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## PRESS RELEASE AND STATEMENT

### **Somaliland's Union and Disunion & the Lessons of the Scotland Referendum**

#### ***Time for the International Community to re-consider its stance on Somaliland's 1991 self-determination***

As members of the large British and European communities of Somaliland origin, we have witnessed with appreciation, tinged with envy, how the United Kingdom recently dealt with the demand for self-determination by the people of Scotland and the clear agreement to continue to work together constructively in the best interests of the people of Scotland and of the rest of the United Kingdom, regardless of the outcome of the referendum in Scotland. It is not only the way the referendum was agreed upon, but also the underlying principles of self-determination in a union of states that have some parallels with and stark contrasts to Somaliland's union and disunion with Somalia.

It appears to us that –

'If a 300 year old peaceful and prosperous union of two states has been considered for a possible dissolution through self-determination of the people of one of the states, then the dissolution of a 30 year union of the two states of Somaliland and Somalia in May 1991 after a 'genocidal' war waged by the government of the union against the majority of the Somaliland people, and at a time when there were no avenues for the exercise of democracy, let alone internal self-determination, should surely be acceptable to any Somalian government claiming to be the successor to the pre 1991 government'.

In the [attached Statement](#), we set out the details of the union and disunion of Somaliland and Somalia and how the international community has missed opportunities in the last 23 years to see beyond the ethnicity that Somalis (like Britons) share and appreciate the differing national origins of the peoples of the two Somali inhabited states that united in 1960 to form a new state. Like Scotland and England, the two countries had their own Act(s) of Union and have throughout the unhappy union retained their differing national origins. In sharp contrast, however:

- Other than conflicts many centuries ago, no Air Force planes have ever flown from Scottish bases to bomb the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and neither has the ceremonial artillery in the vantage points of Edinburgh been used to destroy the city streets below - that has happened in Somaliland during the 1980s which directly led to dissolution of the union by Somaliland in May 1991.
- Since then, Somaliland and Somalia had no common governmental and constitutional structures, currency, defence, security, law and order, public financial

links, economy, citizenship etc. – all essential links in the case of the long union of Scotland and England.

It is time, in this third decade of the end of the defunct union, to lay it to rest peacefully and avoid a repetition of another costly war between the Republic of Somaliland and a resurgent Somalian government, whose priorities should be establishing and sustaining the much needed peace and prosperity in its country.

- We, therefore, urge the **Government of Somalia** and the people of Somalia to accept that the Somaliland people who willingly entered into an unconditional union with them in 1960 have also, in the same way, decided to end that union in May 1991, and have since consistently confirmed their stance about the union and their commitment to see two fraternal states working together in meeting the enormous challenges facing both of them and the other countries in the Horn.
- **The international community** has kept Somaliland in limbo in its attempts to build a government for Somalia. As these efforts are planned to finally bear fruit in 2016, we urge that the current flagging talks between Somaliland and Somalia be turned into an international roundtable process for laying the defunct union to rest. Somalia can then concentrate on completing its constitutional dispensation and democratisation and an internationally recognised Somaliland can then assist it, in any way possible, in the same way that the Republic of Djibouti, Ethiopia and other countries in the region are already assisting Somalia.
- **The United Kingdom** has shown how concerns about a 300 year old union (let alone a 30 year old one) can be dealt with peacefully and we earnestly hope that it can also pass its wisdom and experience of self-determination to Somalia in respect of the Somaliland people's decisions about the end of their union. As European citizens and residents, we also call on other **European countries** to follow suit collectively or individually as they have already dealt with similar union/disunion issues in Europe during the last 23 years.
- We remind the **African countries and the AU** the conclusions of the AU's own mission to Somaliland in 2005 which highlighted the unique circumstances of Somaliland and the fact that the OAU had no problems, in the past, in accepting states that retrieved their sovereignty following unsuccessful unions. It is time, therefore, for the African countries (individually) and the AU to look again at Somaliland's unique dissolution of a failed union and to show the African leadership on the Somaliland/Somalia issue that was called for by the International Crisis Group in 2006.

**The Somaliland Societies of Europe (SSE):** *Somaliland Societies in Europe (SSE) is an umbrella network of organisations representing about 45 Somaliland community organisations from 11 European countries. SSE has been a voice for Somaliland organisations in Europe since 2001.*

**This PR and Statement is also endorsed by the following Somaliland Diaspora Organisations:** SSUK; ASLF(France), Ilays (The Netherlands); Somaliland National Association in Sweden; NOMAD (The Netherlands); Somaliland Seura; West London Somaliland Community; East London Somaliland Community, SIRAG; Somalilandlaw.com; Somaliland Overseas and Somaliland Solidarity Group. Somaliland Community Belgium, Somaliland Asso( Italy), Norway, Community Somaliland in Germany.