

Afar Forum Statement on the Somali Regional State Council's Unilateral Decision to Establish 14 New Districts

The Afar Forum expresses its grave concern and strong condemnation regarding the unilateral and provocative decision by the Somali Regional State Council to approve the establishment of 14 new districts.

This decision, ratified on July 26, 2025, during the Council's 6th Term, 4th Working Year, 9th Regular Session, represents a serious threat to inter-communal peace and stability in Ethiopia.

While Somali Regional State authorities claim the creation of the new districts—**Darimi, Biyada, Buladere, Gera-Nugule, Shakisa, Duben, Alen, Bayahaw, Burkayer, Shehda-Buhodle, Hagermoqor, Baad-Weyne God-Dere, and Obosha**—is intended to improve administrative efficiency, decentralization, and service delivery, the Afar Forum views this action as both deliberately inflammatory and illegal.

Our Core Concerns Are as Follows:

- **Violation of the Peace Agreement:** This decision directly violates the spirit and letter of the peace agreement signed between the Afar and Somali regional leaders in July 2024.
- That agreement marked a hard-won commitment to resolving long-standing and bloody territorial clashes between Afar and Somali-Issa pastoralist communities through peaceful dialogue.
- The illegal establishment of these districts blatantly undermines this fragile peace process.

The Afar Forum firmly believes that this move is calculated to escalate tensions and potentially reignite conflict—not only between the Afar and Somali communities, but also between the brotherly Somali and Oromo peoples. Establishing administrative structures in areas outside the Somali Regional State's legally defined boundaries is a clear provocation.

This reckless decision contradicts ongoing, albeit opaque, efforts to implement the July 2024 peace agreement. It shows a blatant disregard for the lives and livelihoods of pastoralist communities who yearn for sustainable peace and stability.

Such adventurism threatens not only the immediate border areas but also the broader peace and unity of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Our Call to Action:

The Afar Forum urgently calls on the Federal Government of Ethiopia to:

- Immediately intervene and nullify this provocative and illegal decision taken by the Somalia Regional State;
- Uphold the Constitution and enforce the terms of the July 2024 peace agreement;
- Prevent the Somali Regional State from taking such unilateral actions that threaten peace and coexistence.

We view the Somali Regional State Council's decision as illegal, dangerous, and a deliberate act of provocation. It represents a serious setback to the fragile peace process and a direct threat to the harmonious coexistence of Afar, Somali, and Oromo communities.

We urge all responsible stakeholders—regional leaders, federal authorities, civil society, and the international community—to act decisively and without delay. Reversing this decision is imperative to prevent further escalation.

The consequences of inaction could be devastating.



August 5, 2025.