalism, ethics, and consent.



On day two, the focus shifted to editing, culminating in the fellows successfully producing short films in just one hour. The third day was hosted at the [Medialnk](#) office, where industry professionals led hands-on workshops in camera operation and lighting, significantly developing the participants' technical skills for documentary filmmaking.

The fellowship formally concluded on Thursday, 11 September, 2025 with a

closing ceremony celebrating the fellows' dedication. The final day was focused on reflection, during which participants shared their key takeaways and presented their developed film pitches, receiving constructive feedback from trainers and mentors. Following the ceremony, the training component continued as the official filming of the heroes' stories began and was successfully completed on November 17th.



The ISIR Civic Forum

The Civic Forum is an open platform, acting as a catalyst for change. It is a community-based initiative designed to open up avenues for unfettered discussions and exchange of information about the region. The Institute for Strategic Insights and Research (ISIR) believes that open platforms unlock the community's potential to engage in critical and constructive conversation. The public has a key role to play in national development and success. The ISIR Civic Forum brings together key actors to help find solutions to issues of public interest and aims to improve growth, social mobility, and innovation. The forum is meant to provide

a platform for citizens such as political analysts and other thought leaders in the democratization processes in Somaliland to conduct debates and dialogues in a bid to encourage public participation in Somaliland's transition to democracy.

On April 25, 2025, a civic forum on the [Somaliland Annual Budget 2025](#) was convened in Burao District, as part of the Nalashaah event under the [DAWLAD-KAAB](#) project, which promotes public debate on parliamentary affairs. The forum took place shortly after the House of Representatives reviewed and confirmed the national budget for the 2025 fiscal year.



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The discussion was anchored on the ISIR Institute's newly published analysis titled **"Somaliland 2025 Budget: How Decentralized Is It?"** authored by Ahmed Yusuf. Before the panel discussion began, an overview of the study was presented, outlining its goals, key findings, and the

importance of using public dialogue to strengthen understanding of budget processes. The forum emphasized how informed discussions could support the refinement of the upcoming 2026 budget and ensure that citizen perspectives are better integrated.



The forum brought together a diverse mix of stakeholders, including local community members, civic actors, and representatives from eastern regions. Participants raised various questions for the panelists, focusing on budget allocations, decentralization, and the accountability responsibilities of the central government, regional authorities, and especially the House of Representatives who hold the constitutional mandate to analyze and approve the national budget.



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Panelists responded to the audience's concerns, clarifying how different government institutions participate in budgeting and how improved engagement could lead to more equitable allocations across regions.

The **key action point** emerging from the event was a commitment to **disseminate**

the ISIR Institute paper to relevant government agencies, including central and regional bodies as well as members of the House of Representatives. The aim was to encourage wider institutional engagement and ensure that insights from the analysis inform the preparation of Somaliland's 2026 national budget.



Networking

- The Institute welcomed **Suldaan Said Ahmed**, Finland's Foreign Minister's Special Envoy on Peace Mediation in the Horn of Africa, and Mr. Jukka Pajarinen, Director for Eastern & Southern Africa, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, to the ISIR Institute. Together, we're committed to fostering peace and regional collaboration in the Horn of Africa!
- The ISIR Institute welcomed Dr. Sarah Joy Leitch as a Senior Researcher!

With a PhD in African Politics and 15+ years of experience, Dr. Leitch brings invaluable insights into African conflict and governance, particularly in Zimbabwe and Somaliland. Welcome aboard, Dr. Leitch!

- A Memorandum of Understanding for Strategic Cooperation was signed between **The Institute for Strategic Insights and Research** and the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Somaliland**.



WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

We are thrilled to welcome **Dr. SarahJoy Leitch** to **ISIR Institute** as a Senior Researcher!

With her extensive expertise and passion for research, Dr. Leitch will play a key role in advancing our mission and driving impactful solutions. We look forward to her contributions and collaboration!

Join us in giving her a warm welcome!

Dr. SarahJoy Leitch
Senior Researcher | ISIR Institute

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International conferences

Dr. Hassan Sudi attended the International Conference on Crisis and Cooperation in the Horn of Africa, held on 12th and 13th November, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya. His participation underscored the importance of engaging regional experts and decision-makers in discussions aimed at fostering peace and security in the Horn region.



ISIR Initiatives

- **Parliament Oversight:** DAWLAD-KAAB project.

The ISIR Institute provides oversight for the sessions of the House of Representatives, delivering accurate and visualized information to the citizens. This oversight falls under the DAWLAD-KAAB project.

The oversight involves monitoring the laws and amendments approved by the House

of Representatives.

During these sessions, information is analyzed and discussed by invited Members of Parliament (MPs) in debate sessions, reflecting their activities and decisions made. This process keeps citizens informed and aware of the House of Representatives' activities and agenda. The oversight contributes to increased transparency and accountability within the House.



A quarterly debate and the Nalashaah event are held to create a connection between citizens and MPs, allowing discussions on current issues and providing extensive information about how the House of Representatives functions.

Coordination meeting with CSOs collaborating with the House of Representatives

- On August 28, 2025, the third quarterly coordination meeting took place in the House of Representatives' Department of Planning Hall. The primary objective of the meeting was to enable Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to discuss activities completed in the past three months, and plan upcoming initiatives. Another goal was to familiarize CSOs with the various departments of the House of Representatives to foster closer collaboration.

Each organization contributed to supporting the House of Representatives and addressing current issues that require attention. Departments such as the Planning Department, Communication Department, and the recently established Gender Office welcomed civil society organizations (CSOs) and promised to collaborate effectively to facilitate their efforts in supporting the House.



CSOs Coordination Meeting

- In July 2025, ISIR Institute, through its [DAWLAD-KAAB](#) project and in partnership with Siraad Initiative, successfully hosted a dynamic panel discussion titled **"Breaking Barriers: Women's Strength in Parliamentary Politics in Somaliland."** Held at the Assod Hotel in Hargeisa, the event convened experienced and emerging women leaders, activists, and community members. The discussion's primary goal was to critically examine the progress made and the persistent challenges facing women's political participation in Somaliland. Through candid dialogue and powerful personal accounts, the panel effectively illuminated both the obstacles and the opportunities currently present for women in parliamentary politics.

The full report on the discussion is available [here](#).



Breaking Barriers: Women's Struggles and Strength in Parliamentary Politics in Somaliland

Guest speakers





The Good Governance Hero Campaign , Summit and Awards

[The Institute for Strategic Insights and Research](#) successfully hosted the two-day Good Governance Summit in Hargeisa, Somaliland, on June 29–30, 2025, bringing together 150 representatives from the public, private, civil society, academia, and youth sectors. Organized by the Institute for Strategic Insights and Research (ISIR) and Accountability LAB (AL), in collaboration with the Somaliland Good Governance Commission (GGC), the summit aimed to identify governance challenges and celebrate the 2024 good governance heroes.

DAY ONE

The high-level panel on the “Future of Governance in Somaliland” featured Mr. Abdilahi Bile, Mr. Mohamed Hashi, and Mr. Abdisamad Osman, focusing on rebuilding trust and institutional reform. Panelists noted limited public trust and understanding of government. They emphasized that government services are a public right, not a favor, and stressed the need for public awareness, engagement (e.g., town hall meetings), transparent communication, and holding the government accountable. Citizens were urged to elect good politicians.



The Good Governance Heroes Summit & Awards 2025



A research paper on conflicting mandates and policy overlaps in public service was presented by Mr. Abdifatah Habbane of the GGC Planning Department. A "Reflection Session" followed, where heroes Osman Ali, Dr. Gudoon, and Mr.

Haboon shared their experiences and the post-selection impact on their lives. A "World Cafe Session" allowed participants to engage directly with heroes to learn about community volunteering and good governance promotion.



The Good Governance Heroes Summit & Awards 2025



The Good Governance Heroes Summit & Awards 2025



DAY TWO

Day two began with remarks from ISIR's Managing Director, Dr. Hassan Sudi, and GGC's Dr. Adan Ahmed Dahir. Accountability Lab's Communication Manager, Mrs. Fardous Ali, led the "Stories of Change" session, which screened films about the five selected Good Governance Heroes, explaining the selection process and inviting each hero on stage for applause.

Guest speakers, including GGC Chairman Dr. Adan Ahmed Dahir, emphasized the importance of such events for encouraging public and institutional performance improvement. Dr. Dahir announced that GGC would consider a similar initiative

for public institutions. Mr. Ahmed Osman, Director General of the Ministry of Livestock and Rural Development, hailed the heroes and permanently employed one of them, Dr. Nageeye, who was a temporary staff member. Mrs. Aisha M. Nur from Negaad women's umbrella stressed the role of volunteers and civil society.

After a Somali cultural dance performance by Hiddo Academy, the five Good Governance Heroes of 2024 Mr. Nageeye, Mr. Ali, Mrs. Hawo, Mrs. Hibo, and Mr. Abdirashid—received awards symbolizing their courage and commitment. Each recipient gave a short speech about their journey and impact.



The final Good Governance Heroes Campaign Summit and Awards

In 2025, the Institute for Strategic Insights and Research achieved a major milestone by hosting the **Good Governance Summit and Awards** for the second consecutive time. This highly-anticipated two-day event, held at the prestigious Damal Hotel in Hargeisa, also served to conclude the five-year project. The Summit functioned as a vital platform, promoting accountable leadership, transparency, and citizen-led change throughout the region.

The Summit's core mission was to move beyond mere discussion and actively celebrate exemplary public service. The agenda featured a dynamic mix of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive workshops centered on themes of anti-corruption, policy effectiveness, and community empowerment. The event successfully brought together government officials, civil society leaders, academics, and international partners, fostering a rich environment for collaboration and the sharing of best practices in governance.



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The Good Governance Heroes Summit and Awards
ISIR accountabilitylab



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The highlight of the two days was the **Good Governance Awards ceremony**, a poignant celebration of leadership and impactful contributions. This segment was dedicated to honoring individuals whose commitment to public welfare and ethical governance set a high standard for others. In a powerful moment of

recognition, five truly deserving individuals were celebrated and formally designated as **"Good Governance Heroes."** This award recognized their outstanding, often tireless, and selfless contributions to their respective communities and sectors, demonstrating a profound dedication to positive, citizen-focused change.



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The ceremony reached its pinnacle with the presentation of the **Lifetime Achievement Award** to **General Ahmed Mohamed Hassan (Swahili)**. This esteemed honor was a profound testament to his exemplary career, one defined by decades of unwavering dedicated

service, unimpeachable integrity, and transformative leadership within the public sphere. General Hassan's legacy serves as an enduring model of the ethical and effective leadership the Summit seeks to promote.



The 2025 Summits reinforced ISIR's role as a leading voice in promoting good governance, accountability, and the active

participation of citizens in shaping their future, solidifying the event's place as a cornerstone in the regional calendar.



Honorary Dinner

The ISIR Institute, through its Managing Director, Dr. Hassan Sudi, hosted a prestigious and heartfelt honorary dinner to celebrate the dedication of the Good Governance Heroes Volunteers. Dr. Sudi personally invited the volunteers to the ISIR offices for the event, which was held at the renowned Hayatt Hotel, providing an elegant and fitting setting for the event.

This annual event serves as a cornerstone of the Institute's commitment to promoting accountability, transparency, and effective governance within the community. The "Good Governance Heroes" are a select group of volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment, selflessness, and impact in their efforts to champion these principles. Their work, ranging from monitoring

local government activities to running community education campaigns, is critical to fostering a culture of integrity.

The dinner was attended by key project team members; speeches throughout the evening highlighted the importance of volunteerism in strengthening democratic institutions and the tangible positive changes brought about by the honored individuals.



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The event featured a formal awards ceremony where each volunteer received a citation and a token of appreciation, underscoring the deep gratitude of both the Institute and the partner organization for their tireless efforts. The atmosphere was one of profound appreciation and inspiration, reinforcing the collaborative spirit essential for advancing good governance initiatives.



Conclusion

The year 2025 has been a period of profound contribution and insight for the Institute for Strategic Insights and Research (ISIR). Our research, civic forums, and training have equipped decision-makers and citizens with the knowledge required to navigate the complex dynamics of the Horn of Africa, even amid persistent challenges of conflict and instability. By fostering informed dialogue, strengthening civic engagement, and cultivating a new generation of researchers, ISIR has helped to lay the foundation for a future where peace, sound governance, and sustainable development can take firm root across the region. Our resolve is unwavering, and our commitment to transformative analysis is stronger than ever.

As we look ahead to 2026, ISIR renews its dedication to advancing regional peace and security, democratic governance, and socioeconomic development in the Horn of Africa. Building on the achievements and lessons of 2025, we will continue to expand our research, deepen our partnerships, and amplify the voices of stakeholders across the civic space. With sustained collaboration and support, we look forward to another productive year from the Institute—one in which our work continues to inform public discourse, shape policy, and contribute meaningfully to a more just, stable, and prosperous region.

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