



SOMALI PERCEPTIONS SURVEY: KEY FINDINGS ON SOMALILAND

Through the Somalia Program Support Services (SPSS) activity, International Business and Technical Consultants, Incorporated (IBTCI) conducted a perceptions survey in Somalia in July, August and September 2016 for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). The goal of the Somali Perceptions Survey (SPS) was to provide USAID/Kenya and East Africa (KEA)/Somalia Office (USAID/Somalia) with relevant, accurate, and current information to inform USAID's policy and project implementation. Through the survey, covering Somaliland, Puntland, the Emerging Federal States (EFS) and Mogadishu, respondents provided their opinions and perceptions on key political themes and priorities. Key findings for Somaliland are presented in this report. There have been few other population-based surveys in Somaliland, making it difficult for the international community, including USAID, to understand and support in-country priorities. As the sampling calculations for the SPS were based on the ensuring a representative sample for the four areas as a whole; accordingly, findings for Somaliland presented in the below analysis are not fully generalizable for Somaliland; however the SPS-Somaliland provides much-needed information focused on key areas of governance, including access to information, political interest and efficacy, trust in institutions, democratic norms, and participation.

Final Sample: 526 Somalilanders
Male: 265
Female: 261
4 regions, 26 settlements
Urban: 11 settlements, 48%
Rural: 15 settlements, 52%

SPSS collaborated closely with USAID/Somalia to develop and implement the survey through IBTCI's subcontractor, Data and Research Solutions (DARS). The IBTCI SPS team managed the development of the survey questions and questionnaire and supervised the testing of questions and the instrument by DARS. DARS implemented the survey in July and August 2016. Because the initial sampling in Somaliland involved mostly rural settlements, which potentially limited the generalizability of the survey findings, DARS surveyed an additional nine urban settlements in September 2016 to substitute for nine previously surveyed rural settlements.

This report presents information about the views and experiences of 526 Somalilanders. The report examines common sentiments identified across Somaliland as well as variations in perceptions, reported behavior, and preferences. The survey used multiple questions to explore each topic, using complementary questions to give more confidence about the sentiments of Somalilanders. This report identifies and analyzes the views and experiences of respondents based on five themes: access to information, political interest and efficacy, trust in institutions, democratic norms, and participation and citizenship. When possible, the report compares the survey results to average Afrobarometer findings (Round 6) about people across sub-Saharan Africa.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Somalilander respondents fall into one of three groups of media users for information about political developments: daily television and social media users, daily radio listeners, or participants in daily face-to-face interactions. The mosque is the most used source for information, with 49% using it daily. The mosque is also the most trusted source, with 60% of respondents noting a lot of trust. Radio is another key source for information across Somaliland, with almost half of respondents (48%) noting that they use the radio daily for news and information while a third of respondents watch television daily for information about politics. Around a quarter access electronic media sources of information (SMS, news websites, messaging applications, social and other internet sites) daily. Respondents who access social media also tend to be daily television watchers. Horn Cable Television (HCTV) and Somaliland National TV are the two most-watched television stations, and the BBC and Radio Hargeisa are the most-listened-to radio stations. Foreign radio is generally trusted more than local radio.

Frequency of Use for Different Media Sources (Daily + A few times a week)

State-owned television channels	49%
Privately owned television channels	48%
State-owned radio stations	62%
Privately owned radio stations	—
Mosque	63%
Friends and family	50%
Clan Elders	36%
Women's organizations and leaders	16%
Tea shops	42%
Market Places	58%
Khat chewing clubs	38%
SMS Subscription	49%
News websites	32%
Messaging apps like Whatsapp	31%
Social media like Facebook or Twitter	35%
Other internet sites	30%
Newspapers	22%

In addition to the use of the mosque, respondents also report using a variety of face-to-face methods (clan elders, family members, tea shops, khat-chewing clubs, and marketplaces) to gather information about politics. Respondents who use these methods daily or a few times a week are not likely to be daily television watchers or social media users, and few are daily radio listeners.

How respondents get their information is strongly influenced by gender, urbanization, income, and education. Men, urban residents, higher-income respondents, and more educated respondents report higher levels of television and social media use.

Respondents believe the media is generally effective in revealing corruption. Respondents are evenly split on whether too much reporting on negative events harms the country or whether the media should consistently report on government mistakes and corruption. On the other hand, respondents see media ethics as problematic, with more than a third asserting that the media almost always or often print or say things that they know are not true.

POLITICAL INTEREST AND EFFICACY

Somalilanders pay substantial attention to and are interested in politics. Almost 70% of respondents discuss politics with their friends and family. However, two-thirds of respondents do not think that they understand politics, and about 15% pay no attention to politics. Self-reports of not paying attention to politics are higher among women, rural residents, and respondents with lower incomes and education levels than among men, urban residents, and respondents with higher incomes and education levels. The sense of not understanding politics is only slightly stronger among women than men.

A narrow majority of respondents asserted the need to be very careful in dealing with other people, but 45% felt that most people could be trusted. Almost all respondents felt that they are treated fairly compared to other citizens.

Respondents generally knew who holds particular positions in different executive-branch institutions at various levels of their government. However, there is little knowledge of Somali leaders outside of Somaliland, and few people could name the person who represents them in the Somaliland Parliament.

Respondents expressed a belief that they can make a difference in politics; 44% stated they would have “a lot” of influence if they tried to make real change on a political issue and 37% stated that they would have “some” influence. The survey also asked respondents to whom they would turn to influence politics; the most popular responses were local leaders such as clan elders, district council members, family members, city government leaders, and religious leaders.

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

Respondents see the security situation in their local area as good, with 71% rating their security as very good and 77% noting that their security had improved a lot in the last four years. However, when asked about the incidence of a variety of security incidents in their families in the last year, 11% of respondents noted that they had had items stolen from their home, and 6% reported that someone in their family had

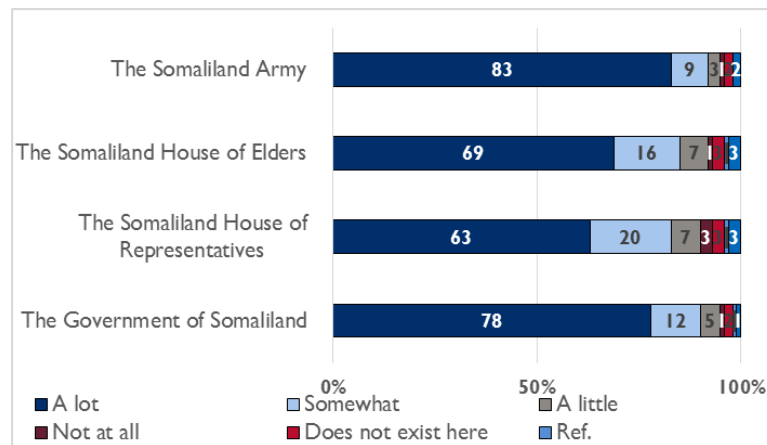
been physically attacked. Four percent had been affected by a shooting or bombing nearby, and 2% of respondents had had one or more people in their family killed in the past year. Nonetheless, respondents expressed the belief that the country is heading in the right direction and saw their economic conditions as good and improving.

When asked about the relative importance of government action compared to accountability, a narrow majority emphasized getting things done, even if citizens have no influence. When the survey rephrased the question through the metaphor of parenting, almost three-fifths (58%) agreed that “The government is like a parent; it should decide what is good for us” rather than viewing the government as “an employee that citizens should tell what to do.”

Respondents saw the 2010 Presidential election as more fair than the 2005 Parliamentary election. A majority of respondents assess both as very or somewhat fair; few saw these electoral processes as unfair. Respondents know little about the formation of federal states in Somalia.

Respondents are generally satisfied with the service providers in their area. When asked, a majority of respondents indicated that they are willing to pay taxes in exchange for more services.

Level of Trust in (Select) Somaliland Institutions



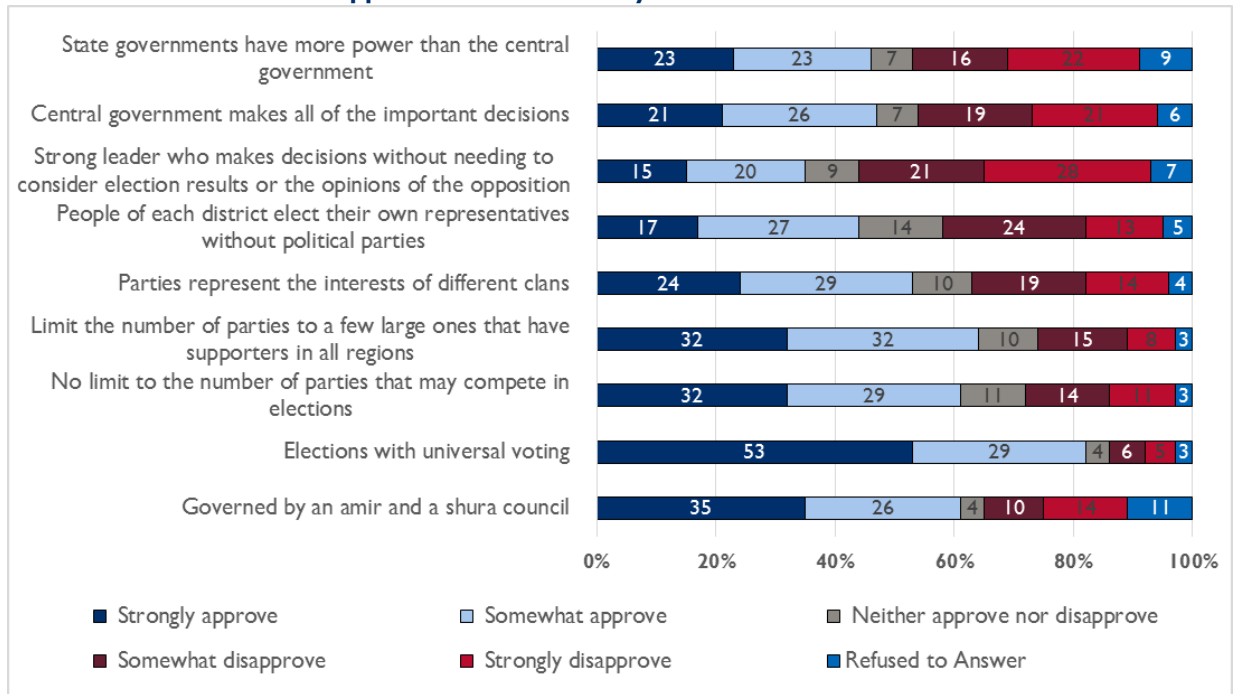
When asked how much they trust a list of institutions, respondents reported the highest levels of trust (above 70%) for key Somaliland institutions such as the Somaliland Army, the Government, and the Police. Respondents also expressed considerable trust in clan elders (72%). Trust levels were slightly higher for the House of Elders (69%) than the House of Representatives (63%). At the same time, respondents reported much less trust in the Member of Parliament (MP) representing their local community and generally showed less trust in the

formal institutions closest to them. Fewer than half (42%) reported a lot of trust in their District Council. This same pattern of declining levels of trust moving from the Central Government to Regional Government and District Councils was evident in responses pertaining to spending “tax revenue on providing the services needed by the people.”

DEMOCRATIC NORMS

Respondents reported a preference for democracy over non-democratic government, but the strength of this preference was weaker than in other sub-Saharan African countries. Support was stronger for general democratic principles, ranging from elections and protection of minorities to socioeconomic principles such as government providing for basic needs. Respondents indicated the lowest levels of support for freedom to criticize the government, with only around a third indicating that this was very important. When asked to choose, respondents prioritized the protection of individual rights over clan rights. Just over half of respondents supported the government’s right to prevent the media from publishing things that it considers harmful to society rather than express their support for media freedom to publish without restriction.

Support for Alternative Systems of Government



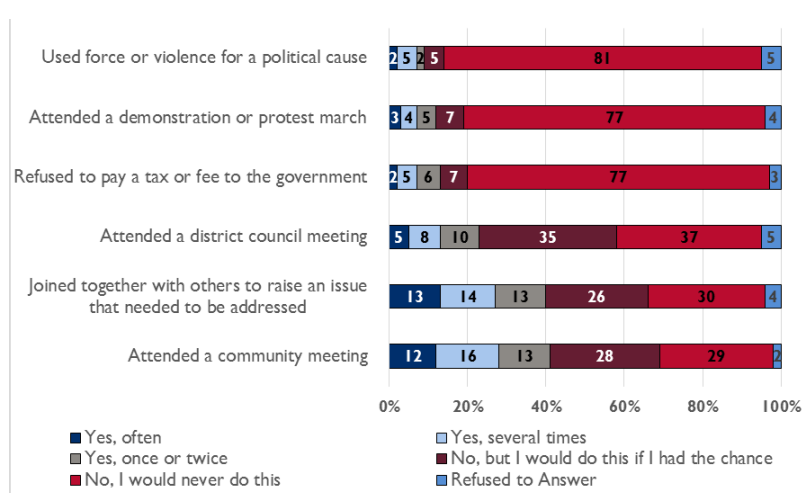
Over half of respondents (56%) supported restrictions on the numbers of parties, as is currently the case in Somaliland, rather than wanting many political parties to ensure choice in governance. However, when asked positive questions about their level of support for a variety of options concerning political parties (ranging from no limits to no parties), respondents were simultaneously supportive of no limits and limiting the number of political parties to just a few large ones that have supporters in all regions.

Respondents agree with the merits of a wide variety of types of governance for the country. The most popular option, approved of by 82% of respondents, is a system of elections with universal voting. Respondents would also support governance via Amir and Shura Councils (61%). On balance, respondents rejected strong leaders who do not consider election results. Respondents were split on questions concerning the desirability of different balances of power between the central and state governments.

PARTICIPATION

The SPS presents evidence that Somalilanders are active in politics. Pluralities of respondents noted that they had attended community meetings and joined together to raise issues of concern in the last year. However, under a quarter of respondents had participated in district council meetings in the last year. Few reported engaging in protest behaviors such as refusing to pay a tax, attending a demonstration or march, or using force for a political cause.

Political Actions Performed in the Last Year



Many respondents described themselves as leaders or members of voluntary associations and community groups, with a third reporting being active members and 12% being leaders of an association.

Respondents share some common perspectives on citizen responsibilities, particularly in terms of high levels of support for voting and paying taxes. Similar to questions about the media, respondents expressed relatively weak support for citizen criticism of government as something that good citizens should do. Only a fourth of respondents (25%) supported criticism in general terms, whereas levels of support were higher for more concrete forms of criticism by citizens, such as complaining to government officials when public services are of poor quality (57%). An absolute majority concurred that good citizens “should agree with the majority in the community” and should also attend community meetings in their communities.

With regards to identity, a majority of respondents asserted that they are proud to be called Somalilanders. To further probe at issues of identity, respondents were asked to contrast clan and Somali identity; 51% of respondents chose Somali or mostly Somali identity over their clan. However, a subset of respondents (15%) identified only as a member of their clan. Comparing the SPS results with those of Afrobarometer surveys in sub-Saharan Africa shows that clan identity remains comparatively strong in Somaliland; Somalilanders chose ethnic Somali identity over clan identity at lower rates than the aggregate figures for sub-Saharan African countries where Africans were asked to choose between national and ethnic identity.

Some of the respondents surveyed (8%) had lived abroad, returning after residing in neighboring countries for a few years. While respondents suggested that this period abroad had had substantial effects on their political views, this was not readily apparent in terms of responses about democratic values such as support for democracy.