

Iranian, Russian firms
begin drilling
in Khuzestan's Kupal
oilfield

3 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 8017 • Wednesday, December 31, 2025 • Dey 10, 1404 • Rajab 10, 1447 • 100,000 rials • 8 pages



> irandaily.ir

| newspaper.irandaily.ir

| IranDailyWeb

Pezeshkian warns of 'regret-inducing' response to renewed aggression

2 >

Israel's Somaliland gamble risks alienating Western allies

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



Mansour Barati

Somaliland, a region in northern Somalia that declared independence in 1991, went unrecognized by any country for decades until December 2025, when Israel became the first state in the world to recognize it as an independent country, describing the move within the "spirit of the Abraham Accords." The decision triggered widespread opposition, including from Western countries and Israel's own allies. The recognition of this Horn of Africa entity, located along the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, has raised concerns about potential Israeli use of Somaliland's ports for military purposes or even the possible transfer of Palestinians from Gaza. In an interview with Iran Daily, Mansour Barati, an analyst of Israeli affairs, said that recognizing Somaliland represents a realist response by Israel to manage security threats, contain rivals, and safeguard vital economic arteries in a turbulent international system. However, the lack of alignment by the United States and the European Union could impose meaningful diplomatic costs on Israel.

IRAN DAILY: What strategic and geopolitical objectives is Israel pursuing by recognizing Somaliland? To what extent have geopolitical rivalries in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden shaped this decision?

BARATI: Reducing Israel's recognition of Somaliland to a purely diplomatic decision constitutes an analytical error. The core of this development should instead be traced to a shift in the status of the "Red Sea" within Israel's national security doctrine. This vital waterway, which is Israel's sole maritime access route to the East, has in recent years transformed from a relatively secure commercial passage into a focal point of power competition and security threats. Within this context, Somaliland has acquired strategic significance for Tel Aviv for several key reasons. First, stability in a turbulent environment: unlike Somalia's central government, which has grappled with structural instability for years, Somaliland has maintained a degree of political order and internal security. For intelligence and security cooperation, this level of "governance efficiency" outweighs international legitimacy. The region's geography, overlooking the Bab al-Mandeb strait, has turned it into an ideal location for maritime monitoring and surveillance. Second, threat balancing and strategic depth: escalating competition with Iran and the rise of asymmetric threats against shipping have compelled Israel to redefine a new layer of "strategic depth." A presence in the Horn of Africa allows Israel to extend its defensive and deterrence layers beyond its immediate borders. Third, drawing Somaliland into the Abraham Accords framework constitutes another driver behind Tel Aviv's willingness to recognize the region's separatist authorities. Moreover, the convergence of Israeli and Emirati interests following the Abraham Accords has laid the groundwork for this presence. Accordingly, Israel's tilt toward Somaliland is not a symbolic act of state-building, but a realist response aimed at managing security threats, containing rivals, and protecting vital economic lifelines in a strained international system.

What consequences could opposition from global powers, including the United States and the European Union, have for the future of this decision? Conversely, how might this move affect Israel's relations with Washington and Brussels if their opposition persists?

Opposition by the United States and the European Union carries decisive implications for both the future of this decision and Israel's relations with the West. The official position of Washington and Brussels, which is reiterated explicitly in documents issued by the US State Department and the European External Action Service, is anchored in the principle of "preserving Somalia's territorial integrity" and supporting the federal government based in Mogadishu. From their perspective, unilateral recognition of Somaliland would not contribute to stability in the Horn of Africa, but could instead set a dangerous precedent for separatism, weaken fragile states, and intensify geopolitical rivalries in the Red Sea region.

Within this framework, Western opposition effectively constrains the institutionalization of Somaliland's independence. Absent US and EU backing, Somaliland will remain deprived of broad international recognition, United Nations membership, access to global financial institutions, and durable legal legitimacy, a condition that, according to assessments by the International Crisis Group, leaves the entity economically and security-wise fragile.

At the bilateral level, Israel's recognition of Somaliland, should Western opposition persist, may be viewed as a move out of step with the strategic consensus of the United States and the European Union.

Government 'recognizes' public protests, demands

2 >



Government spokeswoman Fatemeh Mohajerani speaks to reporters during a weekly press briefing in Tehran, Iran on December 30, 2025.
● MIZAN



Saravi proud of 'milestone' AIPS Athlete of the Year nomination

6 >



Rainfall highlights dynamic nature of Lut Desert

7 >

Visualizing 2026: five foreign policy trends to watch

4-5 >



On the eve of Christian New Year Minister frames Armenians as 'part of Iran'

8 >



Tehran Symphony Orchestra performs in Soleimani tribute concert

8 >

