

United States Senate

July 28, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

I write to urge the State Department to conduct a Diplomatic Security tiered assessment of Somalia and establish a separate, region-specific Travel Advisory for Somaliland.

The Department currently maintains a Level 4 “Do Not Travel” advisory for Somalia that applies equally to Somaliland. The Department’s website warns Americans not to travel to Somalia because of “crime, kidnapping, terrorism, unrest, health, landmines, systematic mistreatment of women, systematic mistreatment of gay and lesbian individuals, piracy, abuse of residents in rehabilitation centers, and confiscation of passports by family members.”

That assessment does not reflect the reality on the ground in Somaliland.

Somaliland has functioned as a stable, self-governing, democratic nation for nearly three decades. Since 2003, it has held multiple peaceful, competitive elections and democratic transfers of power. Somaliland is also a reliable security and diplomatic partner for the United States that advances American interests in the Horn of Africa and beyond.

The State Department’s current policy punishes success and rewards failure. It treats Somaliland as though it were no different from the insecurity and dysfunction that plague the rest of Somalia. In doing so, the Department sends precisely the wrong message: that America’s most dependable partners receive the same treatment as its most troubled ones.

This policy comes at a cost. It deters American businesses from investing in Somaliland and complicates U.S. government travel. Importantly, it stifles diplomatic engagement at a time when the U.S. should be deepening its partnership. Official United States government travel conducted entirely within Somaliland is burdened by unnecessary security and resource requirements, including coordination through Mogadishu. This dynamic wastes taxpayer resources while providing no meaningful benefit due to Somaliland’s favorable security environment.

The State Department already recognizes that security conditions can vary dramatically within a single country. Travel Advisories for Mexico assess states individually so Americans receive

guidance based on actual conditions rather than arbitrary national boundaries. There is no reason the Department should not apply the same common-sense approach to Somaliland.

The current advisory is inaccurate and counterproductive to U.S. national security interests. Americans deserve travel guidance that reflects the conditions on the ground, rather than a one-size-fits-all assessment that fails to distinguish Somaliland's peaceful governance and security environment from conditions elsewhere in Somalia. Similarly, security requirements governing official U.S. government activities should be based on current information, requiring a region-specific Diplomatic Security tiered assessment to update data last evaluated in the early 1990s.

I urge you to promptly direct Diplomatic Security to conduct a tiered assessment of Somalia and establish a separate, region-specific Travel Advisory for Somaliland. Doing so would provide Americans with more accurate travel guidance while supporting robust engagement with one of our most dependable partners in the Horn of Africa.

As always, I stand ready to provide you with whatever resources and support you require in helping to secure these goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ted Cruz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ted Cruz
United States Senator