

Conflict in Lasanod, Sool, Somalia: Somaliland's War Crimes and Pathways to Hold it Accountable

I. Summary

The Lasanod conflict entered its second month. This report covers the trajectory of the conflict when the people of Lasanod rose against a secessionist entity denying their political identity based on a territorially and politically united Somalia. First, the report contextualizes the conflict in the occupation of Lasanod by the Somaliland administration in 2007 and attendant problems ranging from extrajudicial killing and economic marginalization to securitization for political problems. The report highlights how leniency of the Federal Government of Somalia and the International Community towards Somaliland, whose transgressions, such as the forced displacement of Somali citizens in Lasanod and the violent enforcement of secessionist ideology, resulted in the indiscriminate shelling of residential areas, hospitals, schools, and business premises in Lasanod. Finally, the report calls for accountability for crimes committed against the people of Lasanod, represented in the federal institutions based in Mogadishu.

II. Introduction

On February 6, 2023, the Traditional Leaders of Sool, Sanag, and Cayn (SSC or Khaatumo Region) and the 33 Consultative Committee (33-Committee) Somalia issued a declaration stating that they are not part of the Somaliland Administration and have never agreed to or participated in the secession program.¹ The declaration also asserted that the Somaliland Administration is attempting to force its secession upon them, violating international norms and laws. The resulting humanitarian crisis in Lasanod, Sool, Somalia, has persisted for over a month, resulting in the deaths of 250 people and injuries to over 1,000 by the forces of the breakaway region of the Somaliland Administration.² Despite the severity of the situation, the response from the international community has been muted, with many offering only vague expressions of concern. Juerg Eglin, head of the ICRC delegation in Somalia, remarked, "people in Las Anod urgently need humanitarian assistance, and we are operating as rapidly as possible to get it to them."³

Since February 6, 2023, Somaliland Administration forces have engaged in indiscriminate attacks on the people of Lasanod. As a result of this conflict, nearly 200,000 people were displaced, hundreds of Somalis were killed and wounded, and 60,000 fled to neighboring countries as refugees.⁴ The violence perpetrated by Somaliland is a culmination of the international community and the Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) late and inadequate response to holding Somaliland accountable. The question then arises: what should the international community do to hold Somaliland responsible?

This article will lay out the background of the conflict, dispel the recent propaganda by the Somaliland Administration, and evaluate the tepid international response and the role of and of FGS. The last section will delve into the global legal framework regarding war crimes, evidence of war crimes committed in Lasanod, and the application of international law to the ongoing conflict and Lasanod. Furthermore, the article will examine the mechanisms by which Somaliland can be held responsible to demonstrate the significance

¹ "SSC Clan Leaders' Summit Release a 13 Point Declaration – Somali Dispatch," *Somali Dispatch* (blog), February 6, 2023, <https://www.somalidispach.com/latest-news/breaking-news-ssc-clan-leaders-summit-release-a-13-point-declaration/>.

² Ahmed Mohamed, "Over 200 Killed in Fighting in Disputed Somaliland Town," VOA, March 6, 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/over-200-killed-in-fighting-in-disputed-somaliland-town/6992190.html>.

³ "Somalia : ICRC Urges Quick and Unimpeded Humanitarian Access to Victims of Violence in Las Anod," News release, International Committee of the Red Cross, February 22, 2023, Africa/Somalia, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/somalia-icrc-urges-quick-and-unimpeded-humanitarian-access-victims-violence-las-anod>.

⁴ Kaamil Ahmed, "Tens of Thousands of Refugees Flee from Somaliland Clashes," *The Guardian*, February 22, 2023, sec: global development, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/feb/22/tens-of-thousands-of-refugees-flee-from-somaliland-clashes>.

of holding violent actors like Somaliland accountable.

III. Background of the Conflict Between SSC and Somaliland

The Somali people and most of the International Community are aware that over the last 15 years, the SSC-Khatumo regions have encountered numerous problems caused by the presence of the Somaliland Administration. These problems resulted in an uprising known as the "Blue Uprising," in which the people in these regions stood up against the secession of Somaliland by raising the blue Somali flag. They protested the agenda that targets prominent citizens, the economic embargo that prevents the presence of development agencies in these regions, and the violation of their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The secession is the fundamental difference between the SSC region and Somaliland Administration. As others pointed out and the Somaliland Administration attempted to portray it, the difference is neither exclusionary political nor economic grievances. Nonetheless, as shown in the following subsections, Somaliland presence in the SSC areas has caused upheaval for the community.

The SSC regions in Northern Somalia, bordering Somaliland and Puntland, have a rich and contrasting history. The clans inhabiting these regions refused British colonial rule and fought against the British presence during the Darwish liberation movement, losing hundreds of thousands of their people. Today, however, the same people who fought for the liberation of Somali people are fighting for their existence against Somaliland forces.

People of SSC-Khaatumo believe that any political solution in Somalia must respect the people's will, history, and traditional political organization. A stable Somali polity can be created by working together and utilizing these potent factors. Standing with the people of the SSC regions and supporting their fight for justice and self-determination is the right course for finding a lasting solution.

a. Somaliland Occupation

In October 2007, Somaliland seized the capital of the Sool region, Lasanod.⁵ This Occupation resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of people, the exile of all traditional leaders, academics, businesspeople, and prominent politicians, and the cessation of investment and visits from the diaspora. With the arrival of Somaliland, inter-clan feuds intensified, and a campaign of assassinations began in the city, targeting what was left of Lasanod's elite. To date, over 150 people have been murdered, and all of these cases remain unsolved. As Dr. Hoehne pointed out, "... who was driving the assignation campaigns induced insecurity in the area, creating tensions between residents...."⁶

⁵ Mohamed Haji, "What's Driving Conflict in the Disputed Somali City of Las Anod?," February 20, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/20/whats-driving-conflict-in-the-disputed-somali-city-of-las-anod>.

⁶ Dr. Markus Virgil Hoehne. "Crisis in Lasanod: Border Disputes, Escalating Insecurity and the Future of Somaliland." <https://africanarguments.org/2023/02/crisis-in-lasanod-insecurity-border-disputes-and-the-future-of-somaliland/>

There have also been a handful of extrajudicial murders, which Somaliland has described as collateral damage, in addition to the assassinations. Also, for the past 20 years, unprovoked and excessive force was utilized whenever there was a demonstration, which resulted in the deaths of innocent and nonviolent protestors. The further point is that even though Lasanod has facilities, anyone detained there is sent to Mandera, Hargaisa, or Burco. Many conflicts have occurred in areas of the SSC regions, such as Kalshale, Boame, Taleh, Sahdher, and Buhodle, in addition to Lasanod's experience. While Somaliland attempted to seize the city of Buhoodle, hundreds of people perished in Kalshaale.⁷

b. Human Rights Violations

In areas of the SSC controlled by Somaliland, there was no freedom of speech, no right to assembly, no freedom of expression in free media, nobody was allowed to question Somaliland's rights to be in these regions, it was criminal to express unionist beliefs, and anybody who exhibited their unionist political views was criminalized. For example, anyone seen with a Somali blue flag was arrested and taken to jail.⁸

Before the Somaliland RRU forces started killing peaceful demonstrators and shelling residential neighborhoods and public facilities, they committed blatant human rights violations in October 2021. The Somaliland administration in Lasanod illegally uprooted Somali citizens who had lived in the city for decades. It was a blatant clan cleansing that targeted anyone originating from the Southwestern region of Somalia with immediate deportations and expulsions, creating hostilities between the people of SSC and their fellow Somalis. Somaliland's security-related justifications for these clan-based expulsion acts can only be taken as scapegoating communities from the Southwest State of Somalia as the perpetrators of the targeted assassinations.⁹

c. Economic Blockade

Investment in Lasanod has decreased as a result of Somaliland's arbitrary Occupation; entrepreneurs have moved their capital out of the area and into other parts of Somalia, stunting the country's economic growth. As a result, the SSC region is among Somalia's most economically challenged regions. In addition, a political tactic Somaliland

⁷ Horseed Staff, "Laas-Aanood Situation Briefing," *Horseed Media* (blog), January 25, 2023, <https://horseedmedia.net/laas-aanood-situation-briefing-377102>.

⁸ "Human Rights in Somalia," Amnesty International, accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/africa/east-africa-the-horn-and-great-lakes/somalia/report-somalia/>.

⁹ Sharmarke Abdi, "The Las Anod Tragedy: How Somaliland used the horrific expulsion of Koonfur-Galbeed residents as a scapegoat," <https://www.hiiraan.com/op4/2021/oct/184160/the-las-anod-tragedy-how-somaliland-used-the-horrific-expulsion-of-koonfur-galbeed-residents-as-a-scapegoat.aspx>

used to compel people to adopt the Somaliland political identity is aid from foreign donors. Finally, to keep INGOS and other international monitoring organizations out, the region is also portrayed as a hotspot of radicalism.¹⁰ For example, “when NGOs do manage to travel to Las Anod, they are officially advised to stay in Aynabo, a nearby Isaaq town, and to only travel into Las Anod during the day,” as Jetro Norman pointed out in his article.

The people of the SSC regions have not received any critical services from Somaliland in the past 20 years. As a result, only local residents can work to provide basic human rights like primary healthcare and education. As a result, the city has some of Somalia's highest newborn death rates, lowest doctor-to-population ratios, and lowest rates of school enrollment.¹¹

IV. Propaganda by Somaliland Administration in Lasanod

Early on, during the uprising of the Lasnod residents, SL tried the divide-and-rule strategy by attempting to buy favors from certain sections of the SSC population. Divide-and-rule was SL's best strategy; however, after several years of unresolved assassinations¹² of nearly 150 prominent people from SSC, which have caused an imaginable upheaval and embittered the SSC community, this strategy collapsed. The back-and-forth shuttling by the Minister of Interior, Mr. Kahin, the Minister of Communication, Mr. Kore, and the Speaker of the House, Mr. Khalif, did not create fissures amongst the SSC people. On the contrary, it galvanized the SSC community.

Throughout the war, the Somaliland Administration has been fully engaged in a propaganda and disinformation campaign to mislead the concerned international community, turn away their attention and focus on the atrocities and mass displacement in Lasanod, the bombardment of the Somaliland militia.¹³ Unable to defeat the SSC defense forces, SL resorted to propaganda. Before the propaganda, it tried to create cleavages within the SSC community, but when that tactic did not work, it attributed the conflict to a disaffected population. When these tactics did not work, SL started calling SSC people terrorists aided by Puntland forces working with FGS and Puntland Special Forces (PSF).

¹⁰ Horseed Staff, “Laas-Aanood Situation Briefing.”

¹¹ Horseed Staff

¹² Jetro Norman, “Conflict in Las Anod and Crisis in Somaliland: External Investment, Intensifying Internal Competition, and the Struggle for Narrative.” <https://africanarguments.org/2023/03/conflict-in-las-anod-and-crisis-in-somaliland-external-investment-intensifying-internal-competition-and-the-struggle-for-narrative/>

¹³ Puntland Post, “The Litany of Somaliland Lies About Laascaanood Conflict,” *Puntland Post*, March 10, 2023, <https://puntlandpost.net/2023/03/10/the-litany-of-somaliland-lies-about-laascaanood-conflict/>.

When this did not work, the SL Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. K. Mohamud, said, "Somaliland is a buffer zone for Ethiopia," The use of the word "buffer zone" to describe the relationship between Ethiopia and SL, a region that claims to have broken away from Somalia, is peculiar.¹⁴

All the above propaganda results from an administration succumbing to a siege mentality in the fog of war. However, clear evidence is that SL Administration has shown no coherent strategy as it issues disjointed messages in every press release. After their false narrative did not work, Somaliland started deploying its lobbyists (i.e., Tibor Nagy, Michael Rubin, and J. Peter Pham) who have been helping Somaliland with the dream of secession in the last 30+ years and have been acquiring profits.¹⁵ Mr. Rubin's recent article on the 19fortyfive website was the most disjointed propaganda, blaming many actors. The article "...oscillates between baseless allegations of Chinese involvement, and a highly reductionist claim that the current fighting can be explained by Darood/Dhulbahante power loss in 1991."¹⁶ The article attempts to combine SSC elders, Puntland forces, Danab Brigade, Liyu police, and al-Shabaab militants to see what sticks. The article throws China into the mix and accuses several officials who were or are in FGS from the SSC regions of being in the mix. Nonetheless, the propaganda did not appear to dissuade the world from the war crimes committed in Lasanod.

V. Response from International Community

Having gotten a token slap on the hand in previous attacks (Kalshale, Taleh, and Lasanod in 2007) and indiscriminate killings of SSC civilians, the Somaliland Administration has gotten away without serious repercussions. Although Somaliland has been warned and told to stop the indiscriminate shelling and killing of Lasanod residents (privately and publicly), they keep shelling and attacking the city, believing that once they capture the city, they will get the usual slap on the hand and the world will look the other way, as they have done in Kalshale and many other attacks.

Knowing the international community's previous and current tepid responses, SL will keep attacking, indiscriminately shelling, and depopulating the city of Lasanod. The breakaway region's goal is to capture Lasanod at all costs, particularly now that the city is depopulated, which has always been their long-term strategy of ethnically cleaning the

¹⁴ Puntland Post, "Somaliland Is Not a 'Buffer Zone' for Ethiopia," *Puntland Post*, February 27, 2023, <https://puntlandpost.net/2023/02/27/somaliland-is-not-a-buffer-zone-for-ethiopia/>.

¹⁵ <https://www.opensecrets.org/fara/countries/202?cycle=2022>,
<https://www.opensecrets.org/fara/countries/202/documents?cycle=2022>

¹⁶ Norman, "Conflict in Las Anod and Crisis in Somaliland."

Sool region from non-Somaliland supporters.¹⁷

The United Nations Charter's Chapter 7 deals with Somalia. "Powers to maintain peace" belong to the UN Security Council. Somaliland's shelling falls under the UN's Chapter 7 categories of "Threats to the Peace, Peaceful Breaches, and Aggressive Acts." As pointed out in Puntland Post:

There is a contradiction in the application Chapter 7 Article to Somalia: the Security Council, of which Britain is a member, takes into account threats to security that transnational terrorism poses to world peace, but it ignores the plight of Somali citizens being killed by forces waging a secession war based on a flawed interpretation of colonial borders.¹⁸

Therefore, for the Somaliland Administration to stop the potential war crimes it is committing in Lasanod, the UN and international community must invoke Chapter 7 provisions. It is questionable that the Security Council ignores the plight of Lasanod residents who are being killed by forces waging secession war based on erroneous interpretations of colonial borders. In contrast, the international community earnestly attempts to invoke the same provisions for the threats to security that transnational terrorism poses to world peace. Later in this article, the question of war crimes will be reviewed.

VI. Response from the Federal Government of Somalia

The silence on the Lasanod war is the most damaging to Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, not only within Somalia but on the international stage. How it is allowed for a separatist region to use scorched earth tactics is dubious. While FGS might erroneously calculate its silence as politically expedient so as not to upset the members of parliamentarians from Somaliland, it will deservedly earn the ignominy of a government with no legitimacy. Moreover, the moral equivalence of SL's aggression and Lasanod residents defending their city is shocking.

On January 3, 2023, Sheikh Adan Mohamed Nur, the Speaker of the Somalia Federal Parliament, "appointed a committee on the situation in Lasanod. Mr. Adan invoked articles 33 and 63 of the draft constitution and the debates during the seventh session of the

¹⁷ Al Jazeera, "International concern as conflict grows in breakaway Somaliland"
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/3/1/international-concern-over-conflict-in-breakaway-somaliland>

¹⁸ Puntland Post, "Why are Somaliland Forces Shelling Laascaanood?"
<https://puntlandpost.net/2023/02/09/why-are-somaliland-forces-shelling-laascaanood/>

Parliament held on January 2, 2022."¹⁹ However, something has yet to come out of the committee, and Somali Parliament is still mum on the Lasanod situation. This disregards the progress in Somalia's state-building initiatives since the first post-transition government. Moreover, it is a dereliction of duty and a letdown of the residents in Lasanod, a district whose residents are represented in its federal institutions' bicameral legislature.

As professor Christos H. Y. Gebreyesus pointed out in his open letter to the Somali Minister of Finance, "most of the world is shocked that the Somali Fed Gov ignores the ongoing struggle for Somali unity."²⁰ Additionally, Dr. Markus Virgil Hoehne lamented that "...why Hassan Sh. Mahamoud is not taking a more active role in this. Through effective diplomacy, it would be a chance for him to contribute to peace in Somalia and to settle the pending issue regarding Somali unity vs. the independence of Somaliland. New thinking is required."²¹

The Federal Republic of Somalia's Ambassador, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Abukar Bale had, made statements on February 22, 2023, and addressed the Security Council as he condemned the SL Administration, saying, "what is happening in Lasanod is a crime against humanity."²²

VII. Evidence of Potential War Crimes Committed by Somaliland

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the treaty establishing the International Criminal Court, laid out a comprehensive definition of war crimes. For the purposes of this article, the most relevant descriptions can be found in Article 8 of the statute, which includes the following:

Willful killing, willfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health, extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly, [and] intentionally directing attacks against the civilian population as such or against individual civilians not

¹⁹ Somalia Federal Parliamentary Speaker Appoints a Committee on "Lasanod Situation," <https://puntlandpost.net/2023/01/03/somalia-federal-parliamentary-speaker-appoints-a-committee-on-lasanod-situation/>

²⁰ Professor Christos H. Y. Gebreyesus, "An urgent open letter to the Minister of Finance, Federal Gov of Somalia."

²¹ Dr. Markus Virgil Hoehne, <https://twitter.com/HoehneVirgil/status/1631202253137666051>

²² This was brave for Ambassador Bale as pointed by Abdirashid Hashi. <https://twitter.com/AnalystSomalia/status/1628493695275225099>. FGS have been conducting shuttle diplomacy behind the scenes.

taking direct part in hostilities.²³

The definitions of war crimes in Article 8 highlight how crucial intent is in deciding who is responsible for committing a war crime. According to the definitions, the acts must have been undertaken with the aim of causing pain or suffering and cannot have been motivated by a need for war. This implies that Somaliland may be liable for potential war crimes under international law if discovered that it deliberately targeted civilians or committed violent acts without a compelling military reason.

Evidence suggests that Somaliland troops' shelling and bombing fit into the parameters of the definition of war crimes and demonstrates that potential war crimes may have been committed in Lasanod and other locations of the region, some of which appear to be deliberate and indiscriminate—particularly the trend of assaults on civilian populations--reports of heavy weapons and bombings that targeted civilians and caused significant devastation and displacement.²⁴ For instance, as reported by Reuters, “hospitals and medical facilities have been targeted and destroyed, and civilians have been killed and injured in the crossfire.”²⁵ Targeting hospitals is in and of itself a display of intentionality. Additionally, in a statement from Djoen Besselink, the Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) representative for Somalia said:

Yesterday morning (February 28, 2023), the hospital we support in Las Anod was hit during indiscriminate fighting for a fourth time in three weeks. This time it caused partial damage to the structure and brought a stop to activities in the pediatric ward and blood bank . . . What we are witnessing today is a desperate situation where the human suffering of the violence is tremendous—displacing people from their homes and making them fear for their lives.²⁶

One could infer that the forces of Somaliland are intentionally targeting the civilians of Lasanod, as well as their infrastructure, and such targeting violates laws of war. This evidence is one of the many pieces that further demonstrate the perceivable culpability of Somaliland. In addition, a report published by the Guardian detailed that “tens of thousands of refugees have fled to neighboring countries, including Ethiopia and Djibouti,

²³ UN General Assembly, *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (last amended 2010)*, July 17 1998, ISBN No. 92-9227-227-6, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3a84.html> [accessed March 2 2023]

²⁴ Mohamed Fatah, “President Muse Bihi and Somaliland Forces Commit War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Las Anod,” *WardheerNews*, March 5, 2023, <https://wardheernews.com/president-muse-bihi-and-somaliland-forces-commit-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-in-las-anod/>.

²⁵ Abdiqani Hassan, “At Least 24 Killed in Second Day of Fighting in Somaliland,” *Reuters*, February 8, 2023, sec. Africa, <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/least-24-killed-second-day-fighting-somaliland-2023-02-07/>.

²⁶ Doctors Without Borders, “Somalia and Somaliland: Indiscriminate fighting affects medical care in Las Anod,” *Doctors Without Borders*, March 1, 2023, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/somalia-and-somaliland-indiscriminate-fighting-affects-medical-care-las-anod>

to escape the fighting."²⁷ Now, coupled with the fact that Somaliland targeted civilians, the displacement of many people adds weight to the damage Lasanod has faced at the hands of Somaliland forces. Questions remain regarding whether Somaliland has made attempts to avoid harming civilians.

Aside from the documented evidence in the press, Abd Ali Ismail, the Mayor of the Lasanod district, provided a recount of the devastation Somaliland perpetuated in Lasanod. According to Ismail, 210 people have been killed, 580 were wounded, 715 homes were destroyed, 16,000 businesses have closed, and the city's water supply has been cut off.²⁸ Additionally, homes and businesses were looted, and Somaliland's destruction of nearby vehicles killed individuals traveling outside of Lasanod.²⁹ The evidence continues to mount as more and more of Somaliland's potential human rights violations are discovered in Lasanod. Thus, it is pertinent for the international community to investigate and respond substantially.

VIII. Options for Holding Somaliland Accountable

If an investigation shows that potential war crimes have been committed, sanctions and legal action will be the most effective measures to hold Somaliland accountable. Such steps are substantive, provide a tangible consequence to Somaliland, and could discourage future acts of violence and impunity.

a. Sanctions:

Sanctions, particularly economic sanctions, can act as a helpful tool to pressure Somaliland to end its violence and comply with the rules and guidelines set by international law. Possible examples of sanctions can include a travel ban instituted on Somaliland's government officials and asset freezes. Similar to the United States sanctions on Myanmar's military leaders for the violent genocide they committed in Rohingya. In these sanctions, the United States placed officials related to the genocide on the "US Treasury Department's Specially Designated Nationals (SDN)" list. This list prohibited any US individual, business, or a financial institution from conducting business with the officials listed and banned their travel to the United States.³⁰ A similar approach can be used concerning the crisis in

²⁷ Ahmed, "Tens of Thousands of Refugees Flee from Somaliland Clashes."

²⁸ "Las Anod Mayor: Somaliland Forces Looted Civilian Homes – Somali Dispatch," March 2, 2023, <https://www.somalidispach.com/latest-news/las-anod-mayor-somaliland-forces-looted-civilian-homes/>.

²⁹ "SSC GENOCIDE | Somaliland Massacre to Lasanod People," accessed March 8, 2023, <https://www.sscgenocide.net/>.

³⁰ "Myanmar, Sanctions, and Human Rights," *Human Rights Watch* (blog), February 18, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/02/18/myanmar-sanctions-and-human-rights>.

Lasanod.

Financial and economic sanctions can be imposed, including the freezing of the foreign accounts and assets of Muse Bihi, Mohamed Kahin, Essa Kayd, Suleiman Koore, Abdiqani Aateye, General Nuh Ismail Tani, Faisal Abdi Botan, General Abdirahman Hassan, Colonel Yusuf Nur, Mohamed Saqadhi, Faisal Ali Warabe, and Edna Adan Ismail. Investigate UK funding of the RRU, the role of the unit in human rights violations in Las Anod, and the unlawful killing and political intimidation in Hargeisa, Borama, Burco, and Erigabo.³¹

To even further emphasize the need for sanctions, Somaliland has been pocketing most of the international aid it received instead of directing it into the regions it controls. Specifically, as written in an open letter to Dr. Elmi Mohamud Noor, the Minister of Finance for the Federal Government of Somalia: "100% of international aid directly sent to Somaliland during the last five years was consumed by the Muse Bihi family, and the leftover was used in the central regions of Somaliland."³² It is clear that in addition to being held accountable for its violence in Lasanod, Somaliland must also be held responsible for the misappropriation of international aid. The Somaliland Special Arrangement, Somalia Compact financial mechanism, and current Somali Multi-Partner should all be reviewed and suspended.

b. Legal Action:

The international legal mechanisms already in place, as utilized by the International Criminal Court (ICC), can be used to hold Somaliland accountable. Notwithstanding the fact that Somaliland is not a state party to the Rome Statute, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction over war crimes committed on its territory. Therefore, if there is evidence of war crimes, which this article has provided in several instances that demonstrate the potentiality of war crimes, and the national authorities are unable or unwilling to prosecute, the ICC Prosecutor may launch an inquiry into the situation in Somaliland.

IX. Conclusion

Somaliland must be questioned and investigated for its violence in Lasanod. The evidence examined demonstrates potential human rights breaches, many death, and violence has been caused. So far, the following has been documented: indiscriminate shelling and bombardment of residential areas, mosques, hospitals, water plants³³, power

³¹ Mohamed Fatah, "President Muse Bihi and Somaliland Forces Commit War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Las Anod," <https://wardheernews.com/president-muse-bihi-and-somaliland-forces-commit-war-crimes-and-crimes-against-humanity-in-las-anod/>

³² Professor Christos H. Y. Gebreyesus, "An urgent open letter to the Minister of Finance, Federal Gov of Somalia.

³³ WAREYSI: *Ma Dhab-Baa in Somaliland Ay Burburisay Shirkadii Biyaha Ee Laascaanood, Maxaa Qarsoon?*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=odgMidcbG-4>.

stations, and solar-powered oxygen plants³⁴, the targeting of particular clans, and the disproportionate use of force.³⁵ The international community must act immediately to hold the Somaliland Administration responsible and question whether their acts constitute war crimes.

Somaliland forces must immediately stop the shelling and bombarding of Lasanod and its population and remove its troops from the SSC area. Given the atrocities committed and the previous extrajudicial assassinations, Somaliland cannot win over the people of SCC and sell them a secession agenda. Rebuilding confidence and trust and fostering reconciliation requires recognition and an unambiguous apology for the atrocities and destruction, allegations against the residents of SSC, and reparations and compensation for those harmed by the Lasanod shelling and earlier killings. Nothing less than justice and the chance to start over in peace and security is due to the residents of Lasanod and the larger SSC community. The international community must constantly monitor the situation and act swiftly to ensure the required actions are taken.

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³⁴ Norman, “Conflict in Las Anod and Crisis in Somaliland.”

³⁵ Fatah, “President Muse Bihi and Somaliland Forces Commit War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity in Las Anod.”