



Postgraduate Program and Research

SOMALIA RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: BILATERAL RELATIONS (2000-2022)

This thesis is submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master Degree in in International Relations & Diplomacy.

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the Somalia-UAE bilateral relations from 2000 to 2022. It was guided by three specific objectives: i) to identify the nature of Somalia-UAE relations; ii) to determine the strategic location of Somalia in UAE foreign policy; iii) to ascertain the factors that strengthen Somalia-UAE relations and the prospects of their future development. Within the framework of the historical, descriptive, and qualitative approaches, primary and secondary sources were used in this context. The study utilized the theories of complex interdependence and social constructivism as an analytical framework for Somalia-UAE relations over the last two decades.

The findings of the study reveal both political and security motives for the UAE's military base expansions in Somalia. The findings of the study indicate that the Somali government needs to develop a pragmatic and assertive foreign policy strategy that carefully recognizes and examines the growing presence of Qatar, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates military base in Berbera and then takes appropriate policy measures that promote the country's national interests. The study's findings show that the number of trade indexes in the UAE appears to be increasing, while the number of trade indexes in Somalia appears to be declining. However, if Somalia achieves political stability and security reform, it may have the potential to attract international investors. The findings of the study point out that the strained diplomatic relations are now getting better since the new regime took office and the two countries signed multilateral relations focusing on security to train and equip the Somali military and to support fighting al-Shabaab and Daish. The recent approval of the Cabinet Ministries' military agreement between the two countries also indicated renewed relations in the security sectors.

The study makes a number of recommendations. First, the study recommends that the UAE leadership respect the sovereignty and territorial unity of Somalia and safeguard the brotherly relations between the two nations. Second, the research recommends the Somali government develop and clarify its foreign policy, priorities, and relations. In particular, its relations with the countries in the Arab League and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Third, the study recommends that the Somali government should improve relations with the UAE to promote trade, security, and economic cooperation. Fifth, the research suggests that the international community, including the UN, AU, EU, US, UK, IGAD, the Arab League, and the OIC, should call attention to the UAE's continued interventions in Somalia's internal affairs. Lastly, this study is not exhaustive; therefore, the researcher suggests that a supplementary and in-depth study should be conducted on this topic.