



Djibouti

by *Levente Kardkovács*



Summary

Djibouti (formerly French Somalia) gained its independence in 1977. The country is a small nation located on the coast of the Bab al-Mandab Strait (the entrance to the Red Sea), sandwiched between Eritrea to the North, Ethiopia to the West and Somalia (specifically the state of Somaliland) to the East.

Relations with Somalia

Somalia and Djibouti have friendly diplomatic relations. The presidents of the two countries met in June 2024 to discuss “means of strengthening relations and enhancing cooperation across various domains, particularly security and the economy.” However, since Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the president of Somalia, came into office Somalia’s foreign policy has reportedly caused some instability in international relations, particularly among Somalia’s neighbours. A meeting in Eritrea between the president of Eritrea, Isaias Afwerki, and president Hassan Sheikh in late 2024 resulted in a formal complaint from the government of Djibouti against Somalia’s president. Relations between Djibouti and Eritrea have been strained for years due to territorial disputes. The warming of Somalia-Eritrea relations led to rising diplomatic tensions not just between

Somalia and Djibouti, but also between Somalia and Ethiopia.

The Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal has also strained Djibouti’s relations with Somaliland, as the country’s economy is heavily reliant on revenues from its ports, which have long served as Ethiopia’s primary access to the sea.

Role in Jubaland

Djibouti was one of the signatories on the statement issued by the United Nations Transitional Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNTMIS) in November of 2024 which urged all stakeholders to “engage in constructive and inclusive discussions on the electoral process”, Jubaland State to “return to the NCC for an open discussion of all outstanding issues, and to restore ties with the FGS”. It also encouraged “all parties to refrain from provocations and re-engage in an open dialogue, before any electoral processes are finalised”

