



## AS IT IS

# Somali Capital Opens First Horse Riding Stable in Recent History

March 08, 2022

On a tree-lined, dirt road in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, people look out in wonder from their homes to see an unusual sight: two young men riding on horses. As they race, it is hard to tell who is winning. They are training for what is the city's first horse races in recent history.

Slowly improving security has fueled demand for sports and **recreational** activities – and horse-riding has become a hit.

Watching the men training, mother of five Abshira Mohamed said she was happy to see an activity for young people.

Yahye Isse, 29, established his stable to offer training in horse riding to the public. A stable is a building where horses are kept. In the future, he wants to host competitions in Mogadishu between riders from the city and riders from other areas in the country.

The capital is still often hit by deadly, suicide bombings by the al Qaeda-linked terrorist group al Shabaab. It aims to take down the central government.

Isse said the stable is a belief that violence will not worsen.

"Horse races are meant for peaceful areas, not war **zones**," he said. He added that children and the old love to see horses. He said that horses have a beauty that brings people in.

During the rule of military dictator Siad Barre, who was forced out of office in 1991, only police were taught how to ride horses. But the new stable has attracted tens of young Somalis who have signed up for training, or lessons, and dream of racing in international competitions one day.

The stable operates out of the Mogadishu **stadium** and is home to 14 horses. More than 30 students have completed a six-month riding class at Isse's stable. He currently has eight full-time students taking the classes.

The students pay \$100 each month. Isse and his three other trainers do not earn a monthly wage, he said. He supports the school financially through his other businesses.

He said he hoped the government would provide support to grow the stable and develop the sport further in the country.

I'm Gregory Stachel.

*Abdi Sheikh reported this story for Reuters. Gregory Stachel adapted it for VOA Learning English.*

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## Words in This Story

**recreational** – *adj.* done for enjoyment

**zone** – *n.* an area that is different from other areas in a particular way

**stadium** – *n.* a very large usually roofless building that has a large open area surrounded by many rows of seats and that is used for sports events or concerts

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