

## **Guelleh Dynasty; A Kingdom in the Making in the Horn of Africa**

Djibouti's current president, Guelleh, succeeded Hassan Guoled Aptidon in office in 1999. Guelleh was sworn in for his second six-year term after a one-man election on 8 April 2005. He took 100% of the votes in a 78.9% turnout. In early 2011, the Djiboutian citizenry took part in a series of protests against the long-serving government, which were associated with the larger Arab Spring demonstrations. Guelleh was re-elected to a third term later that year, with 80.63% of the vote in a 75% turnout. Although opposition groups boycotted the ballot over changes to the constitution permitting Guelleh to run again for office, international observers generally described the election as free and fair. While the local citizens generally believed it was not healthy election at all!

On 31 March 2013, Guelleh replaced long-serving Prime Minister Dilleita Mohamed Dilleita with former president of the Union for a Presidential Majority (UMP) Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed. In December 2014, the ruling Union for the Presidential Majority also signed a framework agreement with the Union of National Salvation coalition, which paves the way for opposition legislators to enter parliament and for reformation of the national electoral agency.

One can easily see the domination of the overall government structures by the very sub sub clan of president Guelleh, almost all-important positions are directly or indirectly held by his close relatives. Which guarantees very fertile environment for his potential future predecessors to lead the country without much challenges. President Gualleh is known for his anxiety about political rivals from Issa clan of Djibouti. During the long years he was leading the secret service of Djibouti many prominent figures has disappeared due to what most of the Djibouti people allegedly relate to his evil acts. Till to date he is the ultimate decision maker in that office, President Guelleh somehow believes that secret service is the only way to control the power and resources of the less then one million country population already most of them are ravaged by the deep rooted poverty. Trying to externalize the internal problems several times he masterminded conflicts between Issa and Gadabuursi clans in the neighboring Somaliland.

It was not a surprise when recently the pro-government demonstrations were organized by the only leading party and the secret services. The theme was “ Guelleh to remain in the Power for another term” according to the Djibouti constitution this was unlawful. However, as part of the already kingdom in the making president Guelleh endorsed the “request” from the

Djibouti community. The president thinks that if he leaves the power very soon still the yet to come potential “king/queen of Djibouti” will not be able to maintain the power for another half a century or so. It is obvious that majority of the elders are not with him, the community in general are tired of the consecutive false promises he made so far. The youth are not seeing the bright future they deserve whatsoever. Unemployment rate has increased dramatically for the last three years. Intellectuals are pouring and deserting very frequently to the other countries. There is no space for political debates and even social dialogue or discussions. Nevertheless, not anyone is like President Guelleh’s daughter; It did not take long for her to find a job in Djibouti after graduating from Columbia University in May 2012. On 22 August, 2012 **Haïbado Ismaïl Omar** was appointed by presidential decree to the post of technical advisor on economic affairs to the Head of State, one of the highest ranks in the civil service. She would therefore had the upper hand on strategic ministries, such as finance and investment. To help her find settled in. She is an example of one of the potential candidates of the Queens to be crowned in post president Ismail era. The kingdom is on the making!

Ismail has invited more than 35 Somaliland officials consisting of politicians, business elites, traditional elders, religious scholars and academia. He sent them a private jet to Hargeisa. to attend the potential future Queen’s wedding in 2014. Another indicator of how Gueelle extravagantly spends the resources without much thoughts of the poverty vanished Djibouti citizens.

Whilst the establishment is swiftly on going, the oppositions where undergoing very harsh tyranny circumstances, they have been arrested indefinitely, deported, and occasionally killed. Latest incident happened on 21 of December 2015 when Security forces in Djibouti indiscriminately opened live fire during a religious celebration in the neighborhood of Belbela

Opposition coalition the Union for National Salvation (Union pour le Salut National: USN) explained that police attacked the banned commemoration of the late religious leader Sheikh Yonis Muse - deliberately targeting opposition supporters using disproportionate force for the defenseless elders and youth in that ceremony. then attacked a house where they said opponents were meeting, killing 19 people. However, Interior Minister Hassan Omar Mohamed stated that "dozens of armed individuals" attacked security forces in the Buldhoqo area, wounding nine, including a police officer. While the exact details are yet to be

confirmed, this marks the most violent act committed by the security forces since February 2013, when at least 12 protesters were killed during post-election demonstrations.

This final incident will have negative impact on the establishment of the Kingdom, it is believed that the intention was to eliminate/decapitate leadership of the oppositions and to terrify their supporters, however, the unintended consequences of the act cannot be predicted and guaranteed. As a matter of fact the opposition has already won the hearts and minds of the Djibouti community in general; the needy poor families, the jobless young graduates, the alienated businessmen/women, the migrated intellectuals, support them.

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