

**VON BATTEN-MONTAGUE-YORK, L.C.**

**REPORT NO: VMY-SL-2021**

**REPORT PURPOSE: EXPANDED SITREP AND ACTION PLAN**

# **THE REPUBLIC OF SOMALILAND REPORT**



**RONALD REAGAN BUILDING AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER  
1300 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE NW, SUITE 700  
WASHINGTON, DC 20004  
EMAIL: MAIL@MONTAGUEYORK.COM**

# CONTENTS

<b>BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>NOTED PROBLEMS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>US PERCEPTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROPOSAL.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PR FORMULATION.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>APPROVAL.....</b>	<b>8</b>

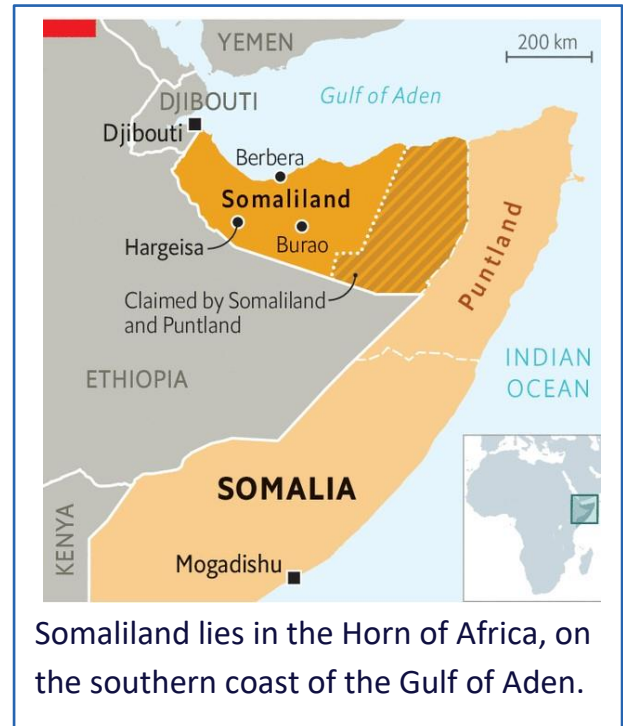
# BACKGROUND

## A DE FACTO NATION

As nations across Africa struggle to maintain law and order, the international community has overlooked Africa's most promising state, the Republic of Somaliland. In 1991, Somaliland announced its independence from the Federal Republic of Somalia. A stable democracy, Somaliland contrasts dramatically with Somalia, which perpetually teeters on the brink of state failure. Somaliland has managed to escape the turmoil of Somalia through rapid efforts to create an independent and forward-looking state. Somaliland has built a stable nation of 3.5 million people with minimal support from the international community.

On May 31, 2001, Somaliland introduced a new constitution by national referendum. Article 8 of the Somaliland constitution guarantees all Somaliland citizens equal rights under the law, regardless of color, clan, birth, language, gender, property, status, or opinion. In 2003, the nation held its first open presidential election, and regular parliamentary elections started in 2005. In a promising trend, the number of cross-clan votes has increased steadily, suggesting that policy, not ethnicity, will determine elections and increasing the likelihood of a competent and durable government.

Somaliland engages in diplomatic operations with the United Nations, the Arab League, the European Union, and U.S. allies such as the United Kingdom and the Kingdom of Denmark. Nevertheless, Somaliland has yet to receive official recognition from a single foreign government. To the international community, Somaliland is an autonomous region of Somalia, subject to the Somali Federal Government. The State Department acknowledges the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia within its 1960 borders in accordance with the Somali provisional constitution, which includes Somaliland and Puntland, and current U.S. policy regarding Somaliland is first to allow the African Union to deliberate the question regarding the status of Somaliland as an independent nation. Nevertheless, this U.S. policy is not set in stone and can be changed.



# NOTED PROBLEM

## Somaliland Public Relation (PR) Failure

Despite the success story of Somaliland as a stable and thriving democracy in Africa, issues relating to both Somaliland as a state and the non-recognition of Somaliland by the U.S. government are rarely covered by established American media or discussed by influential members of the White House press corps. As it pertains to members of the U.S. government, especially members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, to include their respective subcommittees on Africa, Somaliland is unfortunately a non-issue. Many senior members of the United States Congress are either unaware of the nature of Somaliland or confuse Somaliland with the Federal Republic of Somalia. This confusion usually resulted in a negative response because Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (Al-Shabaab), which the U.S. government designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on May 18, 2008, was on many occasions, in error, identified as succession militant group associated with Somaliland. The vast majority of the decision-makers, political figures, and media engaged during the analysis could not distinguish between Somaliland and Somalia. This frame of mind is glaring when we performed data mining and sentiment analyses to ascertain American public perception of Somaliland. We performed two separate data mining and sentiment analyses (spanning one year in data collection). Identical results were achieved.

Unlike Congress, the key members of the States Department assigned to the East African desk are very familiar with Somaliland. The State Department 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices notes that, unlike Somalia, in Somaliland there were no reports of arbitrary or unlawful killings by Somaliland authorities, Somaliland functional courts exist, and Somaliland law allows prisoners to submit complaints to judicial authorities without censorship, and prisoners reportedly submitted such complaints. Nevertheless, the report does note that Somaliland's government continued to use arbitrary detention and arrest to curb negative reporting by journalists, particularly on the suppression of support for unification with Somalia. Somaliland law prohibits publication or circulation of exaggerated or provocative news capable of disturbing public order, and officials used the provision to charge and arrest journalists. Somaliland authorities also regularly harassed journalists through arbitrary detention when they reported on government shortcomings or union with Somalia. Laws providing criminal penalties for the publication of "false news" exist in Somaliland. These noted issues have given key members of the States Department reason to be apprehensive about Somaliland. The 'South Sudan issue' (devolving into political chaos and civil war soon after independence) is still fresh in the minds of key State Department SES and policy leadership.

# US PERCEPTION

## Data Mining and Sentiment Analysis

Data mining is an automated analytical method that lets us extract usable information from massive raw data sets. Sentiment analysis refers to the use of natural language processing, text analysis, computational linguistics, and biometrics to systematically identify, extract, quantify, and study affective states and subjective information. Sentiment analysis is instrumental in social media monitoring as it allows us to gain an overview of the more comprehensive public opinion behind specific topics. The Obama Administration used sentiment analysis to gauge public opinion to policy announcements and campaign messages ahead of the 2012 presidential election. Quickly seeing the sentiment behind everything from forum posts to news articles means better strategizing and planning for the future.

We performed data mining and sentiment analyses on a sample of data collected from online sources to formulate a working hypothesis on the thoughts and opinions of US political actors, key decision-makers, and the American public as it pertains to the U.S recognition of Somaliland. The results show that most Americans hold or associated a neutral or negative sentiment on a host of issues pertaining to Somaliland. There are three types of sentiment: positive, negative, and neutral sentiment. Sentiment refers to the contextual polarity of a text or a document, meaning, the emotional effect the text or document has on the reader (or the author wants to convey). It also indicates the attitude of the author about the subject. Positive words/sentences have a positive sentiment attached to them. (For example, when some text indicates happiness, enthusiasm, kindness, etc., they are generally classified as having a positive sentiment). Similarly, negative sentences have a negative sentiment attached to them. (For example, when some text indicates sadness, hate, violence, discrimination, etc., they are generally classified as having a negative sentiment). When no emotions are implied, they are classified as neutral. See below for the reports on the noted analyses.



from: **Jul 23, 2020**

until: **Jul 23, 2021**

# Somaliland

## Top Mentions Report

# Overview

Overall mentions analysis

The graph shows the mentions from each source channel per day.



## TOTAL MENTIONS

**1470**

1.1k Social from 464 users  
352 Web on 302 sites



## SOCIAL REACH

**3.7M** | **7.4M**

unique | total

🐦 **2.0M** | 4.1M    @ **60.4k** | 143.9k  
📺 **1.6M** | 3.1M



## SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

**186.4k**

total engagements

👍 39.1k    ↻ 2.8k    💬 4.2k    🎥 135.9k  
📘 4.2k    📌 58



## SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

**9.9%**

(145)

positive

**8.8%**

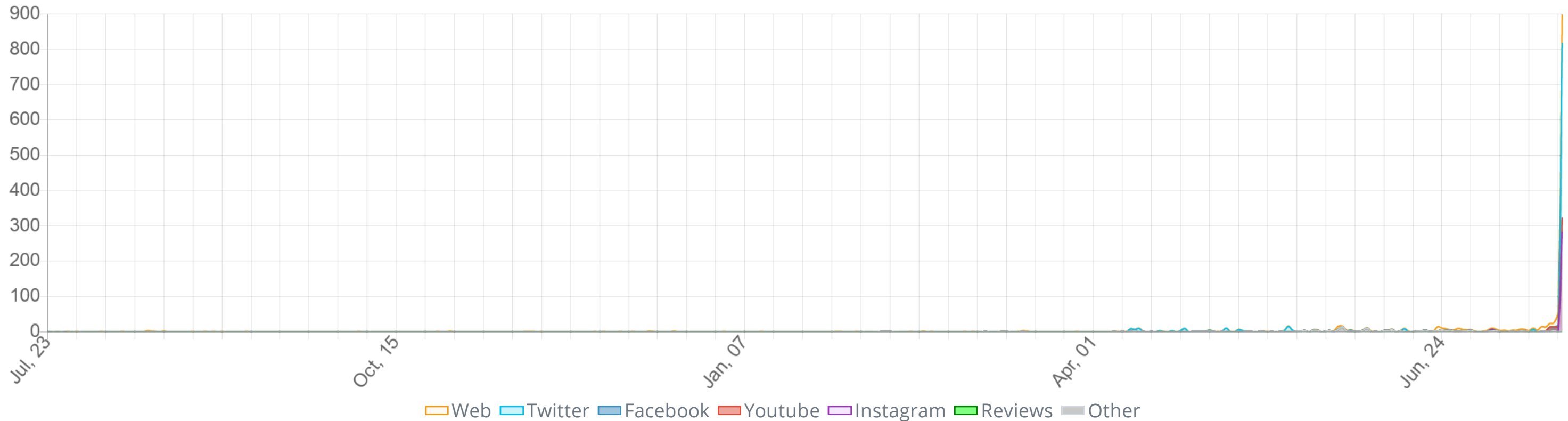
(130)

negative

**73.6%**

(1k)

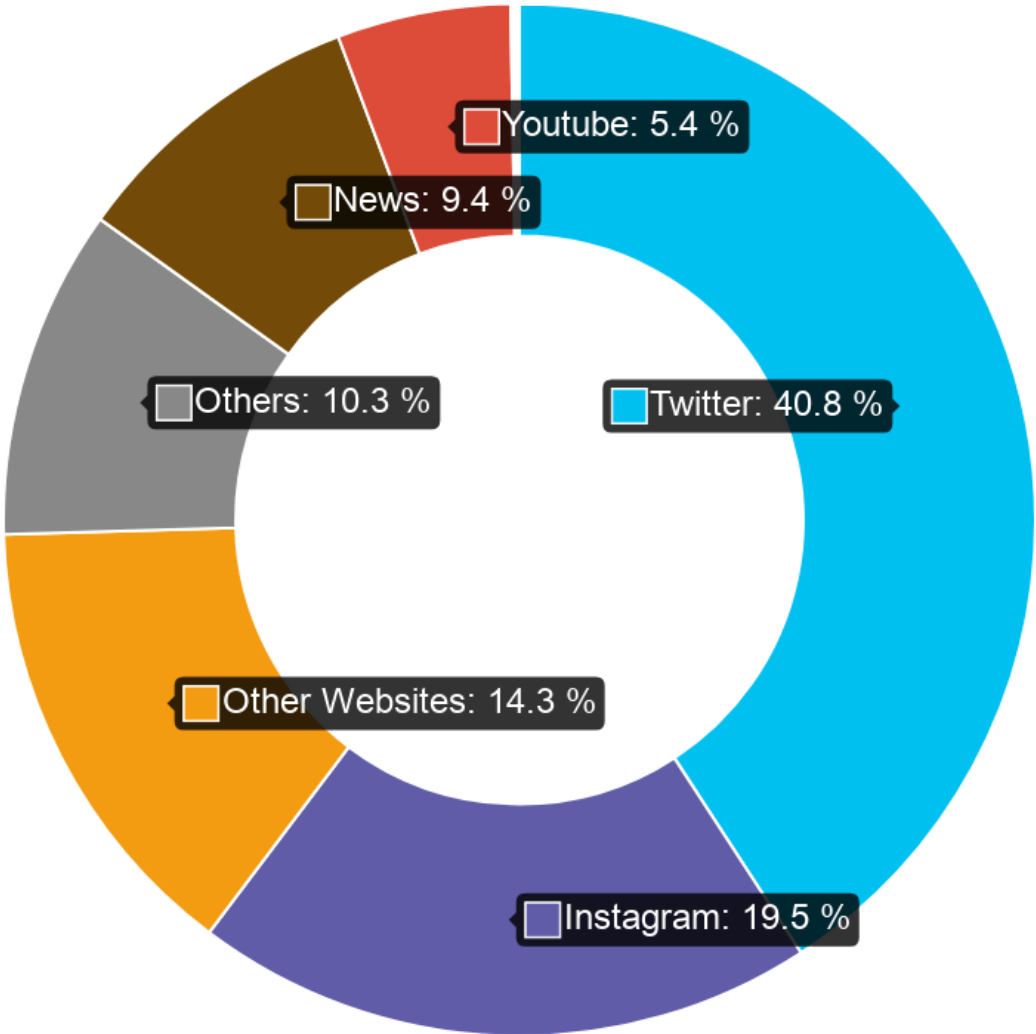
neutral



# Media Share

Share of mentions per source

Below is the Media Share for each different mention source for the selected date period



600	Twitter	286	Instagram
210	Other Websites	152	Others
138	News	80	Youtube
1	Blogs	1	Reference
1	Shopping	1	Various Social Media







from: **Jun 24, 2021**

until: **Jul 23, 2021**

# Somaliland U.S. recognition

## Top Mentions Report

Somaliland

# Overview

## Overall mentions analysis

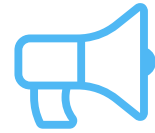
The graph shows the mentions from each source channel per day.



### TOTAL MENTIONS

0

0 Social from 0 users  
0 Web on 0 sites



### SOCIAL REACH

— | —  
unique total



### SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

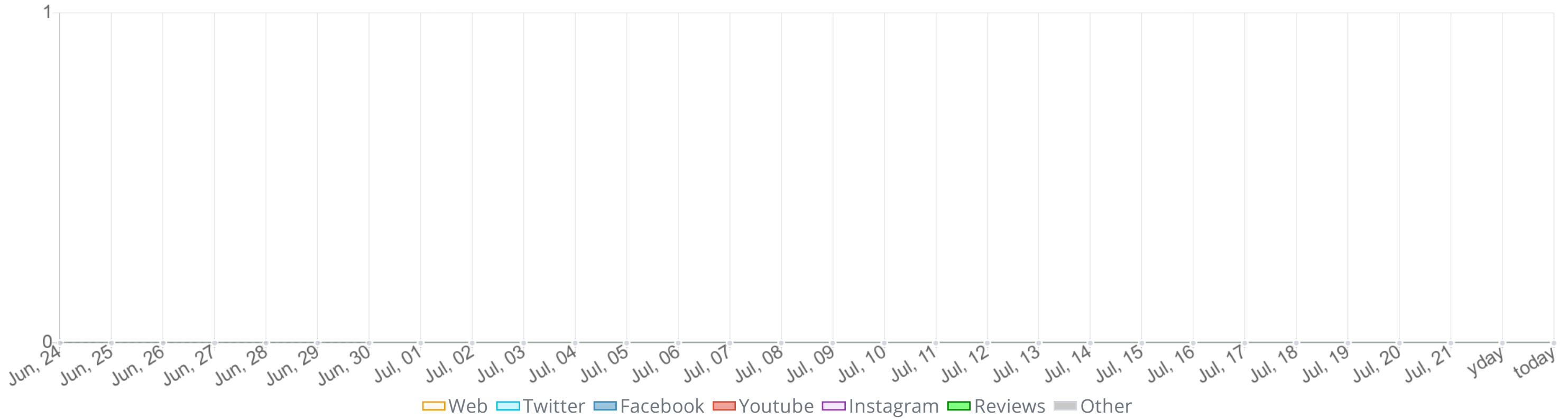
0

total engagements



### SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

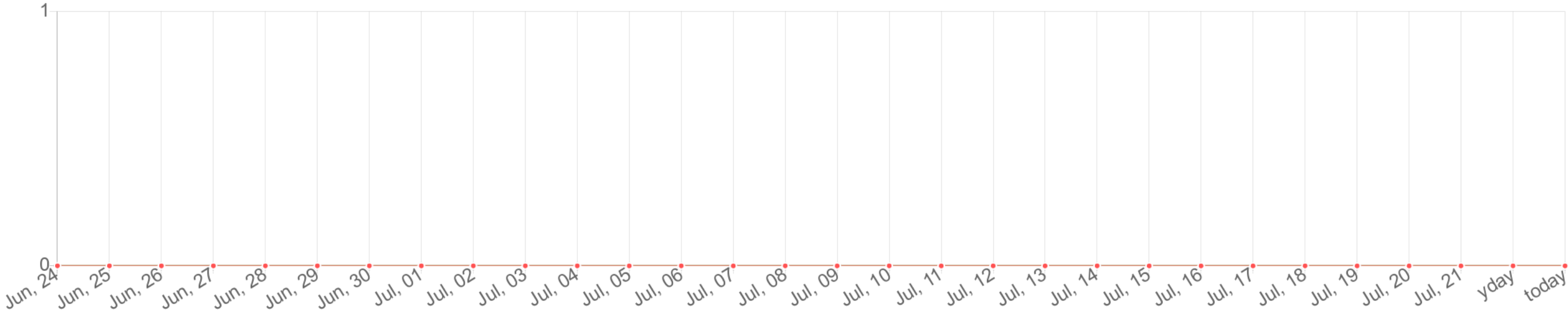
0% (0) positive  
0% (0) negative  
0% (0) neutral



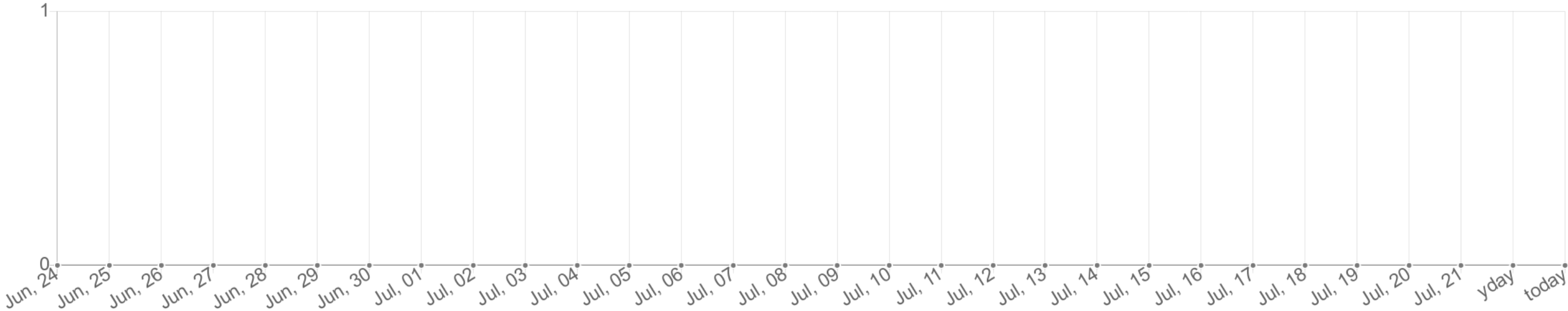
# Sentiment Analysis

Negative vs Positive, Neutral mentions

Daily totals for Positive/Negative/Neutral mentions.



■ Negative ■ Positive



■ Neutral



# Media Share

Share of mentions per source

Below is the Media Share for each different mention source for the selected date period



0	Web
0	Twitter
0	Facebook
0	Youtube
0	Instagram
0	Reviews
0	Others



# PROPOSAL

## Strategic PR and Lobbying Campaign

The analysis shows that while key members of the Biden Administration, especially in the State Department, have great respect for Somaliland. Nevertheless, preliminary discussions suggest the Biden Administration will not overturn the current US position pertaining to recognizing Somaliland as an independent country until key identified members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations provide support and cover for President Biden. The issue is that these key members of Congress, at this current moment, are not fully informed on the issue. As it pertains to key and influential Congressional staffers, while impressed by Somaliland, they fear support for Somaliland recognition will exacerbate the frail US-Somalia relationships.

The key is to create the kind of constructive US and Somaliland engagement that will do away with the various negative perceptions and non-interest and cautious approach members of the US government have pertaining to Somaliland. It is essential that advocacy, lobbying, and public relations campaigns are put into action to do-away with the negative perceptions and cautious approach while simultaneously elevating the standing of Somaliland as a potentially strong US ally on matters relating to national security, trade, and geopolitical alliances. It is also essential to build concrete support for the US to provide direct political, financial, and humanitarian assistance to Somaliland and to include Somaliland in preferred US trade agreements such as trading opportunities as authorized by the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

# ACTION PLAN

## Changing Minds and Public Perception

Strategic PR allows us to integrate PR tactics into an overall communications plan. It creates the opportunity to work towards a measurable, definable goal that further supports how we can help influence a positive Somaliland perception as it pertains to achieving US recognition of Somaliland independence. Strategic PR includes identifying a goal or outcome and employing various communications tools to achieve the defined goal. It is beyond sending out a press release and hoping it gets picked up by a reporter or that you get an email requesting an interview for your client. It is expert positioning through content placement and strategic messaging tactics. It is leveraging the power of news media and social media campaigns to increase awareness of the benefits of the US recognizing Somaliland as an independent state.

## Influencing US Government Decisions and Actions

We will target a well-defined list of members of Congress and work to positively modify their perception of Somaliland. We will also engage in frank discussions and provide evidence-based information to targeted congressional communication directors and press secretaries who trust our judgment due to a close working relationship. The aim is to ensure a positive Somaliland narrative coming from Congress to the national new media.

Engaging the Biden Administration is essential. We will engage with senior members of the Biden Administration, including the National Security Advisor and senior members of past Administrations who have built goodwill and strong friendships in all branches of the US government, to push for policies and activities beneficial to Somaliland. We engage with members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the House Committee on Financial Services, the State and Treasury Departments, and the Office of the US Trade Representative to lay down arguments and push for direct aid, trade, investment, and other resources to help boost Somaliland economy.

# PR FORMULATION

## PR Strategy Checklist

We ask that you answer a few questions to ensure that we fine-tune our approach and tailor our PR strategy to your needs. The PR Strategy Checklist will provide us with key information that will help us plan our PR activities and make strategic decisions about the best ways to communicate your message with key stakeholders and the general public.

1. What are your goals and objectives?

It is important to be clear about your goals and objectives before we begin. Clearly stating these goals and objectives at the beginning of the engagement helps us determine the feasibility of your requests and to plan accordingly.
2. Who is your target audience?

Public relations is all about communicating clear and consistent messages to target audiences. Once you know what you want to say, the next step is deciding who you want to say it to. Our PR strategy will vary depending on who your key stakeholders are.
3. What are your key messages?

Once you have decided on your objectives, you will need to identify key messages that you want us to communicate to key stakeholders. This will allow us to develop messaging that clearly outlines and communicates your intended message.
4. Who is your spokesperson (public face in Washington, D.C.)?

You will want a confident and calm spokesperson who can speak on behalf of your organization and reinforce key messages in Congressional meetings and media interviews.

# APPROVAL

## APPROVAL AND AUTHORITY TO PROCEED

Name	Approval	Title	Date
Dr. Karl Von Batten, FRSPH		Managing Partner	7/25/2021