

Somalia, tops in corruption, pushes Prime Minister overboard

Written by

Wednesday, 04 December 2013 13:57

Dec. 3 (GIN) – Despite hundreds of millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars spent on nation building, U.S. efforts in Somalia appear to be sliding back to square one.

As the Somali government passed its one-year anniversary in September, wrangling among the leaders lead to the ouster this week of the Prime Minister. His critics accused his administration of favoritism and clan politics.

Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon lost a vote of confidence in parliament, in what is seen as a blow to efforts to stabilize the country. He fell out with President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud last month after he tried to sack some of the president's allies from the cabinet.

A Somali national who lives in the U.S. and teaches at Bard College in N.Y. wrote a sobering article for the New York Times two months ago titled "Somali's Leader: Look Past the Hype."

He was referring to Somalia's president Hassan Sheik Mohamud, who he called "a darling of the West."

During a recent visit to the East African country, friends of Bard Professor Nurrudin Farah shared their doubts that President Mohamud could stand up to the elders who fanned the flames of the two-decade-plus civil war and still dominate the country.

Among the cited failures was the failure to punish the convicted killer of two Doctors without Borders staffers in 2011. The murderer, another Doctors without Borders worker, was sentenced to 30 years but was freed after 3 months. He returned to his hometown and lives openly, apparently without fear of arrest.

Nurrudin wrote: "You would expect the president of a dysfunctional state like Somalia to move with greater alacrity to bolster confidence in the rule of law. Mr. Mohamud has not done so. It's not his only deficiency. He has lost credibility among the countries contributing to the 17,700-member African Union mission that is propping up his regime."

"Those in the West — like Time magazine, which in April named the president one of the world's 100 most influential people — would be wise to re-evaluate their rosy assessments until Mr. Mohamud commits himself to the principles on the basis of which he was elected."

Meanwhile, the Berlin-based corruption watchdog Transparency International this week called Somalia the most corrupt country in the world.



Nurrudin Farah, a professor of literature at Bard College, is the author, most recently, of a trilogy of novels: "Links," "Knots" and "Crossbones."