

Market prices for a vote getting high in Puntland

Corruption is running of Puntland presidential election, with candidates giving gifts and large sums of cash to lawmakers to secure their votes. Politicians running for parliament openly bought votes.

Politicians have been peeling off wads of hundred dollar bills to buy votes. Others have shown up for parliamentary races standing next to a political nobody who was bribed or coerced into running against them, to make the race look fair.

Several analysts say the election has turned out to be a milestone of corruption, one of the most fraudulent political events in Puntland's history.

Investigators estimate that hundreds of thousands has feverishly changed hands during parliamentary elections that will culminate in the selection of the president.

Corruption clan-based elections are not new here in Puntland. According to several researchers, before the election for President Abdiwali Mohamed Ali 2014, many of the clan elders were given a bribe to choose the clan's representative in Parliament.

One elder in Bosaso, a port town in north eastern Puntland, Somalia, said that the night before his clan was to select a Parliament member, one of the candidates stopped by the hotel where the delegates were staying and started handing out stacks of hundred dollar bills. The candidate told the delegates they would each get \$3,000 for their votes and the money was widely believed to have come from a presidential candidate who had made a secret deal with the parliamentary candidate that if he won his race then he would vote for the presidential aspirant at the final stage of the election process.

The cash, the elder said, was passed hand-to-hand.

"Everybody knows this is wrong," the elder said. "But you can't refuse. If you do, the clan won't trust you, and then maybe you have problem."

When asked what kind of problem, he said, "Personal security problem."

The Candidates

More than 15 presidential hopefuls are running. Analysts contend that President Abdiweli have a good chance of keeping his office because he have kept millions of dollars from corruption to buy enough votes from the Parliament members who will vote for the new president.

Political insiders, speaking on condition of anonymity, said candidates have begun reimbursing would-be supporters for their expenses, including hotel bills and meals. In addition, officials say bribes of between \$1,000 and \$5,000 have been paid.

More candidates are challenging the incumbent president Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, who is seeking a second five-year term as leader of Puntland. The president will be elected by members of the parliament, who were picked up by clan elders.

Among the president's main challengers are former federal and Puntland state ministers, former army commanders, businessmen, and civil society activists.

Five years in power

In August 2013, Abdiweli launched a campaign to run for President at Puntland state in the northeastern regions of Somalia, so as to strengthen ties with the clan leaders he met them at different times with different regions.

On 8 January 2014 Abdiweli win the election, narrowly defeating Abdirahman Farole by 33 votes to 32. The victory officially makes Ali the 5th President of Puntland.

On 14 January 2014, former Puntland President Farole officially handed over the power to his successor Abdiweli, The transfer ceremony was held at the Puntland State House in Garowe.

After 5 years in power, President Abdiweli Gas is seeking for the next term in office, but what sort of state is he leaving behind?

Years of economic, political and security uncertainty, Abdiwali the President semi-autonomous region of Puntland who has been in power for at least 5 years will step down.

Most of his critics say Abdiwali Gas's legacy is badly tainted and Abdiwali Gas's legacy is poverty, and jobless is almost 90% and Puntland people become poorer, Puntland become a weak state. Corruption is destroyed the state.

His mismanagement of Puntland's economy was staggering. An estimated thousand of youth risk their life across mideterenian to immigrate Europe to get to plant a new life. And the others who stayed behind in Puntland have coped with an unemployment rate estimated at higher than 90 percent.

Abdiwel's administration has faced corruption allegations leading to continues failures in the security and state building during past five years.

Lack of goodwill from the political leadership

The charter that formed the Puntland State envisaged a transition from the clan-based system to a democratic system in three years. However, the state was plunged into a vicious political conundrum by leadership complexities, which made the transition clause in the charter a pipedream. According to clan elders, civil society group members and politicians interviewed, the biggest impediment to transition to democracy is the lack of political will by the government, especially the president. Additionally, the interviewees noted that there is a serious lack of accountability by the Puntland government.

Reforming the political and governance systems in Puntland still largely depends on the whims of the incumbent president, who always tends to want to maintain power and avoid accountability, by stonewalling democratization processes.

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