

WALKING IN CIRCLES: POST ELECTION POLITICAL IMPASSE IN SOMALILAND CONTINUES



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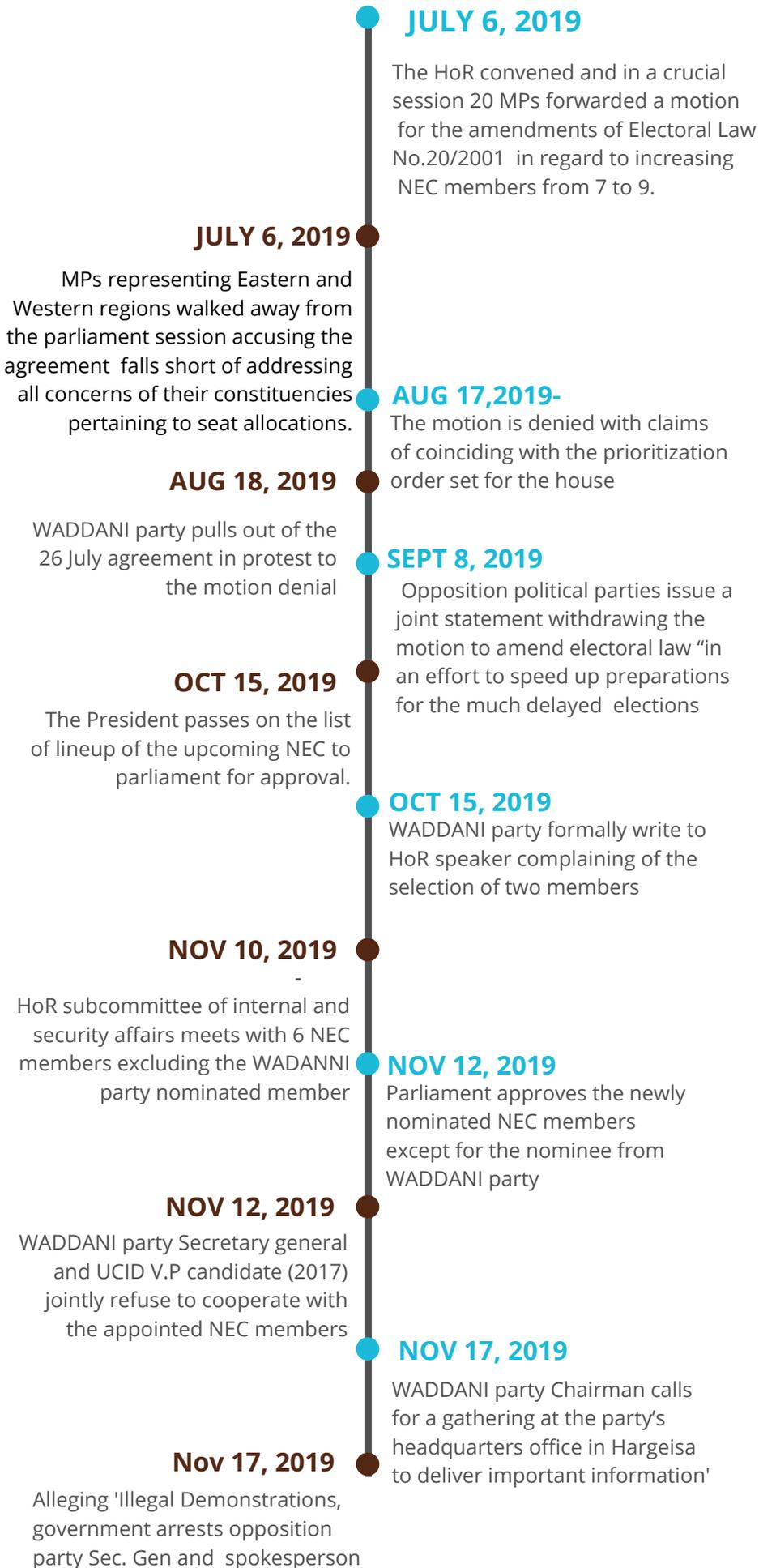
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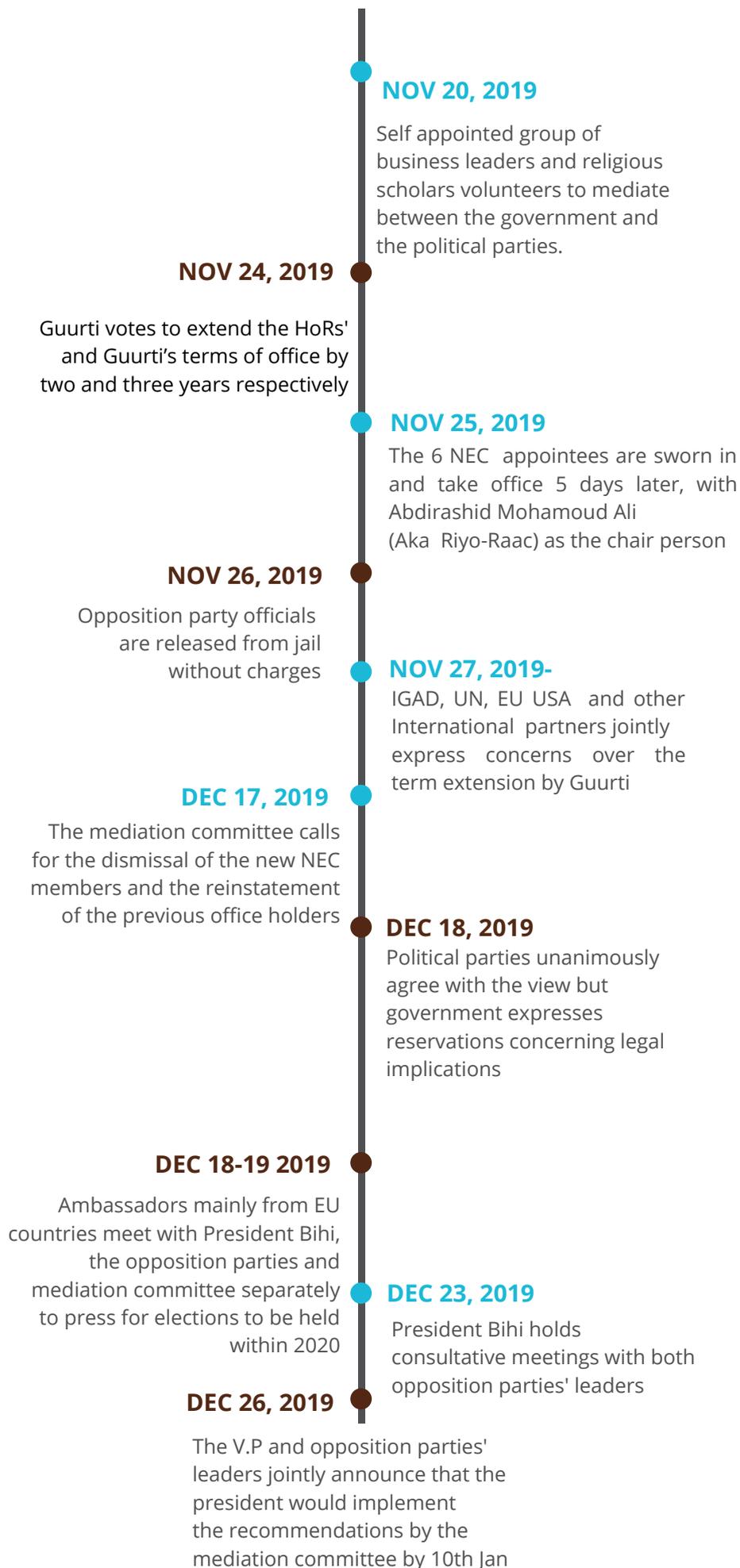


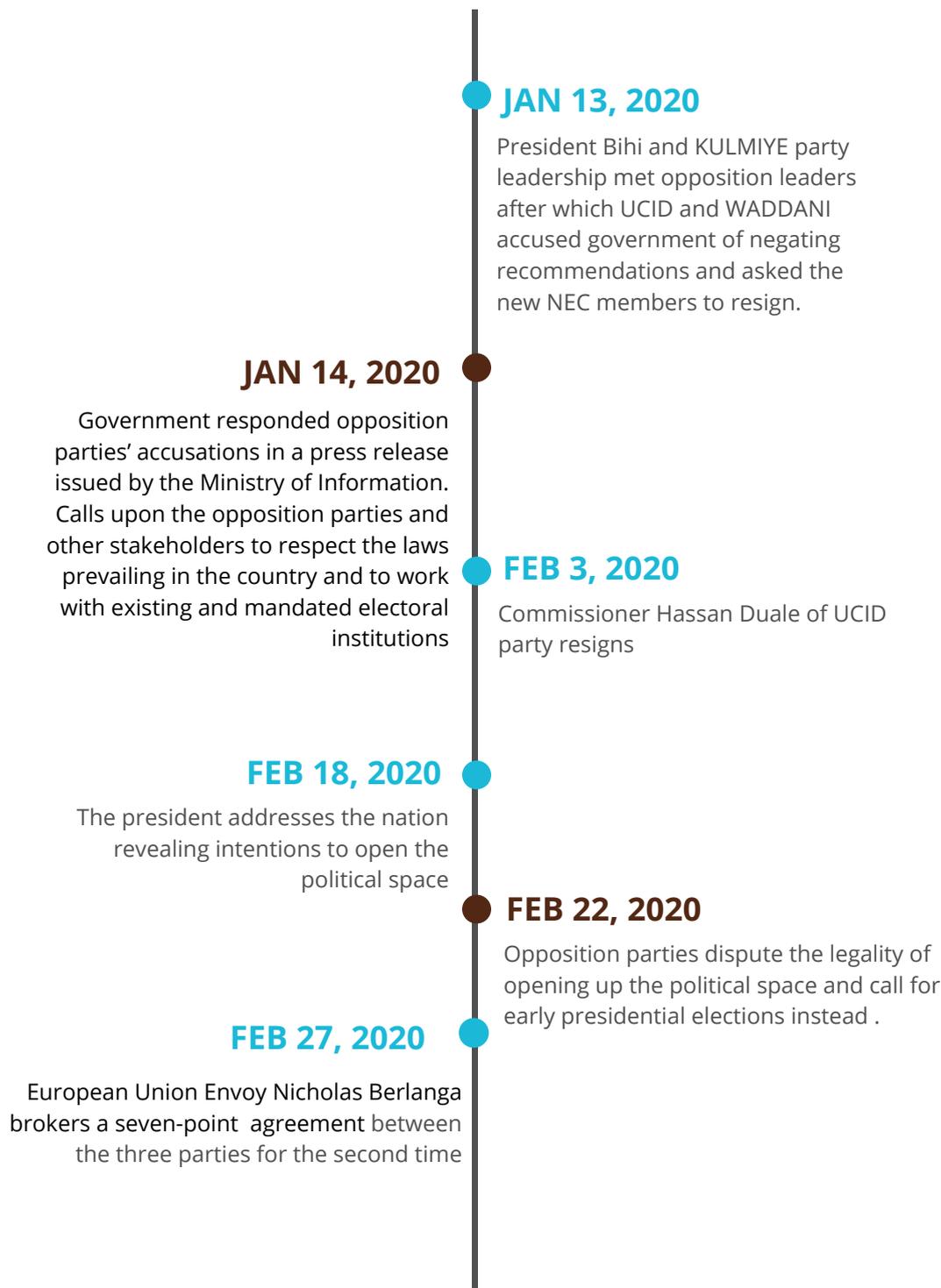
Following the November 2017 elections, political parties in Somaliland continue to be engaged in a protracted political headlock, which locals have dubbed “walking in circles.” After numerous and unsuccessful efforts at local negotiations and mediation, the European Union Ambassador to Somalia, Mr. Nicolas Berlanga, brokered a political settlement between the three political parties on the 27th of February 2020 in Hargeisa for the second time in less than a year. As a result, a seven-point agreement was signed by the leaders of the three political parties.

This marks the third time that external intervention was required to resolve an internal political crisis. Two of these occasions were during President Bihi’s term, and were only months apart. ISIR Analytics presents the following Infographic which captures the chronology of events to remind our audience how political events unfolded since the last agreement was signed in July 2019.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS







Major highlights of the deal:

- The agreement reached sets sights on municipal and parliamentary elections to be held within 2020
- The newly signed agreement calls a hybrid body of national electoral commission that combine seven former commissioners and the current seven commissioners
- Whilst the current commission will remain as a mandatory body, the former commissioners will take a technical role to manage day to day election operations along with three assistant internationals representing donor countries.

Conclusion

Considering the above timeline of events in Somaliland it is apparent that for 24 months, political parties focused on one topic –National Electoral Commission. It may be time to question the leaders' capacity to resolve more complex disputes in future.

It is worth noting that major stumbling blocks to holding parliamentary elections go beyond NEC. Seat allocation and Quota for minority groups is yet to be agreed on.

Clan elders and community leaders from Awdal and Sool regions have repeatedly pronounced their intention to boycott any forthcoming election if their concerns are not addressed.

It is also certain that the Guurti were not signatory to the agreement reached so they may stand firm and insist that the term extensions still holds.

Coming from that backdrop, political changes in the way of possible elections in the near future seem improbable.

The question is “have Somaliland political parties resolved the political stagnation and reached an amicable solution, or they are just entering a new cycle of political juggling?”