



PUNSAA

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Puntland Non-State Actors (**PUNSAA**) Secretariat would like to extend its sincere appreciation to all stakeholders, individuals, institutions, and staff whose unwavering support and dedication have enabled us to achieve significant strides in realizing our mission and vision.

We are particularly grateful to the **Government of Puntland** and its various ministries for their growing recognition of the critical role non-state actors (NSAs) play in building a legitimate and inclusive state apparatus. Your collaboration and trust have been instrumental in advancing our shared goals.

Our heartfelt thanks go to the **Somali Stability Fund (SSF III)** for their continued financial support and the strong, cordial working relationship we have fostered over the years. Your commitment has been vital to the success of our initiatives.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to the **various NSAs** who have joined the PUNSAA platform and continue to collaborate with us in uniting voices and efforts toward common objectives. Your dedication to the vision of a stronger, more cohesive civil society is truly commendable.

Finally, we are profoundly grateful to all beneficiaries, donors, and stakeholders whose voluntary contributions and support make our work possible. Your belief in our mission inspires us to continue striving for positive change and sustainable development in Puntland and beyond.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are building a brighter future.

VISION

PUNSAA envisions effective development, cooperation, trade, and policy dialogue (locally and internationally)

MISSION

PUNSAA aims to engage NSAs by improving their capacity to enable them to have space in policy dialogue activities aimed at formulating appropriate and sustainable development programs.

PUNSAA'S STRATEGIES FOR INFLUENCE**EFFECTIVE COORDINATION**

to promote collaboration and coordination among its NSA members to present unified policy recommendations.

BEST PRACTICES AND INNOVATION

PUNSAA identifies and promotes effective strategies and encourages innovative networking approaches for greater impact.

BEST PRACTICES AND INNOVATION

to empower and enhance the capacity and knowledge of its NSA members through training, resources, and knowledge-sharing to enhance members' effectiveness in advocating for policy changes.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

ABDIRAHMAN ABDIRISAK

Chairman Of PUNSAA



The Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA) has achieved remarkable milestones between 2023 and 2024, thanks to the unwavering support of our members, partners, and stakeholders. We are proud to reflect on our contributions to Puntland's democratic progress and the significant strides we have made as an institution.

One of our most notable achievements has been our pivotal role in supporting Puntland's historic transition from a traditional elder-led selection process to a **one person, one vote electoral system**. This shift marks a transformative step toward inclusive and participatory governance. In 2023, PUNSAA actively participated in and observed local government elections in **34 districts**, and in 2024, we continued this critical work by supporting elections in **3 additional districts**. We were at the forefront of ensuring transparency, fairness, and credibility. Our involvement extended beyond observation; we actively engaged in policy discussions, political cooperation, and dialogues that shaped the democratization agenda.

This progress would not have been possible without the collective efforts of our **120 constituent members**, which include civil society organizations, private sector representatives, women's groups, grassroots organizations, traditional and religious bodies, professional associations, and media outlets. Your trust and collaboration have strengthened our platform and amplified our impact.

We are also deeply grateful to our **board members and staff**, whose dedication, expertise, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in carrying out PUNSAA's mandate and achieving these milestones. Your commitment to our mission has been the driving force behind our success. Special thanks go to the **Government of Puntland** for its continued partnership and recognition of the vital role non-state actors play in building a legitimate and inclusive state. We also extend our gratitude to the **Somali Stability Fund (SSF)** for their unwavering financial and technical support, as well as to international actors and the media for their collaboration and advocacy.

As we look ahead to an even more exciting and impactful year, we are inspired by your continued support and enthusiasm for PUNSAA's mission. Together, we are not only advancing democracy and good governance in Puntland but also laying the foundation for a more inclusive and prosperous future. Thank you for being part of this journey.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DAHIR FARAH

Executive Director Of
PUNSAA



Dear Esteemed Partners,

As we close another year, it's a significant moment to reflect on our shared successes and challenges. At Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA), our dedication to nurturing democracy and promoting good governance remains steadfast. Our work in various domains is crucial for ensuring a peaceful and progressive Puntland. PUNSAA actively engages in fostering democratic principles through comprehensive civic education initiatives, empowering citizens and enhancing governmental transparency. By advocating for sound governance practices, we ensure accountability and integrity in public institutions.

In supporting district council elections in the past two years, PUNSAA played a significant role in ensuring that these processes are inclusive and representative. Our initiatives focus on enhancing voter awareness and participation, ensuring that electoral outcomes genuinely reflect community aspirations.

Peace and stability are at the heart of PUNSAA's mission. We worked collaboratively to mediate disputes and foster dialogue, employing strategic interventions that prioritized reconciliation and long-term peace-building efforts across contentious zones.

In 2024, PUNSAA advocated for a vibrant civil society by providing platforms where diverse groups can express their views and influence policy. We strive to ensure that civil society voices are not only heard but are actively integrated into the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Moving forward, our aim is to enhance these endeavors, ensuring sustained progress and the flourishing of democratic values across Puntland. We extend heartfelt gratitude to our collaborators and community members who support and trust in our mission. Together, let us forge a stronger, more democratic future.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DEO	Domestic Election Observers
DTWG	Democratization Thematic Working Group
EC	European Commission
EDF	European Development Fund
MAP	Media Association of Puntland
MOIFAD	Ministry of Interior, Federal Affairs and Democratization
NSA	Non-State Actor
PUNSA	Puntland Non-State Actors Association
SSF	Somalia Stability Fund
PEC	Puntland Electoral Commission
UNITAMS	United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
SONSAF	Somaliland Non-State Actors Forum
EU	European Union
PDRC	Puntland Development and Research Centre
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
ESR	Election Situation Room
WSR	Women Situation Room

BACKGROUND

The Puntland Non-State Actors Association (PUNSAA) is a dynamic network that brings together Non-State Actors (NSAs) across the Puntland State of Somalia. Established in 2008 as an initiative of NSAs with the support of the European Union (EU) and Saferworld in Garowe, PUNSAA has grown into a vital platform for fostering collaboration, advocacy, and participation in decision-making processes.

PUNSAA envisions a society where NSAs actively contribute to decision-making, policy formulation, and the advancement of peacebuilding, good governance, state-building, democratization, and overall development. Our mission is to empower NSAs to engage effectively with the government, international community, and other stakeholders to drive positive change in Puntland.

As the only platform in Puntland uniting a diverse range of NSAs, PUNSAA represents non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), business associations, and professional groups such as teachers, lawyers, and doctors. By bringing together these varied sectors, PUNSAA facilitates a coordinated approach to NSA participation in local, state, regional, and international cooperation.

Through dialogue, consensus-building, and networking with public institutions and policymakers, PUNSAA has become a key player in influencing development processes and promoting democratic governance. We provide a platform for citizens to debate ideas, organize around shared objectives, and amplify their voices in political participation. In doing so, PUNSAA complements the work of representative bodies like parliaments and supports the watchdog role of the media.

BACKGROUND

Over the years, PUNSAA has built a strong coalition of NSAs capable of influencing policies and actively participating in the promotion of democracy, good governance, and human rights in Puntland. Our primary focus areas include:

- **State-building and Democratization:** Supporting the transition to inclusive and participatory governance.
- **Peacebuilding:** Promoting stability and reconciliation in Puntland.
- **Human Rights and Good Governance:** Advocating for justice, transparency, and accountability in government institutions.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Holding government institutions accountable for their actions and ensuring they serve the public interest.

PUNSAA's work has positioned it as a trusted partner in Puntland's development journey, bridging the gap between citizens, the government, and the international community. By fostering collaboration and empowering NSAs, we continue to contribute to a more democratic, just, and prosperous Puntland.

KEY 2024 PROJECTS

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

With the generous support of the Somali Stability Fund (SSF III), PUNSAA implemented the Nabad iyo Nidaam Hufan project (2023-2024), a transformative initiative designed to address the challenges stemming from prolonged conflict, instability, and governance issues in Puntland. The project aimed to foster sustainable political settlements, reconciliation, democratization, and the renewal of the social contract, ultimately promoting peace, inclusivity, and good governance.

The project sought to achieve transformative change by encouraging consensus-building among the government, opposition groups, and civic actors. By facilitating dialogue and collaboration, it worked to prevent conflicts, ensure smooth electoral processes, and build a democratic society where all voices were heard, and tensions were resolved peacefully. A key focus was on promoting inclusivity in state-building and addressing the impact of elections on social structures. This included creating spaces for diverse perspectives and ensuring that the needs of all citizens—particularly marginalized groups such as women, minorities, and youth—were addressed.

Recognizing the critical role of civil society and media in championing democracy and holding the government accountable, the project also prioritized strengthening civil society organizations (CSOs) and media actors. Through targeted capacity-building initiatives, these entities were empowered to advocate for democratic reforms, enhance transparency, and contribute to a vibrant and resilient civil society.

KEY 2024 PROJECTS

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

a) Enhanced Inter-Party Dialogue, Stakeholder Engagement and Election Planning

In early 2024, PUNSAA implemented a series of initiatives to address political issues and promote governance reforms in Puntland, focusing on fostering political stability, inclusivity, and democratic processes. Key activities included:

- **Virtual Meetings:** Three virtual meetings in January 2024 addressed political stability, constitutional powers, and electoral reforms, featuring experts from civil society, government, and politics. Discussions emphasized reconciliation, judicial independence, and the need for inclusive consultations.
- **Town Hall Meeting on Local Elections:** Held in May 2024, this meeting reflected on the 2023 local elections, promoting decentralization, accountability, and good governance. Participants included government officials, political parties, academics, and civil society representatives, with discussions on public participation, electoral agreements, and addressing challenges like funding and legal inconsistencies.
- **Consultation Meeting on Democratic Process Completion:** The meeting focused on electoral reforms, judicial independence, civic education, media freedom, and anti-corruption measures, bringing together diverse stakeholders to advance Puntland's democratic transition.
- **Inclusive Diversity Events:** Throughout 2024, PUNSAA celebrated the achievements of marginalized groups in governance, providing platforms for women, youth, and minorities to share their experiences and advocate for inclusive policies.
- **Town Hall Meetings for Regional Collaboration:** These meetings fostered dialogue between regional authorities and communities, addressing local challenges, promoting accountability, and enhancing civic engagement.

Key Outcomes:

- Established regular engagements between municipal officials and residents to address community challenges.
- Enhanced understanding of community involvement in decision-making and MP roles.
- Improved transparency in service delivery, taxation, and budget allocation.
- Strengthened relationships between local governments and civil society organizations (CSOs).

KEY 2024 PROJECTS

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

b) Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Training

Between January and March 2024, PUNSAA successfully conducted Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Trainings, reaching 250 participants (149 males and 101 females) across regions including Bosaso, Carmo, Burtinle, Xarfo, and Galkayo.

The training provided targeted sessions for key stakeholders involved in the electoral process, equipping them with essential skills in conflict resolution, negotiation techniques, and effective communication. Participants engaged in practical exercises and simulations to address potential conflicts during electoral activities.

Key Outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of conflict resolution and negotiation techniques.
- Improved understanding of the root causes of conflict and best practices for reconciliation.
- Empowered stakeholders to address electoral process challenges effectively.
- Recommendations for the continuation of such training and the introduction of refresher courses.



KEY 2024 PROJECTS

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

c) Improved Government Accountability Mechanisms

PUNSAA conducted a thorough institutional capacity assessment for the Office of Human Rights Defender (OHRD), the Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Bureau (GGACB), and the Puntland Election Commission (PEC). The assessment, carried out in collaboration with Somali Research and Economic Development Consultancy Ltd., aimed to identify key priorities and develop strategic work plans to enhance institutional effectiveness.

Findings and Outcomes:

- Identification of significant gaps, including outdated strategic plans, weak internal communications, insufficient human resource policies, and inadequate financial management.
- Recommendations for developing new strategic plans, improving communication and performance management systems, enhancing financial sustainability plans, and investing in infrastructure improvements.

d) Digitization of Government Documents

PUNSAA, in partnership with the Puntland Parliament, successfully digitized and digitalized government laws to enhance public access to legal information.

Outcomes:

- Creation of a centralized online repository with user-friendly navigation and interactive features.
- Improved public access to current and accurate legal information through regular updates and high-quality scanned documents.

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KEY 2024 PROJECTS

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

e) Strengthened Civil Society and Media

PUNSAA conducted a comprehensive capacity assessment and training program for its member organizations to address organizational gaps and enhance their effectiveness.

Outcomes:

- Identification of strengths and weaknesses across 13 critical areas, including governance, planning, HR management, finance, and stakeholder engagement.
- A ten-day capacity-building training attended by 50 participants from 38 local organizations, resulting in significant skill enhancements and increased collaboration.
- Recommendations for targeted capacity-building initiatives to improve operational efficiency, resilience, and sustainability.



KEY 2024 PROJECTS

SUPPORT FOR LOCAL DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESSES IN PUNTLAND

The years 2022-2024 were, by all accounts, an eventful period marked by significant socio-political and economic developments in Puntland. This era was defined by the adoption of Puntland's first democratic elections (one person, one vote) since its inception in 1998, marking a historic shift from a clan-based system of governance to a democratic one. This transformative process has been fundamental in reshaping Puntland's political landscape.

PUNSAA has been at the forefront of these developments, driven by the recognition that civil society plays a critical role in fostering inclusive governance and ensuring that every citizen has access to power. With growing acknowledgment and support from the government, PUNSAA actively contributed to the democratization process through a range of impactful activities.

KEY 2024 PROJECTS

PROMOTING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

a) Election observation training

In a bid to enhance election transparency and promote free and fair elections, PUNSAA trained and deployed over 160 Domestic Election Observers (DEOs) across the remaining three districts—Garowe, Dangorayo, and Godobjiraan—to oversee the local council elections. These observers played a crucial role in ensuring a free, fair, and transparent electoral process while acting as an independent oversight body.

To strengthen this effort, PUNSAA engaged civil society networks to form a Civil Society Coordination Committee. Comprising eight prominent individuals from various sectors within PUNSAA, the committee worked to enhance relationships and build trust among election stakeholders. It also provided support to the Domestic Election Observers and facilitated the dissemination of their observation findings. The committee organized several meetings with key stakeholders, including the Puntland Election Commission (PEC), the Dispute Resolution Committee for Local Council Elections, and various political associations, to foster collaboration and ensure the credibility of the observers' reports.

Additionally, PUNSAA established an Elections Situation Room (ESR) as a central reporting hub. The ESR served as the primary point for receiving real-time updates from polling stations across the three districts (Garowe, Godobjiraan, and Dangorayo). It provided regular, reliable election-related information to media outlets, political parties, civil society organizations, international observers, donors, and other stakeholders. This initiative not only enhanced transparency but also strengthened confidence in the electoral process among all participants.



KEY 2024 PROJECTS

PROMOTING FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS

b) Puntland post-election multi-stakeholder workshop

To accelerate the democratization process and support Puntland's transition from a clan-based system to a democratic one, PUNSAA actively participated in a 4-day multi-stakeholder retreat held in Qardho. This conference focused on reflecting on the lessons learned from the recent local government elections, identifying challenges and opportunities, and charting a way forward for future electoral processes.

During the retreat, stakeholders engaged in in-depth discussions on the amendments needed to electoral laws to ensure free, fair, and credible elections, particularly for the upcoming presidential election. PUNSAA played a key role by presenting the findings of the Puntland Domestic Election Observers' Report, which detailed incidents observed on election day and provided actionable recommendations for the government, the Puntland Electoral Commission (PEC), civil society organizations, and donors.

The retreat brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including the Puntland Electoral Commission, political parties, the Puntland House of Representatives, the Ministry of Interior, and various civil society organizations. Organized and facilitated by BUILD-UP, the event served as a critical platform for dialogue, collaboration, and consensus-building, further advancing Puntland's democratic transition.

KEY 2024 PROJECTS

MOU FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN PUNSAA AND PUNTLAND PARLIAMENT

PUNSAA influenced and played a key role in decision-making and policy processes by engaging with various stakeholders. To build consensus and promote the legitimacy of PUNSAA, the Chairman, Secretariat, and Board of Directors (BoD) members visited the Puntland Parliament House and met with the Speaker of the Puntland Parliament. The purpose of the meeting was to establish a strong working relationship between the two entities and ensure meaningful engagement in policymaking, governance, and democratic processes.

During the discussions, both sides agreed to collaborate on plans, policies, and representation. The meeting was instrumental in building a partnership and fostering mutual understanding, culminating in the initiation and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU outlined the framework for cooperation between PUNSAA and the Puntland Parliament, detailing the best ways to work together effectively.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Parliament and PUNSAA focused on several key areas of collaboration, including:

- Information sharing to enhance transparency and informed decision-making.
- Public participation in parliamentary proceedings and local governance.
- Input on policy issues to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.
- Civic engagement to empower citizens and strengthen democratic processes.
- Capacity building to enhance the skills and effectiveness of both institutions.

This partnership strengthened transparency, accountability, and inclusivity by enabling civil society organizations (CSOs) to contribute their expertise, advocate for citizens' interests, and monitor parliamentary activities. The MoU also helped institutionalize dialogue mechanisms, fostering a more participatory and representative democracy in Puntland.



CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS

CAPACITY BUILDING AND EXPERIENCE-SHARING WORKSHOPS

b) PUNSAA Staff Capacity Development

The institutional capacity of PUNSAA has seen significant improvement, with realistic strategies now in place to enhance sustainability and ensure the platform's independence. In 2023, several key milestones were achieved, including the development of critical policies such as the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Policy Statement and the Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (PSEA) Policy. Additionally, PUNSAA launched a new website to improve communication and accessibility.

The Board of Directors maintained a strong governance structure, meeting quarterly to review progress, address challenges, and set strategic priorities. These efforts were further bolstered in 2024, when PUNSAA organized a series of training sessions to ensure all staff members were well-versed in the newly developed policies. Capacity-building initiatives were also extended to regional focal points, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively represent PUNSAA's mission in their respective regions.

Internally, PUNSAA continued to improve its policies and procedures to enhance operational efficiency and accountability. Furthermore, the platform continued its tradition of hosting Non-State Actors (NSAs) in General Assembly meetings every two years, fostering collaboration, dialogue, and collective decision-making among its diverse membership. These efforts have not only strengthened PUNSAA's institutional framework but also reinforced its commitment to transparency, sustainability, and the empowerment of civil society in Puntland.

CHALLENGES

PUNSAA faces several challenges that hinder its ability to fully achieve its mission and objectives. One of the most pressing issues is the extremely low levels of awareness among civil society organizations regarding governance issues and the management of public resources. This lack of awareness has significantly limited their effectiveness in holding the government accountable and ensuring efficient service delivery to citizens.

Another critical challenge is the threat of political interference, which is particularly prevalent in fragile democratic systems. In such contexts, governments often perceive Non-State Actors (NSAs) as "opposition forces" or adversaries rather than partners to be consulted and supported. PUNSAA recognizes this as a significant risk, not only for the NSAs it represents but also for its own operations, as political interference could undermine its independence and credibility.

Additionally, like many NSAs, PUNSAA continues to grapple with budgetary constraints, especially core funding. These challenges are characterized by a chronic shortage of funds and an insufficient resource mobilization strategy, which limits the organization's capacity to implement programs, expand its reach, and sustain its operations effectively.

THE WAY FORWARD 2025

PUNSAA intends to continue its efforts to support and influence key areas that strengthen democracy, governance, and civic engagement in Puntland. These include:

- 1. Promoting Openness and Participation:** PUNSAA will work to foster greater openness among Non-State Actors (NSAs) in governance structures, enabling their enhanced participation in policy formulation and promoting constructive dialogue with government institutions. This will ensure that diverse voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.
- 2. Strengthening Networking and Capacity Building:** PUNSAA aims to improve networking among NSAs by equipping them with essential skills in policy analysis, lobbying, advocacy, financial management, resource mobilization, governance, devolved funds, and community mobilization. These efforts will empower NSAs to engage more effectively with stakeholders and drive positive change.
- 3. Enhancing Monitoring and Accountability:** PUNSAA will focus on enhancing the institutional and technical capacity of NSAs to monitor state performance through tools such as social auditing, budget tracking, and engagement with duty bearers. Additionally, rights education through public forums will be prioritized to ensure citizens are informed and empowered to hold their leaders accountable.
- 4. Empowering Communities and Leaders:** PUNSAA will continue to empower and train NSAs, community leaders, and citizens on governance, basic rights, government reforms, critical policies, fund management, lobbying, and advocacy. District-level consultation meetings between communities and their leaders will be organized to foster dialogue and collaboration. A continuous education and community dialogue program will also be rolled out to increase knowledge on governance and promote active citizen participation.

Through these initiatives, PUNSAA remains committed to building a more inclusive, transparent, and accountable governance system in Puntland, ensuring that all citizens have a voice in shaping their future.

PARTNERS



