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The First Year of President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre

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President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmaajo and Prime Minister Hassan Ali Kheyre popularity has slipped since the 2017 election, because of their inaction and mostly talk, as well as their lack of vision, strategy and concrete policies in addressing the enormous challenges facing Somalia. Also their association and wielding an absolute power to Fahad Yasin, Chief of Staff of Villa Somalia, didn't help but worsened the discontent of Somalis to their leaders. Fahad, a former Al-Jazeera Arabic correspondent is Qatar proxy leader in Somalia. Fahad is a member of Al-Islah Movement, the Muslim Brotherhood in Somalia and was a member of Al-Itihad Al-Islamiya. Al-Itihad Al-Islamiya was considered as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States, and the United Kingdom.



President Farmaajo while campaigning called out former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and his team for their failures. However, after his election, he surrounded himself with President Hassan Sheikh cronies. Where is the change!

The perception in Somalia and the across many capitals is that President Farmaajo is being manipulated by Fahad, who is running the affairs of the country. When President Farmaajo took power last year, he was celebrated as a new kind of a Somali leader. However, Farmaajo has shown to be frail, and beholden to Fahad, and Qatari influence.

Worse yet, Fahad has succeeded to undermine Farmaajo and Kheyre's ties with allied governments including the United States, discreetly aligning Somalia with Qatar and its proxy allies Iran and Ethiopia. The alliance with Qatar has had negative impact on the Somalia's image and standing with the International Donors that are crucial to Somalia's security, and economic development, according to reports.

Somali political leaders and the public remain profoundly dissatisfied with President Farmaajo’s leadership, and unwillingness to control Fahad’s widespread abuse of power and corruption. They object to the notion that Fahad, an unelected former Aljazeera staffer with no national security or foreign policy experience is running roughshod over President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre, using the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) and other government institutions to abuse rule of law and settle political scores with opposition figures.

Undermining and corrupting the judiciary and abuse of rule of law by Fahad has become a major concern over the past year. As a result of these developments, U.S. support to Somalia is in serious jeopardy, according to western diplomats. The U.S. patience with President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre has been running very low, leading to the suspension of all support to the Somali National Army.

Grading year one of the presidency.

President Farmaajo is the elected leader of Somalia, and the buck stops with him, my analysis will objectively focus on how he performed based on the promises he made to the Somali people and their representatives before and after last years election.

Rating Scale

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Label</i>
5	Excellent
4	Good
3	Fair
2	Poor
1	Bad

Political Stability

Despite many meetings between the federal government and the regions, President Farmaajo has wasted his first year because Fahad has been waging a covert war against Somali regions. He financed a no-confidence vote against Hirshabelle President last summer, successfully dismissing President Cosoble and his government.

Embolden Fahad then went after Galmudug President Ahmed Dualle Gelle “Haaf”. The standoff was defused after the other regions realizing that the threat came to the aid of President Haaf and sided with Galmudug. Fahad has since attempted to destabilize Puntland, Southwest and Jubaland, financing campaigns against regional presidents.

According to sources familiar with Fahad Yasin covert activity and access to intercepted communications between Fahad Yasin, Qatar Intelligence, and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, the proxy allies of Qatar see Somali regional presidents as threats to their goals and plans for Somalia that includes the establishment of “Ciidanka Shacabka” a.k.a. the People’s Army, a paramilitary militia similar to Hezbollah and aligned with Qatar, Iran and Al-Islah, the Muslim Brotherhood in Somalia.

These sources report that Fahad has been on Western Intelligence radar since meeting with senior Qatari Intelligence, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard – Quds Force and Hezbollah in Turkey last year.

Fahad and Qatar have been recruiting current and former Al-Shabaab leaders and fighters as well as clan and sub-clan militias in south-central Somalia to form Ciidanka Shacabka, establishing parallel security institutions controlled by Fahad and his proxy allies that will undermine federal and regional government authorities.



In addition, Fahad and his proxy allies have created political crisis in Mogadishu that undermine the confidence and effectiveness of government institutions. In less than 12 months, President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre were forced to fire the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Industries, Interior and Federalism, and Religious Affairs. Several Ministerial positions remain vacant because of resignations of ministers. As a result, many federal government institutions are not functioning.

Since taking charge, Farmaajo - Kheyre government has had two Ministers of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Interior, Humanitarian, and Religious Affairs. They also had two Chiefs of Defense Forces, police commissioners, and NISA directors as well as three National Security Advisors. All these changes suggest that Fahad who has had the final authority on all these changes is poorly serving them, leading to perpetual political and security instability. There were many more qualified and experienced candidates ready to serve, however Fahad values personal familial ties, friendships and loyalty over education, competency and merit.

Political Stability Score: (2 out of 5)

Leadership Style

President Farmaajo promised to bring change to Somalia. He called out former President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud and his team for their failures. However, after his election, president Farmaajo surrounded himself with President Hassan Sheikh cronies.

Nabad iyo Nolol became an extension of Hassan Sheikh government. The cronies include Fahad Yasin, former Hassan Sheikh financier and campaign manager for the 2012 elections; Prime Minister Kheyre a close associate of Hassan Sheikh and his senior advisor; Thabit Mohamed a relative of Hassan Sheikh and his former Deputy Chief of Staff who he later was appointed the Deputy Chief of Mission to Somali Embassy in Washington DC; Minister Jamal Hassan, former Chief of Mission to Somali Embassy in Nairobi, and a close associate of Hassan Sheikh; Minister Abdirahman Bayle, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs; Abdullahi Mohamed Ali “Sanbalooshe” a close associate of

Hassan Sheikh, Mohamed Abdi Hayir “Mareye”, the former Minister of Information, and Minister Ahmed Isse Awad (a close confidant of Fahad), who served as the Somali Ambassador to the United States. So *where is the change?*

President Farmaajo’s leadership and management style is described as peculiar. He is unable to project a clear vision, leadership and persona required to lead Somalia. He still remains in campaign mode focusing on trivial issues, giving away his authority to Fahad.

According to western diplomats who routinely interacted with President Farmaajo for over six years, not much has changed of the president since he was the prime minister, demonstrating political naivety and increasing dependence on Fahad. The president’s vulnerability to manipulation and propensity to only depend on close friends, family and Fahad, has exacerbated his problems, leading to leadership vacuum and paralysis.

Leadership score: (1 out of 5)

Security

Since taking charge, not much has changed in the security of the average Somali citizen. President Farmaajo promised to tackle security and rebuild the national army, police and intelligence services. However, these institutions are in worse shape today than a year ago. More than 10,000 soldiers have not received their salaries in over 9 months.

According to western officials, Farmaajo - Kheyre government have not prioritized the paying salaries of the security forces as they promised, leading to poor state of security. What’s concerning to many Farmaajo and Kheyre supporters is the significant time has been wasted on political infighting, campaigns against the regions, unnecessary travel, meetings, and conferences, as well as perpetual campaigning that has wasted millions of dollars that could have been better used to pay the security forces and their families instead of self-aggrandizing trips and astroturf inorganic publicity stunts to hype the accomplishments of the president and the prime minister.

The United States suspended pay to Somali National Army last summer because Farmaajo – Kheyre government’s failure to account for million of dollars in wages for the SNA and mismanagement of food, fuel and material support, according to reports. The U.S. also suspended support in response to widespread public corruption and misuse by senior officers and leaders of the Somali National Army appointed by President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre. These officers pocketed SNA salaries and sold donated food, fuel and weapons on the black market to businessman linked to al-Shabaab. Despite repeated demands to remove these corrupt officers, Farmaajo and Kheyre kept them and they still remain employed with the Somali National Army.

Since taking charge last year, President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre appointed many senior security leaders and directors who previously were dismissed by previous government’s for incompetent, corruption and failed leadership. These appointments show the poor decision-making and lack of understanding the security conditions of Somalia by the president and the prime minister and confirm that their promises to fix security were nothing but hollow words.

Shortly after winning the election, President Farmaajo appointed Hussain Moalim, a former taxi driver from London and a known spy for the British to be his National Security Advisor. Moalim has no military, law enforcement and intelligence background. He was appointed because he was an ally of Fahad and a relative to the President's wife. He was fired in July after a disastrous five months, and many failures and embarrassments.

He was replaced by Ahmed Sheikh, a Somali National Army General with over forty years experience. General Ahmed was fired in December and replaced with Abdi Muse Said, relative of Fahad and a British spy and a former source for Ethiopian and Kenyans.

As a result of the new advisors' poor leadership and abrasive management skills, the National Security Council meeting in February was a failure. The federal government and the regions could not agree on the main issues and delayed important decisions.

According to reports, the National Security Advisor on many occasions overstepped his role and overstated his authority to the International Community and the Somali government institutions, claiming that he was in charge and had the authority that are constitutionally and legally given to the commander in chief. In one of those incidents, the National Security Advisor who calls himself the "Super Minister" demanded that Ministers of Defense, Minister of Internal Security and NISA directly report to him, creating a confusion and problem between the Ministers, Villa Somalia and the International Community.

In another incident, the National Security Advisor during a visit to the Somali National Army Headquarters claimed that he was in charge of the SNA and demanded they ask for his permission before they authorize the release of material to SNA units. The Chief of the Defense Forces who was at the time traveling with the President. The Advisor sent a poorly worded letter to the Chief of the Defense Forces claiming to speak for the president, bestowing him authority reserved for the president and the commander in chief. The response from the CDF and the Somali National Army was swift and hell no. This amateurish behavior by the National Security Advisor and many others appointed by President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre has undermined confidence in their leadership and is contributing to the poor state of political and security affairs of Somalia.

Finally, although security in Mogadishu has marginally improved in some areas, the personal security of the average citizen has not seen tangible improvement. Al-Shabaab still has strong presence in Mogadishu, continuing to blackmail, harass and murder average citizens, security, and political and business leaders.

Despite claims of security improvements, al-Shabaab controls Bakara Market and collects millions of dollars every month from business leaders in and around Mogadishu. Al-Shabaab runs most of the checkpoints from outskirts of Mogadishu to the borders with Ethiopia and Kenya.

In Mogadishu, the city is still reeling from the October attack, and remains unstable. The Farmaajo – Kheyre government claims that security has improved in Mogadishu. However, the city is in a total lockdown with checkpoints, roadblocks and permanent street closures, giving the illusion of security.

Majority of Mogadishu districts are no go zones controlled by al-Shabaab. Security experts assess that al-Shabaab controls more territory today than a year ago and the overall security is getting worse.

Statistics show that more civilians and security officers have died in the first 12 months of Farmaajo – Kheyre term than the last 12 months of the previous government. So where is the improvement? Majority of western diplomats and foreign staff are based inside Mogadishu International Airport, protected by AMISOM and private security.

Security score: 2 out of 5

Foreign Relations

The [bizarre letter the former Foreign Minister Yussuf Garad](#), sent to former US Ambassador to Somalia, requesting a military assistance, claiming with no supporting documents that Al Shabaab, is mining uranium in the Galmudug region and selling it to Iran for its nuclear program, is a testament of Farmaajo's foreign affairs fiasco.

On the hand, the Farmaajo – Kheyre government has managed to alienate many of Somalia's closest allies by aligning with Qatar and its proxy Iran. Despite declarations and claims of neutrality in the Gulf crisis, Somalia has sided with Doha and Tehran.

As a result, Farmaajo is the first President to not receive invitation to visit the White House. President Farmaajo and Prime Minister Kheyre are unpopular in Washington, because his failure to understand the geo-political risks aligning with Qatar and Iran.

The U.S. Government has called out Qatar and Iran for sponsoring terrorism and congress that supports Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Egyptian alliance against Qatar and Iran. Farmaajo - Kheyre alliance with Qatar is short sided is making it harder for Somalia to receive support and funds Somalia needs to combat al-Shabaab and the Islamic State.

Foreign Relations Score: 1 out of 5

Justice Reforms

Since taking charge, the Farmaajo – Kheyre government has not fired or disciplined judges or senior government official's accused of corruption. They are still employing judged accused of taking bribes, including the Supreme Court Judges. President Farmaajo publically promised to reform the judiciary last summer. Since that promise, the president has done little to change the judiciary and improve the rule law. Quite the contrary, Farmaajo has allowed Fahad Yasin and the National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) to usurp the authority, using force against opposition political figures.

President Farmaajo was allegedly elected buying votes using Qatari funds, an illegal act. His government accused former Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid and former Minister Abdirahman Abdishakur of sedition. Sedition is “an conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of state or monarch”. Fahad illegally used the Attorney General and NISA to kill, arrest or intimate opposition political figures and leaders.

Justice Score: 1 out of 5

Combating Public Corruption

President dependence on Fahad has contributed to increased corruption and abuse of power. Corruption defined is a significant and growing problem in Villa Somalia that undermines security, development, and state- and democracy-building objectives.

Cronyism, pervasive, entrenched and systemic public corruption is at an unprecedented level in Villa Somalia.. Fahad uses Qatari funds to payoff members of the parliament.

Weakly functioning institutions influenced and controlled cronies and relatives of Fahad have defined the government. Fahad's allies and unofficial powerbrokers have been given unprecedented access to the president enabling them to reap benefits. Access to government jobs is dependent on being friend with Fahad, or Prime Minister Kheyre. .

Corruption Score: 2 out 5

Final Score: 2 out 5 (Poor)

In conclusion, President Farmaajo and Prime Kheyre have objectively performed poorly and well below expectation and so far have failed to deliver on many of their promises. They have failed to leverage the love, and euphoria that followed the election. Under their leadership, Somalia has become beholden to Qatar, its proxy allies Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood. Relations between the federal government and Somali regions have deteriorated, contributing to more political and security fragmentation of Somalia.



President Farmaajo has three years remaining. The International Community is spending billions in Somalia and they remain concerned about his poor leadership, as they were when he served as the prime minister. It's way past time for Farmaajo to standup and claimed the position he was elected to serve.

The status quo is failing Somalia, according to senior Western diplomat. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is leaving and there are no credible Somali forces available to replace them. Another western diplomat and African Union senior official also echoed that sentiment, stating that Farmaajo and Kheyre have underperformed and are failing to grasp what is required to lead and manage Somalia today.

They stated that some governments have begun to look at options from working with only the regions, directly supporting state institutions including the regional security forces. They foresee that unless Farmaajo – Kheyre take seriously the task of Somalia and refocus their attention; they will be politically and economically marginalized

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