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Credit - Drishti Ias

## Israel's Recognition of Somaliland



Source: TH

Israel becomes the **first country** to formally **recognise Somaliland** (not a UN-recognised state) as an independent state, with implications for **regional stability**, **maritime security**, and great power competition.

- Israel claims the recognition is in the **spirit** of the **Abraham Accords**, as Israel seeks to **normalise relations** with non-traditional partners.

## Somaliland

- **Historical Background:** Previously, it was the British Somaliland Protectorate, and it formally became a **British colony in 1920**. Gained independence as the **State of Somaliland** in 1960 before **voluntarily merging** with Italian Somaliland to form Somalia.
  - It declared **independence in 1991** after the fall of **Siad Barre's regime**, following **large-scale human rights abuses** against the **Isaaq clan**, which is dominant in Somaliland.
  - Operates with **de facto autonomy**, having its own **currency, passports, police**, and **capital (Hargeisa)**, but lacks international recognition until now.
- **Strategic Location:** Somaliland lies in the **Horn of Africa**, an **East African peninsula** extending into the **Gulf of Aden**, **Somali Sea**, and **Guardafui Channel**, comprising **Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia**.
  - The region overlooks **critical global shipping routes**, with the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait** located near **Djibouti and Eritrea**, linking the **Red Sea** to the **Indian Ocean**.
- **Security & Military Dimensions:** Somaliland presents Israel with a strategic opportunity, offering a potential forward base for intelligence, logistics, and counter-Houthi operations, as well as a possible location for resettling Palestinians. The UAE operates a military port and airstrip in Berbera (port city).



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