



PUNTLAND BOOK FAIR 2025

Theme:

**Security, Peacebuilding
and State Building
in Somalia**

07 08 09 DEC 2025

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REFLECTION

Puntland Book Fair

#PBF2025

The Puntland Book Fair is an annual activity dedicated to celebrating books, Ideas, and discussions bringing together book lovers, readers, intellectuals, authors, and dignitaries. The forum is composed of keynote speeches, insightful panel discussions, book launches, and cultural activities.

The book Fair hosts each year dozens of notable **guests** from all the Somali regions including authors, intellectuals, prominent politicians, scholars and state-building experts. Also, the bookfair received each year's hundreds of participants.

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1. About the Puntland Book Fair

The Puntland Book Fair is an annual event dedicated to celebrating books, ideas, knowledge, and public discussion. It brings together book lovers, readers, intellectuals, authors, scholars, policymakers, and dignitaries in a setting designed to encourage learning and exchange.

The Book Fair combines keynote and guest speeches with panel discussions, book presentations, book launches, and cultural activities. This combination allows the event to promote reading and writing while also providing a public platform for discussion of issues that affect Somali society.

Each year, the Book Fair hosts dozens of notable guests from different parts of Somalia and beyond, including authors, intellectuals, prominent political figures, scholars, and state-building experts. The event also attracts hundreds of participants, creating an opportunity for people with different backgrounds and experiences to meet and exchange ideas.

The 2025 edition placed particular emphasis on security, peacebuilding, and state building in Somalia. The theme connected the intellectual and cultural purpose of the Book Fair with some of the most important questions facing Somali society and institutions.

YEAR 2025 THEME

Security, Peacebuilding and **State** **Building** in **Somalia**



Facts!

In Somalia, 43.9% of adults were literate according to the latest available UNESCO data (2022). The figure highlights the continued importance of investing in literacy, reading and foundational learning across the country.

43.9
%

— UNESCO Institute for Statistics / World Bank, latest available data

Puntland's Ministry of Education and Higher Education identifies improving basic literacy and learning outcomes as key priorities for the education system, alongside strengthening teacher development, curriculum and learning environments.

— Puntland Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Executive Summery

This report presents a detailed account of the activities, deliberations, speeches, presentations, panel discussions, book sessions, and other engagements held during the 2025 Puntland Book Fair.

While books, authors, and the promotion of reading remained at the heart of the event, the central substantive focus of this edition was security, peacebuilding, and state building in Somalia under the theme "Security, Peacebuilding and State Building in Somalia."

The Book Fair provided a platform to reflect on Somalia's journey toward security, peace, and state building; recognize progress; examine persistent challenges; and consider possible pathways toward a more stable and resilient Somalia. Participants included policymakers, security experts, academics, traditional and religious figures, youth, women, authors, intellectuals, civil society representatives, and other members of the public.

The discussions covered a wide range of connected issues. These included counterterrorism and the relationship between government leadership and community ownership; the experience of the Puntland Hillaac Operation against ISIS; the role of local governments in peacebuilding, service delivery, and state building; education as a foundation for peaceful and resilient societies; and the role of youth and women in peacebuilding and state building.

A recurring message throughout the programme was that security cannot be separated from broader questions of governance, public confidence, education, justice, and development. Participants repeatedly emphasized that military and security gains need to be followed by stabilization, infrastructure, services, stronger institutions, community engagement, and opportunities for young people.

The Book Fair also highlighted the role of books, education, research, literature, poetry, and intellectual dialogue in strengthening Somali society. Several speakers emphasized that knowledge should not remain separate from public challenges but should contribute to understanding and addressing issues affecting peace, governance, development, and social cohesion.

This report therefore documents the proceedings not simply as a record of an event, but as a summary of the ideas and perspectives presented during the different sessions.

DAY ONE
7TH DEC 2025

OPENING CEREMONY



**Welcome
Remarks**

Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Dalmar
Director, Puntland Book Fair

Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Dalmar welcomed the guests, speakers, authors, partners, and participants to the fourth edition of the **Puntland Book Fair**. In his opening remarks, he briefly reflected on the history of the Book Fair and the significance of sustaining the initiative for four consecutive years.

Mr. Dalmar emphasized that the Book Fair should be understood as more than a gathering of people who read and appreciate books. He described it as a platform for sharing ideas, encouraging dialogue, and creating space for constructive discussion on public issues. In this sense, he connected the cultural purpose of the Book Fair with its wider role in intellectual and public life.

He expressed appreciation for the regular support provided by the President of Puntland, **H.E. Said Abdullahi Deni**, and the Puntland Ministry of Education and Higher Education, led by Hon. Fuad Abshir Adeer. He also acknowledged the support of the State Minister for the Presidency of Puntland, Hon. Abdifitah Ashkir.

Mr. Dalmar extended his appreciation to the sponsors and other partners who supported the event. He specifically recognized Dookh Press, members of the media fraternity, and the Garowe Municipality for their contributions to the organization and implementation of the Book Fair.



**GUEST
SPEECH**

Mr. Hassan Abdirisak Adan

On behalf of the Board of Directors, PBF

Mr. Hassan Abdirisak Adan expressed appreciation for the continued support of the Puntland Government, led by President H.E. Said Abdullahi Deni, and the Mayor of Garowe, Mr. Abdulkadir Ahmed Geeddi.

He emphasized that the Puntland Book Fair is a youth-led initiative and described it as a demonstration of the capacity, initiative, and leadership potential of young people. The continued organization of the event, in his view, shows that young people can create and sustain platforms that contribute to intellectual development and public dialogue.

Mr. Hassan also appealed for stronger **government support** for reading and writing. He called for greater support to youth and for investment in libraries and community centres that can provide spaces for learning, reading, writing, discussion, and exchange of ideas. His remarks placed the Book Fair within a wider effort to strengthen a culture of knowledge and learning.



GUEST SPEECH

Dr. Ali Sh. Adan

Guest Speaker

Dr. Ali Sh. Adan emphasized the importance of education and leadership in the journey of human development. He presented education as an important foundation for developing individuals and societies and stressed that leadership is equally important in translating knowledge and potential into meaningful progress.

He also emphasized the indispensable role of unity in achieving common objectives. His remarks recognized the value of bringing people together around shared aspirations and highlighted the importance of intellectual platforms in creating understanding and common purpose.

Dr. Ali appreciated the efforts of academic institutions and the **organizers** of the Book Fair for continuing this intellectual exercise. He noted the contribution such a platform makes to expanding the intellectual capital of society and to bringing Somalis together from different parts of the country and beyond.

His **remarks reinforced** the broader purpose of the Book Fair: to create a space where education, leadership, knowledge, and unity can be discussed in relation to Somalia's development and future.



Mohamed Ahmed Bari

General Manager of Golis

He appreciated the organizers of the Book Fair and reiterated the indispensable role of **books and forums** of this kind in strengthening the intellectual and public life of the community. He encouraged continued support for such spaces, which bring together readers, authors, thinkers, and community leaders.

He emphasized Golis's longstanding commitment to supporting the Book Fair throughout its existence, noting that the company has consistently supported books, authors, and literary initiatives.

The **Golis Manager** also offered to support the Book Fair in developing a digital platform that would enable audiences to follow the event live and participate virtually, thereby expanding its reach beyond those attending in person.



POETRY PRESENTATION

Ismahaan Arraweelo

Poet and author of **Maayad**

Ismahaan Arraweelo, author of the book **Maayad** and one of the participating poets, presented a poem reflecting on the sacrifices and heroic efforts of the Puntland Defense Forces and the people of Puntland in the pursuit of peace and development.

The **poem** included the following lines:

*"Illaa Bari heegan
Nugaal habbi weeye
U heesay u heesay
Maamulki horreeyay
Hooyadii federaalka
Budlaantan hayaantay
U sii hambalyeeyay"*



GUEST SPEECH

Mr. Abdirahman Daacad Director, Department of Higher Education

Mr. Abdirahman Daacad emphasized the importance of the Book Fair's theme and acknowledged the contribution of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education as a co-organizer.

He encouraged participants to engage in **meaningful discussion** and deliberation on the relationship between education and security. In particular, he encouraged consideration of how education can be used to address societal issues and contribute to broader peace and stability.

His remarks positioned **education** as an issue that extends beyond the classroom. Education can shape how citizens understand their society, interact with one another, and respond to social challenges. This made education relevant to the **broader theme of security, peacebuilding, and state building**.



GUEST SPEECH

Mr. Tim Othieno Head of the UN Office in Puntland

Mr. Tim Othieno thanked the organizers for the invitation and expressed his pleasure at attending the 2025 Book Fair. He observed that the theme of the year could not have been more timely, given that Somalia was at an important stage in its **political journey** and was navigating political transition.

He reflected on the role of books in society, emphasizing that books help people understand the past, make sense of the present, and imagine the future. He also described ideas as tools for transformation and highlighted the suitability of Garowe as a venue for such a gathering because of its association with peace and stability.

Mr. Othieno emphasized the importance of youth voices in peacebuilding and state building. He indicated that **UNTMIS looked** forward to participating in the Book Fair and noted its support for the event, including a contribution of **books on cybersecurity**.



Hon. Abdullahi Bile Nur

Minister of Civil Aviation and Airports of Puntland

Hon. Abdullahi Bile Nur, who served as a member of the Support Committee of the Hillaac Operation, spoke about the support provided to the Puntland Defense Forces during the operation.

He explained that the committee carried out two closely related responsibilities. First, it helped **mobilize public support** for the operation. Second, it worked to provide necessary support to wounded soldiers and to facilitate logistical assistance.

The Minister thanked the people of Puntland for their continued and unrelenting support. He recognized contributions from different districts and highlighted the role of the **Puntland diaspora**. His remarks emphasized the importance of community solidarity and public mobilization in supporting security efforts.



GUEST SPEECH

Hon. Abdirahman Mohamed Farole

Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Hon. Abdirahman Mohamed Farole thanked the organizers of the Book Fair and emphasized the importance of peace for **state building and development**. He connected the security situation with the broader development agenda, stressing that peace provides an important condition for communities and institutions to pursue development.

The Minister recognized the sacrifices of the Puntland Defense Forces in their fight against terrorist groups **during the Almiskad Operation**. He also expressed appreciation for the leadership of the President of Puntland.



Hon. Fuad Abshir Adeer

Minister of Education and Higher Education

Hon. Fuad Abshir Adeer welcomed the guests and expressed appreciation for their participation in the 2025 edition. He highlighted the **Ministry's role** in organizing and supporting the Book Fair as part of its mandate to expand knowledge, encourage reading and writing, and support authors and intellectuals.

The Minister thanked the organizers for their commitment and for sustaining the Book Fair over several years. He emphasized that the Book Fair is not only an opportunity for authors to present their work. It is also a forum for dialogue on issues of consequence to society, with each edition providing space to address a substantive theme.

He described the 2025 theme as **particularly critical because**, without functional state institutions, it is difficult to achieve sustainable peace and effective service delivery. He therefore connected the intellectual discussions of the Book Fair with the practical question of how Somali institutions can contribute to peace and public welfare.

The Minister also highlighted the introduction of an **annual award** to recognize individuals who have contributed to education, the expansion of knowledge, and intellectual life.



OFFICIAL OPENING

President H.E. Said Abdullahi Deni officially opened the Book Fair and welcomed all participants to Puntland. He appreciated the continuity of the programme and commended the organizers for sustaining the event for four years.

The President emphasized the importance of celebrating knowledge, authors, intellectual life, and public forums that create opportunities for discussion on issues of public importance. He stressed that the Book Fair should not be viewed only as a gathering of book lovers but also as a forum for serious deliberation.

Referring to the year's theme, he emphasized the importance of security, peacebuilding, and state building to Somalia's future. He also praised the sacrifices of the Puntland Defense Forces who participated in the Almiskad Operation against ISIS, describing their sacrifices as an important foundation for peace and stability, which in turn create the conditions necessary for development.

The President encouraged the development of a stronger culture of translating important and seminal works on different subjects into Somali. He noted that translation can expand the range of knowledge available to Somali readers and make important ideas more accessible to the wider population.

He also emphasized that Somalis are united as a society but noted the continued need to strengthen the state-building process in order to achieve stable politics, peace, and development.

The President concluded by praising the achievements of the Somali diaspora, presenting their accomplishments as evidence of the quality and potential of Somali people.

H.E. Said Abdullahi Deni
President of Puntland

**BANDHIGGA
BUUGAAGTA
PUNTAND**



PUNTLAND

EDUCATION AWARD





Following the opening remarks, President H.E. Said Abdullahi Deni presented the Puntland Education Award to Mr. Mohamud **Sh. Hamid Mohamed, Vice Chancellor of Puntland State University**. The award recognized excellence in education and contribution to knowledge production and dissemination.

EC. 2025



Mustafe Osman

Deputy Director and Head of Operations, Balqiis Insights

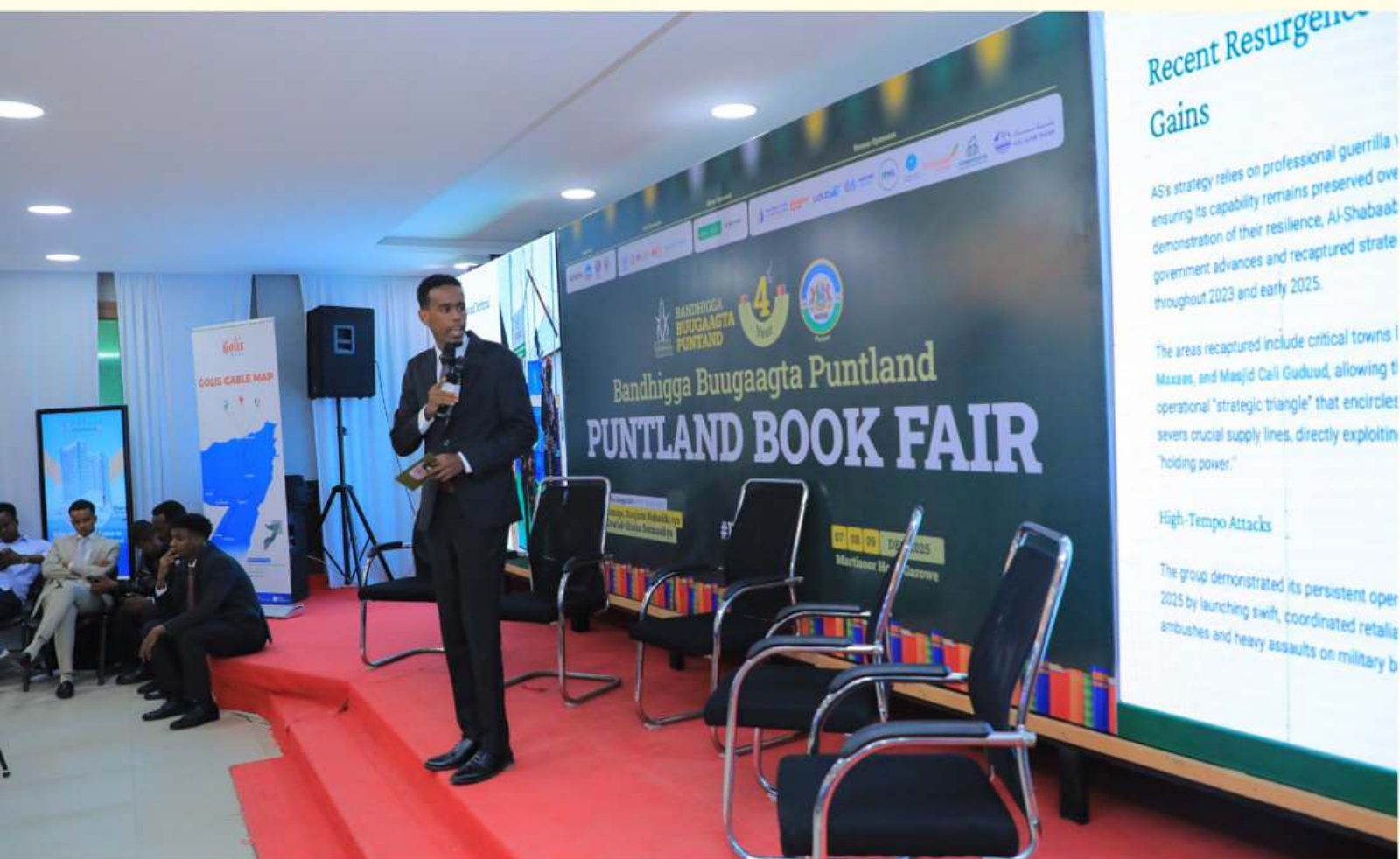
The presentation examined Somalia's overall security landscape, with a particular focus on counterterrorism efforts by the Federal Government and federal member states, including Puntland State of Somalia.

The presentation provided a comparative analysis of the major terrorist groups including Al-Shabaab and ISIS. It considered their different characteristics and approaches and examined the responses that governments and communities have developed in addressing the security threat.

Particular attention was given to the **Hillaac Operation conducted by Puntland against ISIS**. The presentation considered the operation in comparative terms and examined the approaches used against terrorist groups.

In discussing Somalia's broader security outlook, the presentation emphasized the need for political consensus. It also stressed that territories recovered from armed groups require stabilization if security gains are to translate into lasting peace and governance.

The presentation further **highlighted donor fatigue** and the need to reconsider and recalibrate national strategies. This pointed to the importance of developing approaches that connect counterterrorism operations with longer-term stabilization and institutional development.



PANEL 1 DISCUSSION



DAY ONE
7TH DEC 2025



Title

Counterterrorism in Somalia: Aligning Government Leadership and Community Ownership

Panel Members:

- **Abdifitah Abdinur**, State Minister for the Presidency of Puntland
- **Sh. Mohammed Idiris**, Religious Leader
- **Asho Gelle Diriye**, Former Puntland Minister
- **Gen. Mumin Abdi Shire**, Puntland Police Commissioner

This session was moderated by **Abdirisak Lawland**

- The first panel examined counterterrorism through the relationship between government leadership and community ownership. The discussion focused strongly on the Hillaac Operation and the lessons that participants believed could be drawn from it for Puntland and Somalia more broadly.
- Participants discussed the significance of the operation, its reported operational successes, and the damage inflicted on the opposing terrorist group. They also considered what the operation could mean for peace, stability, and economic activity in Puntland.
- The discussion emphasized that political will and leadership are necessary for successful counterterrorism. Participants highlighted the importance of preparing the political and institutional groundwork for an operation and of securing appropriate support and understanding from international partners.
- Community ownership emerged as another central issue. Participants emphasized that public support is critical in confronting a group such as ISIS. Government forces require cooperation from communities, while communities require confidence that the government can protect them and provide a pathway toward normal life after conflict.
- The panel also considered the potential of the Hillaac experience to provide an example for countering insurgent and terrorist organizations. Participants argued that terrorist groups can be defeated when there is sufficient determination, political will, leadership, public support, and coordinated action.
- Participants described the Almiskad area as strategically important and as an area with significant potential. At the same time, they reflected on the damage caused by terrorism over a prolonged period, including killings, displacement, and hostage-taking in strategically important and resource-rich parts of Puntland.
- The reported success of the operation was also discussed in relation to public confidence. Participants noted that the success helped restore confidence in government and contributed to a sense of unity among the public.
- However, the panel emphasized that confidence must be sustained. The government was encouraged to develop a strategy for re-engaging communities and maintaining public confidence after the security operation.
- The discussion then moved beyond military action to the requirements of stabilization. Participants highlighted infrastructure development in recovered areas as an important priority. They also recommended that education curricula address terrorism and that greater employment opportunities be created for young people in order to reduce vulnerability to recruitment by terrorist organizations.
- The discussion therefore presented counterterrorism as a broad process requiring military capability, political leadership, public participation, education, employment, infrastructure, and sustained engagement with affected communities.

BOOK SESSION



DAY ONE
7TH DEC 2025



Participating Authorst

- **Hoodo Yuusuf Muuse** — Author of Naqshadaynta Nolosha
- **Cabdirisaaq Cumar Caddeysay** — Author of Soomali baan ahay and Diiwaankii Abwaan Jaamac Kediye
- **Cabdikhaaliq Baashi** — Translator of Xasil
- **Cumar Shaafi** — Author of Xeebi waa dahab
- **Dr. Maxamuud Maxamed Maxamuud** — Author of Maskax Luntay
- **Suuban Bootaan** — Author of Xaawaley

This session was moderated by **Mohamud Tallman**

The first book session provided an opportunity for authors and a translator to present their works and engage with participants. The session complemented the policy and security discussions by maintaining the Book Fair's central focus on books, authorship, reading, and intellectual exchange.



**GUEST
SPEECH**

Eng. Mohamed Isse Osman

DG of Puntland Ministry of Information, Technology

The Director opened the second day by emphasizing the importance of organizing intellectual forums and returning attention to the central theme of peace, security, and state building.

Drawing on his experience as the **author of Ismahurto**, a historical novel grounded in Somalia's experience during the 1990s and the period of state failure, he presented a historical reflection on Somalia's journey from state failure through peacebuilding, reconciliation, and state building.

He emphasized the importance of consensus and advocated for bottom-up approaches to reconciliation, **peacebuilding, and state building**. The remarks therefore connected literature and historical reflection with the practical challenges of rebuilding social and political institutions.



PRESENTATION

Bashiir Suuley

Co-founder, Galkayo Peace Forum

Bashiir Suuley presented the experience of youth-led efforts to create peace and harmony between residents of the different sides of Galkayo, which are administered by Galmudug and Puntland.

He explained that the **efforts began in 2017** and involved young people from the northern and southern sides of Galkayo. They organized campaigns focused on schools and used awareness activities to promote peace, coexistence, and harmony.

Bashiir described some of the difficulties and challenges encountered during the process. He also highlighted efforts to remove physical barriers between the northern and southern parts of the city and to create stronger social links between communities.

The peace campaigns later extended into rural areas and reached pastoralist communities. This expansion demonstrated an effort to take peacebuilding beyond the urban **environment and engage communities** whose lives and livelihoods are connected to the wider area.

The presentation highlighted the potential of **education, books, and intellectual forums** as tools for bringing people together. The efforts ultimately contributed to the creation of the Galkayo Peace Forum.

The main lesson drawn from the experience was the importance of grassroots peacebuilding and the role that young people can play in initiating and sustaining peace efforts at **community level**.



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PANEL **2** DISCUSSION



DAY ONE
8TH DEC 2025



Title

**Local Governments as Frontline Institutions for
Peacebuilding, State Building, and Development**

Panel Members:

- **Mohamed Ali Farah**, Director General, Puntland Ministry of Interior
- **Ahmed Dheereeye**, Mayor of Burtinle
- **Sara Salah**, Former Member, Transitional Puntland Election Commission
- **Mohamed Shire Dibbad**, Local Governance Expert

This session was moderated by **Ahmed Sanwilwilo**

- The second panel examined local governments as frontline institutions for peacebuilding, state building, and development. Participants focused on the fact that local governments are the level of government that interacts most directly with citizens and therefore have an important role in shaping public confidence in government.
- Participants noted that local governments deliver services and frequently serve as the first public institutions to respond to local conflicts and crises. Because of this, their capacity affects not only service delivery but also the relationship between citizens and the state.
- The panel emphasized the need for communities to experience positive peace and stability so that people can plan their lives predictably and work toward development. Peace was described as the foundation that allows other social and economic activities to flourish.
- Decentralization was discussed as an important mechanism for empowering local governments and strengthening their ability to deliver services. Participants also highlighted popular elections in Puntland districts as an important step in strengthening local representation and increasing public confidence in governance.
- The discussion noted that district-level priorities inform the recently developed Puntland's Five-Year Development Plan. Participants noted that using district needs as a foundation for development planning represents a shift toward placing community priorities at the forefront of governance.
- Participants called for greater efforts to bring government services closer to citizens through local government institutions. They also stressed the need to strengthen early warning and conflict-management mechanisms at the local level.
- The panel further identified several areas where local governments require institutional strengthening, including human resources, revenue generation, and public financial management.
- Fiscal transfers were highlighted as particularly important. Participants emphasized that when responsibilities are devolved to local governments, those responsibilities should be accompanied by adequate financial resources. Otherwise, decentralization can create responsibilities without the capacity to fulfil them.
- Overall, the discussion presented local government as a central component of state building because it is the level at which citizens most directly experience public authority, services, representation, and conflict management.



Saed Basher

Director, MASAF Institute

PRESENTATION

Mr. Saed Basher examined the historical process and strategic direction of the **Hillaac Operation in Almiskad against ISIS**. The presentation covered the geography of the operation, its timeline, and the different phases through which the operation developed.

The presentation also examined emerging issues such as the use of technology in warfare and considered how these developments affect the conduct of counterterrorism operations.

Mr. Basher discussed the implications of the **Hillaac experience for counterterrorism** in Somalia more broadly. He highlighted the value of campaigns focused on specific geographical areas, the importance of intelligence-based decision-making, and the need for political stability and consensus.

Community buy-in was also emphasized as an important factor in **stabilization**. **The presentation** therefore reinforced the broader message of the Book Fair that counterterrorism operations require support from political institutions and communities if they are to contribute to sustainable peace.



BOOK SESSION

2



DAY ONE
8TH DEC 2025



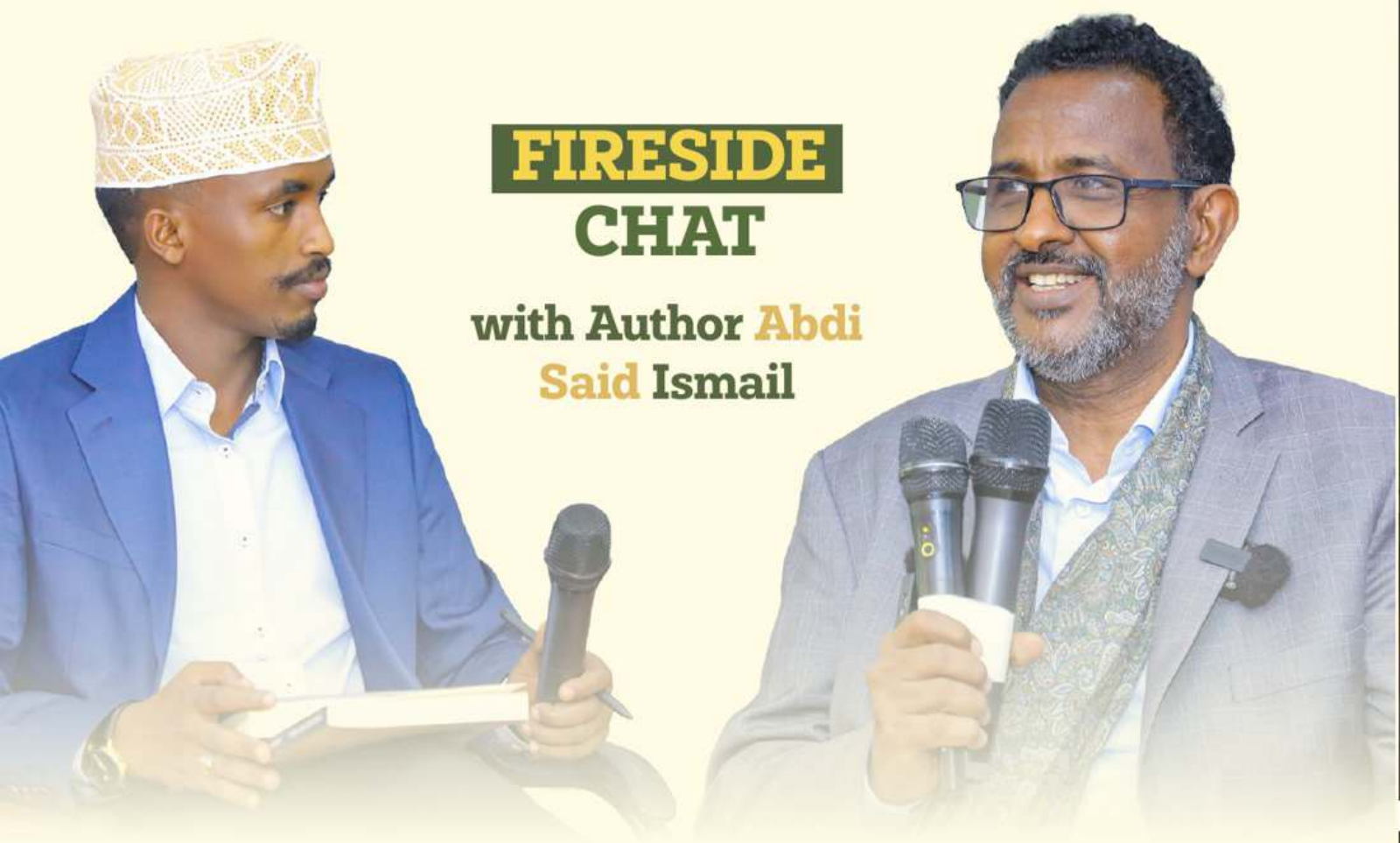
Participating Authorst

- **Ibraahim Sayid Cali** — Author of Wehelka Ardayga and Tilmaamaha Waalidka
- **Faarax Maxamuud Xiirane** — Author of Nabaddu Maaha Hal-kudhig
- **Faadumo Daahir Jaamac** — Author of Cishqi and Cuud
- **Cabdalla Rowje** — Author of Muhashada Xorriyada
- **Abdullahi Ahmed Yusuf** — Presenter of Aragtida Lowska

This session was moderated by **Najmo Garaase**

The second book session continued the Book Fair's literary programme and provided authors and presenters with an opportunity to share their works with participants. The session complemented the day's policy discussions by maintaining a space for literature, authorship, and intellectual exchange.





FIRESIDE CHAT

**with Author Abdi
Said Ismail**

The Book Fair featured a fireside chat with renowned Somali author Abdi Said Ismail, whose notable works include *Xadka Ridada*, *Saboolnimada Sidee Looga Baxaa*, ***Siyaasad Aan Sixir Lahayn***, ***Halgankii Tukayaasha***, and ***Gumeystow Lagu La Dood***.

The conversation focused on his **latest book**, *Gumeystow Lagu La Dood*, a Somali translation and commentary on Aimé Césaire's seminal work *Discourse on Colonialism*. The discussion explored the nature and legacy of colonialism, its enduring impacts, and the relevance of Césaire's ideas to contemporary Somali society.

The session also highlighted the importance of translating classical and **influential works** into Somali as a means of expanding the intellectual capital available to Somali readers and strengthening the country's literary and intellectual tradition. Participants engaged the author in a wide-ranging discussion on authorship and translation, as well as the importance of intellectual curiosity and fostering a culture of reading, writing, and critical thinking.

The fireside chat provided an opportunity **for participants to engage directly** with the author and reflect on the role of literature and translation in broadening intellectual discourse within Somali society.



PANEL 3 DISCUSSION



DAY ONE
8TH DEC 2025



Title

Building Peaceful and Resilient Societies
Through Education

Panel Members:

- **Dr. Abdiqani Ahmed Farah**, Scholar and Researcher
- **Caarshe Siciid Muse**, Presidential Envoy
- **Halimo Abdi Jama**, Puntland Ministry of Education
- **Cabdullaahi Abshir Sanco**, Intellectual
- **Ahmed Abdullahi Isse**, CSO Representative

This session was moderated by **Abdirisak Jama**

The third panel examined the role of education in building peaceful, stable, and resilient societies. Participants approached education not only as a service but as a foundation for human development and an important long-term investment in peace and stability.

- Education and knowledge were described as foundations of human progress. Participants argued that education contributes to development, and development can in turn support stability, peace, and resilient societies.
- The panel emphasized the importance of research in improving education. Participants called for the development of local research capacity so that education policy and practice can respond more effectively to the realities and needs of Somali society.
- Participants also discussed the wider social effects of education. Education produces knowledgeable and competent citizens who can contribute to society and participate more effectively in community and public life.
- Curriculum reform emerged as an important area of concern. Participants argued that curricula should reflect the situation of the country and should give greater attention to peace, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and coexistence.
- The quality of teachers and education managers was also emphasized. Participants called for significant investment in education personnel because teachers and education managers are among the most important factors influencing the quality of education.
- The panel proposed greater use of mass awareness and education campaigns in rural communities. Participants referred to the experience of campaigns associated with the introduction of the Somali alphabet in the 1970s as an example of how education and awareness can reach large sections of the population.
- Participants also called for broader reform of the education system and for creating space for students and young people to become free, competent, creative, and courageous. Education, in this view, should develop not only academic knowledge but also confidence, initiative, and critical thinking.
- The panel emphasized the importance of teacher motivation. The observation that demoralized teachers can produce a demoralized generation of students highlighted the need to consider teacher welfare, professional support, and motivation as part of education reform.
- The role of government was also discussed. Participants emphasized that government has a responsibility to provide education as a public service and to regulate education service providers, including private schools and private universities.
- Overall, the panel presented education as one of the most important long-term tools available to Somalia for building capable citizens, strengthening social cohesion, improving development outcomes, and contributing to peace.

BOOK SESSION

3



DAY ONE
8TH DEC 2025



Participating Authorst

- **Farxiyo Cabdidaahir Axmed** — Author of Iftiinka iyo Himilada
- **Ugaaso Sugulle** — Author of Saboolnimada Ardayga
- **Xaliima Cali Shire** — Author of Marwo Bila

This session was moderated by **Deko Ahmed Ismail**

The third book session continued the presentation of Somali literary works and provided another opportunity for authors to engage with readers and participants.



PANEL 4 DISCUSSION



DAY ONE
8TH DEC 2025



Title

**The Role of Youth and Women in
Peacebuilding and State Building**

Panel Members:

- **Kaltuun Aadan Siciid**, Somali Peace Line
- **Xaawa Omar Abdirahmaan**, Youth Leader and Co-founder of Bay Region Reading Club
- **Najmo Qaranbila**, Author and Youth Leader
- **Abdikhaliq Bashi**, Author
- **Abdulkadir Shire**, Youth Development Expert and Researcher

This session was moderated by **Shaafici Cirro**

The fourth panel focused on the role of youth and women in peacebuilding and state building. Participants emphasized that young people and women should be recognized not only as groups affected by insecurity but also as important actors capable of contributing to solutions.

- Justice and social cohesion were identified as important foundations for peace and stability. Participants emphasized that peacebuilding cannot be sustained where communities lack confidence in justice or where social divisions remain unresolved.
- The indispensable role of women in peacebuilding was highlighted. Participants argued that women should have meaningful opportunities to lead and participate in public decision-making and other processes affecting peace and development.
- The experience of youth in the Galkayo peace process was cited as an example of youth leadership in peacebuilding. The experience demonstrated how young people can initiate practical efforts to bridge divisions and promote coexistence.
- Participants also highlighted the role of youth in emergency relief programmes. This was presented as evidence of the capacity of young people to mobilize and respond to community needs.
- Youth skills development and access to opportunities were discussed as important tools for reducing insecurity. Participants connected skills and opportunity with the ability of young people to pursue productive livelihoods and avoid vulnerability to negative influences.
- The mobilization and recruitment of young people into the police was identified as a commendable initiative in Puntland. Participants viewed youth participation in security institutions as one possible way of connecting young people with public service and community security.
- The panel also discussed peace messaging and the use of social media. Participants emphasized the importance of using communication platforms to create awareness, promote peace, and tackle misinformation.
- Youth umbrella organizations and organizations in different regions were encouraged to develop joint programmes and organize regular forums that bring young people together. Such interaction can help break barriers and reduce myths, prejudices, and misconceptions between communities.
- Participants emphasized the importance of encouraging youth agency and confidence and celebrating youth achievements. Recognizing positive contributions can help strengthen young people's sense of responsibility and their willingness to participate in public life.
- Women's participation in public decision-making was identified as another priority. Participants called for greater opportunities for women to lead and contribute to governance and peacebuilding.
- Finally, participants discussed the role of youth in addressing challenges such as tribalism, terrorism, irregular migration, and other problems that negatively affect young people. The overall message was that youth should be empowered to become part of the solution to the challenges affecting their communities.

LUNCHEON HOSTED BY EMAAD PROPERTIES

EMAAD Properties hosted a luncheon for guests and organizers of the Book Fair. The luncheon provided an informal setting for participants to interact and reflect on the programme.

Mr. Abdisalan Isse, Manager of EMAAD Properties, thanked participants for accepting the invitation. He explained that the company's real estate development would feature a library and community learning centre intended to encourage reading and writing.

Sh. Mohammed Idiris, who was among the guests of the Book Fair, thanked **EMAAD Properties** for hosting the luncheon and congratulated the company on the development project. He noted the potential impact of the project on Garowe and Puntland more broadly.

Sh. Mohammed encouraged the private sector to continue making investments in the future of the country and emphasized the importance of focusing on productive sectors.





The **closing ceremony** brought together reflections from representatives of book fairs, women's organizations, government, academia, and other participants. The remarks reinforced several of the themes that had emerged throughout the programme, particularly the **importance of education**, justice, youth participation, peace, public dialogue, and the role of authors and intellectuals.



**GUEST
SPEECH**

Mohamed Farah Warsame

Chairman, Bari Book Fair

Mr. Mohamed Farah Warsame thanked the organizers for putting together the programme and highlighted the importance of the theme for young people.

He emphasized that young people constitute a **large share of the population** and are among those most affected by insecurity and weak state institutions. In his remarks, the challenges facing youth were therefore connected to the quality and effectiveness of public institutions.

He stressed the importance of justice, the rule of law, and service delivery as ways of addressing the factors that expose young people to harm. **His remarks reinforced** the broader message that peacebuilding requires functioning institutions capable of protecting citizens and responding to their needs.



GUEST SPEECH

Ifrah Abdinur Farah

Chairperson, Midnimo Women Network

Ms. Ifrah Abdinur Farah highlighted the importance of the Book Fair in nurturing a culture of reading, writing, and respectful dialogue. She emphasized the **value of creating spaces** where people can exchange ideas constructively.

She congratulated the young female authors who formed a significant part of the Book Fair programme and recognized their participation as an important contribution to the **intellectual life of the event**.

Ms. Ifrah emphasized the importance of peace for achieving development and the indispensable role of justice in achieving progress. She also encouraged **original research** into the issues discussed during the Book Fair, particularly those that are critical to Somalia at this stage.



**GUEST
SPEECH**

Dr. Abdiqani Ahmed Farah

Scholar and Researcher

Dr. Abdiqani Ahmed Farah made remarks on the importance of education as a tool for development and for lifting people out of poverty.

He referred to the experiences of **countries that have** undergone significant transformation through education and encouraged participants to consider what lessons could be drawn from such experiences.

He encouraged the younger **generation to read**, write, pursue their curiosity, and develop a culture of knowledge-seeking and critical thinking. His message reinforced the role of young people as participants in the intellectual and developmental future of Somalia.



Mr. Mahad Colaad

Director, Department of Administration and Finance

Mr. Mahad Colaad thanked the participants and emphasized the value of convening people from different places. He described **such gatherings as important** because they create space for reflection, exchange, and learning. He described the Book Fair as a transformative programme and viewed it as a positive step in challenging the perception that Somalis are primarily an oral society. The continued development of books, writing, and intellectual forums, in his view, can contribute to a stronger culture of documentation and knowledge.

He stated that the **Ministry was proud to support** the 2025 Book Fair and noted that the collaboration between the Ministry and the organizers had produced positive results. He reiterated the importance of continuing similar programmes in the future.



Hon. Abdifitah Mohamed Abdinur

State Minister for the Presidency of Puntland

Hon. Abdifitah Mohamed Abdinur warmly welcomed guests who attended the Book Fair from different parts of Somalia. He **encouraged** the Book Fair to continue focusing on themes that touch directly on the livelihoods and material conditions of young people.

He encouraged young people to be creative and to make effective use of the resources increasingly available to them, including the internet and artificial intelligence. He also emphasized the value of the older generation as a source of guidance, **support, experience,** and mentorship.

The Minister highlighted the Book Fair's role as a space where young people from different parts of the **country can meet**. He described this as an opportunity to improve mutual understanding, build relationships, strengthen cohesion, and reduce social barriers.



Hon. Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud

Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Puntland

Hon. Abdirahman Mohamed Mohamud highlighted the message sent by the Book Fair regarding Puntland's contribution to Somali peoplehood. He emphasized that authors and intellectuals are in a **strong position** to communicate messages of hope, change, development, and unity.

He encouraged authors to address issues that affect the lives and livelihoods of communities. These issues include environmental concerns as well as broader public questions such as how to build effective state institutions.

The **Minister's remarks** therefore encouraged authors to connect literature and intellectual work with practical challenges facing society and to use their platforms to contribute to public awareness and constructive national dialogue.



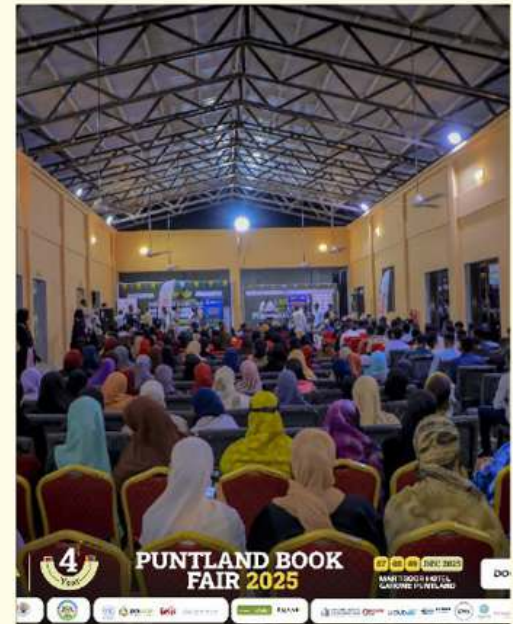
Musical Performance by Mohamed Husein Lafoole

The renowned Somali singer Mohamed Husein Lafoole, who was among the key guests of the Book Fair, gave a musical performance featuring some of his popular songs, including Nabadeey.

The performance provided a cultural conclusion to the formal programme and connected the event's focus on peace with Somali musical and artistic expression.

Lafoole sang his masterpiece song Nabadeey (oh peace) which among its verses are:

Nabadeey macaaneey,
 Neecaw udgooney
 Naqa iyo barwaaqada
 Nimco lagu qaboobaay
 Inta naas irmaanoo
 Laga jaqo nafaqadaay
 Naxariista Eebbaay
 Niyadana u rooneey
 Naftaydaa ku jeceloo
 Rajo aan nusqaamayn
 Kugu naawilaysee
 Nabadeey macaaneey
 Neecaw ugdooneey



DAY THREE
9TH DEC 2025

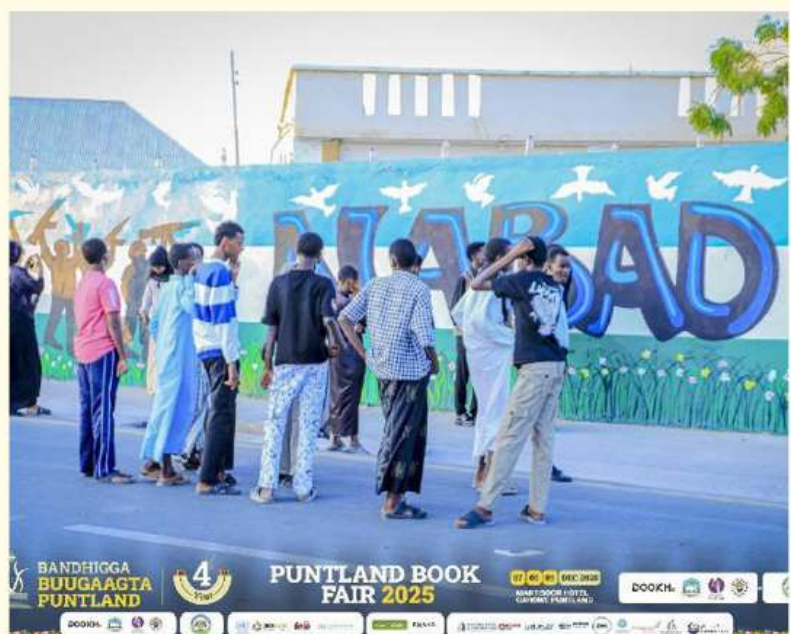
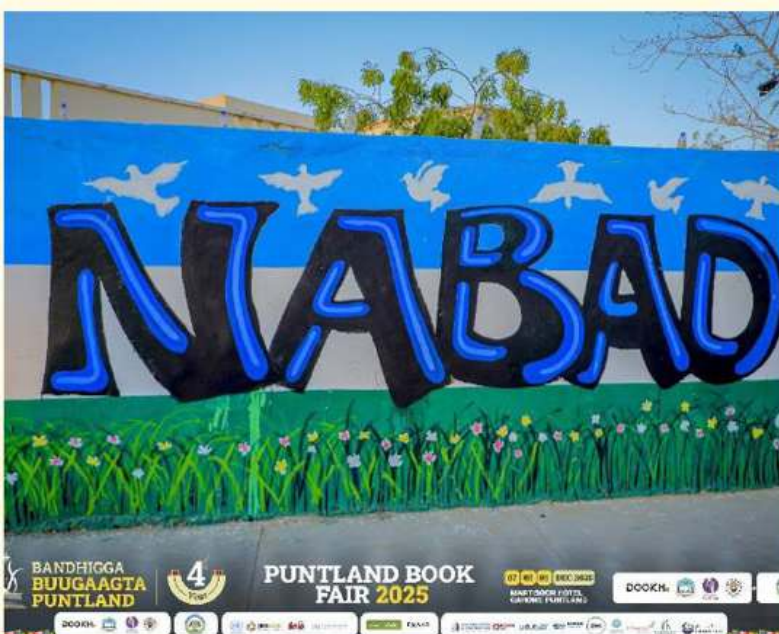
ARTS ACTIVITIES



The Book Fair also featured a public arts activity in **Garowe Square**, where **local artist 4C** used graffiti and painting to promote messages of peace and social harmony. The activity transformed the public space into an open platform for artistic expression, engaging passers-by and creating an accessible connection between art, community, and **peacebuilding**.

Through colourful murals and live painting, the artists explored themes of peace, unity, coexistence, and hope. **The activity complemented the Book Fair's broader** emphasis on dialogue and social cohesion, demonstrating how creative expression can contribute to public awareness and encourage positive conversations within the community.





DAY THREE

9TH DEC 2025



RECOGNITION OF ORGANIZERS SPONSORS, AND VOLUNTEERS

At the conclusion of the programme, certificates of recognition were presented to organizers, sponsors, and volunteers who contributed to the successful organization of the **2025 Puntland Book Fair**.

The recognition acknowledged the **collective effort behind** the event and the contribution of the people who supported organization, coordination, guest reception, facilitation, and other aspects of the programme.





OVERALL REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2025 BOOK FAIR

The 2025 Puntland Book Fair demonstrated the ability of a literary and cultural event to provide a platform for wider public dialogue. While the promotion of books and authors remained central to the programme, the event created space for substantive discussion of security, peacebuilding, education, local governance, youth, women, and state building.

One of the strongest themes across the programme was the relationship between security and governance. Discussions on counterterrorism repeatedly moved beyond military operations to questions of political will, public confidence, community ownership, stabilization, infrastructure, education, and employment. This reflected a broader understanding that security gains need to be consolidated through institutions and community engagement.

A second major theme was the importance of local and community-level peacebuilding. The presentation on the Galkayo peace process and the panel on local governments highlighted the value of bottom-up approaches, local leadership, community participation, and institutions that are close to citizens.

Education emerged as another cross-cutting theme. Speakers connected education with human development, peace, social resilience, research, critical thinking, and the development of

competent citizens. The discussions also emphasized the importance of teachers, education managers, curricula, rural awareness, and appropriate government regulation.

The role of youth and women was also prominent. The programme presented youth not simply as a population affected by insecurity but as actors capable of organizing peace initiatives, participating in public service, contributing to emergency response, and engaging in public dialogue. Women's participation in peacebuilding and public decision-making was similarly emphasized.

The Book Fair also demonstrated the value of literature and intellectual platforms in public life. Several speakers encouraged reading, writing, translation, research, and knowledge production. The participation of authors, poets, researchers, government officials, and community actors created a setting in which literary and public-policy discussions could intersect.

Taken together, the sessions presented peace, security, education, governance, and development as interconnected rather than separate agendas. The discussions suggested that sustainable state building requires progress across these areas and that public dialogue can help create greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved.

Vote of Thanks

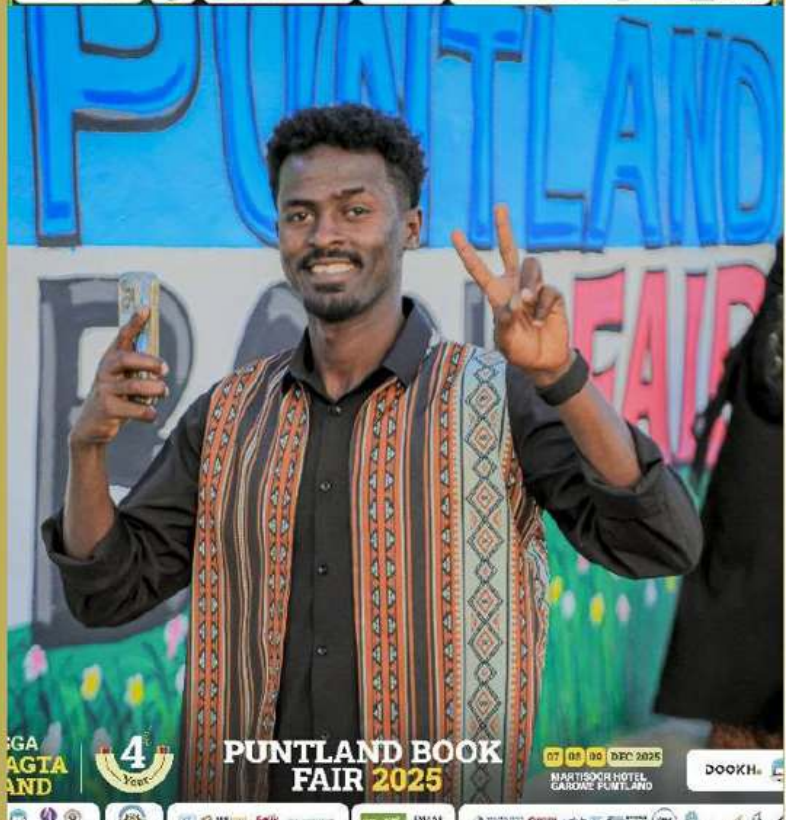
As the organizers of the Puntland Book Fair, we express our sincere gratitude to all partners and sponsors whose support contributed to the successful delivery of the 2025 Puntland Book Fair.

We also express our appreciation to the participants who travelled from different parts of Somalia and beyond to attend the event, present books, participate in discussions, share ideas, and contribute to the overall success of the programme.

Special appreciation goes to the youth who volunteered their time and energy throughout the event. Their contribution included helping with organization, welcoming and receiving guests, supporting the sessions, and facilitating the smooth running of the forum.

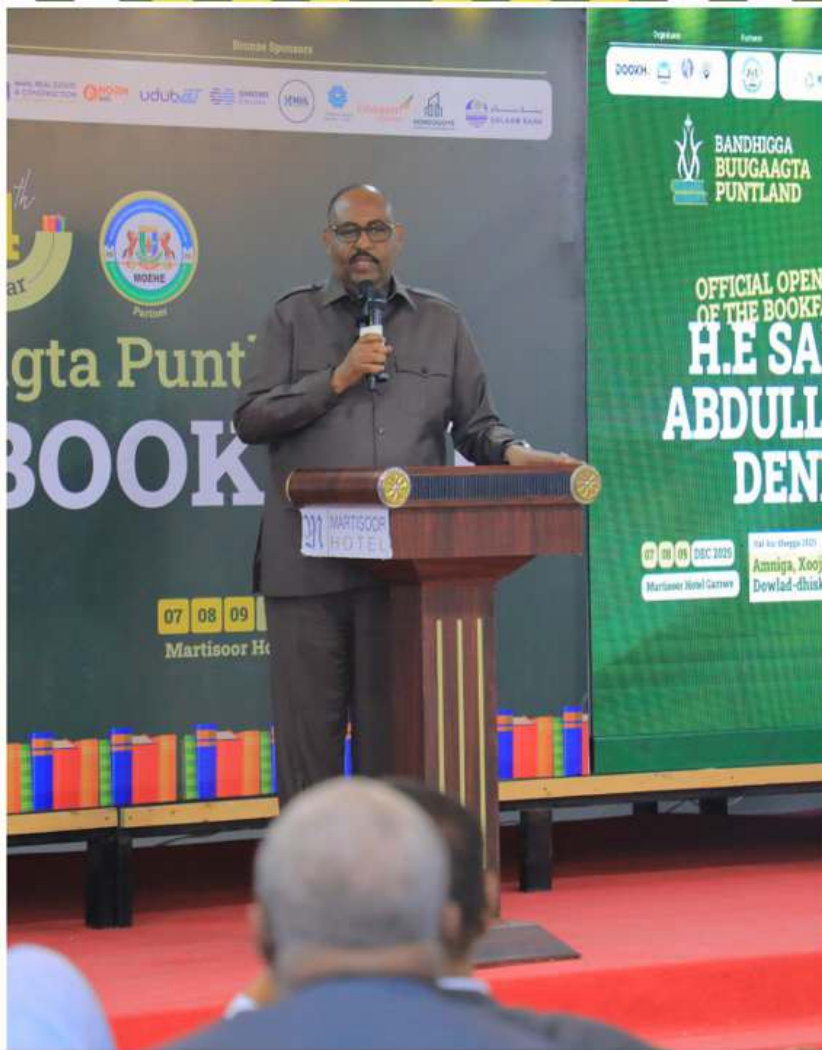
The organizers also recognize the speakers, panelists, authors, moderators, cultural performers, government institutions, civil society organizations, private sector partners, media practitioners, and other stakeholders whose participation strengthened the programme.











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