



DR AWEYS OMAR MOHAMOUD

CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE FRS 2021



**“Let’s utilize the
talents of our
ingenious people
to rebuild
our nation”**



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Reflections on the métier of Dr Aweys Omar

Mohamoud

1. It is an honour to share some thoughts about Dr Aweys Omar Mohamoud's very important and liberating ideas for state-building, now that he has formally decided to put his name forward as a Candidate for President of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in the up-coming elections. Many know him for his recent well-written articles on politics and state-building, but I have known Aweys since the mid-1980s when I was a Director General at the Ministry of Health, and he was an up-and-coming young officer in the health education unit. He later won a WHO scholarship to study for a Diploma Course in the UK. Upon completion of that course, he returned to Somalia to continue with his job but was forced by the deteriorating economic, social and political conditions of the time to leave Somalia and seek opportunity elsewhere.

Colleagues reunited

2. Many years later, we met again here in the UK where we both ended up, following the civil war in our homeland. I reconnected with him through his activism of the pen and the tongue, and his personal struggle to see the country and the people he loved reintegrate and rebuild. It happened that me and Aweys, along with many other invitees, attended the preparatory meetings for the first London Conference on Somalia held at Lancaster House on February 23, 2012. There were several preparatory meetings for this Conference which were held both at Chatham House and in Lancaster House itself by the then PM Cameron's government. I met Aweys in one of those meetings at Chatham House when he asked a highly pertinent question to the meeting organizers. I didn't recognize him straight away because of the many years that have elapsed since I last saw him but during the coffee break, I went over and talked to him.

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3. As I was a Trustee and Secretary of the Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy, I extended an invitation to Aweys to come and talk to us about his liberating idea, *Gobannimo*, which he discussed with me there and then and said that he was about to publish it, at the time.

4. At its simplest, *Gobannimo* was aimed at the core of Somalia's conflict, essentially the clan power struggles. It called on the major clans to re-examine and transform their prevailing assumptions and approaches to power so that the Somali people can begin to negotiate peace and end the war. Specifically, it called on the four main clans to temporarily (only for a one term government of four years, to be precise) renounce their claim to the three topmost offices of the state (the President, the PM, and the Parliamentary Speaker) of their own volition for the sake of peace and unity. They would then support the creation of a national unity government led by upstanding citizens from the minority groups (so-called 0.5) who are elected to office on merit. This one-term government would be tasked with completing the essential work of putting the foundations in place in terms of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace-making between communities across Somalia, and would start off the first permanent government, following a long and horrific civil war, on the right foot.

5. The following week, Aweys kindly attended our SIDD meeting at our offices near Victoria Station in London and made a passionate delivery of his brilliant idea, *Gobannimo*. We thought *Gobannimo* was an ingenious idea that could have potentially transformed politics in Somalia at the top and could have also, possibly, addressed the cultural prejudice, discrimination and persecution of minorities which, along with poverty and vulnerability, are the root causes of conflict in our country. Aweys interviewed former presidents and prime ministers who all gave their blessings to this project. Sadly, leadership in Somalia at the time wasn't yet ready for such a radical and transformative idea.

Ideas come from learning and literature

6. Learning and literature provide society with the guiding principles of life. They are even more important for leaders as it pertains to their understanding of complex issues, making observations and coming up with theories about them, and using the right methodology. A leader being highly literate (or even better, scientifically literate) thus is vital in today's complex world, and even more so in Somalia's deeply ingrained state-building crisis. Put it simply: literature spawns knowledge, and knowledge spawns good leadership.

7. Think about this! The causes and conditions of conflict that afflict our country include environmental, historical, cultural, economic, political and institutional. The latter refers to the state losing its legitimacy, offering few or no public services, and losing physical control of its territory. Various literature on conflict studies confirm that these issues may have their origins at the individual, family, community or societal levels, as well as at the international, global or ecological levels.

8. For instance, the individual and family levels comprise at least biology, physiology, philosophy, psychiatry, psychology, and theology; at the community and societal levels, at least anthropology, economics, history, political science, and sociology; at the international level, international relations; and the global/ecological levels, climatology, ecology, geography, and geology, to name just a few. What this means is that the issues our country faces arise from quite a multidisciplinary mosaic of causal complexity which need answers at all these levels.

9. Our leaders also need to work on the principles of constitutional federalism and governance. That requires an understanding of comparative federalism, and the contemporary nature and meanings of federalism and federation. It also requires looking at detailed theoretical examination and also empirical

studies of the experiences of various federal states and the relationship between state-building and national integration, as well as exploring the pathology of federations – looking at failures, successes and the impact of globalisation.

10. Now the implication is that our leaders need to be able to read up about government, power and principles of politics; federalism and separation of powers; rights and liberties of citizens; institutions (parliament, the presidency, the executive branch and the bureaucracy); the constitution; the law and criminal justice; democratic politics (political parties and elections); interests, conflicts and compromise. They also need to read up about theories, practices and dilemmas of governance, etc. The task is huge, and it is necessary that Somali leaders have an aptitude for logical thinking and are able to read, absorb and apply most of this vast literature to be able to proffer new ideas and solutions.

We Need a New Approach

11. We must all be in complete agreement that the existing arrangements are broken, and that a new approach is needed. What do I mean by this? The problem question must be how best can we, the Somali people, make peace and state-building a success in our homeland? Success, in my view, is one in which the state-building effort showed progress across core dimensions of statehood, including security, legitimacy, humanity, capacity and prosperity. A failure is a case in which there is a failure of security, legitimacy, or humanity, and no progress on prosperity or capacity. Twenty years after the much-hailed Arta Peace Process in Djibouti produced a Transitional National Government (TNG), we see the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) showing little or no success on any of these issues.

12. Our people are suffering primarily because of poor leadership. We need to proffer forthwith an effective remedy to this situation by electing a visionary

leader with the capacity and critical thinking skills that go beyond basic responses to deep societal issues that need profound decisions. The task ahead requires a leader that can distinguish fact from fiction; synthesize and evaluate information; and clearly communicate, solve problems and discover truths. A leader who can put forward practical and effective ideas of state-building and nation-building.

13. Dr Aweys Omar Mohamoud is a highly educated individual and will be a credible leader, given the opportunity. He's a graduate (with a PhD) of University College London (UCL) – one of the best centres of higher learning in the UK. He has the right aptitude and education, and recent experience on the ground to play the role. Aweys has lived, worked and studied in more than one continent and across cultures and historical experiences. As we can see above, he has a multidisciplinary background in public health science, education and international development, linguistics and legal studies, sociology and psychology, and shall always bring this perspective to his work. He has done an extensive reading of most of the literature I discussed above, and even more.

14. Let me briefly share some of the issues that he raised when we met for coffee a few days ago. He said that he was in London at the end of 1990, doing a Master's Degree course on Education and International Development at the Institute of Education, University of London. The main body of literature that Aweys and his colleagues were tackling in class and in group discussions was how would each and every country represented in the course (no less than 30 countries) start implementing the vision and commitment of Education for All (EFA) adopted by the World Conference on Education for All held at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 by representatives from 150 countries. This conference established the Education for All agenda and committed national governments and international agencies to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults by the year 2000. His colleagues were discussing

enthusiastically about the EFA agenda whereas Aweys was completely consumed by what was happening in his home country, and especially his capital city of Mogadishu. That was in December 1990, not much more need to be said!

15. Fast forward to 8 September 2000, at the United Nations headquarters in New York City, the Millennium Summit brought together the largest gathering of world leaders in history who adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration by committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of targets, with a deadline of 2015. These have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and included the following: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; to achieve universal primary education; to promote equality and empower women; to reduce child mortality; to improve maternal health; to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; to ensure environmental sustainability; and to develop a global partnership for development. As the world community committed itself to these humanistic goals, where were we as a member nation of the human family? We know the TNG was established between April–May 2000 at the Somalia National Peace Conference held in Arta, Djibouti and President Abdiqasim Salad Hassan attended the summit, but what was the reality on the ground? Again, not much more need to be said!

16. Fast forward to another decade and a half to 25 September 2015, more than 150 world leaders have gathered in New York for the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, adopting the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the form of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These new development goals, also known as the Global Goals, aim to end poverty, hunger and inequality, take action on climate change and the environment, improve access to health and education, build strong institutions and partnerships, and more. Again yes, our then President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was in attendance but today October 2020, a mere ten years to this

fast approaching deadline of 2030, where are we at in terms of any of the 17 sustainable development goals? Every group, every people, and every nation in this world are struggling for freedom, justice and human betterment, why aren't we?

17. Aweys then expounded his ideas about the way forward, and kindly shared with me a detailed post-election agenda which I'm sure he'll be presenting to the public in due course. Prominent among those ideas were the following: (1) how he would come up with actions and initiatives that signal new beginnings to build trust in an inclusive way across society; (2) how he would build legitimacy by connecting the government and the governed, and by exercising political power to enforce the rule of law, in the pursuit of justice; (3) how he would do everything in his power to fulfil the obligations that form the basis of state-society relations, such as rights and protections, freedom and justice, and the accountability of the government to the governed; (4) how he would promote education (a topic that is very close to his heart) for peaceful transformation of society; and (5) how he would address the challenges of out-of-school children, reintegration, youth unemployment, and social and economic reconstruction of the country. I bear witness that these are the issues that are exercising his mind, not *ka dhashay*, *ku dhashay*, *u dhashay*, etc. Aweys Omar Mohamoud was born and bred in Aden Yabal, a district of Middle Shabelle region (*ex regione di Benaadir*) in 1960. With his beautiful wife H. H. Elmi, they have raised six children, five of whom have grown up and have managed to successfully go through the education system, hold down jobs and live as productive members of society here in the UK and the EU.

18. Aweys is one of the most outstanding individuals to emerge from the generation of first immigrants/refugees who fled the civil war in Somalia in the late 1980s and early 90s. He is an avid reader and scholar. Anyone who visits his home here in London must truly fall in love with his beautiful home library and the awesome collection of books in the superbly fitted and well-lit

solid oak shelving. In addition to his specialist training in public health, education, international development, and sociology, he has recently turned to works of philosophy, literature, political science, comparative studies, history and biography. I highly commend his candidacy for President of the Federal Government of Somalia for 2021.

Thank you.

Ahmed Sharif Abbas, MBBS; MPH; PhD

Chairman of SIDD (Somali Initiative for Dialogue and Democracy), UK;

Chairman (for 20 years) of the Benaadiri Somali Community in the UK;

Compiler and Editor (with Peter Riddell) of 'Ten Years of Somali Peace-Making in the Diaspora'

Formerly Public Health Specialist, Department of Public Health, Kensington & Chelsea and West Minister Health Authority, London, UK;

Public Health Specialist, NHS Executive, Department of Health, Directorate of Public Health, London, United Kingdom;

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A bio of Dr Aweys Omar Mohamoud is here.

Postscript

The following colleagues and partners of ours in the Somali community in the UK have all voiced their heartfelt support to Dr Aweys Omar Mohamoud's candidacy for President of the Federal Republic of Somalia in 2021, and have all attended his Presidential Campaign Announcement Ceremony here in

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London on Wednesday, 4th November 2020. Please see here the cover pages of a work that I have compiled which was the result of a collaborative project between all of the colleagues named below, myself and Aweys himself.

Name	Title
1. Dr Abdi Ahmed Farah (Pakistan)	Professor of Paediatrics and Former Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Somali National University.
2. Mr. Yusuf Omar Ali, BSc; MSc; PhD	Principal Research Consultant, Director, Ilays - a Community-based Organization in the London Borough of Hounslow; President of Anglo-Somali Society, a friendship international Organization. Formerly: Acting Dean Institute of Sciences, and Director Department Natural Sciences, Somali Academy of Sciences and Arts (SOMAC) General Manager of SOMAC/SAREC Senior Fulbright Fellow at University of South Carolina USA, Interim Secretary of Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) Chairman of SOMRA, a UK based Somali NGO

	<p>Member of Technical Committee, Arta Somali Peace Conference</p> <p>Manager, Hounslow Refugee Forum,</p> <p>Founding Member of University of Hargeisa,</p> <p>Founding Member, Berbera Maritime and Fisheries Academy,</p>
3. Dr Abdurahman Omar Mohamed (Cunaaye)	<p>Former Director of Benaadir (Mogadishu) Regional Medical, Public Health, and Epidemiology Services; Former National Sports Medical Officer; Senior Lecturer in Public Health, Faculty of Medicine, Somali National University; and (in the UK) Senior Community Health Advisor and Senior Trustee of Somali Community Development Trust (SCDT), a London-based Somali Community Organization.</p>
4. Dr Yusuf Munye Yusuf,	<p>Former Director of Somali Traditional Medicine and Medical Plant Centre, Ministry of Health; Associate Professor of Traditional Medicine and Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine, Somali National University; Chief Pharmacist (for 20 years), Police Health Affairs Department, the State of Kuwait; Senior Trustee and Committee</p>

	Member of Benaadiri and Baajuuni Somali Community in the UK.
5. Dr Mohamed Abdirahman Haji, BSc; Dvm; MSc, Dic (Imperial College).	Chairman of Somali Elders Council, UK; Chairman of Higs Health Initiative; Consultant in Livestock Development. Formerly: Chairman and Co-Founder of Somali Ecological Society; Deputy General manager, National Tsetse Control Project; Director, Department of Animal Health and Production, Ministry of Livestock, Forestry and Range.
6. Mr Mohamed Sheikh Mussa	Senior Committee Member, Somali Reconciliation Initiative, a UK based organization that co-organized the Arta Peace Conference in Djibouti in 2000. Formerly: Maritime Captain; Technical Department Director, Somali national Shipping Line; Vice-Commandant of Mogadishu Port; Commandant of Merka Port, Somalia.`
7. Mr Aweys Mohamed Yusuf, BSc (Hon); MSc; PGCE.	Treasurer and Education Coordinator, Barnet Somali Community Group - Barnet Multicultural Community Centre, London, UK.