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# THE ROAD TO RESOLUTION:

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# UNDERSTANDING THE INTRICACIES OF THE LAS ANOD CONFLICT & THE PATH TO PEACE

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conflict in Las Anod, located in the Sool region of northern Somalia, is a multifaceted issue that encompasses historical, political, economic, and ethnic dimensions. The Dhulbahante clan, which is distinct from the Isaaq clan that dominates Somaliland politics, seeks unity with the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) to achieve a more inclusive political environment, as they fear marginalization under the Somaliland administration.

In this context, local legitimacy theories underscore the significance of comprehending the social and political structures in the region. The recent collaboration among all Dhulbahante subclans living in Las Anod and its immediate environs to re-launch the SSC-Khatumo movement has also served to escalate a local crisis into a wider one encompassing the disputed regions of Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC); which are claimed by Somaliland based on colonial-era boundaries.[1] It will therefore be necessary to adopt a multifaceted approach that tackles clan rivalries as well as the aspiration for unity with the Federal Republic of Somalia in order to achieve a peaceful political resolution.

Efforts by Somaliland authorities to frame its own actions as part of a fight against international terrorism are intended to capitalize on the concerns of key international partners (notably the U.S., U.K and E.U) and build support for the military operation to re-establish control over Las Anod. However, there is no evidence that the local al-Qaeda affiliated Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (aka al-Shabaab) has taken any official or unofficial side in the conflict.

For its part, the Federal Government of Somalia's response to the conflict has also inflamed tensions, including the appointment of a politically aligned envoy that was perceived by local Dhulbahante leaders as being more favourable to the Isaaq-dominated Somaliland administration.

Prospects for resolving the conflict will hinge on addressing local socio-political issues which include historic grievances, clan, and sub-clan rivalries. It is therefore important that any approach by the FGS to the conflict in Las Anod and the wider SSC region will require a balanced approach that avoids controversial statements or decisions and focuses instead on reconstruction, humanitarian support, peacebuilding, and respecting the wishes of the people of SSC. By adopting such an approach, the FGS will be able to create the conditions necessary for lasting peace and unity.

# 1. BACKGROUND

The conflict in Las Anod between the Government of Somaliland and local clans in the wider Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) region, has complex historic, political, economic, and tribal (clan) dimensions. This paper will aim to provide a comprehensive background and introduction to the conflict, focusing on local legitimacy theories and examining the role of the Dhulbahante clan, whose current level of unity and political cohesion, distinguish the current conflict from previous iterations.

The Dhulbahante clan itself is a member of the larger Harti-Darod confederation. Members of this clan mostly inhabit the districts of Las Anod, Taleh, and Hudun in the Sool Region; Erigavo District in the Sanaag Region; and Buuhoodle in the Togheer Region.[2] Other members of the Harti-Darod confederation, namely the Majeerteen, dominate the political and socio-economic life of Puntland, while other Darod sub-clans can be found living across the border in the Somali Region of Ethiopia. However, the clan has no immediate relationship with the Isaaq clan, considered either its own clan or a sub-clan of the Dir clan family, which largely dominates political life in Somaliland. This combination of the geographic location of the Dhulbahante, which dominates Sool Region, and these cross-border clan relationships have contributed to the current conflict.

To understand the roots of this current round of conflict centred on Las Anod and Sool Region, it is necessary to go back to the establishment of the first pro-Federalist SSC administration in 2009, which was later followed by an initiative to establish 'Khatumo State'. [3] The self-declared administration by local Dhulbahante clans was officially named the 'Unity and Salvation Authority of the SSC regions of Somalia'. This was an attempt to establish a new autonomous state within Somalia under the then internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG), that would be separate from both Somaliland (est. 1991) and Puntland (est. 1998). However, after a series of battles in 2010 and 2011, the SSC administration collapsed with one faction signing a ceasefire agreement with Somaliland authorities, others relocating to Puntland, and others refusing to align themselves with either of these two factions.

In January 2012, the Khatumo State was declared after a series of local and international conferences. However, local Dhulbahante sub-clans were not united in supporting this new administration, with a former faction of the SSC surrendering its forces and weapons to Somaliland authorities in June 2012 following negotiations in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

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The administration was also beset with internal divisions. In August 2016 peace talks with Somaliland authorities sparked a split that resulted in President Ali Khalif Galaydh signing a peace agreement with Somaliland authorities in October 2017, while his Vice-President declared support for the annexation of Sool Region by Puntland. Today, the newly established SSC-Khatumo is different in that all Dhulbahante sub-clans have signaled their support for the movement, exhibiting intra-clan unity that was previously absent.

Valuable insights into this conflict can be gained by understanding the social and political structures that shape power dynamics in this context. In the conflict in Las Anod and the broader SSC region, considering the impact of traditional leaders, local institutions, and clan dynamics is crucial. The recent unprecedented level of unity among Dhulbahante sub-clans has significantly influenced the current conflict, by completely mobilizing local resistance against the Somaliland Army. This has mainly involved allowing Dhulbahante and Harti clansmen to leave their posts in the Somaliland Army, the Federal Government of Somalia Army, Puntland Security Forces, Darawish, and other irregular clan militia, and join SSC-Khatumo forces individually in defending the city.

The use of media and information warfare have also been instrumental in shaping public opinion and perception of the conflict in Las Anod. Both Somaliland authorities and the SSC-Khatumo movement have been seen to use various communication channels, ranging from state-owned media (Somaliland) to social media (SSC-Khatumo). This has helped to shape perceptions among supporters on both sides of the conflict with the result of hardening opinions and complicating conflict resolution processes.

The current level of political unity among Dhulbahante sub-clans is also a new and complicating factor to the resolution of the crisis. A comprehensive understanding of these dimensions, including the application of local legitimacy theories, is therefore essential to identify potential paths to resolution and achieve lasting peace and stability in the region.



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## 2. The Issues

The protests in Las Anod started on December 26th, 2022, after the killing of Abdifatah Abdullahi "Hadrawi," an official from Wadaani, Somaliland's largest opposition party. The demonstrations later shifted their focus to the unresolved killings of over 100 local officials and elders in Las Anod since Somaliland took over the city in 2007. In response to the protests, Somaliland police resorted to live fire, resulting in the deaths of 20 protesters. This sparked a series of events that ultimately led to protesters taking up arms to protect themselves.

The bloody situation led to 33 chiefs, elders, and notable individuals of the Dhulbahante and the Fuqshini (a subclan of the Ayr-Habargidir-Hawiye) to demand that Somaliland forces leave Las Anod.[4] This was followed by a meeting of representatives from more subclans, which ended on 6 August with the declaration that SSC would be part of Somalia, and that secession was completely rejected by all sub-clans of the Dhulbahante and the Fuqshini.

The residents of Las Anod and the overwhelming majority of the Dhulbahante clan have expressed a consistent preference for unity with the Federal Government of Somalia. This is motivated by their desire for a more diverse and inclusive political environment. The Federal Government's system of power-sharing between various clans contrasts with the dominance of neighbouring clans in the administration of Somaliland. It presents an opportunity for the Dhulbahante to participate in a political system where their interests are protected, and they are not marginalized.

The conflict in Las Anod has been further complicated by complex clan dynamics and perceptions. Many Dhulbahante view the actions of Isaaq-dominated security forces during the conflict as an extension of ongoing clan rivalry, with the killing and wounding of civilians being seen as a manifestation of clan-based rather than a heavy-handed attempt at crowd control and suppression of political dissent. It should also be noted that the killing and wounding of civilians has also triggered demands for compensation (Somali: Mag or 'blood money') under both Islamic (Sharia) and customary (Xeer) laws.

The target of these demands is not the Somaliland Government or Somaliland Army directly, but rather the clan group responsible for paying mag, to which a soldier or other security force member belongs.[5] Consequently, the conflict has started to take on both political and tribal dimensions, making peace and reconciliation more challenging.

To fully understand the situation in Las Anod, it is crucial to recognize the complex interplay between the desire of local Dhulbahante sub-clans to be a part of Somalia and underlying clan-based dynamics, which fuel an interest in having direct control over their local political, economic, and security environments. Added to this are historic clan-based tensions and conflicts, resulting in a strong desire not to be dominated by other Darod sub-clans (e.g., Majeerteen) or non-Darod clans (e.g., Isaaq). This feeling was reignited when the Somaliland Army and other security forces killed over twenty civilians between 26 December 2022 – 4 January 2023, attempting to suppress protests and restore control over the city.

Addressing these issues will require a multifaceted approach that balances the aspirations of the majority of the Dhulbahante community for their region to be reunified with Somalia and the need to tackle the clan rivalries that fuel the conflict. This involves promoting dialogue and negotiation between the Dhulbahante and the Somaliland administration, and involving traditional leaders in the peacebuilding process. By engaging stakeholders from all sides and addressing the root causes of the conflict, a peaceful resolution that accommodates the diverse interests of the various clans and subclans can be realised.

The international community plays a critical role in supporting the resolution of the Las Anod conflict and fostering unity with Somalia. External actors should encourage dialogue and negotiation between conflicting parties and facilitate humanitarian assistance. By promoting inclusivity and addressing underlying clan dynamics, sustainable peace can be achieved, and the aspirations of the Dhulbahante and other marginalized groups can be realized.

## 2.1 The war of words

Somaliland has attempted to justify its actions in the region by presenting it as part of the global fight against terrorism. However, there is no credible evidence to suggest that al-Shabaab is involved in the conflict on the side of the SSC-Khatumo movement or has attempted to exploit the conflict to make in-roads into Sool Region. This narrative from Somaliland authorities aims to gain international support and legitimacy while deflecting attention from the underlying political, tribal, and historical issues that fuel this most recent round of violence.

Somaliland is presenting itself as a responsible partner in regional security to attract support from foreign governments that are concerned about the spread of extremist ideologies. It has employed lobbyists to write to US government officials, informing them of false reports that al-Shabab was involved in the Las Anod conflict.[6] This narrative was likewise spread by influential pro-Somaliland individuals on social media. The pro-Mogadishu orientation of the SSC-Khatumo movement would indicate that the conflict is being driven by local rather than external factors and stands at odds with the Salafi-Jihadi ideology of al-Shabaab which is a member of al-Qaeda's global network.

Therefore, it is crucial for the international community to carefully assess Somaliland's narrative and consider the broader context of the Las Anod conflict to devise effective and targeted strategies that address the root causes of the violence. To achieve lasting peace and stability in the region, Somaliland, SSC, and the Federal Government of Somalia must engage in genuine dialogue and negotiations to resolve the underlying issues driving the conflict. Efforts by the Somaliland administration to frame the situation as a fight against international terrorism without concrete evidence to support such claims obscures the true nature of the conflict and undermines prospects for a sustainable resolution. A nuanced understanding of the complex political, tribal, and historical dynamics at play is essential to achieve lasting peace and stability in the region.

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The Las Anod conflict is a complex issue that requires a nuanced understanding of the various factors driving the violence. While Somaliland has attempted to present the conflict as part of the global fight against terrorism, there is no concrete evidence to support such claims, and al-Shabaab has given no official position or taken sides in the conflict. Efforts to address the underlying political, tribal, and historical issues driving the conflict through genuine dialogue and negotiations are essential for achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

### **3. Mistakes of the Federal Government in Handling the Conflict**

The Federal Government of Somalia's handling of the Las Anod conflict has been marked by decisions that have, unfortunately, inflamed tensions rather than fostered reconciliation. By naming an envoy who is viewed as a political ally of the Isaaq clan, the government has not only failed to address the issue but has also further aggravated the situation. This choice of envoy has been perceived by the Dhulbahante as an endorsement of the Isaaq-dominated Somaliland administration and FGS recognition of Somaliland's claims over Las Anod, reinforcing their fears of marginalization and political exclusion.

Moreover, the President of Somalia's election on May 15, 2022, relied significantly on votes from the Isaaq clan, raising suspicions among the Dhulbahante about the government's commitment to their cause. This reliance on Isaaq support during the election has cast doubt on the President's ability to remain impartial and effectively mediate the conflict between the Dhulbahante and the Somaliland administration.

Statements made by members of the administration have also contributed to the escalation of tensions in Las Anod. The State Minister of the Presidency, Abshir Bukhari, has referred to Las Anod as being part of Somaliland, further inflaming Dhulbahante feelings and suggesting that the government tacitly recognizes Somaliland's claim to the region. Such statements undermine the majority of the Dhulbahante community's desire for unity with the Federal Government of Somalia and exacerbate the already delicate situation.



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The government's actions and rhetoric have led to increased feelings of disillusionment among the Dhulbahante, further complicating the prospects for peace and unity. To address this situation, the government must acknowledge the concerns of the Dhulbahante and demonstrate a genuine commitment to their aspirations. This could be achieved by appointing a neutral and respected envoy capable of mediating between the conflicting parties, as well as ensuring that government officials avoid making provocative statements that could inflame tensions.

An examination of the government's approach reveals a missed opportunity to foster dialogue and promote reconciliation between the Dhulbahante and the Somaliland administration. Instead, the government's actions have inadvertently deepened the divide, making the resolution of the conflict more challenging. To rectify this, the government must adopt a more inclusive and balanced approach that recognizes the unique challenges faced by the Dhulbahante and actively seeks to address their concerns.

To regain the trust of the Dhulbahante and pave the way for a lasting resolution to the conflict, the Federal Government must demonstrate that it is truly committed to their cause. This can be achieved through the implementation of confidence-building measures, such as promoting economic development in the region, supporting capacity-building initiatives for SSC local government institutions, and ensuring that the Dhulbahante's political rights are safeguarded.

Ultimately, the Federal Government of Somalia must adopt a more proactive and balanced approach to the Las Anod conflict. By acknowledging the concerns of the Dhulbahante and demonstrating a genuine commitment to their aspirations, the government can create the conditions necessary for lasting peace and unity in the region.

## 4. Prospects for resolving the conflict

The prospects for resolving the Las Anod conflict depend on various factors that consider local legitimacy theories and the political, tribal, and historical complexities of the situation. Addressing the aspirations of the SSC-Khatumo people to be part of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) is a critical component of any solution.

Firstly, the Federal Government of Somalia must recognize the unique challenges faced by the Dhulbahante and actively engage them in the political process. This includes respecting their desire of the community to be part of the FGS rather than being dominated by the Isaaq-led Somaliland administration. By fostering an inclusive environment that accommodates the diverse interests of various clans, the government can create a foundation for sustainable peace and stability. To facilitate dialogue between the conflicting parties, a neutral and respected mediator should be appointed, including engaging with Somaliland as a separate entity from SSC.

Secondly, addressing historical grievances and tribal rivalries is essential to the long-term resolution of the conflict. Promoting a culture of reconciliation, understanding, and forgiveness among the clans is critical for rebuilding trust and fostering social cohesion. Initiatives such as inter-clan dialogues, joint development projects, and cultural exchange programs can help mitigate the animosities that have driven the conflict and encourage cooperation between the Dhulbahante and the Isaaq-dominated Somaliland administration as separate, peaceful polities.

Thirdly, the government should avoid exacerbating the situation through controversial decisions or inflammatory statements. This includes reevaluating the appointment of politically aligned envoys and ensuring that government officials refrain from making divisive remarks. Demonstrating a commitment to neutrality and impartiality can help alleviate suspicions and foster trust among the Dhulbahante and facilitate constructive engagement with the Somaliland administration.

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Lastly, focusing on socio-economic development in the region can address the underlying drivers of the conflict. By investing in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, the government can create an environment in which all stakeholders feel valued and included. This approach can lead to the empowerment of the Dhulbahante community and promote a sense of shared responsibility for the region's future.

Given the complex nature of the Las Anod conflict, achieving a lasting resolution will be a challenging endeavour. However, by adopting a balanced and inclusive approach that prioritizes dialogue, reconciliation, and socio-economic development, the Federal Government of Somalia can create the conditions necessary for sustainable peace and unity in the region. Success depends on the government's genuine commitment to addressing the concerns of the Dhulbahante, honouring their aspirations to be part of the FGS, and engaging constructively with the Somaliland administration. This multifaceted approach can pave the way for a more stable and prosperous future for the region.

# Annex: Timeline of key events in Las Anood

**26 December 2022:** Abdifatah Abdullahi Abdi, also known as "Hadrawi," was a young official of Wadaani, Somaliland's largest opposition party. He hailed from the Dhulbahante clan, which is dominant in the area where he was assassinated in Las Anod.[1]

At this time anti-government demonstrations across the city started.

**From 26-31 December 2022:** Somaliland soldiers opened fire on several occasions, resulting in the deaths of 10-20 people and leaving many more injured; many of them young men and women. Unverified footage circulating on social media of the protests showed Somaliland security forces firing indiscriminately.[2]

**3 January 2023:** A local trader was shot by Somaliland forces patrolling the town; he was armed to guard his business and in the context of disarming him, he was killed. This provoked considerable outrage among his close relatives, who took to arms and attacked the Somaliland army in town.[3]

**4 January 2023:** The Somaliland Army withdrew to positions on the outskirts of Las Anod.[4]

**Mid-January 2023:** several high-ranking ministers of Somaliland, including the Interior Minister, Mohamed Kaahin, and the commander in chief of the Somaliland Army, Nuuh Tani, arrived in Las Anod to monitor the situation. They took residence in Hamdi Hotel in the eastern part of the town, guarded by their own forces, but did not engage in any known talks with traditional clan leaders or other members of the community.[5]

**Second half of January 2023:** 13 of the highest traditional leaders of the Dhulbahante clan, along with one from the Fiqishini clan, arrived in Las Anod and were welcomed by locals.[6]

**28 January 2023:** Consultations officially began and were expected to lead to a decision on the way forward for Dhulbahante in the coming days.[7]

**30 January 2023:** On January 30th, 2023, President Muse Bihi delivered a widely broadcasted speech in which he attributed the unrest in Las Anod to "terrorists".[1] However, traditional leaders rejected this claim and instead placed the blame for the town's insecurity on the Somaliland Government and its forces.[2]

**31 January 2023:** The Somaliland government issued a warning the country's media outlets against spreading news, reports, and polls that could worsen the situation in Las Anod, saying that "everyone working in Somaliland is obligated to follow the laws of the country, first and foremost the Somaliland Constitution." [3]

**1 February 2023:** IGAD held a meeting in Mogadishu to discuss joint efforts to defeat the al-Shabaab.[4] At the same time, reports emerged that the President of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Gelle, had offered his services as a mediator between Dhulbahante clan leaders and Somaliland authorities.[5]

**2 February 2023:** The spokesperson of the committee in charge of internal discussions in Laascanood, Chief Aqil Abdirisq Hassan Falaluug, rejected an offer from the President of Djibouti to act as a mediator with Somaliland authorities. The spokesperson noted that the position of the SSC-Khatumo leadership community and clan leaders was that negotiations could only begin after Somaliland forces withdrew from all Dhulbahante areas.[6]

**6 February 2023:** Dhulbahante elders in Sool announced their desire to establish a new Federal Member State as part of the Federal Republic of Somalia, independent of both Somaliland and Puntland, to be named SSC-Khatumo.[7] Prior to the release of the announcement, fighting erupted between Somaliland forces and local clan militia in the east part of Las Anod, centred around the Hotel Hamdi. Somaliland forces were reported to have used heavy weapons during the clashes but the number of casualties are not known. The first asylum seekers fleeing fighting in the city arrived in Ethiopia.[8]

**8 February 2023:** The Mayor of Las Anod, Abdirahim Ali Ismail, said "this is not a war between Somaliland and Puntland, nor between Somaliland and terrorists, but between the Somaliland army and the people of Las Anod." [9]

**10 February 2023:** The Government of Somaliland declared an unconditional ceasefire as it came under heavy pressure from international human rights organisations and the United States Government.[10]

**14 February 2023:** The Government of Djibouti denied rumours circulating on social media that its forces were supporting the Somaliland Army in fighting against SSC-Khatumo aligned clan militia forces in Las Anod.[11]

**16 February 2023:** President Muse Bihi said he had initiated peace talks with traditional elders of the Dhulbahante clan.[3] However, the traditional clan elders denied having any contact with Somaliland authorities for peace talks and said negotiations could not take place until the withdrawal of the Somaliland Army and other forces from Las Anod. At the same time, the BBC announced that clan leaders had established a new council which included key figures such as Garad Jama Garad Ali, Garaad Cabdullaahi Garaad Saleebaan Garaad Maxamed, Garad Jama Garad Ismail Duale, Garaad Cabdirisaaq Garaad Soofe Durraan.[12]

**23 February 2023:** The United Nations Human Rights Council reported that more than 185,000 people, 89% of them women and children, have been displaced by the fighting in Las Anod since 6 February 2023.[13]

**25 February 2023:** A spokesperson for the Somaliland army said that, "Hostile forces with al-Shabaab background broke the ceasefire agreement and attacked Somaliland forces. The attack was repulsed and much of the city remains under the control of Somaliland forces." [14]

**26 February 2023:** Somaliland's Foreign Minister, Essa Kayd, announced the final withdrawal of troops from the front lines in Laascaanood to designated military units to minimize civilian impact. He also said that AS was behind the disturbances and that they chose Laascaanood as a place of refuge because they were driven out of central Somalia.[15]

**28 February 2023:** A major hospital was hit by four mortar rounds, killing at least one person, and wounding several others. Somaliland's Ministry of Defense denied that the military shelled the hospital and said such reports were "fake news" intended to damage the military's reputation. The UN also reported a casualty count of over 200 deaths.[16]

**Since 1 March 2023:** There was a lull in fighting between the Somaliland Army and SSC-Khatumo aligned forces. However, while life is said to be returning to normal there is obvious damage to civilian, commercial and government infrastructure, while major obstacles were reported on the roads to Bosaso and Burco.[17]

**9 March 2023:** The Government of Somaliland said that fighters from Ethiopia's Somali Region were present in Las Anod fighting alongside SSC-Khamtumo forces against the Somaliland Army.[10] The claim was rejected by Ethiopian authorities.[18]

**16 March 2023:** the Somaliland Army was accused of indiscriminately shelling civilian areas of Las Anod.[19]

**18 March 2023:** fighting between the Somaliland Army and SSC-Khatumo aligned militia forces and shelling of the city is reported to have resulted in 47 people killed and over 280 injured.[20]

**26 March 2023:** After several attacks, the Somaliland National Defense Forces (SNDF) spokesperson announced that "SNDF has shifted from defensive approach to offensive against foreign invaders in Laascaanood. Professionally planned strategic military operations will be launched onward." [14] "Bring it on," SSC leader Garad responded, exuding confidence that their forces could defend the city. "Just let us know when you need an exit strategy or way out," he said, adding that another attack had been repelled that very day, when a delegation of traditional elders from Mogadishu had come to SSC to mediate for a negotiated settlement.[21]

**27 March 2023:** The European Union Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, Annette Weber, called for a ceasefire and for the parties to "engage in negotiations for a long-term settlement and enable humanitarian access." [22]

**30 March 2023:** The United States State Department issued a statement calling on Somaliland to pull back its forces from Las Anod while also asking for "militias in Laascaanood to refrain from any offensive actions against Somaliland forces." [23]

**31 March 2023:** Two persons were reportedly killed when the Somaliland army shelled locations across the city including the Mayors Office. [24]



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**1 April 2023:** the Somaliland Army attempted to re-take Las Anod with a multi-directional assault on the city. Both sides claimed to have taken prisoners during the eight-hour battle which is reported to have left 37 dead and more than 200 injured. The same day, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud appointed Abdikarim Hussein Guled as his Special Envoy for Somaliland Affairs. In a carefully worded statement, SSC-Khatumo leaders welcomed the appointment but added that “these talks do not concern us” because “we are not a part of Somaliland, we were never a part of it. And we will not be a part of it.”[25]

**7 April 2023:** the commander of the 95th Brigade of the Somaliland Army based in Buhoodle and Arowayn, Lieutenant Colonel Mohamed Deeq Mahumed Abdi, announced his defection to the SSC-Khatumo movement. He explained that his resignation came after witnessing abuses perpetrated by Somaliland forces on the people of his region, and that he intended to defend his community.[26]

**8 April 2023:** The SSC-Khatumo council announced the cessation of trade between the regions of Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) and other areas of Somaliland effective from 15 April 2023. The declaration included a prohibition on the movement of both civilian and commercial traffic, as well as restrictions against the operations of organisations registered with Somaliland authorities in Hargeisa.[3] At the same time, the Deputy Commissioner of Hudun district, Abdinasir Abdikhadir, announced his defection to the SCC-Khatuma forces, becoming the second official from Somaliland to a defect during the week.[27]

**9 April 2023:** The president of Somaliland held a meeting with the 10 political organizations to seek support for the government's plan to find a solution to the conflict in Laascaanood.

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Cover: Aerial View of Las Anod, undated (Photo: Casimaada 17 Feb 2023)

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