



## Somalia's Newest Military Commander Also Its Youngest

**OE Watch Commentary:** President Farmajo of Somalia has appointed a new commander of the Somali National Army. He is Odowaa Yusuf, and at 32, he is the youngest person to ever hold that key position, as reported in the accompanying excerpted article from the Somali website *Radio Dalsan*.

Born in the Aadan Yabaal District of the Middle Shabelle region, the new commander was only three when Siad Barre's regime fell and plunged the country into chaos, as no central government existed. The future commander completed his secondary studies in Mogadishu, joined the army, and then went to Uganda for a year of military training. In 2009 he continued his military training in Sudan. The following year he returned to Somalia as a one star general, which was followed by additional training in Turkey. Additional assignments and postings, including as commander of the division that protects the state house - a position that brought him into close proximity to the Somali presidency - eventually culminated in his recent appointment as commander of the Somali National Army.

Though the brief article covers the highlights of General Odowaa Yusuf's rise to his present position, it does not discuss the difficulties he faces. With questions regarding the capability of the Somali military to fill the void created by AMISOM's ongoing withdrawal; donor nations expressing hesitation to continue funding the Somali armed forces because of concerns regarding extensive corruption among the troops and politicians; and a terrorist group, al-Shabaab, that has often been described as diminished but yet still mounts deadly operations, the newly appointed young general has his work cut out for him. **End OE Watch Commentary (Feldman)**



*Somali Army troops such as these will now be led by 32 year old General Odawaa Yusuf, the country's youngest ever military commander.*

Source: AMISOM/Flickr, [https://www.flickr.com/photos/au\\_unistphotostream/7092788687](https://www.flickr.com/photos/au_unistphotostream/7092788687), Public Domain

*“His appointment makes him (Odowaa Yusuf) the youngest ever commander in the military at just 32, having been born in 1987.”*

**Source:** “Somalia National Army Get the Youngest Military Commander in History,” *Radio Dalsan (Somalia)*, 25 August 2019. <https://www.radiodalsan.com/en/2019/08/25/somalia-national-army-get-the-youngest-commander-in-history/>

*President Farmajo has appointed a youthful Odowaa Yusuf as the commander of the Somalia National Army...His appointment makes him the youngest ever commander in the military at just 32, having been born in 1987.*

*In 2013, he was once again sent for training in Turkey in what was deemed to be the highest training in the military ranks. He returned to several promotions and postings. In 2014, he returned to the Turkish Army War College where he stayed till 2016.*

*He later became the deputy leader of the Villa Somalia Protection Unit later rising to be the leader of the unit. This close proximity to the presidency must have endeared him to the center of power.*