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1. Letters From Secretariat

1.1 Letter from the Secretary General

Esteemed Delegates

As the Secretary General of BRCMUN'25, I am honored and pleased to welcome you all to our conference. On behalf of the entire BRCMUN'25 team, I would like to express our gratitude for the many difficulties we have faced. We have worked with passion, dedication, and great care to present a conference that we are really proud of.

My name is Ecenaz Anbarlı, I am a student of Beyhan-Rıfat Çıkılıoğlu Anatolian High School. BRCMUN'25, what once seemed like a distant dream, has now become our reality. I am honored to serve as Secretary General at such a prestigious conference alongside an academic team whose dedication and depth of knowledge continue to impress me every day. Since I first started at the United Nations, it has held a place in my heart, and my passion for it has only grown stronger over time.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the endless support of our organizing team. Our whole team is ready to work for you.

The planning of the BRCMUN'25 started at once, and it was incredibly inspiring to witness how deeply we all care about this conference. We aim to show that the United Nations Model is more than just a simulation. It is a stage for young voices, a platform for diplomacy, and a space for change.

Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to those who have been with me on this path, to my MUN predecessors who have shaped today's standards, and most importantly, to you for being here, participating, and believing.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

With the most sincere regards,

Ecenaz ANBARLI

Secretary-General

anbarliecenaz@gmail.com

1.2 Letter from the Deputy Secretary General

Dear Participants,

I am very excited and sincerely grateful to welcome you all to BRCMUN25. As Deputy Secretary General, I am proud to be part of a conference that has been built on months of dedication, hard work, and an unwavering belief in what we do. From the moment the idea of BRCMUN25 was born, every member of our team has poured their hearts into making this more than a conference, but a shared experience that we can all grow from.

My name is Çınar Efe Buluş, I am a student of Beyhan-Rıfat Çıkılıoğlu Anatolian High School. Since I first stepped into the world of MUN, I have found something that challenges me, inspires me, and gives me a place where my voice matters. This feeling has only grown stronger with each conference. It has been an incredible journey to be able to participate in the creation of BRCMUN25 from scratch, a journey for which I am truly grateful.

This conference is not just about speeches and decisions. It's about learning to listen, understand, and work together. It's about discovering what kind of leader, thinker, and changemaker you can be. And to see so many passionate individuals gathered here today proves that we are on the right track.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who contributed to this process, especially the brilliant organization and academic teams.

But most of all, thank you for being here; your presence means everything to us. You are the one who makes BRCMUN special.

I wish you an unforgettable and inspiring conference.

Best Regards,

Çınar Efe BULUŞ
Deputy-Secretary General

buluscinarefe12@gmail.com

2. Letters From Chairboard

Dear Delegates,

My name is Sina, I'm 17 years old and currently a student at Eti Social Sciences High School. I'm honored to serve as your chair in this committee on "The Crisis of Statehood in Somaliland and the Question of International Recognition."

As someone who values teamwork, diplomacy, and open-minded discussion, I believe our committee will be both productive and enjoyable. I'm confident that with mutual respect and a bit of preparation, we can create meaningful dialogue and creative solutions together.

If you have any questions or need support, feel free to reach out. I'm here to help — and I look forward to seeing your ideas in action!

Warm regards,

Sina

Chair of the Committee

onanmehmetsina@gmail.com

Dear Delegates,

My name is Güneş Uzun and I would like to state that it's a great honour to be serving as your Vice-Chair throughout the BRCMUN'25 conference. I cherish this opportunity to work with this amazing team and be a part of this astonishing chairboard.

This will be my 4th time being in a chairboard but I can say with confidence that the SPECPOL committee already has a special space in my heart, it being my first committee in my first JMUN.

With the important agenda we have at hand, I am more than sure that we will have fruitful debates and come to the very needed conclusions.

This study guide was written with the much required knowledge we expect from the delegates in order to make sure you have every information you need. We made sure to specifically highlight those parts.

I look forward to meeting with every distinguished delegate.

I wish us all a great conference.

Best regards,

Güneş Uzun

Vice-Chair

gunesuzn@gmail.com

3. Introduction

3.1 Introduction to the Committee

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, the effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Israeli Practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, and International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

*credit 1

Originally two separate committees, the Fourth Committee focused solely on decolonization affairs before 1993, when it was merged with the Special Political Committee during the end of the United Nations Trust Territory system.

*credit 2

3.2 Introduction to the Agenda Item

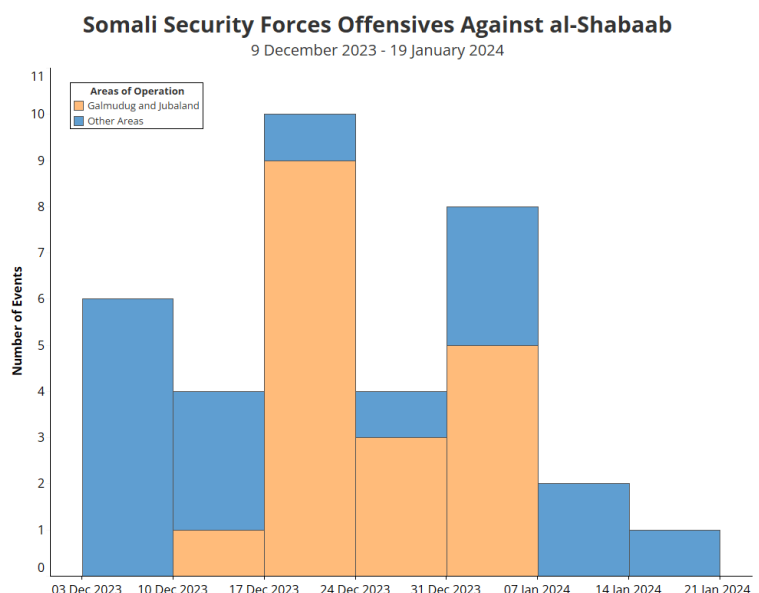
After the downfall of the Socialist and military Siad Barre regime in Somalia, Somaliland took an immediate action an independent declaration of statehood from its failed “parental state”, Somalia. Still; the international community has not recognized its act of establishing a government, keeping peace and managing to flourish in a kind of stability. Among the former Somali Republic territories, it is now only Somaliland that secured democratic and stable government and sustainable peace in the region. Somalia, which was part and “heir” of the former Somali Republic, is now unstable and even challenged by the Islamist extremist group, Al-Shabab. Somaliland, once under the colonial power of the British Empire like other African countries, argues it should be recognized as an independent state.

*credit 3

4. Background Information

4.1 Conflicts in Somalia

Conflicts in Somalia intensified after the fall of dictator Siad Barre in 1991. With the collapse of the central government, around 20 different clan-based militias and warlord groups began fighting for power. Somalia became fragmented, and



extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab emerged. Since 2006, Al-Shabaab has expanded its influence and, as of 2023, was estimated to have between 5,000 and 7,000 active fighters. These conflicts are driven not only by politics but also by disputes over critical resources such as land, water, and grazing areas. The result has been widespread instability, with over 3.8 million people internally displaced and nearly 8.25 million people—about half the population—in need of humanitarian assistance as of 2024. Despite international peacekeeping efforts, Somalia remains deeply divided due to long-standing mistrust and fragmentation.

4.2 Armed Conflicts

Armed conflict has been a persistent issue in Somalia for decades. Numerous militias and terrorist groups continue to use violence to assert control. Between 2009 and 2023, more than 14,000 civilians were reported killed due to armed clashes and bombings. Schools and healthcare facilities have also suffered, with over 1,000 schools either damaged or closed in conflict-affected regions. As of 2024, more than 2.5 million children are out of school. The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and suicide attacks has increased, especially in urban centers like Mogadishu. International organizations like the UN and Red Cross have provided aid, but nearly 70% of the population lacks access to basic healthcare. Peace talks have been attempted multiple times, but a sustainable solution remains out of reach.

4.3 History of Statehood Crisis in Somaliland

Somaliland, a region in northern Somalia, declared independence in 1991 following the collapse of the national government. Formerly a British protectorate, it had merged with Italian Somaliland in 1960 to form modern Somalia. Since its declaration of independence, Somaliland has developed its own institutions, including a government, currency, and security forces. It has held seven democratic elections since 2002 and maintains relative peace. As of 2023, Somaliland has a population of about 4.5 million people, and its economy relies heavily on livestock exports, contributing to over 60% of its GDP. However, no country formally recognizes it as a sovereign state. This lack of international recognition limits its access to global financial institutions, foreign loans, and development aid. Despite having one of the most stable political systems in the region, its unrecognized status continues to hinder broader progress.

5. Involvement of the British Government

British Somaliland, former British protectorate, southern shore of the Gulf of Aden, eastern Africa. In the Middle Ages it was a powerful Arab sultanate; it was broken up in the 17th century. Its coast came under British influence in the early 19th century, but formal control was not acquired until it was taken from Egypt in 1884. It fell under Italian control in World War II. In 1960 it was united with the former Italian Somaliland to form Somalia. In 1991 a

government opposition group declared the region comprising the former British Somaliland to be an independent state; however, it was not internationally recognized.

In 2007, I led a UK parliamentary delegation, supported by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, to Somaliland and we also visited the African Union in Addis Ababa to ask why it had not yet recognised Somaliland. The answer was that an internal report recommending recognition was gathering dust because some of its members feared that recognition might encourage breakaway provinces in other countries. But Somaliland is not a breakaway province – it's a nation that reasserted its independence and has shown a capacity for building its own democratic institutions, pursuing peace and security, and fostering economic growth.

In the same period that Somaliland has been a successful democracy, Somalia (the residual south) has been a failed state. Why should those who currently run Somalia not be told to focus on imitating the peace, democracy, cohesion and economic success of Somaliland, instead of being encouraged in a land grab?

Understandably perhaps, Foreign Office officials are reluctant to recognise Somaliland before any nation in the region does so, but Britain should stand ready to come second with recognition. Or have we forgotten the enormous contribution made by soldiers from British Somaliland during the second world war and that of Somaliland's seamen since the middle of the 19th century, as well as the contribution that Somalilanders make nowadays in the UK?

6. International Recognition Process

6.1 The Stance of International Law on the Matter

The prevailing definition of a state in international law is outlined in Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. It asserts: "The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications:

a) a permanent population;

b) a defined territory;

c) government;

d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states."

According to Professor Frederick Tse-shyang Chen, these four criteria seem to offer flexibility in how a state can satisfy them rather than providing rigid thresholds for acceptance.

International scholarship largely considers Somaliland as having satisfied such criteria:

"Somaliland's territory has been unchanged from the times of the British Somaliland protectorate with 3.5 million permanent inhabitants residing in it and a functioning government that uses every opportunity to enter into diplomatic relations with other States."

Ignoring the political arguments made against Somaliland's recognition, if operating by themselves, the Montevideo criteria, having been fulfilled, should make this case for international recognition open-and-shut.

Professor Chen, however, also outlines another important and operative doctrine relevant to this case: “‘Divided states [are] in fact admitted to the UN only after the conflicting claims of the two sides [have] been formally adjusted, either in favour of division...or in favour of reunification.’” While not universally recognized as a formal requirement, “in practice the admission of an entity as a Member State of the United Nations can be regarded as the approved seal of Statehood,” making such acceptance worth acquiring in order to externally solidify otherwise de facto statehood. At present, Somaliland is still a legal territory of Somalia and, while peace talks have occurred, Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi has indicated that his people are past the point of trying to reconcile and reunite with the rest of the country. As long as this impasse remains, it seems as though Somaliland will be precluded from recognition under the current international law regime.

For Somaliland, this means that no matter how much stability and development the region continues to foster, its efforts towards recognition on the international level are futile as long as it is handcuffed to the southern region. Coming at the expense of people who have organized a functional system but will continue to be precluded from international resources like the World Bank, the current international order privileges an existing state that has been littered with problems for years.

6.2 Issue of International Recognition

Somaliland broke ties with Somalia’s government in Mogadishu after declaring independence in 1991, and the region has sought international recognition as an independent state since then. No foreign government recognizes its sovereignty, but many effectively acknowledge Somaliland as separate from Somalia. It has held several, peaceful democratic elections since 2003. The United States, France, the United Kingdom, and the European Union (EU) sent delegations to observe Somaliland’s 2017 presidential election. The territory’s 2024 electoral contest was one of only five elections in Africa that voted in an opposition party, called Waddani, and enjoyed a peaceful vote.

The Somaliland government asserts that it meets most of the requirements of a sovereign democratic state: it holds free and fair elections, has its own currency and security forces, and issues its own passports. It also says that its independence claim is consistent with a longstanding norm of the African Union and its predecessor that colonial-era borders should be maintained. Some analysts also note that Somalilanders are predominantly from the Isaaq clan, and thus ethnically distinctive from other Somalis.

The territory has widely been seen as an “oasis” for stability in a turbulent region. “From the Somalilanders’ perspective, they have a completely reasonable argument,” Bronwyn Bruton, democracy and governance expert, said in 2018. “Somaliland is trying to break off from Somalia, which hasn’t been a functioning country in decades.” In 2024, democracy and civil liberties watchdog Freedom House rated Somaliland as “partly free,” scoring a forty-three out of one hundred, while Somalia got only eight in the same year—an unequivocally “not free” status. However, Somaliland’s score declined following government crackdowns on those protesting parliament’s decision to postpone the 2022 presidential election. After its peaceful

2024 election, however, several experts and diplomats noted that the territory is one of the most stable democracies in the region.

Even though it does not enjoy international recognition, Somaliland has a resident population estimated at 3.5 million people. This population largely consists of ethnic Somalis who share one language, culture, and historical heritage. In other words, there exists quite a high degree of social cohesion and most of it is on automobiles. Such population stability also can be justified by the fact that the country holds census activities, functions voter registrations, and is actively involved in democratic elections regularly.

Somaliland's population is one strong indicator of the country's stability and permanence. Its people are demographically consistent. Population censuses are held constantly to provide an accurate state of the demographics for formulation and governance. Voter registrations are also carried out with utmost care so that the electoral process is representative enough of the population. All these parameters ensure the permanent population criterion stipulated by the Montevideo Convention is strengthened.

Further, the participation of the working population of Somaliland in free and fair democratic exercises, such as presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, demonstrates behavioral relevance and engagement in the management and activities of their nation; the active citizenship legitimizes the administration and further represents a population that is settled, not transitory in any way, and deeply devoted and dedicated to the exercise and the overall nation-state-building process.

Tension Between Ethiopia, Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland

The reason that the tension occurred again in the Horn of Africa is the rivalry between Ethiopia and Somalia, which is increasingly bringing on the involvement of external actors—now mainly Egypt. In this scenario, unrecognized states, such as Somaliland and Puntland, seek to play a geopolitical role that brings them closer to their goals. In the case of the former, recognition as an independent state; in the case of the latter, a more prominent role in Somalia and the region.



The most recent episode in this geopolitical game is Somalia's accusation of an Ethiopian "illegal arms delivery" to the Puntland government this September. Puntland is a federated state of Somalia and, in theory, should not engage in foreign defence relations.

Located in the northeast of the country, it sits at the tip of the Horn of Africa, where the Gulf of Aden ends to give way to the vastness of the Indian Ocean. Puntland has its own government, parliament, judiciary, and armed forces. In early 2024, a constitutional crisis erupted between the Somali federal government and Puntland. This was following a central government process to change the constitution. The Puntland authorities rejected this and in March announced their abandonment of federal institutions. Puntland would henceforth be governed as a de facto independent state, they said. Within days, the Puntland government entered into partnership agreements with Ethiopia in several fields

Ethiopia is in the midst of a very serious diplomatic crisis with the federal government of Somalia, and Puntland's 'independence' reorientation suits it well, presenting an opportunity to extend Ethiopian influence in the region and weakening the prospects for a reunified and strong Somalia, a country with which Ethiopia has been at war throughout recent history. The Addis Ababa-Mogadishu crisis has much to do with the agreement reached between Ethiopia and Somaliland in January this year, under which the Somalilanders leased a sea outlet and a port to the Ethiopians—Berbera has been mentioned, but there is no confirmation—in exchange for Addis looking favourably on a future official recognition of Somaliland's independence.

Ethiopia and Somaliland's Relations

Ethiopia stated on 2024 that they will make an "in-depth assessment" of a possible recognition of Somaliland independence. The announcement comes two days after both governments signed a memorandum of understanding for Ethiopia's access to the sea through Somaliland territory. Ethiopia could thus become the first state in the world to recognize Somaliland independence. The agreement is "null and void," says Somalia.

Somaliland proclaimed independence from Somalia in 1991 after a ten-year war. The breakaway republic has not received official recognition from any United Nations member, although it maintains diplomatic relations with Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates, and Taiwan, among others. Somalia rejects Somaliland independence and considers it one of six states making up the Somali federal republic.

(To see the federal states of Somali: <https://mop.gov.so/federal-member-states/>)

The full text of the memorandum of understanding has not been made public and, from the information that has emerged, it appears that aspects remain to be defined. A statement from the Ethiopian government's press service on X (formerly Twitter) on 3 January specifies that Ethiopia will "make an in-depth towards taking a position regarding the efforts of Somaliland to gain recognition." Addis Ababa will also transfer a stake in Ethiopian Airlines to the Somaliland government. It will do so in exchange for the lease of a "permanent and reliable naval base and commercial maritime service in the Gulf of Aden."

The Somaliland Foreign Ministry was more specific on January 2024, also in X, it spoke of “formal recognition of the Republic of Somaliland” by Ethiopia and quoted Somaliland President Muse Bihi Abdi as saying that, “in exchange for 20 kilometre” —it did not specify whether square or linear— “sea access for the Ethiopian Naval forces, leased for a period of 50 years, Ethiopia will formally recognize the Republic of Somaliland, setting a precedent as the first nation to extend international recognition to our country.”

No steps has been taken to recognize Somaliland by Ethiopia since.

(To reach the whole MOU: <https://x.com/FdreService/status/1742511010315919641>)

Possible Recognition of Somaliland by USA

Abdullahi, the new president of Somaliland, revealed that US military officials, including the Horn of Africa’s most senior officer, have recently visited Hargeisa. Another Washington delegation is expected to “evaluate the asset [Berbera]”.

A key US military base, Camp Lemonnier, is located in neighbouring Djibouti but concern is growing over Chinese influence there as Beijing continues to strengthen its ties with Africa.

Project 2025, the alleged blueprint for the second Trump presidency, proposes the recognition of Somaliland as a “hedge against the US’s deteriorating position in Djibouti”.

In April, US aircraft carriers off the coast of Somaliland played a part in US bombing raids on Yemen, responding to Houthi rebels’ disruption of Red Sea shipping lanes.

The US has yet to announce any formal arrangement with Somaliland, but Abdullahi said they were embedded in attempts to safeguard global maritime trade.

“We are a partner in security. We are a partner in counter-terrorism. We are a partner in safe marine routes for world trade,” says Abdullahi, who was sworn in as president five months ago. In that time, he says, the US ambassador to Somalia has visited him three times.

The Trump administration is split over its approach to Somalia, which still considers Somaliland part of its territory.

Recent gains by al- Shabaab Islamist militants have raised questions in the Trump administration over the worth of US counter-terrorism operations in Somalia. The withdrawal of US personnel and the closure of the US embassy in Mogadishu, the Somali capital, has been mooted..

Sources indicate that elements of the Trump team want to drop the US’s longstanding “one Somalia” policy. Ditching support for Somalia’s weak central government would pave the way to officially recognise Somaliland.

“The US and maybe other international partners will [soon] have to recalculate their policies regarding Somalia,” says Abdullahi.

Williamson (the former defence secretary) like Abdullahi, believes recognition will happen by 2028 at the latest. He adds: “Before President Trump’s term ends, the US will have recognised Somaliland. My hope is that within a year we will have the first country within the United Nations to have recognised Somaliland.”

Bashe Omar, former representative of Somaliland to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), says US officials he met recently in Abu Dhabi were “frustrated” at the one-Somalia policy.

“What we are hearing, behind the scenes, is encouraging us. The US is moving in the right direction.”

(learn more about the topic:

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/may/30/exclusive-somaliland-president-says-recognition-of-state-on-the-horizon-following-trump-talks>)

Montevideo Convention

(Click here to access the

document: <https://www.ilsa.org/Jessup/Jessup15/Montevideo%20Convention.pdf>)

Montevideo Convention, agreement signed at Montevideo, Uruguay, on December 26, 1933 (and entering into force the following year), that established the standard definition of a state under international law. Adopted by the Seventh International Conference of American States, the convention stipulated that all states were equal sovereign units consisting of a permanent population, defined territorial boundaries, a government, and an ability to enter into agreements with other states. Among the convention’s provisions were that signatories would not intervene in the domestic or foreign affairs of another state, that they would not recognize territorial gains made by force, and that all disputes should be settled peacefully. The agreement was signed by the United States, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Bolivia was the only country attending the conference that refused to sign the agreement.

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