

MEMORANDUM

Date: 09/25/2021

To: US State Department

From:

Mohamed Ibrahim, Representative of Alliance Republicaine pour le Developpement (ARD), Affiliate of Charter for the Democratic Transition (CTD)

Ali Ali, Representative of Front de Restoration de l'Unite et de la Democratie (FRUD), Affiliate of CTD

Omar Hassan, Coordinator of Security and Defense Committee Coordinator CTD

Subject: Current alarming situation of the Republic of Djibouti

Independent since 06/27/1977, Djibouti is a small eminently strategic state located in the Horn of Africa. It shares land borders with Ethiopia, Somalia to the East and South and Eritrea to the North. On the Red Sea, It faces Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula beyond the Bab-El Mandab.

With a population around one million, generally young, Djibouti faces several challenges as we entered the 21st century.

The access to its independence was achieved with true national unity of different ethnics and tribes that came together against the colonial power. Unfortunately, the first government immediately took advantage of the absence of a constitution and instituted authoritarian and dictatorial practices that led to the creation of a single party.

This has resulted in the personalization of power, nepotism, bad governance, widespread corruption, systematic repression, tribalism that have undermined the peaceful coexistence of communities and the emergence of a national state.

It took the outbreak of an armed FRUD insurgency in 1991 for the country to draft a first constitution. However, this attempt officially marked the end of the one party government; even though it still was imperfect to respond to the democratic aspirations of the nation.

In any elections cycle neither the new constitution voted in 1992, including the limitation of political parties to four only, nor the following amendment of the 2002; have insured the events of free and transparent elections in Djibouti.

In addition to that, we have witnessed the advent of a dynastic succession from uncle to nephew in April 1999, and the violation of the 2001 peace agreement and the 2014 framework agreement. (copies of these agreements attached).

In 2010, in order to stay in power the President Ismail Omar Guelleh unconstitutionally amended specific clauses in the constitution, such as; the limitation of presidential terms to two to unlimited

number of terms and introduced new conditions for any candidate running for office (for ex: denying any dual citizens to participate political races).

Since then the constitution allows the president to remain in power for life, at the option of presidential elections of convenience, which practically are falsified in favor of the one in power, thus putting the country at risk of deregulation and chaos.

In the national political reality, this situation has created a complete lockdown of the political space and the criminalization and systemic hunting of political opponents, which leads to inevitable radicalization of the means of expression.

On the socio-economic level, despite the availability of sufficient resources in the country, endemic unemployment estimated to be over 60% and an abject poverty remains the daily life for the majority of Djiboutians. Lack of transparency and political will to lift up Djiboutians from poverty and come up with a political plan to better the lives of people push families and particularly youth to seek migration to abroad as an alternative.

On the national economic nightmare it is also important to mention the weight of the debt, of around 105% of GDP (85% of which is held by China alone), its sustainability worries international financial institutions like (the IMF, the World Bank) and runs the country the risk of bankruptcy.

It's dismaying for us, but it is not a secret at all that the country is renowned for being one of the most corrupt and unjust in the world, in a state where the predatory of public funds is set up as a model of governing.

The state of all the national infrastructures reflects the dilapidation and precariousness of the country. It is enough for a rain to fall, so much awaited in these arid regions, for the capital to sink completely into chaos for lack of sanitation system, flagrant proof of acute bad governance.

On the regional level, the government in place practices an irresponsible policy of interference in the internal affairs of Somalia, Ethiopia and Yemen.

This alarming situation and the danger of chaos that lurks the country stability, like its neighbors, poses a major risk for its future, short and long term.

Therefore, we, political parties, including ARD, UDJ, PND and FCP, FRUD organization, LDDH human rights organization, as well as members of the civil society and political personalities, have decided to take our responsibilities by signing the Charter for a Democratic Transition in Djibouti (see attached document)

What do we mean by democratic transition?

To prepare, by a transitional period through a democratic, participative and citizen process, the transitioning from the current dictatorial and despotic regime to an inclusive, democratic and republican national state.

Our goal is clear: to create a new social contract.

Our goal is concrete: to put in place a democratic transition through a peaceful process.

It is imperative and vital that our nation, rich in diversity, establish and adopts a fundamental law and modern institutions that safeguard our national unity.

This is where the preparation of the future of Djibouti begins and we hope our nation's friends and partners to accompany us in the realization of this life-saving project.

In the interest of Djibouti, its people and regional stability.

Charter for Democratic Transition (CTD)