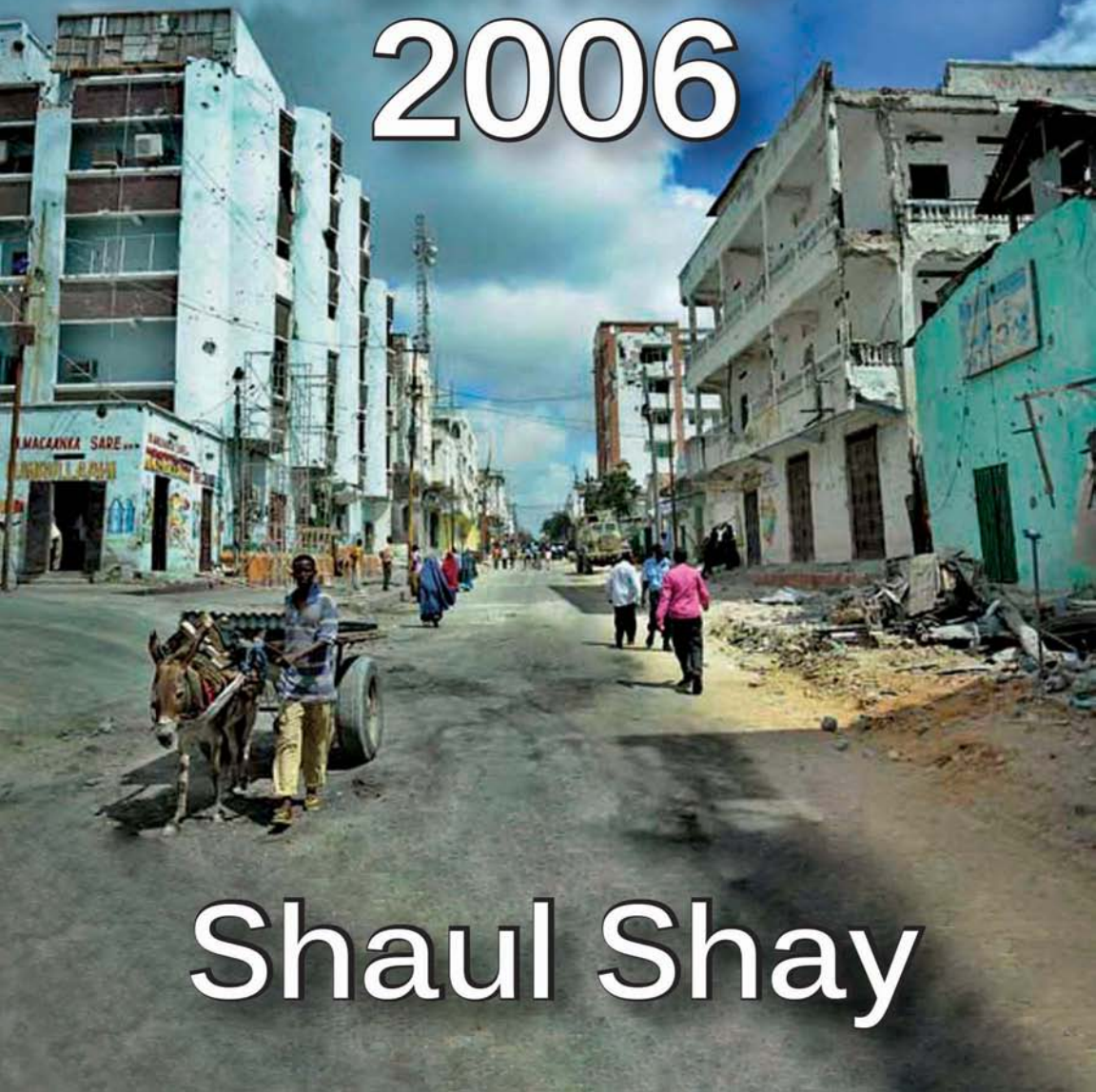


Somalia in Transition since 2006



Shaul Shay

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Transaction Publishers

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Abbreviations

AIAI	al-Ittihad al-Islamiya
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AQAP	Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ARPCT	Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism
ARS	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia
ARS-A	Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia-Asmara
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a
AU	African Union
CGPCS	Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia
CISS	Coordination for International Support for Somalia
CO	Commanding Officer
COE	contingent-owned equipment
CRD	Center for Research and Dialogue
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defense Force
FOB	forward-operating base
FPENS	Formal Private Education Network in Somalia
FSI	Failed State Index
GBC	Global Broadcasting Corporation
GDP	gross domestic product
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
ICG	International Contact Group on Somalia
ICU	Islamic Courts Union (also referred to as UIC)
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IEEPA	International Emergency Economic Powers Act
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organization
IKRF	Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMO	International Maritime Organization

IOLF	Islamic Oromo Liberation Front
ISA	Israel Security Agency
IU	Islamic Union
JFMB	Joint Financial Management Board
JICC	Joint Islamic Courts Council
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
JVA	Juba Valley Alliance
KDF	Kenya Defense Force
LICUS	low-income countries under stress
MANPADS	man-portable air-defense system
MANPATS	man-portable antitank system
MIRA	Mercy International Relief Agency
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Medicines Sans Frontiers
NCA	National Constituent Assembly
NFD	Northern Frontier District
NGO	nongovernmental organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Army
OTC	Oversea Transport Company
PDP	Peace and Development Party
PMPF	Puntland Maritime Police Force
PRMC	Pumwani Riyadya Mosque Committee
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSOD	Peace Support Operations Division
RKB	Ras Kamboni Brigade
ROE	Rules Of Engagement
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
SDG	Somalia Donor Group
SDM	Somali Democratic Movement
SHOC	Somali Humanitarian Operational Consortium
SIC	Sharia Implementation Council
SICC	Supreme Islamic Courts Counsel
SIF	Syrian Islamic Front
SIMAD	Somali Institute of Management and Administrative Development

Abbreviations

SNA	Somali National Alliance
SNA	Somali National Army
SNF	Somali National Front
SNM	Somalia National Movement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SRC	Senior Revolutionary Council
SRCC	Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission
SRRC	Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council
SRSP	Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party
SSDF	Somali Salvation Democratic Front
SSICC	Somali Supreme Islamic Courts Council
SSLF	Somali Salvation and Liberation Front
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TFI	Transitional Federal Institution
TJRC	Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission
TNG	Transitional National Government
TSC	Technical Selection Committee
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UGR	ungovernable region
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNPOS	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Program
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Force
USC	United Somali Congress
WAMY	World Association of Muslim Youth

Introduction

In 2011, the international community, through the United Nations, devised a political roadmap (“Roadmap for the End of the Transition”) for Somalia’s stakeholders: the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Puntland, Galmudug, and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a (ASWJ). The roadmap has ambitious goals: peace and security, reconciliation and an outreach program, and the adoption of a new constitution. In essence, the roadmap was designed to lay the groundwork for an independent, secure, and permanent state of Somalia.¹

Since August 2011, African Union, Kenyan, and Ethiopian troops, alongside the TFG forces and a coalition of Somali militias, have liberated the major towns from the radical Islamic movement al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen. The military defeat of the al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen and the implementation of the Somalia “road map” is a sign of hope after decades of despair and could be a turning point for the country and a step toward democracy and restoration.

Somalia has lacked a stable central government since the country’s 1991 civil war, and in the years since it has experienced ongoing clan violence, the rise of armed groups, Islamic radicalization, invasion by outside forces, widespread banditry, piracy, and famine. The crises in Somalia pose a danger not only to the Horn of Africa, but also to the security and economies of the region and the world. Almost 50 percent of the world’s maritime trade passes through the region, and attacks by pirates cost the world economy more than US\$7 billion annually, making the Somali crisis an international one.² The Horn of Africa’s military theater now includes the widest array of international forces after Afghanistan. The United States, China, Russia, and the European Union all maintain naval forces in the region to combat piracy.³

On the ground, the Somali civil war turned into a regional and international conflict with African Union (AMISOM), Kenyan, and

Ethiopian forces fighting alongside the Somali government forces against the al-Qaeda–affiliated al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen and its allied Islamic groups. And al-Shabaab has shown little resistance, strategically abandoning its former strongholds, bases, and training camps while adopting guerrilla and terror tactics in the face of larger and better-equipped armies. But al-Shabaab, though weakened, is far from a spent force, and it is no longer the only threat to stability. The resurgence of interclan competition and warlordism is just as serious. Places such as Kismayo, Ras Kamboni, and Baidoa are microcosms of the largely unseen Somalia outside of Mogadishu. Observers say regions such as these will test the transition from failed state to stable democracy.

While there is an understandable inclination to strengthen the central government in Mogadishu and its security apparatus, past and present transitional administrations have failed to bring stability, in large part because many clans do not support the reestablishment of a strong central government.⁴ My book *Somalia between Jihad and Restorations* (published in 2008) analyzed the background and events that led the Somali society to Islamization, the rise and fall of the Islamic Courts Union, and the international efforts to stabilize war-torn Somalia (until December 2006).⁵

In 2012, Somalia reached a crossroad with two main alternatives:

- Formation of a moderate and pragmatic state (with the support of the United Nations, United States, European Union, and African Union)
- Remaining a “failed state” and a theater of chaos and endless jihad

In 2014, the Somali government gave priority to justice and security sector reform, but insecurity in Mogadishu and other government-controlled areas remains a serious challenge. The unresolved implementation of the proposed federalism plan led to open conflict, notably in the contested port town of Kismayo, where fighting broke out in June 2013 between rival militia.

In 2014, the Islamist armed group al-Shabaab still maintains control of much of southern Somalia, and the group increased attacks on high-profile civilian locales in Mogadishu, including the courthouse, a popular restaurant, and the United Nations compound and the presidential palace (February 2014), killing scores of civilians.⁶

The time of transition may be over, but it is clear that the work of transformation is just beginning. So, will this be the end of political and social chaos in Somalia? This book analyzes the dramatic events

in Somalia since 2006 and the new opportunities for restoration of the country because of the “road map,” improved security conditions, and the potential for massive international support.

Notes

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3. Ibid.
4. “Somalia: An Opportunity That Should Not Be Missed,” Africa Briefing 87, *International Crises Group*, February 22, 2012.
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Somalia: Historical Review

Background

Somalia is situated in the African Horn, an important strategic location overlooking the passageway between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.¹ Lying on the east coast, along the Horn of East Africa, Somalia is a coastal country with the Indian Ocean to the east and south and the Gulf of Aden to the north. Land boundaries are shared with Djibouti to the north, by Ethiopia to its north and northwest, and Kenya in the southwest.

The Gulf of Aden, situated at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula between Somalia and Yemen, is one of the most important trade routes in the world. It is the southern gateway to the Suez Canal, which connects Europe and North America with Asia and East Africa. About 10 percent of global shipping traffic passes through it every month, including 4 percent of the world's daily crude oil supply.

The Jubba and the Shabelle Rivers flow through Somalia on their way to the Indian Ocean. Both rivers originate in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. The region between them makes up most of Somalia's agricultural farmland before it opens out into pastures southwest of the Jubba River that go all the way to the Kenyan border. But Somalia is basically an arid country, prone to periodic droughts and famines.

Somalia was a target for Western colonialism from the sixteenth century until the last century and alternated between Portuguese, Italian, French, and British control. The first Europeans to gain a foothold in Somalia were the British, who were forced to do so to protect the all-important trade routes to India and the Far East. The British consolidated their position in 1839 by gaining control over the strategic port of Aden in the Arabian Sea.

Between 1840 and 1886, the British East India Company established a series of trade treaties with various Somali chiefs. Italy also had a hand in the early establishment of Somalia and marked out the boundaries

of Italian Somaliland in the south between 1897 and 1908. Ethiopia claimed the Ogaden region of western Somaliland in 1897.

The first uprising against colonialism occurred when Somalis sought to push the Ethiopians out of the Ogaden region but then decided to target European colonists as well. The Dervish State, headed by Moham-med Abdullah Hassan, an Ogaden whom the British referred to as “Mad Mullah,” conducted a religious-based war of resistance against the Ethiopians and British from 1899 to 1920, resulting in the deaths of nearly one-third of northern Somalia’s population. Great Britain defeated Hassan in 1920.

The arrival of the twentieth century saw the northern part become the protectorate of British Somaliland while the south became Italian Somaliland. Italy maintained control of Italian Somaliland as a part of its African empire (including Ethiopia and Eritrea) until 1941. During World War II, Great Britain also took over these areas and ruled them as military protectorates until 1949, at which time the newly-formed United Nations granted Italy a trusteeship over most of present-day Somalia while the British retained a trusteeship over what is today the self-declared state of Somaliland.

Italy dedicated significant effort toward developing its colony, but Great Britain took a more hands-off approach to governance, leaving more responsibility in the hands of local leaders and providing little in the way of infrastructure. These distinctions are often cited as the underpinnings of the incompatibility that would arise between the two areas.

In the aftermath of World War II, as more and more colonies broke free of their colonial shackles, Somalia too went through similar throes, and in 1950, Italian Somalia became a UN trust territory. On June 26, 1960, after the ten-year interim period, the northern protectorate of Somaliland gained independence from Britain. Five days later, the two former colonies united to form the United Republic of Somalia under President Aden Abdullah Osman Daar, Prime Minister Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, and a 123-member national assembly representing both territories.

Daar ruled Somalia from 1960 to 1967. Shermarke succeeded him and led the country for two years until his assassination in 1969. Though northern and southern Somalia were united under one government, they operated as two separate countries, with different legal, administrative, and educational systems.

Since its establishment, Somalia has suffered from political instability and intertribal conflict. The delicate issue of Greater Somalia, whose re-creation would entail the detachment from Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya of Somali-inhabited areas, presented Somali leaders with a dilemma: they wanted peace with their neighbors, but making claims on their territory was certain to provoke hostility. The radicals wanted to include in the constitution an article calling for the unification of the Somali nation “by all means necessary.” In the end, the moderate majority prevailed in modifying the wording to demand “reunification of the dismembered nation by peaceful means.”

Somali Society

The Somalis are a culturally, linguistically, and religiously homogeneous people who are divided along clan lines and sparsely scattered over a harsh, dry land. There are significant distinctions among sectors of the population, related in part to variations in means of livelihood.

The overwhelming majority of Somalis speak the Somali language. Ethnic Somalis number around 20–25 million and are principally concentrated in Somalia (over ten million), Ethiopia (4–5 million), northeastern Kenya (about 1.5 million), Djibouti (350,000), and over a million living in non-East African countries and parts of the Middle East, North America, and Europe because of the Somali civil war.²

Most of the Somali population is Sunni Muslim. But despite the religious homogeneity, the Somali society is characterized by tribal division and infinite rivalries against a background of personal and sectarian power struggles.

Although 95 percent of the population are ethnic Somalis sharing a common culture, in traditional society they have segmented themselves into a hierarchical system based on patrilineal descent. The major branches of the Somali lineage system are four overwhelmingly pastoral nomadic clan families (the Dir, Darood, Isaaq, and Hawiye, collectively known as the Samaal) and two agricultural ones (the Digil and Rahanwayn). Their constituent units are the clans, which are made up of lineages that are themselves further segmented.

The four main tribes are

- The Darood is the largest Somali clan. Its members live throughout northeastern and southwestern Somalia and the Jubba River Valley as well as in northern Kenya and in Ogaden

- The Hawiye members live in central and southern Somalia, in larger numbers in Kenya and Ethiopia and in smaller numbers in other countries. As of 2007, the Hawiye are the most dominant clan in the Somali capital of Mogadishu
- The Dir members live mostly in northern, central (Mudug), and southern Somalia, as well as in Ethiopia's Somali region and in Djibouti
- The Isaaq members live mainly in Somaliland and the Somali region in Ethiopia³

These four tribes are divided into subtribes, extended families and clans, which either cooperate or compete with each other. The strongest basis for loyalty is family and extended family, while on the tribal and national scope, the level of solidarity and loyalty becomes steadily weaker. The confrontations between the various social components have been a frequent phenomenon throughout Somali history; however, there have been various institutions charged with resolving these conflicts, such as councils of the tribal leaders and elders and various Islamic institutions.⁴

Most of Somalia's population is split between nomadic tribes and tribes with permanent residences. The fertile and cultivated lands are mainly in the southwest, where the country's two perennial rivers, the Jubba and the Shabelle, are located. This area serves as Somalia's wheat granary and provided a solution for the years of drought during which the roaming residents relied on the produce of the farmers, either via commerce or by invading the area and forcibly confiscating the food.⁵

The Dir, Darood, Isaaq, and Hawiye, which together make up the Samaal clans, constitute roughly 75 percent of the population. Most Samaal clans are widely-distributed pastoralists, although a growing minority of them are settled cultivators. The Digil and Rahanwayn constitute about 20 percent of the population. They are settled in the riverine regions of southern Somalia and rely on a mixed economy of cattle and camel husbandry and cultivation.

The traditional social structure was characterized by competition and conflict between descent groups. Among the Samaal, the search for pasture and water drove clans and lineages physically apart or pitted them against each other. The Digil and Rahanwayn (cultivators of the south) had a history of warfare over trade and religious matters and of fighting the encroachments of camel-herding nomads.⁶

Whatever their common origin, the Samaal and the Digil and Rahanwayn evolved differently as they adapted to different physical environments. With some exceptions, the Samaal lived in areas that

supported a pastoralism based mainly on camels, sheep, and goats. The Digil and Rahanwayn lived in the area between the rivers where they raised cattle and came to enslave the non-Somali cultivators who were there when they arrived. After the demise of slavery in the 1920s, the Digil and Rahanwayn undertook cultivation themselves.⁷

The Samaal considered themselves superior to settled Somalis. Lineage remained the focal point of loyalty for pastoral nomads. Some texts refer to these two mainly-agricultural clans of Digil and Rahanwayn as Sab. However, members of the Digil and Rahanwayn and most Somalis consider the appellation *Sab* derogatory. Used as a common noun meaning “ignoble,” the term *sab* was applied by the Samaal to groups that pursued certain disdained occupations. The Samaal felt that the Sab had lowered themselves by their reliance on agriculture and their readiness to assimilate foreign elements into their clans. Traditionally, the Rahanwayn are considered a Digil offshoot that became larger than the parent group. The Digil and Rahanwayn developed a heterogeneous society that accorded status to different groups on the basis of origin and occupation. Group cohesion developed a territorial dimension among the settled agriculturists.⁸

Relations between and within groups underwent changes during the colonial era and after independence. Armed conflict between descent groups (or in the south, territorial units) became rare during the two decades (the 1960s and 1970s) following independence. However, in the 1980s and early 1990s, as President Ziad Barre incited and inflamed clan rivalries to divert public attention from the problems of his increasingly unpopular regime, Somali society began to witness an unprecedented outbreak of inter- and intra-clan conflicts. The basic modes of social organization and relations persisted, however, particularly among the pastoral nomads. Moreover, national politics often operated in terms of relationships between segments of various kinds.⁹

Along the southern coast, in the valleys of the Jubba and Shabelle Rivers and in a few places between the rivers, small groups live—probably totaling less than 2 percent of the population—who differ culturally and physically from the Somalis. Some are descendants of pre-Somali inhabitants of the area who were able to resist absorption or enslavement by the Somalis. The ancestors of others were slaves who escaped to found their own communities or were freed in the course of European antislavery activity in the nineteenth century. The Somali term for these people, particularly the riverine and inter-riverine cultivators, is *habash*.¹⁰

Tradition, as transmitted orally from father to son, has the force of law among the nomads. That nomad order prescribes what to do in every conceivable situation and directs the nomad's attitude toward life. The nomad's value system is all embracing and clearly defined. It draws its content from tradition and mainstream Islamic beliefs.¹¹

There is strong belief in Allah, upon whose mercy and compassion one finds prosperity and luck or whose wrath destroys whole populations. It is Allah who is worshipped, his prophets professed, the saints revered, and the ancestors appeased and respected. Only then can a society lead a decent life protected from natural catastrophes.¹² The corollary of these values is manifested in the fatalist philosophy that the nomad holds true. Any conceivable situation, social or ecological, depends on the will of God. To the nomad, nothing in the world of nature functions but in accordance with God's will. The other corollary is to profess Islam, the religion ordained by the Almighty through his prophet, Mohammed, and to abide by its tenets.¹³

Because the Somali family is an extended unit, ancestors are revered and accorded holy or saintly status. Members of a clan aspire to appease their ancestors through offerings and ritual ceremonies, in the hope that they will take care of their offspring and will avert any evil that may fall on them.¹⁴

Religious men, *wadaad*, play a vital role among the nomads. They treat the sick and initiate the rituals of offerings, ceremonies, feasts, marriage, and death. Traditionally, the *wadaad* were the first to teach students in a classroom.¹⁵

Another component of Somali society is the urban class, mainly consisting of merchants and clerks that are closer to the secular culture, having moved a relatively long way from the religious and tribal systems.¹⁶

Most of the internal conflicts in Somalia during the modern era have erupted due to the uprising of one of the tribal groups against an attempt to impose a collective Somali identity and its desire to protect its self-definition and freedom as a group.

The Islamic faith is one of the identities that cuts across clan lines. In precolonial times, rural Somali communities recognized two distinct authorities: clan elders and religious leaders. Their responsibilities overlapped to the extent that Islam was essentially assimilated into clan culture. This symbiotic relationship has persisted throughout the colonial and post-colonial era.¹⁷ (Islam in Somalia is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.)

Ziad Barre's Administration¹⁸

Britain withdrew from British Somaliland in 1960 to allow its protectorate to join with Italian Somaliland and form the new nation of Somalia. In the first nine years of its existence the Somali state was a parliamentary democracy that allowed unrestricted political activity, and the political and social systems incorporated traditional tribal norms and values together with Western lifestyles and values.¹⁹ One of the expressions of the conservative aspects was the marginal role of women in the political system; it was May 1963 before the right to vote was granted to all Somali women.

When Somalia gained its independence in 1960, the Cold War was at its peak, and the conflict played a determinant role in perpetuating hostilities among the Somalis. During this era, Somalia was a theater of superpower rivalry for strategic advantage, and the state was part of this Cold War policy. To this regard, the conflict among domestic forces, as well as Somalia and neighboring states, such as Ethiopia, were constantly meddled with by external patrons.

Regrettably, it is quite understandable that the so-called superpowers at that time first and foremost served their own geopolitical interests and only after that the domestic interests of their client states. Thus, it was the priority of both the United States and the Soviet Union to contain each other's influence on Somalia.

Muhammad Ziad Barre was orphaned at the age of ten, and until adulthood he had struggled to support himself as a goatherd in Somaliland, which at that time was an Italian colony. He then joined the Italian colonial police and quickly rose in the ranks. In 1960, when Somalia was granted independence, Barre was appointed deputy commander of the Somali army, which was being founded at the time, and five years later he was appointed commander of the Somali army.

In March 1969, General Ziad Barre initiated a military coup and seized control. The elected president, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, was deposed, and Somali democracy ceased to exist. Somalia then became a state controlled by a military regime. And the military government in Somalia with the support of the Soviet Union built the fourth-largest modern sophisticated army in sub-Saharan Africa.

Barre not only introduced governmental changes, but he also aspired to instigate a Marxist revolution that would introduce fundamental changes in Somalia's political, social, and economic systems. Barre introduced elements that constituted a radical break with the past.

The new regime soon declared socialism as its frame of reference, in part as a means of obtaining Soviet aid. The regime's basic ideas constituted a pragmatic version of Marxism adapted to local social and economic conditions. In this version, class struggle did not apply; the bourgeoisie was very small, composed of the new elite and sub-elite (chiefly employed in government), a few traders, and a few professionals. There was no significant proletariat, rural or urban, and no great Somali entrepreneurs or landholders. In this framework, Barre became a close ally of the Soviet Union in East Africa. The Soviets supplied Barre with weapons, military equipment, and advisers, and with their help, Barre proceeded to build up a strong army with which he attempted to resolve conflicts with his neighbors and his adversaries from within.

Thus, the militarization also militarized the body politic, and violent methods became the means for internal suppression and controlling the population. On top of that, the military regime in Somalia remained in power with the political, military, and economic support of its Cold War patrons, despite its naked human-rights violations. The reason, namely, in terms of geopolitical significance, Somalia ranked high, and as long as this strategy served the interests of foreign powers, the domestic brutality of the ruling regime remained unquestioned.

However, the then-Somali leadership knew that the United States and its Western allies were providing more substantial military aid to Ethiopia, and as a result, Siyad Barre allied with the Soviet Union. This alliance finally engulfed in a special friendship agreement, which guaranteed steady aid programs, mostly arms and military equipment. Meanwhile, its archenemy, Ethiopia, remained on the side of the USA-led bloc. And from then on, an arms race between the two countries took place.

In its initial zest for change, the new regime focused on the divisions in Somali society: the cleavages between clans and lineages, the settled and the nomadic, strong and weak pastoral lineages competing for grazing land and water, patrons and clients in the cultivating regions, and urban and rural dwellers. Attention was also given to the continuing disdain shown to those of low status. Under the new regime, clan and lineage affiliations were irrelevant to social relations, and the use of pejorative labels to describe specific groups thought inferior to Somalis was forbidden. All Somalis were asked to call each other *jaalle* (comrade), regardless of hereditary affiliation.²⁰

The Revolutionary Council, with Barre at its head, served as Somalia's government, changed the political and organizational structure of the government, and formulated a new ideology that incorporated Islam and Communism.

In 1969, a short time after his ascendancy to power, Barre declared that he would act against the tribal and sectorial characteristics of Somali politics and society. He claimed that the tribal mentality constituted a threat against Somalia's unity, and in the name of the struggle against this danger, he banned all political and party activity. But in practical terms, in the twenty-one years of his regime, Barre also based his political power on tribal and sectorial loyalty. Most of the influential and powerful positions were allocated by Barre among the three main clans of the Darood tribe: the clan to which he belonged, Marehaan; the clan of his son-in-law, Dhulbahante; and the clan of his mother, Ogaden. The remaining tribes and clans were permitted to claim the "leftover" crumbs from the Somali government's "cake." The ban on political and party activities made the tribal association the only legal possibility for group organization; therefore, a clear link was created between the tribal and political interests.

In 1971, Barre declared his intention to convert the revolutionary military regime to a civilian government, thus leading to the establishment of a governmental party: the Somali Revolutionary Socialist Party (SRSP). The members of this party's central committee were also the members of the Revolutionary Council.²¹

Modern political Islamic movements did not emerge in Somalia until the late 1960s, when Somali students (particularly those studying at Al-Azhar University in Egypt) and employment seekers were exposed to the teaching and public support for political Islam in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries where al-Iqwan al-Muslimin (the Muslim Brotherhood) was gaining widespread support. Upon returning from abroad, many of these individuals formed parallel Somali movements to al-Iqwan, seeking to peacefully transform the Somali state to one based on Islamic law (Sharia). Their beliefs led to public resistance to Ziad Barre's plans for "scientific socialism" and ultimately to government repression. For example, when followers of the movement publicly rejected the "family law" of 1975 for its recognition and promotion of the legal and economic equality of women, demonstrations were eventually put down by the execution of ten prominent clerics.

Following the repression and fracturing of al-Iqwan, a period of relative inactivity followed when Islamist organizations were not prominent in Somali politics. However, instead of disappearing altogether, the remnants of al-Iqwan went underground and began organizing for their political return at a later date.²²

In 1977–1978, a brutal war waged between Somalia and Ethiopia because of Somalia's demand to control the Somali population in the Ogaden desert. The Somali forces were defeated, and more than a million Somali refugees fled from Ogaden to Somalia, placing an onerous burden on its already collapsing economy. The combination of Somalia's defeat, the refugee problem that resulted, and the severe economic crisis that struck the country in the mid-1970s forced Barre to appeal to the international community for humanitarian aid.²³

The economic and social crisis also led to the establishment of opposition pockets to Barre's regime from among his own tribe and party, in addition to the adversaries from rival political and tribal circles. Facing the threat against his regime, Barre began a campaign to suppress his adversaries; many were arrested, tortured, and even executed, and tribes that were hostile to the regime were severely punished. Barre's economic and political distress from within and his disappointment with the Soviet stance during the Ogaden war triggered a significant shift in his policies. He abandoned his alliance with the Soviets and appealed to the United States and the West for aid.²⁴

The United States hastened to assist Barre, thus ousting the Soviet Union from this important strategic stronghold on the shores of the Red Sea. The United States granted Barre generous aid, directly and through the international bank, to enable his regime to survive.²⁵ In exchange, Somalia allowed the United States to utilize docking services at the strategic port of Berbera, which had previously served the Soviet navy.

In return for the stream of economic and military aid pouring in from the West, Barre was requested to implement a more liberal policy, preserve human rights in his country, and act to establish a democratic political system. As a result of these pressures, in December 1979, Barre declared elections for the parliament in which the "People's Parliament" was elected, but in effect all of the elected parliament members were affiliated with the SRSP, the governing party.

Following the elections, Barre also introduced changes to the composition of the executive branch. He rescinded the roles of the three vice presidents and consequently reinstated the Revolutionary

Council (in October 1980). As a result of these changes, in practical terms, three congruent bureaucratic mechanisms functioned in one governmental system:

1. the party's politburo, which held executive authority through the Central Council (which was an executive entity)
2. the Council of Ministers
3. the Senior Revolutionary Council (SRC)²⁶

The multiplicity of mechanisms and the competition between them enabled Barre to fortify his own status and left him with the decision-making process through the strategy of "divide and conquer." However, the failing bureaucracy and the political power struggles prevented the restoration of the Somali economy, despite the economic aid received from the West.

Against this background, in February 1982, Barre set out for the United States. To minimize the criticism against his regime, on the eve of this visit, he made the gesture of liberating two political prisoners who had been incarcerated since 1969. But at the end of his visit, when he saw that the political criticism in his country was rising, he initiated a new wave of suppression of opposition members and of those entities that he perceived as a threat to his status. On June 7, 1982, Barre commanded the arrest of seventeen leading politicians and public figures, including the chief of staff, the former vice president, and a former foreign minister as well as some politburo members. The arrests triggered an atmosphere of terror and crisis, and as a result, opposition elements consolidated into a united front, mainly on a tribal basis, with the aim of toppling the government.

In July 1982, Somalia faced not only internal problems but also an external threat in the form of an invasion by Somali exiles, with the aid of Ethiopian army units and combat planes, into the state's north-western regions and its center, thus threatening to cut the country in two. Barre declared a state of emergency and requested Western aid to repel the invaders. The US administration agreed, rushing weapons shipments and doubling its economic aid. After several weeks of fighting, the invasion was deflected, and Barre was again free to deal with his adversaries at home.

In December 1984, with a desire to intensify his government's legitimacy, Barre introduced several amendments to the constitution, including an extension of the president's term of office from six to seven years and an amendment that allowed the president to be elected in a

referendum instead of by the Central Council (the executive body). It is to be noted that in referendums that Barre held during his term of office he always won 99 percent of the votes, and therefore the amendment of the constitution in this matter was geared at fortifying his control and granting his regime a broad, popular basis of support.²⁷

The Rival Factions in Somalia (1991)

As stated previously, the Somali society was characterized by a large range of power brokers arrayed on a tribal, clan, and extended-family basis. Some of these power centers established political movements and militias aimed at protecting the group's interests in the Somali political system. It is possible to count five main movements, all on a tribal and regional basis, that were prominent in the power struggles in Somalia during the early 1990s:

1. the United Somali Congress (USC) of the Hawiye tribe in central Somalia, the dominant movement in the state
2. the Somalia National Movement (SNM) of the Isaaq tribe in the Somaliland area
3. the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) in the Ogaden area
4. the Somali Salvation and Liberation Front (SSLF) of the Mayerteen tribe
5. the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM) of the Rahanwein tribe in northern Somalia

The movements were generally divided up into two main groups:

1. North Somali movements, headed by the SNM, which represented tribes and populations from the former British colony
2. Central Somali movements, headed by the USC, which represented tribes and populations from the former Italian colony

Although the regional and tribal division provides a relatively convenient way to distinguish between power brokers, the political reality was actually far more complex, and splits and rifts within the ranks of the political movements, in addition to a shifting of loyalties, were prevalent in Somali society.

After the collapse of the Ziad Barre government in 1991, a number of different movements developed in Somalia whose ideology and objectives cover a wide spectrum of political philosophy. These include al-Islah, al-Tabliq, al-Takfir, and al-Ittihad. Even a brief overview of the interests and activities of these various movements warns against any simple conflation of all politically-organized Islamist groups as

“fundamentalist” or “terrorist.” For example, al-Islah, whose name translates to “reconciliation” or “meditation,” seeks to infuse Somali politics with a liberal reading of Islamic values through entirely nonviolent means. Membership in the movement is generally drawn from the educated elite of the Hawiye clan, including former politicians and civil servants, academics, health and engineering professionals, and businessman traders. Their activities are focused in Mogadishu, including basic literacy training in Koranic schools, vocational training, and higher education at Mogadishu University.

Some humanitarian organizations, such as Mercy International, are integrally connected to al-Islah. Of the modern political Islamic organizations, al-Islah appears the most moderate and, because of its adherence to internationally recognized principles of human rights and gender equality as a member of the Peace and Human Rights Network, finds itself in confrontation with more militant movements such as al-Ittihad.²⁸

At the end of 1990 and the beginning of 1991, there was widespread insurrection initiated by the tribes and power brokers in Somalia against the government of General Barre, who had governed Somalia for twenty-one years at that point. Because of the insurrection, Barre was forced to flee Somalia, and he was given political sanctuary in Nigeria, where he died in 1995. Most of his associates and supporters, who fulfilled central roles in the administrative and governmental mechanisms, also fled Mogadishu, and the capital was left in governmental chaos.

The End of Ziad Barre’s Government and the Civil War

After the regime’s collapse in early 1991, Somalia descended into turmoil, factional fighting, and anarchy. Worst of all, when the Cold War ended, the departing superpowers left behind an enormous quantity of weaponry, which turned the entire land of Somalia into an armed camp.

In May 1991, northern clans declared an independent Republic of Somaliland that now includes the administrative regions of Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag, and Sool. Although not recognized by any government, this entity has maintained a stable existence and continues efforts to establish a constitutional democracy, including holding municipal, parliamentary, and presidential elections. The regions of Bari, Nugaal, and northern Mudug comprise a neighboring semiautonomous state of Puntland, which has been self-governing since 1998 but does not aim at independence; it has also made strides

toward reconstructing a legitimate, representative government but has suffered some civil strife. Puntland disputes its border with Somaliland as it also claims portions of eastern Sool and Sanaag.

The two main contenders for control of Somalia came from the ranks of the United Somali Congress (USC), the dominant political movement in Somalia at that time: Ali Mahdi Muhammad and General Muhammad Farah Aidid.²⁹

Ali Mahdi Muhammad was one of the USC leaders and a member of the Hawiye tribe and the Abgal extended family, which resides mainly in the Mogadishu area. He had been a teacher and a government clerk prior to his election to the House of Representatives (the republic's National Congress) in March 1969. Following Ziad Barre's coup in October 1996, Muhammad was arrested along with many other politicians. He was released from prison several years later and then launched a career in business. In the 1980s, he served as the manager of the UN offices in Mogadishu. At the same time, he used his financial resources to assist guerilla fighters affiliated with the USC in their struggle against Ziad Barre.

In May 1990, Muhammad was among those who signed a petition demanding that Ziad Barre introduce democratic reforms. Barre responded with a rash of arrests; Muhammad fled to Rome where he continued to act against Barre's government from the USC offices there. In the framework of the internal struggle in the ranks of the USC, Ali Mahdi Muhammad relied on supporters within the USC, members of his own tribe, and a loose coalition with other tribes.

General Muhammad Farah Aidid was also one of the senior leaders of the USC and a member of the Hawiye tribe, but he belonged to the Habar Gadir extended family, which resides in central Somalia. Although his father was a simple camel raiser, Aidid studied in Italian schools and then in the Soviet Union. Aidid spoke several Western languages and was considered an intelligent, though somewhat erratic, individual.

During the administration of President Ziad Barre, Aidid fulfilled senior roles; he served as a senior officer in the army with the rank of general, a cabinet member, an ambassador to India, and the director of Somalia's intelligence. However, Barre suspected that Aidid was subverting him and incarcerated him for a period of six years.

In the framework of the internal struggle in the ranks of the USC between Aidid and Ali Mahdi Muhammad, Aidid was supported by his tribe and a relatively broad coalition of other tribes, as well as political and military power brokers, called the Somali National Alliance (SNA).

Following the collapse of Barre's regime, the USC declared the establishment of a temporary government, but its actual rule was limited. The USC elected Ali Mahdi Muhammad as its temporary president. According to the 1979 constitution, the president serves as the head of state, and he is authorized to appoint a government; accordingly, Ali Mahdi Muhammad appointed Omar Arta Galib, of the Isaaq tribe, as temporary prime minister. Galib established a government with twenty-seven ministers and eight deputy ministers. This step accentuated the importance that Muhammad attributed to the establishment of a coalition on a tribal basis and to the broadening of a legitimate basis for his government.

In June 1991, elections were held for the leadership of the USC, and Aidid was elected chairman of the movement. But despite the defeat within his movement, Ali Mahdi Muhammad refused to relinquish the presidency, which he had taken at the end of 1990. Because of Muhammad's actions, Aidid strengthened his links with his allies in the SNA and initiated forceful steps to depose Ali Mahdi Muhammad and his associates.³⁰ Ali Mahdi Muhammad declared that it was his true intention to hold general elections the moment that the security circumstances allowed it, but the internal power struggles in the USC and the resistance of opposition elements to Muhammad's government prevented any possibility of holding elections. The country rapidly deteriorated into a civil war.

Thus, in the beginning of 1992, a civil war erupted in Somalia that quickly spread from Mogadishu to the other parts of the land. In the fighting in Mogadishu, Aidid had the upper hand, and his forces overtook most parts of the city. But they were unable to uproot Ali Mahdi's forces in several quarters, leaving the capital divided. After their relative success in the capital, Aidid and his men set out to dominate the central and southern parts of the country. The ruthless battle between the rival tribes and factions along with the collapse of all governmental systems, including the supply of basic products, in addition to the severe drought that prevailed in the area (which reportedly caused the deaths of some 300,000 people in 1992), culminated in a major disaster for Somali residents.

The UN Operation Restore Hope

The United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and other organizations, sought to resolve the conflict. In 1991, the secretary-general dispatched an envoy to whom all faction

leaders expressed support for a United Nations' peace role. The United Nations also became engaged in providing humanitarian aid, in cooperation with relief organizations. The war had resulted in nearly one million refugees and almost five million people threatened by hunger and disease.

In January 1992, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo against Somalia. The secretary-general organized talks between the parties, who agreed on a cease-fire, to be monitored by United Nations observers, and on the protection of humanitarian convoys by United Nations security personnel. In April, the council established the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I).

The UN offices in Mogadishu were opened shortly after the victory of Aidid's forces over Ali Mahdi Muhammad, and in this situation it was clear to the UN representatives that they were too late to achieve any kind of compromise between the warring parties. Therefore, the UN activity focused on humanitarian aid to ease the starvation and suffering of the inhabitants.³¹ The UN secretary-general defined the situation in Somalia as anarchy and viewed the achievement of a cease-fire and the confiscation of weapons from the rival sides as a pivotal step toward resolving Somalia's problems. Therefore, the United Nations decided (with US support) to dispatch an international force under UN auspices with the following roles: providing humanitarian relief for Somalia's starving population, disarming the fighting sides, and forming a stable central government based on the Western model.³²

The UN's steps came up against dogged resistance on the part of traditional power brokers and entities with political interests in Somalia, and the UN's humanitarian mission rapidly deteriorated into a violent confrontation with local militias, particularly with the forces of General Aidid, which inflicted heavy casualties on the UN forces. The rival parties in Somalia understood that the humanitarian aid arriving via the United Nations constituted the key to control of the state and its population and therefore did everything in their power to achieve control over the distribution of humanitarian relief.³³

Ali Mahdi Muhammad, who continued to claim that the role of state president was his even after his defeat at the hands of Aidid, argued that he should be the only person with the authority to supervise the allocation of humanitarian aid and set standards for eligibility and prioritization for its distribution. When the United Nations refused to accept this demand, his forces bombed the Mogadishu port and attacked the distribution sites of humanitarian aid. Ali Mahdi Muhammad claimed

that the attacks were carried out by desperate and uncontrolled elements among his forces, but it was evident that he was the person who decided to deprive the general population of humanitarian aid if it was not conducted under his control.

Meanwhile, General Aidid argued that the distribution of the relief should be handled by his own people, who controlled most of the country's territory, and accused the United Nations and Arab countries of taking sides in the conflict and being accomplices to Ali Mahdi Muhammad's actions.

In view of the increasing difficulties surrounding the distribution of the humanitarian aid in Somalia, in November 1992, the United States decided to dispatch a large military force whose role would be to enable the UN delegation to assist the suffering Somali citizens. The US decision came up against the strong opposition of various power brokers in Somalia, who were afraid of losing their power if they relinquished their control over the supply of food and international humanitarian aid.³⁴

On November 2, 1992, Aidid threatened that any deployment of foreign forces in Somalia would end in bloodshed, and the USC spokesperson stated that the reference was to the American armed forces that were impairing Somali sovereignty. Because of the US and UN refusal to take his side in the confrontation, Aidid launched a series of steps aimed at reinforcing his status in anticipation of a possible confrontation with the Americans. Aidid convened a conference of leaders of various sectors in Somali society to gain their support for the SNA and their loyalty to its leadership. At the same time, on November 10, 1992, Aidid's forces took over fifteen central intersections from gangs and local power brokers, thus achieving control over the country's main roadblocks and axes.³⁵ At the end of November, Aidid visited Kismayo—a city in the southern part of the country with an important port, an airport, and a central junction—and signed an agreement with several important power brokers, including

- Ahmad Omar Jays, chairman of the SPM, whose people controlled the area (Aidid appointed him deputy chairman of the SNA)
- Muhammad Nur Iliaw, leader of the SDM in the north
- Leaders of the Army for the Liberation of Somali, a relatively large underground movement whose main bases were in nearby Kenya

In a meeting with these leaders Aidid described the dangers threatening their control and demanded cooperation to protect joint interests. At the same time, Ali Mahdi Muhammad acted to build

up a counter-coalition, and held meetings with power brokers from Eritrea and Ethiopia to recruit aid in his struggle against Aidid.

However, despite the threats, on December 1, 1992, the two warring sides welcomed the arrival of the UN and the US forces. Nevertheless, each of the sides demanded that the United Nations and the United States recognize him as Somalia's legitimate leader and that the US forces take action against his adversary if he disrupted the distribution of humanitarian aid.

The relief effort was hampered by continued fighting and insecurity. In August, the Security Council decided to deploy some 3,000 additional troops to protect humanitarian aid. But the situation continued to worsen, with aid workers under attack as famine threatened 1.5 million people.

In November 1992, the United States offered to organize and lead an operation to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The Security Council accepted the offer and authorized the use of "all necessary means" to establish a secure environment for the relief effort. The Unified Task Force (UNITAF), made up of contingents from twenty-four countries led by the United States, quickly secured all major relief centers, and by year's end humanitarian aid was again flowing. UNOSOM remained responsible for protecting the delivery of assistance and for political efforts to end the war.

At a meeting convened by the secretary-general in early 1993, fourteen Somali political movements agreed on a cease-fire and pledged to hand over all weapons to UNITAF and UNOSOM. In March, the United Nations organized an aid conference at which donors pledged over US\$130 million. At a reconciliation conference organized by the secretary-general and his special representative for Somalia, the leaders of fifteen political movements endorsed an accord on disarmament, reconstruction, and the formation of a transitional government.

That March the Security Council also decided on a transition from UNITAF to a new United Nations peacekeeping operation—UNOSOM II—authorizing it to use force if necessary to ensure its mandate: securing a stable environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. UNOSOM II was also mandated to assist in the reconstruction of economic, social, and political life. But while UNITAF had patrolled less than half of the country with 37,000 well-equipped troops, the 22,000 United Nations peacekeepers were given the mandate to cover all of Somalia.

The Somali factions, however, did not observe the cease-fires. On June 24, 1993, UNOSOM II soldiers from Pakistan were killed in an attack in Mogadishu. Subsequently, clashes between UNOSOM and Somali militiamen in Mogadishu resulted in casualties among civilians and UNOSOM.

In October 1993, eighteen US soldiers of the Quick Reaction Force—deployed in support but not part of UNOSOM—lost their lives in an operation in Mogadishu. The United States immediately reinforced its military presence, but later announced that it would withdraw by early 1994. Belgium, France, and Sweden also decided to withdraw.

At this time, the secretary-general also held talks in Somalia while UNOSOM and United Nations agencies continued their reconciliation and relief efforts. Somali elders held reconciliation meetings in various parts of the country, and over 100,000 refugees returned to relatively peaceful parts of Somalia. In early 1994, the Security Council revised UNOSOM II's mandate, stressing assistance for reconciliation and reconstruction and setting a March 1995 deadline for the mission.

In March 1994, at talks brokered by the secretary-general's envoy, the fifteen major political movements signed a declaration of reconciliation. It provided for a cease-fire, the disarmament of militias, and a conference to appoint a new government. But preparations for the conference were repeatedly postponed. The secretary-general told the Security Council in September that UNOSOM II's ability to provide security had been reduced by troop withdrawals, budget restrictions, and military actions by the Somali factions. Wider problems included the lack of commitment to peace by the factions and insufficient political will by member states. The council approved reductions in the force.

With faction leaders still not complying with the 1993 and 1994 agreements, the Security Council extended UNOSOM for a final period. It urged factions to enact a cease-fire and to form a government of national unity. As no further progress was ever made, UNOSOM withdrew in March 1995.

Notes

1. Together with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, it is often referred to as the Horn of Africa because of its resemblance on the map to a rhinoceros's horn.
2. CIA World Factbook, "Somalia: People and Map of the Somalia Ethnic Groups," Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia, "Census 2007," *CIA World Factbook - Djibouti - People and Society*.

3. James Cameron, *The African Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), 176–180.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. *Somalia*, Country Studies Series, Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1988–1999.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Mohammed Farah Aidid and Satya Pal Ruhela, *The Dawn of Civilization to Modern Times* (Civic Webs Virtual Library, 1994).
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. “Somalia,” *CIA World Factbook*, 2000.
17. Andre La Sage, “Prospects for al-Ittihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia,” in *Review of African Political Economy* 27, no. 89 (September 2001).
18. This part based on Shaul Shay, *The Terror Triangle of the Red Sea* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005).
19. “Somalia,” *CIA World Factbook*, 2000.
20. *Somalia*, Country Studies Series, Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress, 1988–1999.
21. Robert F. Goreman, “The Anatomy of Somali Civil War and Famine,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (March 1993), 9–18.
22. Andre La Sage, “Prospects for Al-Ittihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia,” in *Review of African Political Economy* 27, no. 89 (September 2001).
23. Ibid.
24. “Somalia,” *CIA World Factbook*, 2000.
25. “Somalia’s Hopes,” *ABCNews.com*, October 26, 2001.
26. “Somalia,” *CIA World Factbook*, 2000.
27. Ibid.
28. Andre La Sage, “Prospects for Al-Ittihad and Islamist Radicalism in Somalia,” in *Review of African Political Economy* 27, no. 89 (September 2001).
29. “The Civil War in Somalia,” *CIA World Factbook*, 2000.
30. Ibid.
31. “Mission in Somalia,” *NomadNet.com*, December 5, 1993.
32. Ibid.
33. Robert F. Gorman, “The Anatomy of the Somali Civil War and Famine,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (March 1993), 9–18.
34. “Mission in Somalia,” *NomadNet.com*, December 5, 1993.
35. Ibid.

Islam in Somalia

Historical Background

Islamic faith is one of the basic Somali identities, along with class and race, that cuts across clan lines. Nearly all Somalis are Sunni Muslims. Practicing Islam reinforces distinctions that further set Somalis apart from their African neighbors, many of whom are either Christians or adherents of indigenous faiths.

Somalis have traditionally adhered to the Shafi'i school of Sunni Islam. Historically, most have belonged to one of the established Sufi orders and in their practices have fused local traditions and beliefs with Islam. Clan ancestors have been assimilated as *awliya*, or “trusted ones,” and Somali laws regularly incorporate elements of Sharia.¹ By the 1980s, more radical interpretations of Islam had begun to spread as Somali Muslim scholars returned from Egypt and Saudi Arabia to a country dealing with widespread corruption, economic downturn, and growing civil unrest.

The Islamic faith took root in the Horn of Africa and Somalia over a thousand years ago. Shortly after the Hijra, in 622, the Quraish, the Prophet Muhammad's tribe, started persecuting Muslims (ca. 670), and hundreds of the prophet's followers fled across the Indian Ocean to present-day Zaila and through Eritrea. So the Islam of Somalia dates back to the time of the Hijra, and many Somalis became Muslims even before the prophet Islamized the Arabs and Islam succeeded in Arabia.

The victory of the Muslims over the Quraish in the seventh century had a significant impact on Somalia's merchants and sailors, as their Arab trading partners had all adopted Islam, and the major trading routes in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea came under the sway of the Muslim caliphs. Through commerce, Islam spread among the Somali population in the coastal cities of Somalia, and instability in the Arabian Peninsula saw several migrations of Arab families to those areas. These clans came to serve as catalysts who forwarded the faith's prevalence

in the Somali peninsula. By the fourteenth century, the whole Horn of Africa, up to Kenya and Zanzibar, had flourishing Muslim cities and Muslim sultanates, such as Adal and Ifat.

In the 1300s, the ancient Somali Sheikh Yusuf al-Kowneyn (Barkadle) adapted Arabic script to the Somali way of reading for learning the Quran. Around this time, another sheikh by the name of Hussein of the Bale Oromo Arsi region left northern Somali, and Islam became well established in southern Ethiopia all the way to northern Ethiopia.

From the tenth to the sixteenth century, the Adal sultanate was a medieval Islamic state in what is now Djibouti in northern Somalia. The capital of Adal was Harar, and there were several significant trading ports, such as Zaila, on the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. In 1529, Ahmad Grāñ, the military leader of Adal, declared a jihad against Emperor Dawit II of Ethiopia and his Christian followers. His army, reinforced by nomadic Issa and Oromo fighters from Somalia and janissaries from the Ottoman Empire, swept into Ethiopia, driving up from the south, destroying monasteries and churches, and converting the people to Islam as they went. By 1533, Ahmad Grāñ controlled all but the northern highlands, but it was there that he finally met his match.

The Ethiopian emperor, Dawit II, appealed to the Portuguese for aid, and although it arrived too late for Dawit II, his successor, Emperor Galawdewos, was able to drive Ahmad Grāñ's forces back south, until they were finally defeated at the Battle of Wayna Daga on February 21, 1543.

Mogadishu is the capital and chief port of Somalia, and with a population reaching a million, it is also the largest city of Somalia. Mogadishu was established by Arab immigrants from the Persian Gulf and was one of the earliest in the long range of Arab settlements all over the East African coast. Its location attracted traders who traded across the Indian Ocean with Persia, India, and China. Mogadishu also prospered from trade with the interior, which spread Islam throughout Somalia. Trade increased among the Swahili cities of coastal East Africa around 1000, which drove the Mogadishu economy by the early 1100s.

In precolonial times, rural Somali communities recognized two distinct authorities: clan elders and religious leaders, whose responsibilities in the conduct of individual and community affairs overlapped to the extent that Islam was essentially assimilated into clan culture. This symbiotic relationship has persisted throughout the colonial and postcolonial era.²

Because Muslims believe that their faith was revealed in its complete form to the Prophet Muhammad, it has been difficult to adapt Islam to the social, economic, and political changes that began with the expansion of colonial rule in the late nineteenth century. Some modifications have occurred; however, one response was to stress a return to orthodox Muslim traditions and to completely oppose Westernization. The Sufi brotherhoods were at the forefront of this movement, personified in Somalia by Mohammed Abdullah Hassan in the early 1900s. Generally, the leaders of Islamic orders opposed the spread of Western education.

The modern revival of Islam addresses multiple strains in the society inflicted by colonialism and modernity. Its proponents advocate application of Sharia in all aspects of life and snub the secular idea of the state. Streams of ideas and groups belonging to this category are numerous and diversified. However, in Somalia, three main conceptions of Islamism are more visible. These are Salafism, represented mainly by al-Ittihad; the Muslim Brotherhood, represented mainly by al-Islah; and the Sufi orders.³

Somalia's postindependence civilian and military governments recognized Islam as the official state religion, but there was no tolerance for political Islam. Somali Islam can be traced to a common source: the Wahdat al-Shabaab al-Islami and the Jama'at al-Ahli al-Islami (also known as the al-Ahli group).³ These Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups developed in the 1960s and strove to be key players in liaising with the state and the setting of its mixed ideological agenda.

The rise to power of Mohamed Ziad Barre in 1969, however, deprived the Islamists of their status. When religious leaders challenged the government of Ziad Barre, in 1975, over a new family law that gave equal rights to men and women, ten Muslim scholars were publicly executed. Al-Ahli was forced to disband and al-Wahdat and other Islamist groups went underground or fled to the oil-rich states of the Gulf to join the diasporic Somalis.

By the 1980s, the Somali Islamist movement had grown considerably. Nevertheless, it was the ouster of the Barre dictatorship that gave a major boost to Islamic associations and organizations. Their common denominator was the desire for a unique form of Islamic regime in Somalia.⁴

The three Islamic trends—Salafism, Traditional Islam, and Sufi orders—are present in Somalia. The distinctions between the groups are not only doctrinal but also in leadership, dominant clan affiliation, and sectarian interests. While Sufi orders and Traditional Islam are

tolerant, Salafism is confrontational, and its followers have engaged in bloody confrontations with clannish factions.⁵

Sufi Islam in Somalia

Religious orders have always played a significant role in Somali Islam. The rise of these orders (*tarika*, “way” or “path”) was connected to the development of Sufism, a mystical sect within Islam that began during the ninth and tenth centuries and reached its height during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In Somalia, Sufi orders appeared in towns during the fifteenth century and rapidly became a revitalizing force. Followers of Sufism seek a closer personal relationship to God through special spiritual disciplines. Escape from self is facilitated by poverty, seclusion, and other forms of self-denial. Members of Sufi orders are commonly called dervishes, from the Persian *daraawish* (singular *darwish*, “one who gave up worldly concerns to dedicate himself to the service of God and community”). Leaders of branches or congregations of these orders are given the Arabic title “sheikh,” a term usually reserved for those learned in Islam and rarely applied to ordinary *wadaad* (holy men).

Dervishes wandered from place to place teaching. They are best known for their ceremonies, called *dhikr*, in which states of visionary ecstasy are induced by group chanting of religious texts and by rhythmic gestures, dancing, and deep breathing. The object is to free oneself from the body and to be lifted into the presence of God. Dervishes have been important as founders of agricultural religious communities, called *jamaat* (singular *jamaa*). A few of these were home to celibate men only, but families usually inhabited the *jamaat*.

Most Somalis were nominal members of Sufi orders, but few underwent the rigors of devotion to the religious life, even for a short time. Three Sufi orders were prominent in Somalia: the Qadiriyya, the Idrisiyyah, and the Salehiyya. The Rifaiyya, an offshoot of the Qadiriyya, was mainly represented by Arab residents in Mogadishu.⁶

Sufism has historically been influential in Somalia, as elsewhere in Africa, but its political influence declined in the latter part of the twentieth century. It remains part of the religious landscape in Somalia but not in a highly organized form. Membership in a Sufi brotherhood is theoretically a voluntary matter unrelated to kinship. However, lineages are often affiliated with specific orders. Each order has its own hierarchy that is supposedly a substitute for the kin group from which the members have separated themselves. Veneration is given to previous

heads of the order who, upon their death, are considered saints and whose tombs become pilgrimage centers.⁷

An important Sufi-linked organization is Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), which seeks to unify the Sufi community and to counter the influence of radical groups. ASWJ developed as an offshoot of Majma Ulimadda Islaamka ee Soomaaliya, an assembly of Islamic scholars that sought to establish a Sharia-based government. ASWJ condemns violence and the practice of *takfir* (excommunication). Attitudes toward *takfir* constitute a major dividing line between mainstream and radical Islam.⁸

Traditional Islam (Muslim Brotherhood)—Harakat al-Islah

More conservative and orthodox interpretations of Islam and Islamist movements have made important inroads over the past decades. Groups inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood made their appearance in the 1960s but were suppressed under the Ziad Barre dictatorship. One of the Islamist movements that has emerged over the past decades is Harakat al-Islah. Al-Islah was established in the 1970s as a network of underground groups. The movement's work focuses on education. It is the dominant force at the University of Mogadishu and other educational institutions and in the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (FPENS). FPENS, a consortium of Somali schools, is made up of more than 100 schools with 100,000 students (over one-third female) in Mogadishu and other Somali cities. It employs over 1,700 teachers and 500 support staff.⁹

Radical Jihadi Islam

The jihadi activists are committed to violence and armed resistance against what they perceive as the continuing onslaught of the enemies of Islam. The jihadi movement has seen its fortunes ebb and flow during the last decades. The most significant jihadi movement in Somalia from the late 1980s to 2005 was al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (Unity of Islam).

Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (Unity of Islam)

Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya first emerged in the late 1980s in Mogadishu, and most of its members were young academics who studied in Middle Eastern schools. They believed that the only way to liberate Somalia from the corruption, oppression, and tribalism that characterized Ziad Barre's regime was to adopt political Islam. In this, al-Ittihad was similar to many Islamic movements in the Middle East and the Muslim world.

After the collapse of Ziad Barre's regime in 1991 and the following power struggle between clan-based militia factions, al-Ittihad tried to construct a cross-clan movement based on the appeal of Islamist ideology as an alternative to a failed nationalism and divisive clanism.¹⁰ In broad terms, the political trajectory of al-Ittihad since the collapse of Ziad Barre's regime can be broken down into two strategies: a violent military strategy and a nonviolent strategy.¹¹

The Military Strategy

In the early days of the civil war, the strategic objective of al-Ittihad was to build power by taking control of key economic installations across Somalia. Al-Ittihad's initial success came in Kismayo in January 1991, when the movement took control of the seaport, a lucrative transit point for taxing international aid and imported and exported goods. However, in March 1991, General Farah Aidid advanced on Kismayo with his United Somali Congress militia (USC), drawn from the Hawiye clan. In exchange for the right to administer the town in the future, al-Ittihad offered to fight side by side in defense of Kismayo with the secular Somali National Front faction (SNF), drawn from the Darood clan. The offer was not accepted, and with continuing divisions within the al-Ittihad and SNF ranks, Aidid was able to capture the town, which gave the impression that al-Ittihad had placed the interests of the Darood clan (the defenders of Kismayo) above those of the Hawiye (the forces of General Aidid).

Disillusioned by these developments, a group of mainly Hawiye clerics broke away to form their own association. After the fall of Kismayo, all Darood clans were targeted for harsh reprisals from the Hawiye militia, including summary executions, systematic rape, and looting, because of their genealogical association with the former president. Following these events, much of the remaining trust between cross-clan allies was undermined, and al-Ittihad increasingly broke along clan lines.

Fleeing from Kismayo, Darood remnants of al-Ittihad regrouped in Bosasso and Garowe towns in northeast Somalia (now known as Puntland). In 1992, al-Ittihad again attempted to take control of key commercial points in Bosasso. This led to a military confrontation with the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), drawn from the Darood clan, in which al-Ittihad was again defeated and forcefully displaced.

The movement relocated to the towns of Luuq and Dolo in Gedo region. There, it was able to court support from Darood Marehaan residents. The clans formed the backbone of the SNF faction, leading to

interclan confrontation between al-Ittihad and the SNF in southwestern Somalia. Originally, al-Ittihad participated with the SNF in the defense of Marehaan territory from SNA–Habar Gidir incursions. Once victorious, al-Ittihad found itself in control of the district administrations in Luuq and Dolo towns and temporarily extended their influence to Bulo Hawo and El Waq.

The Conflict between al-Ittihad and Ethiopia

In 1993, al-Ittihad began its threefold campaign in Ethiopia. First, it waged war on the newly-established Somali Regional State of Ethiopia.¹² Al-Ittihad managed to control one location for a sustained period: the town of Luuq near the border with Ethiopia and Kenya. Luuq's proximity to Ethiopia was significant because of al-Ittihad's commitment to a Greater Somalia. In particular, the group focused on Ethiopia's Ogaden, a region inhabited by a majority of Somali speakers. The movement was known to have links with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Al-Ittihad managed to perpetrate some spectacular terrorist strikes, including an attempt on the life of the Ethiopian Somali leader, Abd al Majid Husayn.¹³

Second, al-Ittihad cooperated with the radical Muslims of the Oromos, the IOLF. Third, they carried out terrorist attacks, culminating in the 1995–1996 explosions in Dir Dawa and in Addis Ababa (mainly attacks on hotels in the city). All these attacks were said to be supported by Osama bin Laden and Hassan al-Turabi, from Khartoum, Sudan.¹⁴ These activities were the reason why the al-Ittihad movement was included on the US State Department's list of terror organizations.

In response, Ethiopian forces intervened in Luuq and destroyed al-Ittihad's safe haven. In 1996 and again in 1997, the Ethiopian military crossed into Somalia numerous times, defeating al-Ittihad and driving them further south along the west bank of the Jubba River.

With Ethiopian forces taking action in Somali territory and bin Laden ousted from Sudan, the radical Islam of the Oromos began losing its military sting. The combined effect of this intervention and Ethiopia's efficiency in stemming al-Ittihad allies in Ethiopia, as well as the loss of proximity to al-Qaeda's Khartoum headquarters in 1996, weakened it militarily.¹⁵

Al-Ittihad's Nonviolent Strategy

Following al-Ittihad's military defeat, the group declined in prominence, and from 1997 onward, al-Ittihad adopted a new strategy.

The movement decided to withdraw from direct military activity and gave up holding territories on a permanent basis, as this turned them into an easy target for Ethiopia and other enemies.

The movement instead decided to assimilate and act within various Somali communities, which made it difficult for its adversaries to thwart its activities. Based on the understanding that the Somali tribalism found it hard to accept an integrative Islamic perception, the movement decided to act on a tribal basis and leave the goal of a united Somalia under the wings of an Islamic regime for the subsequent stages. The movement achieved varying levels of influence in different tribes, but no tribe agreed to subjugate its leadership to the movement's policies.

The movement became decentralized, much like the social structure of Somalia, causing it to take on a different character in the various areas of Somalia. In some areas the organization cooperated with Western relief organizations and refrained from maintaining ties with radical Islamic organizations, while in other locations the movement acted independently. In still other areas, it was involved in violent activity against Somali adversaries and Westerners.

Al-Ittihad decided to attain its long-term goal—the establishment of the Islamic regime in Somalia—through *dawa* activities (education, indoctrination), and it pursued the development of long-term political and social infrastructures by investing in education, in the development of a local judicial system based on Islamic law, and in communications and information. The organization operated relief and charitable organizations, developed its economic infrastructure, and focused on the recruitment and infiltration of its members into influential focal points in Somali society.

In 2000, a coordinating committee of sixty-three members of al-Ittihad and their militias was established, chaired by Dahir Aweys. The chairman and his close associates continued to pursue their terrorist ways.¹⁶

Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya after the 9/11 Attacks

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States, suspicions were raised regarding cooperation between al-Ittihad and al-Qaeda. According to the United States, al-Ittihad enabled al-Qaeda to use its bases and other infrastructure prior to al-Qaeda's terror attacks in 1998 against the US Embassy in Nairobi (Kenya) and in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). The al-Qaeda liaison for the

al-Ittihad organization was Osama bin Laden's aide Muhammad Attaf, who was killed in the US offensive in Afghanistan.¹⁷

The al-Ittihad organization apparently continued to operate several training camps for Islamic terrorists, including the Ras Kamboni camp located near the Kenyan border.¹⁸ According to US sources, this camp served as a base for al-Qaeda terror activity in Africa (mainly in nearby Kenya). In view of the links between al-Ittihad and al-Qaeda, it was feared that al-Ittihad might offer al-Qaeda members fleeing Afghanistan a safe haven in Somalia, and that Somalia would then serve as the organization's main base, replacing the one lost in Afghanistan.

Al-Ittihad and the "Arta Process"

Al-Ittihad had a strong infrastructure in Mogadishu, and it operated a legal system in the city based on Sharia law before the temporary government was founded. The Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference held in the town of Arta in Djibouti in 2000 was the initiative of the newly-elected president of Djibouti, Ismael Omar Guelleh. The "Arta Process," as it has become known, achieved a power-sharing agreement to establish a Transitional National Government (TNG) that enjoyed a significant degree of acceptance in the country and reoccupied Somalia's seat at the United Nations.

In Somalia, however, the TNG did not follow through on the reconciliation efforts begun in Arta. The conference took place in the context of emerging administrations in Somaliland and Puntland. The revival of a central government reversed the trend toward decentralized governance, threatening the power bases of influential political leaders. The peace process had engaged opposition figures from Somaliland and Puntland, and the absence of many of the key armed-faction leaders made the new government vulnerable to "spoilers."

The al-Ittihad movement supported the "Arta Process" and the establishment of the temporary government and in exchange demanded government portfolios, particularly the Ministry of Justice (because of its critical importance to the application of Sharia as the state law). But this request was turned down, and instead it had to be satisfied with several seats in parliament. This support served as the basis for charges that the temporary government (TNG) was merely a Trojan horse planted by al-Ittihad as al-Qaeda's tool. From this point of view, the temporary government in Somalia was perceived as similar to the Taliban government in Afghanistan, which had championed the al-Qaeda organization.

Shortly after its formation, the TNG was opposed by an alliance of faction and political leaders known as the Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council (SRRC). The SRRC was backed by Ethiopia and concerned about the role and influence of the militant group al-Ittihad al-Islamiya within the TNG, which had made claims on Somali-inhabited land in Ethiopia. The TNG also failed to win the confidence of donor governments. Ultimately, it became associated with the Hawiye clans of Mogadishu and the business class and failed to extend its control beyond a small part of the capital. Public support for it waned amid accusations of corruption and clanism. By 2004, al-Ittihad was regarded as “a spent force, marginal if not defunct as an organization.”¹⁹

Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya's Financial Sources

Funded by wealthy Saudis, al-Ittihad had extensive connections with the Somali expatriate community in Nairobi, Kenya, and the predominantly-Muslim coastal regions. AIAI was extensively connected to al-Barakaat, a Somali business conglomerate and money-transfer organization, described by former US Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill as one of the “financiers of terrorism.” Al-Barakaat allegedly provided al-Qaeda with money-laundering services.²⁰

On September 24, 2001, al-Ittihad al-Islamiya's finances were sanctioned by the administration of US President George W. Bush under Executive Order 13224. Its then-head Hassan Dahir Aweys was also sanctioned under EO13324 in November of that year.²¹

In addition to Somalia's largest traders, remittance banks (also known as the *hawildad* or *hawala* system) became a significant source of revenue and patronage for al-Ittihad. In the mid-1990s, when militia factions fragmented and turned against one another, direct remittance support for the factional struggle decreased. Instead, diasporic Somalis increasingly channeled money directly to war-affected kin. Trust networks established on common commitments to a political Islamist agenda gained Somali businessmen easy access to capital through connections to Islamist counterparts in Dubai and Saudi Arabia. Faith-based credit schemes left Islamist businessmen well positioned to take over Somalia's US\$500-million-per-year remittance business.

To conduct their business across the country, the remittance agencies slowly built a sophisticated telecommunications network to serve their needs. This has created an independent and primarily legitimate

financial sector in its own right. Yet, the remittance companies—as a source of profit sharing and a channel for foreign support—remain an essential financial asset for al-Ittihad. In addition, these companies are sources of employment for young, devout followers of the movement.

The financial strength gleaned from these connections has been spent in two ways. First, al-Ittihad has cultivated public support by delivering welfare services to the urban poor in major centers across the country. For example, during the 1997–1998 El Niño floods in Somalia, Islamic organizations were an essential and well-organized part of the relief response. This strategy is not different from that of al-Islah, except for al-Ittihad's concentration on the most disenfranchised communities, which are susceptible to indoctrination to more militant agendas.

Second, al-Ittihad has sought to build a patronage network within each clan by increasing the influence of like-minded individuals within each clan to assume the reigns of traditional authority. This was evident during the constitutional crisis in Puntland. As President Abdullahi Yusuf's tenure elapsed, al-Ittihad used its influence within the Bosasso business community and financial payoffs within the Majerteen councils of elders to disrupt reconciliation with Yusuf and propose alternative presidential candidates.

Islamic Charitable Organizations

Islamic charities in Somalia do not maintain ties with Western and other philanthropic organizations and do not adopt the behavioral norms and transparency customary in organizations of this sort. The “closed” policy of these Islamic organizations enables them to closely cooperate with radical Islamic organizations that exploit these charities to promote their goals in this country. It is also possible that some of the Islamic charities actually constitute “front organizations” for al-Ittihad as well as other radical Islamic organizations.

Following the collapse of the Barre regime and the humanitarian crisis in the early 1990s, Islamic charities both foreign and domestic expanded dramatically. The finding of a recent study on the phenomenon estimates that there are “literally dozens” of Islamic charities in Mogadishu alone, most notably the Africa Muslims Agency, based in Kuwait; the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates (UAE); the World Association of Muslim Youth (WAMY), based in Saudi Arabia; the Al-Islah Charity, linked to Harakat al-Islah; the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-Islam al-Alamiyya) and its subsidiary, the

International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), both based in Saudi Arabia; Dawa al-Islamiya; and the Al-Wafa Charitable Society, which is listed as a “specially designated terrorist entity” by the US government.²²

Some of these, and others not listed here, have been linked to militant Islamist groups inside and outside of Somalia. As described above, the Muslim World League, the IIRO, and the now-defunct Mercy International Relief Agency (MIRA) were all used to channel funds to al-Ittihad during the early 1990s. As part of the wider investigation into the Saudi-based Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation’s links to international terrorism, the United States cited the Somali offices of al-Haramain as directly linked to terrorism, persuading Riyadh to suspend their staff in 2003.

In April 2005, an employee of the al-Haramain office in Somaliland was arrested for involvement in the assassination of several foreign aid workers.²³ But the vast majority of Islamic charities in Somalia have no such links with extremism: they were private NGOs that provided essential services to the public. In Mogadishu alone, Islamic charities either manage or support three universities, a major management training institute, two hospitals, and schools that furnish education for over 100,000 students. Many of them also support work in other regions of the country.

The term “Islamic charities” implies a distinction from NGOs assisted by Western donors that is in reality not so clear-cut. Many Somali Islamic organizations are simply committed to providing a service that is consistent with their beliefs and practices as Muslims and have little or no qualms about partnerships with non-Muslim organizations or donors. Some Islamic charities in Somalia do use social services as a platform for proselytizing, political activism, and the promotion of an Arab national identity.²⁴ But most ordinary Somalis resent such activities as religious and cultural interference and are resistant to their messages, so many Islamic charities appear to lack any parallel agenda. Much of the instruction in Islamic teaching institutions is in Somali or English, not Arabic, and is focused on academic or vocational skills rather than religious education.

Additionally, as a close observer recently noted, “Islamic charities are doing some of the most practical and intensive work in Somalia to promote the education, advancement and empowerment of women.” Women constitute a significant proportion of the students in Islamic learning institutions at all levels, and classes are often mixed.

The expansion of Islamic charities in Somalia was primarily a response to need and the availability of funding. Most Islamic NGOs profess a belief that their faith offers a way out of the crisis that has engulfed their country for nearly fifteen years and perceive their missions and actions in that context. Islamic social activism is not necessarily a sign of growing radicalism, nor is it inherently anti-Western. On the contrary, the endeavors of many Islamic NGOs are a pragmatic response to a crisis for which all support is welcome.

Notes

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The Islamic Courts Union in Somalia

Historical Background

After the collapse of the Ziad Barre regime in 1991, Somalia descended into civil war, and many public services that had been supplied by the government were “privatized.” In such a “chaotic” environment, NGOs and Islamic organizations replaced the government in providing the necessary services. The Da’awa institutes and the Islamic Sharia courts were the main components of the Islamic infrastructure that emerged in Somalia. Some experts claimed that it was a part of a strategy by the Islamic organizations to take power in Somalia.

As early as 1993, Sharia courts had been established in some parts of Somalia. Their *modus vivendi* was to establish law and order in conjunction with the secular authority of local faction leaders and the traditional customary law. Mogadishu’s earliest Islamic court was formed in the Madina district in 1993. Some of the founders of the court were former al-Ittihad members.¹ After 1997, however, a new round of Sharia courts emerged in south Mogadishu and later in Marka with integral connections to al-Ittihad. This owed a great deal to the failure of the militia factions to provide a stable environment for the investment of the local business community. In the absence of law enforcement forces, each court had its own militia. Compared to the various clan and factional militias, the Islamic courts’ militias had a reputation for discipline and good conduct.²

Following the failure of the Cairo and Sodere peace accords, as well as the short-lived agreement between Aidid and Ali Mahdi to establish the Benadir administration in 1998, the secular militia factions were unable to maintain the support of the business community.³ The alternative for the business community was the support of the Islamic Sharia courts, many of them affiliated with the al-Ittihad.

In early 2000, a group of court leaders from Mogadishu formed the Sharia Implementation Council (SIC) to unify and coordinate the various courts.⁴ The organization had a *majlis* (assembly) with sixty-three members. The secretary-general of the SIC was Hassan Dahir Aweys, one of the leaders of AIAI.

In September 2000, when the Transitional National Government (TNG) returned to Mogadishu from Djibouti, some members of the TNG argued that the courts should simply be absorbed wholesale into the new judicial system; others argued for a more selective approach based on qualifications and merit.⁵ Eventually the dispute was resolved to favor examinations, which many judges refused to stand for. But the decision had little impact, as the TNG never became a functional administration.⁶

In 2004, a new umbrella organization (of ten different courts) was established for Mogadishu's Sharia courts: the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts in Somalia. The elected chairman of the council was Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. Under the leadership of Sheikh Ahmed, the Sharia court system in Mogadishu expanded.

The Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts founded a 400-strong militia based on combatants of the different courts. Toward the end of 2004, the council's militia had been involved in clashes with other militias in the area of Mogadishu.

The formation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in October 2004 and the anti-Islamist approach of President Abdullahi Yusuf led to confrontation between the Islamic courts and the TFG. President Yusuf's plans to invite foreign forces to restore peace and order in Somalia pushed the Islamic courts into an alliance with other Islamic organizations and Yusuf's political rivals. The TFG members blamed the Islamic courts as extremists and supporters of terror, but a majority of the Mogadishu residents backed the Islamic courts in their confrontation with the TFG.

In July 2005, the Council of Islamic Courts accepted the appointment of Aden Hashi Ayro as commander of the militia. During the years 2004–2005, the Islamic courts implemented Sharia law in the areas that they controlled. On December 31, 2004, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts issued a *fatwa* (religious judgment) that celebration of the New Year was an offense punishable by death.⁷ Another judgment argued that any terrorist suspects found on Somali soil should be tried by Somali courts rather than extradited to foreign countries.⁸ In November 2005, militias from several courts had operated to shut

down cinemas in northern Mogadishu that they blamed for screening corrupt and immoral Western films.⁹

In March 2006, fierce fighting broke out between the US-backed coalition of Somalia warlords that had controlled the Mogadishu area for a decade and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). In the fighting between the ICU and the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism (ARPCT), hundreds of Mogadishu residents lost their lives.¹⁰ After several months of clashes, in June 2006, the ICU declared victory in their struggle to control Mogadishu.¹¹

After taking Mogadishu, the focus of military operations immediately shifted to Jowhar, ninety km north of the capital. Jowhar was a former base of the TFG. The ICU said hostile militia and “technicals” (heavy weapons mounted on trucks) were being mobilized in Jowhar. A group of warlords led by Muhammad Qanyare had fled to Jowhar after their defeat in Mogadishu on June 4, 2006, and tried to reorganize there. In a preemptive strike, the ICU attacked the town and took it without much resistance on June 14, 2006. Qanyare and his group had fled the town the night before.

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, one of the ICU leaders, agreed to a new system of governance for the town of Jowhar, with elders heading the administration while the militias ensured security in the town. Sheikh Ibrahim Farah, a prominent elder and imam of the town, said, “We agreed to collaborate with the Islamic courts in the establishment of new administrations.”¹²

After being captured by the ICU, there was a marked change in Jowhar. Journalist Muhammad Ibrahim Malimow reported there was “a sense of relief” that the ICU had taken over, as people were no longer under duress to pay the exorbitant taxes that warlords had imposed, and food prices had fallen by 15–20 percent. Elders, intellectuals, religious leaders, and business people were directly involved in decision making, and there was a resurgence of debate and discussion over issues of leadership.¹³

After the Mogadishu takeover, structures set up by the ICU were based on the existing organization of the courts. The original aim was to bring together clans and subclans to establish an Islamic court to provide a forum for justice and the handling of disputes. This was critical in trying to establish security in areas of Mogadishu where people were at the mercy of chaotic warlord rule. The courts were composed of the chairman of the Islamic court militia and the chairman of the local *shura* (council).¹⁴ The challenge in the post-victory era was to

extend and broaden the organization without being weakened by interclan politics or being seen to impose the kind of central authority so weakened by Somalis. This expectation contrasted sharply with the keenness of Somali professional classes and the international community to identify a “type” of government as defined by centralized administrative structures and a definitive political ideology.¹⁵

The Islamic Supreme Consultation Council of Islamic Courts had ninety-one members and acted like a parliament for all the courts. It was headed by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Since June 2006, it had expanded to include representatives of all the established courts. It had no executive powers, but according to one observer, “sorts out any problems in outlying courts, keeps all the programs in line, and makes sure everyone is reading from the same script.” Known as the *shura* (council), it acted as an advisory body of the ICU.¹⁶ The ICU had also established a fifteen-member executive council, headed by Sheikh Sharif, that acted as an executive branch of government and implemented decisions.¹⁷

On July 27, 2006, the ICU claimed that they had set up a Sharia court inside a vast complex in Mogadishu that had once served as the country’s presidential palace—a highly symbolic move. “This is the place where Somalia will be ruled from, and we appreciate the cooperation with the courts,” said Abdel Rahman Janaqaw, a senior member of the Supreme Islamic Courts Counsel (SICC).

After the victory of the ICU over the ARPCT, the next goal of the ICU was to defeat the TFG that remained, the last obstacle on the ICU’s way to control south and central parts of Somalia. In the wake of the ICU’s victory, the TFG reiterated its long-standing call for foreign “peacekeepers” to intervene.¹⁸ In response to the TFG call, Ethiopia sent several hundred troops to support the TFG. The government of President Abdullahi Yusuf was based in a provincial town, Baidoa, where witnesses said Ethiopian soldiers were guarding key buildings. Addis Ababa backed Yusuf and regarded the Islamists as led by “terrorists.” Since taking Mogadishu, the ICU had accused Ethiopia of sending troops across the border into Somalia, a claim denied by the Ethiopian government. “Ethiopia had absolutely nothing to do with the latest fighting in Mogadishu and other towns between the militia of the warlords and the ICU,” said a statement from the Ethiopian foreign ministry.¹⁹

The ICU had rejected the TFG call for foreign troops and opposed the deployment of foreign troops on the grounds that it would make

the country more dangerous and unstable, adding that they were already providing security in the capital. However, the African Union (AU) announced on June 19, 2006, that it would propose sending a peacekeeping mission to Somalia and that it would be sending an assessment team to evaluate the situation on the ground. "We agreed that priority be given to dialogue, and [this] should take place with the transitional federal institutions and all the parties in Somalia," AU Peace and Security Commissioner Said Djinnit said in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.²⁰

However, the ICU's leader, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, declared that, "As long as Ethiopia is in our country, talks with the government cannot go ahead."²¹ "If the government cares about the Somalis, it should remove our enemy from the country. . . . Ethiopia has invaded us," Aweys said. Aweys denied that the Islamists planned to expand to Baidoa. "There has never been an intention of attacking Baidoa," he said. On the other hand, Sheikh Aweys also called the Somalis to join the jihad (holy war) against the Ethiopian forces on Somali soil.

To prevent further bloodshed, the United Nations, Sudan, Kenya, and other states made efforts to bring the TFG and ICU to the negotiation table. Representatives of the TFG and the ICU met on June 22, 2006, in Khartoum, and agreed to meet again on July 15, 2006. However, the TFG failed to attend the meeting in July, accusing the ICU of violating the earlier agreement.²²

Later, the TFG agreed to attend talks with the Islamists in Khartoum on August 1–2, responding to a UN drive to avoid war. "We will go to Khartoum without any preconditions," said Abdul Rizak Adam, TFG's chief-of-staff, after talks with a senior UN envoy at the government's base in Baidoa. The talks in Khartoum ended without any significant results, but after meeting with a Kenyan delegation led by the assistant foreign affairs minister of Kenya, both the ICU and the TFG agreed to resume talks in Khartoum on August 31, 2006.²³

Meanwhile, on August 9, 2006, the ICU seized Beledweyne, a town on the Ethiopian border. The ICU claimed that they had attacked the government-appointed regional administration in the town, forcing the local governor and provincial commissioner to flee toward Ethiopia.²⁴ The ICU militia were also said to be advancing on Galkaayo, 465 miles north of Mogadishu. Galkaayo is a town on the border with semiautonomous Puntland, the home of the president of the TFG, Abdullahi Yusuf.²⁵

On August 13, 2006, the ICU seized control of the town Haradere, 300 km north of Mogadishu on the Indian Ocean coastline. Haradere was a base of piracy and dozens of hijackings of ships. The pirates called themselves the “Defenders of Somali Territorial Waters” and were loyal to regional warlord Abdi Mohamed Afweyne.²⁶ Afweyne and the pirates fled before the Islamic courts’ militiamen arrived at Haradere. The Islamic militia was welcomed by the local inhabitants, who had been terrorized by the pirates. The Islamic militia’s move to Haradere came shortly after a statement by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys that he would forcefully stop all acts of piracy in Somalia.

The next move of the ICU was on September 24, 2006. The militia of the ICU captured the strategic port town of Kismayo, 260 miles southwest of Mogadishu. Kismayo is the most important city in south Somalia after Mogadishu and the third key city in the country.²⁷ Two international harbors and an airport make Kismayo a strategic gate to Somalia. The ICU forces took control of the town without a fight after the local forces from the militia of Juba Valley Alliance (JVA) loyal to the TFG defense minister, Barre Shire Hirale, fled the town.²⁸

The ICU said they took Kismayo to prevent it being used to bring foreign peacekeepers into the country, as requested by the TFG.²⁹ The prime minister of the TFG, Ali Mohamed Gedi, said the takeover of Kismayo had been a “violation” of the cease-fire agreed upon by the ICU and the TFG in Khartoum.³⁰ On September 25, 2006, several thousand demonstrators protested against the ICU in Kismayo. The ICU militiamen, with white bands on their heads, opened fire on protesters, killing a thirteen-year-old boy and injuring two other children.³¹ The ICU imposed a curfew in town and shut down the local radio station, which it blamed for anti-ICU propaganda.

The TFG interior minister, Hussein Mohammad Farah Aidid, told *Al Jazeera* that “there are foreign forces . . . which attacked Kismayo.”³² In response to this accusation, Hassan al-Turki, a leader of the ICU militia, acknowledged for the first time that foreign fighters were helping the ICU militia. Al-Turki said, “[The government has] called foreigners . . . and we are getting help from our Muslim brothers to train us.”³³

On October 13, 2006, a militia loyal to the TFG defense minister, Colonel Barre Shire Hirale, tried to retake Kismayo, three weeks after losing the town to the ICU. The fighting on the town’s outskirts lasted for two hours as rival forces used heavy machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades. The Islamic forces pursued Hirale’s retreating fighters toward the town of Barhani, some thirty miles west of Kismayo, Islamic

courts' official Abdullahi Warsame said.³⁴ Some locals were arrested for helping to plan the attack, including Hirale's wife.

The ICU continued to expand with the symbolic takeover of Brava, a coastal town 125 miles southwest of Mogadishu and one of the small pockets in the south still outside their control. The town's leaders were sympathetic to the Islamic courts, but pledged to hand over their weapons.³⁵

Earlier, on October 12, 2006, Hirale's militia and the ICU had clashed briefly in the town of Buala, 220 miles south of Baidoa, where Hirale had been regrouping his forces.

Restoring Order and the Implementation of Sharia Law

In Mogadishu, the ICU concentrated on dismantling the notorious roadblocks, thereby effectively demobilizing the clan-based militia, neutralizing the warlords and local faction leaders, and denying them much-needed resources for the militia. Critically, it allowed the population freedom of movement and removed the daily threat of intimidation and extortion. It also removed the threat of spontaneous conflict from the "freelance" militia, who lived off what they could demand or steal. Many were addicted to drugs and *qat* (khat) and attacked indiscriminately.

Sheikh Abdulakdir Ali, the ICU vice chairman, said that after the takeover, the ICU had given priority to areas of high insecurity, particularly the main Bakaara Market and other business centers. Civilians, such as Halima Ali, a small trader, said people were taking full advantage of the new freedom of movement: "In the past I was robbed a number of times as I went to the market; [now] I go and come back with everything."

In the areas under the ICU control, the Islamic movement imposed strict Sharia law. The ICU decreed in June 2006 that sport was a "satanic act." Sports were then banned during Ramadan. In September 2006, a group of teenagers playing football (soccer) in Mogadishu was taken into custody and only released when their parents promised they would never allow their children to play football again. The Somalis segregated seating for male and female sports fans. The ICU also put up mosques at all playing fields in the country so that the players would not miss the prayer.

In the first week of July 2006, Islamist militiamen shot dead two football fans who were watching the World Cup in Mogadishu. They had banned cinema halls showing the World Cup, Western and Indian

movies, wedding parties, and what they called the “satanic music of the west.” The Islamic courts’ militias beat members of the Mogadishu Stars, a musical band, with electric cables after they had performed at a wedding ceremony because the wedding had included the mixing of men and women as well as playing music, which were regarded as un-Islamic.

The ICU introduced corporal punishment and public flogging of youth accused of “indecent behaviors.” Sheikh Abdalla Ali, a senior official of the ICU, declared that, “He who does not perform prayers will be considered as infidel, and Sharia law orders that that person be killed.”

The ICU also enacted repressive measures against the media. Their thirteen rules included that:

the media must not publish or disseminate information contrary to the Muslim religion, the public interest, or the interest of the nation; the media must not disseminate information likely to create conflicts between the population and the Council of Islamic Courts; the media must not serve foreign interests: the media must not publish or disseminate elements of foreign culture contrary to Islamic culture or promoting bad behavior, such as nudity on film.

The ICU opened the mosque of the Islamic Solidarity, the largest mosque in the Horn of Africa, on August 19, 2006. The mosque had been closed for sixteen years, since the outbreak of the civil war in Somalia. The Islamic Solidarity mosque was established in 1987 by the Saudi King Faisal bin Abdel Aziz Foundation, and it accommodated about 10,000 worshipers.³⁶ Parts of the mosque had collapsed, as it had not been restored since 1991. The ICU called for collecting donations for restoring the mosque.³⁷ Sheikh Abdul Rahaman Ganko, deputy chairman of the ICU executive committee, also called on the Somali businessmen and merchants to join the efforts to restore the mosque.³⁸

The ICU also reopened the Mogadishu port for shipping after more than a decade. Warlords had closed it in February 1995. On September 5, 2006, a ship chartered by the United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP) docked in Mogadishu, loaded with food for the drought-stricken regions in Somalia.³⁹

The Somali people’s reactions to the ICU’s victory were mixed. On one hand, the ICU had restored order and security after the stateless decade under the rule of the warlords. On the other hand, some people were concerned about the imposition of a radical interpretation of Sharia law.

The Radicalization of the Somali Society

After the victory of the ICU over the ARPCT, the ICU recalled former experienced officers that had served in the Somali armed forces before 1991 and reestablished at least four training camps. The ICU had recruited more than 1,000 *moryaans* (former fighters in the warlords' militias) and rehabilitated and trained them. The *moryaan* had to learn personal and religious discipline so they could be integrated into the ICU militia. The training included Islamic indoctrination and military trainings. The young militiamen were brainwashed with the principles of being devoted Muslims and learned about the jihad that they had to be ready to fight against the enemies of the ICU and Islam.

On October 9, 2006, Sheikh Sharif called a press conference and appeared in military uniform to announce a jihad against neighboring Ethiopia, accusing its government of interfering in Somali affairs and sending its troops across the border to support the Transitional Federal Government. He said the declaration of jihad "was not concerning the international community but Somali citizens, and all Somali citizens are ready to defend their country with jihad if the Ethiopians don't stop their intervention."⁴⁰ Many Mogadishu residents accepted the call, viewing the "US-backed Ethiopia" as the main threat to the ICU.⁴¹ The ICU also held seminars for women, where they were taught household management and first aid to support the fighters.⁴²

As a part of the radicalization of the Somali society under the Islamic courts' rule, more than 2,000 people held a rally in Mogadishu on August 11, 2006, calling for a jihad against the enemies of Islam in the Middle East, the United States, and around the world. "Look at what's happening in the Middle East, and the whole world is silent. And when Somalia was in the anarchy, still the world was silent," said Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a leader of the ICU. "It is compulsory to join the holy war," Yusuf Ali Sayyid, a leader of the ICU, told the *Associated Press*. A similar protest was held in neighboring Kenya, drawing about 300 people to Nairobi's main mosque. The protesters, most of them young men, carried signs that read "Israel stop killing our brothers and sisters" and "end America's terrorism of army invasion in Iraq."

On September 17, 2006, an Italian nun was shot dead by Somali gunmen. She was shot at the S.O.S. hospital in Mogadishu by two gunmen. The nun's bodyguard and a hospital worker were also killed. The assassination took place shortly after a leading Somali cleric

criticized comments that Pope Benedict XVI had made in a speech that had offended Muslims. The pope had cited the words of a Byzantine emperor who had characterized some of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as “evil and inhuman.”⁴³ The pope’s remarks created energized responses in all the Muslim world, but Somalia was the first and only place where a Christian had been murdered as revenge. The violent response in Somalia was a part of the radicalization of Islam after the victory of the ICU.

Financing the ICU

Before ICU’s victory over the ARPCT, they were backed and financed mainly by the Somali business community and Islamic charities. The head of the Bureau of African Affairs at the US State Department, in a hearing on June 29, 2006, at the House’s International Relations Committee, accused Saudi Arabia of supporting the ICU. He did not directly accuse the Saudi government of funding Somalia’s ICU, but said that money was flowing from the kingdom and Yemen in support of the Islamic courts.⁴⁴ Saudi Crown Prince Sultan, the deputy premier and minister of defense and aviation, denied the charges that the kingdom was offering assistance to Somalia’s Islamic Courts Union. He was speaking at a press conference following the opening of an armed-forces exhibition.⁴⁵

On July 11, 2006, the ICU established control over Mogadishu’s sea port after a two-day battle in which over 100 people died and about 200 were wounded. The port had been closed for fifteen years following disagreements among the warlords over who should run it. While the port had still been used unofficially, it had not been under any central control, making its use unpredictable.⁴⁶ Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and other top leaders of the ICU described the control of the ports as a monumental, progressive development.⁴⁷ The port falling into the hands of the ICU was a positive development for the movement, which planned to reopen it and profit from its commercial activities. The ICU could facilitate arms imports through control of the ports (the ports of El Maan and Marka are associated with the Mogadishu port) and could generate revenue through a thriving *qat* trade, livestock trade, the profitable charcoal business, and the control of the fishing trade on the Somalia coastline. The *qat* trade (a kind of drug) alone could provide the ICU millions of dollars every year.

Alongside the *qat* business are exports of livestock to the Gulf States. In the past, Mogadishu’s ports had failed to ship thousands of animals

because of the chaos in the city. For example, 3.2 million head of cattle were exported through the port of Berbera in northern Somalia in 1997, and more than US\$100 million in annual cargo was imported to Somalia from Dubai Creek. The ICU planned to continue this trade out of the Mogadishu ports.⁴⁸

Another source of income for the ICU was the charcoal trade. In the past, the Gulf States had provided a market for charcoal that was transported by sea to Saudi Arabia. In the Gulf, the profit from charcoal bags is enormous, with trades earning more than US\$6 profit for an 80–90 kilogram bag. Traders, for example, purchase a bag of charcoal for 35,000 Somali shillings (US\$3–4) and sell it for US\$10 in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁹

The fishing trade also helped to fund the ICU's operations. The warlords generated funds through the issuance of fishing licenses and used the money to pay their militias. Those caught fishing without a license often fell victim to the pirate patrols skimming the coastline. After the warlords were defeated, the ICU was able to oversee the fishing trade and earn money through the issuance of fishing licenses.⁵⁰

With the new Islamist authority in control of Mogadishu's ports, the ICU started to impose taxes on trade traffic. The money earned from this trade helped to fund the Islamists' operations and also made it easier for them to receive arms shipments. Additionally, ICU control over the ports would stabilize trade traffic through Mogadishu and restart a lucrative economic artery.⁵¹

The Leadership of the Islamic Courts

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed

Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was born in Chabila, a town in central Somalia, on July 25, 1964, in the Middle Shabelle region. Ahmed is from the Hawiye clan (Abgal branch), one of Somalia's four main clans that dominates in the capital. He studied at Libyan and Sudanese universities in the mid-1980s. Ahmed then taught geography, Arabic, and religious studies in Juba secondary schools.

Ahmed returned home to Jowhar in 2002, at a time when Abdulkassim Salad Hassan's government was trying to establish control of Mogadishu. He worked against Hassan with Mohamed Dheere, a warlord and his fellow clansman, who was then in charge of Jowhar. Ahmed became chairman of the regional court in Jowhar, but the alliance with the warlord did not last. In 2003, he fled for Mogadishu.⁵²

That same year, one of Ahmed's pupils was kidnapped—amid a wave of abductions in Mogadishu—and the gang responsible demanded a ransom from the twelve-year-old boy's parents. Ahmed was disturbed by the fact that the kidnapping had taken place in an area dominated by his own clan. It was a moment he would later call a turning point.

Ahmed began campaigning within his local community to establish an Islamic court, of which he would be elected the leader. The Islamic court managed to secure the release of his pupil and other abductees. Ahmed and others then began campaigning to combat the crime and banditry rampant in the poor neighborhoods of north Mogadishu.⁵³

The five branches of the Islamic courts united to form the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and Ahmed, who came from a long line of religious leaders, was chosen to become the chairman. Ahmed was regarded as a moderate Islamic leader. In an interview he was asked about claims that he was a Wahhabi and trying to impose Wahhabism in Somalia. He replied, "I myself I don't know Wahhabism at all. I am from a family that followed a Sufi order. I have no idea about Wahhabia, I only heard about the name."⁵⁴

Ahmed lived with his wife and two children in a modest house in Mogadishu, and he did not own a computer or a satellite phone. In an interview to *Asharq al-Awsat*, he said, "I live a simple life, like the majority of Somalis."⁵⁵ He also told the newspaper about his student's kidnapping, an event that had changed his life:⁵⁶

A few years ago, a local gang in Mogadishu kidnapped a young student and demanded a ransom from his family in return for releasing their son. This incident was one of countless other kidnappings and killings perpetrated by armed groups in the Somali capital who exploited the disintegration of the central government, after President Mohammed Ziad Barre was ousted from power.

This event marked [a] turning point in the life of Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. I met with [the student's] teachers and decided to act. We issued a statement that attracted people's attention in Mogadishu. I began speaking to the residents of the neighborhood where kidnappers tended to hide their victims and implored them not to cover up for them.

Prior to the kidnapping, Ahmed had had no affiliation to the Islamic courts organization, which was modestly established in 1996 and grew in 1998. He was surprised to be nominated to lead the organization, which maintained a strong armed militia: "I was visiting a friend when I heard I was nominated for the post. I thought of turning it down and

continuing to work as a teacher and guide pupils. But I soon agreed for fear that the organization might fail while still in its infancy.”

With armed clashes erupting around Mogadishu, Ahmed indicated that he might need to reconsider the security measures he had taken to safeguard his life. “By nature, I do not like [to] have guards around me. But I was forced to seek the help of highly-trained and armed bodyguards because of the recent flare up of violence which Sheikh Sharif blamed on ‘the devil’s allies,’” in reference to US-backed warlords. “I used to go out quite often without guards and I enjoyed it.”⁵⁷

Asked about the number of forces loyal to him, Ahmed said he could not discuss exact figures for security reasons. “This is top secret information. If I tell you, some parties might underestimate us if the numbers are small. We might exaggerate our force if we mention large figures. Since the beginning of the civil war, all Somalis are armed. We have not banned anyone from joining us.”

Ahmed did not regret becoming the leader of the Islamic Courts Union: “This is our fate and responsibility. Our aim is to support the Somali people and to defend their rights and dignity.”

According to Western intelligence sources, the ICU had sheltered Muslim extremists, some of whom had ties to al-Qaeda, including three suspected of carrying out the attacks on US embassies in East Africa in 1998. Ahmed had denied all such accusations, but answering specific questions in an interview with *Awdal News*, his answers were quite different:⁵⁸

Q: There are people suspected by the US government of having links with international terrorism, particularly al-Qaida. One of them is Hassan Aweys, a former head of al-Ittihad, who is on the American black list. What will you do if the US government requests you to arrest him?

A: I don’t think anybody will ask us to do that. We are not assigned to arrest people for them, as you know.

Q: If the US government includes this in the agenda of its talks with you what you will do?

A: They have no right to do that, as you know, we don’t work for the Americans.

Q: Are your fighters all Somalis? Some reports say that they include some foreign elements. And if they are all Somalis do they all belong to Mogadishu or do they include Somalis hailing from Somaliland, Puntland, Ethiopia and Kenya?

A: All our fighters are Somalis. There may be people who arrived here during the battles and joined the fighting. I am not sure of that because all the fighters are volunteers. There may also include people who are residents of Mogadishu but originally came from the other regions, but the fighters who are officially enlisted for us are all from Mogadishu. They are all natives of the city; they are known people and they are the people who established the Islamic courts.

Q: Some reports from the west say that your courts comprise people from various Islamic schools of thought such as al-Ittihad al-Islami, al-Takfir wal Hijra, al-Islah and al-Tabliq and that they are all against the moderate Sunni, Shafi'i and Sufi schools of Islam. If this is true don't you think this could lead to a clash between them?

A: There is no truth in this. The people are ordinary people who organized themselves. Each one of them has been selected on individual basis to lead a court. They could be from Sufi orders or al-Ittihad or others. But as you know al-Ittihad doesn't exist anymore. It has ceased to exist a long time ago.

Q: Where do you get support in terms of arms and finance?

A: The support comes from the people who have established these courts.

For his part, Ahmed emphasized that Osama bin Laden's group did not have any presence in Somalia:

There are no fugitives from al-Qaeda or any other organization, as the US and Ethiopia intelligence services are claiming. This is an open country and strangers will be found out very quickly. Look at the number of lies Washington is telling about Iraq and Afghanistan. It is trying to repeat the same thing in Mogadishu but we don't let it.

Denying receiving financial aid from abroad, Ahmed said the organization's popularity stemmed from the people's love and appreciation from its actions, given the absence of a central government: "[We] rely on our limited resources and what ordinary citizens give us. We welcome financial contributions, however small they are, but do not oblige citizens to contribute."

He denied having any contacts with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), led by President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi, based in Baidoa, adding that he had no objection to future talks, if they served the interests of the Somali people. Criticizing the US administration's role in the recent fighting, Ahmed said Washington was not acting in the interest of

Somalis but was repeating past mistakes. President Bush's remarks on the presence of al-Qaeda in Somalia were "lies," to promote the US War on Terror, he added. But despite this criticism, Ahmed welcomed discussions with the United States to improve the relations between the Islamic courts and the United States.

At the end of June 2006, the leaders of the ICU made the decision to change the leadership of the organization, and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys replaced Ahmed as the head of the ICU. Ahmed was named the chairman of the organization and remained an influential member of the ICU, but he had lost power to the more radical elements in the organization under the leadership of Aweys.

Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys

Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys (in Somali, *Sheekh Xasan Daahir Aweys*) was born in 1935. Aweys was a former colonel who had started preaching in the 1970s. Aweys was among the founders of the al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI) and was the head of the organization for several years.

At the formation of the Islamic courts in Mogadishu, Aweys became the head of one of the most powerful courts in Mogadishu. In 2000, at the formation of the Joint Islamic Courts Council (JICC), Aweys became the secretary-general of the organization.

After the September 11, 2001, attacks, the United States released a list of individuals and organizations accused of having ties to terrorism. Aweys and al-Ittihad al-Islamiya were featured for their alleged links to bin Laden. Aweys was accused by the United States of collaboration with al-Qaeda while bin Laden lived in Sudan (1991–1996). Aweys went into hiding following the September 11 attacks and reemerged only in 2004 to run Ifka Halanica, a powerful court in South Mogadishu.

Around June 2005, Aweys accused the TFG of selling the country to enemies such as Ethiopia and indicated that he was preparing for war. He had called for jihad, warning that his faction would not be mere spectators in the Somali crisis.⁵⁹ Aweys had identified Ethiopia as a threat to Somalia, and in the late 1990s, the AIAI, under his leadership, had been involved in small-scale attacks against Ethiopia (1996) until Ethiopia weakened AIAI's power.⁶⁰

Aweys was viewed as one of the more radical leaders of the ICU, an organization that promoted Sharia and directed the militias that took control of the former Somali capital of Mogadishu in June 2006. The ICU had driven the widely despised secular warlords out of Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia and taken control of the city.⁶¹

Aweys replaced Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as head of the ICU, who had been widely considered to be a more moderate leader. According to an *AP* report, at the end of June 2006, the leaders of the ICU had decided to change the leadership of the organization, appointing Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys as leader of the organization, replacing Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. In his first interview to the media after being named head of the organization, Aweys said:

- Somalia is a Muslim nation and its people are also Muslim, 100 percent
- The organization will support only a government based on Islam. Any government we agree on would be based on the holy Quran and the teachings of our prophet Muhammad
- Somalis always wanted to act on Islam but the former colonial powers diverted them from that. I hope now the only option open for them is to support an Islamic state⁶²

The Islamic organization also changed its name from the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) to the Somali Supreme Islamic Courts Council (SSICC). The United States said it would not deal with Aweys because of “links to terrorism.” In another interview to the *BBC* after his nomination, Aweys said, “I am not terrorist. But if strictly following my religion and love for Islam makes me a terrorist, then I will accept the designation.”⁶³

After taking power from the warlords, Ahmed had softened his rhetoric calling for strict Islamic, or Sharia law, and also agreed to recognize the largely powerless interim government that was based in Baidoa. Aweys, however, condemned that government and any attempts to install a Western-style democracy. Further, he strenuously advocated for a strict Islamic government in Somalia.

US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States would be troubled if Aweys’s promotion was an indication of the direction the Somali Supreme Islamic Courts Council was heading in: “The US has said it is willing to work with other leaders allied to Mr. Aweys, but it fears that a Somalia run by Islamists could be used by international Islamic fighters [mujahideen].”⁶⁴

Sheikh Yusuf Mohamed Sayid

Sheikh Yusuf Mohamed Sayid, also known as Indha’adde (“white-eyed”), belonged to the Ayr clan. He was trained in Afghanistan before the American invasion (Operation Enduring Freedom).⁶⁵ Indha’adde was one of the Islamist warlords before he joined the ICU. He named

himself as a sheikh and the governor of the Lower Shabelle region. After joining the ICU, he was nominated as the deputy of the executive committee of the ICU.

Indha'adde had a key role in arming the ICU militia. He started receiving arms from Eritrea, together with Aweys (the head of the ICU), in March and April of 2005.⁶⁶ According to UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, the arms were transported by aircraft from Eritrea to Baledogle airport, near Mogadishu, and by ship to the port of Marka.⁶⁷ The arms shipments included anti-aircraft guns and mines. In November 2005, Indha'adde visited Asmara, Eritrea, to discuss the continuation of the arms supplies to the ICU.⁶⁸

On December 12, 2006, Indha'adde issued an ultimatum that Ethiopian forces should withdraw within seven days.⁶⁹ On December 20, after the Ethiopians had refused to withdraw, he admitted fighting had begun between the two sides, marking the beginning of the war at the Battle of Baidoa.⁷⁰ On December 23, 2006, as the battle continued, he made a worldwide appeal for jihadists to come to Somalia. However, in the days that followed, the ICU army collapsed, leading to the fall of Mogadishu.

Aden Hashi Ayro

Aden Hashi Ayro was the commander of the Islamic courts' militia. He was considered an extremist Muslim and was trained in Afghanistan, where he met senior members of al-Qaeda, before returning to Somalia.⁷¹ Ayro was largely viewed as a newcomer on the Somali scene, being mentored by Aweys. Reports in 2005 said that Ayro and Aweys were running camps where religious extremists received military training. The training also included indoctrination into fundamentalist ideology aimed at advocating jihad in Islamic states.

In 2005, Ayro was blamed for killing five Western aid workers and BBC journalist Kate Peyton. He was also blamed for the assassination of Abdul Qadir Yahya Ali, the founder of the Center for Research and Dialogue, in Mogadishu in front of his family.⁷²

Also in 2005, Ayro and his followers disinterred all the bodies from the colonial-era Italian cemetery in Mogadishu and dumped them in the trash. They then set up an Islamic militia training camp at the site.⁷³ The remains were sold to the Italian government, with the revenue going toward arming his militia. When elders of his clan, the Habar Gadir, protested, Ayro warned them that they were

following a dangerous path by “supporting infidels” and would suffer unless they stopped.⁷⁴

An ICU-made propaganda video titled *Punishment of the Converts* obtained by *Newsweek* from an Islamic militiaman in Mogadishu showed the Somali Islamists training in the cemetery, interspersed with speeches from several of the ICU’s leading military figures, including a partially-masked man who appeared to be Ayro, according to Somalis who knew him. The dialogue is pan-Islamic and pro-terrorist; the voice-over features Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. “Every Muslim who is victimized in the world, we are calling him to come here,” said one masked Somali fighter. “It will be a safe haven for him.” The Islamic militias’ internal newspaper, *Al Jihad*, put it more bluntly: “Terrorism Is Compulsory,” read a July 3, 2006, headline. “Terrorism, extremism and fundamentalism are part of Islam and good.”⁷⁵

ICU leader Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was asked in an interview about Ayro’s involvement in terror activities in the past:⁷⁶

Q: It happened sometime in the past that Italian cemetery was dug up and the remains of dead people exhumed. There is a suspicion that Adan Hashi Ayro was behind this. We know Ayro is now a commander of the Ifke Halane Court. What does Sheikh Sharif has to say about this to the Italian people?

A: A lot of things have taken place in the country. A lot of mistakes have taken place. Many Somali cemeteries have been built on others. People have been killed, some have been raped, and others have been taken hostage and sold. So this [Italian cemetery] is just one of the many mistakes that happened in the country.

There was great misery in the country. The life of the whole Somali people have been completely destroyed. Millions have left the country, millions have become handicapped and other millions are suffering inside it. Therefore, I think the answer is obvious.

Q: Some of Ayro [*sic*] associates have been convicted in Hargeisa for the murder of foreign aid workers. What is your stand on this issue?

A: Brother, I have no idea about it. I have no information on this matter, I cannot, therefore, comment on it.

Ahmed’s successor as leader of the ICU, Sheikh Aweys, described Ayro as “a good man” who had never been convicted of crime.⁷⁷ Aden Hashi Ayro was killed in May 2008 in an American air strike in the town of Dhusamareb, Somalia.

Hassan Abdallah Hersi al-Turki

Hassan Abdallah Hersi al-Turki was born in 1944 in the Ogaden region in Ethiopia. He was a military officer and played a significant role in the Ethiopia-Somalia war over the Ogaden region in 1977.⁷⁸ After Somalia lost the war, al-Turki left Somalia to continue the war against Ethiopia. He was keen to see Ogaden secede from Ethiopia and become a separate state. Al-Turki then joined the AIAI in Somalia, which had links to al-Takfir wal Hijra and al-Qaeda.⁷⁹

In 1997, al-Turki supported al-Qaeda in preparing the attack on the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. In particular, al-Turki organized a training camp in Ras Kamboni. Twenty individuals linked to al-Turki traveled from Somalia to Kenya to set up a structure to carry out the attack, which took place on August 7, 1998.⁸⁰

On June 3, 2004, the United States put al-Turki on its terrorist list and froze his financial assets. He then joined the ICU and became one of the commanders of their militia.

In July 2006, al-Turki was one of the leading commanders at the Battle of Jowhar when the ICU militia defeated the ARPCT warlords. Since 2006, al-Turki has made territory under his control available for training by various armed opposition groups.

The Confrontation between the Islamic Courts and the TFG

Under the growing pressure of the ICU on the TFG, at least twenty members of Somalia's Parliament resigned on July 27, 2006. They accused the TFG of corruption and of failing to bring peace. "Our government failed to implement national reconciliation, so we have decided to resign," said Othman Hassan Ali Atto, who had stepped down as public works minister.⁸¹ The treasury and government relations ministers resigned as well, and other cabinet members were expected to add their names to the list.⁸²

Twelve more ministers walked away from the weak Western-backed interim government in August 2006, raising fears of imminent collapse of the government, said reports from the area. The minister of minerals and water, Mahamoud Salad Nur, and three other assistant ministers announced their resignation less than a week after the first resignations and then eight more ministers and assistant ministers later resigned after Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi called for peace talks with rival Islamists to be postponed. "We had no option but to resign because we believe if the talks are postponed again it will affect the reconciliation efforts," the former minister of fisheries and ocean resources, Hassan

Abshir Farah, told *Reuters*. "Gedi's government is unpopular among most members of Parliament, and its work plans will not be accepted by the national assembly," Mohamoud Salad Nur told reporters.

On July 26, 2006, Mohamad Ibrahim Mohamad, the chairman of the parliamentary committee for constitutional affairs, was shot.⁸³ On July 28, Abdallah Isaaq Deerow, Somalia's minister for constitutional and federal affairs, was shot by an unidentified gunman, who then escaped.⁸⁴ Deerow was not among the twenty-nine TFG members who had resigned.

Meanwhile, the Islamic courts continued to expand their control over Mogadishu and the southern part of Somalia. On July 27, 2006, the militia said it was setting up a religious court inside a vast complex in Mogadishu that had once served as the country's presidential palace, a highly symbolic move that further marginalized the official administration.⁸⁵ "This is the place where Somalia will be ruled from and we appreciate your cooperation with the courts," said Janaqaw, a senior member of the Islamic courts.⁸⁶ In this regard, experts believed that the Islamic courts' formal acceptance of the legitimacy of the TFG and the TFG's reciprocal recognition that the Islamic courts constituted the new reality in Mogadishu and the country were compromises that could serve as a platform for further constructive dialogue.

Following the July 19, 2006, capture by the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) of the town of Bur Hakaba, near Baidoa, where the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was based, Ethiopia sent a column of vehicles and troops to Baidoa. The takeover of the town near Baidoa was most likely an ICU probe of the extent of Ethiopia's commitment to the TFG, rather than a planned attack of Baidoa aborted by the Ethiopians' arrival.⁸⁷

Two weeks after the Khartoum summit, on September 18, 2006, eleven people, including six alleged assassins, were killed in Baidoa in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Somalia's interim president, Abdullahi Yusuf. The president was unhurt in the attack, but his brother was among the killed, and eighteen people were wounded.⁸⁸ The assassins had detonated a car bomb when the president's convoy left the Parliament building. A second blast went off shortly after the first one. No one inside the building was injured.⁸⁹ The blasts had come as the president started a key session to approve the new cabinet. It is not clear who had carried out the attack.

Despite the Khartoum Accord, the ICU and the TFG remained deeply divided over several key issues, including the proposed

deployment of a peacekeeping force. The minister of foreign affairs of the TFG declined to speculate as to who was behind the blasts, but suggested they were probably linked to the proposed peacekeeping mission issue.⁹⁰ A government spokesman, Abidirahman Mohamed Nur, said, "We really do not have the expertise to uncover the whole attack that was well organized by the same groups that are carrying out attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan."⁹¹ The ICU's chairman, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, condemned the attack and blamed Ethiopia, which backed President Yusuf, saying it wanted a pretext to send troops to Somalia.⁹²

On October 18, 2006, at a meeting in Nairobi aimed at salvaging peace talks with the ICU, TFG President Yusuf appealed for international support against the ICU. For the first time, Yusuf directly accused the ICU of planning to assassinate him and other government officials.⁹³ "As a result of the investigation, our security forces have seized recent ICU documents listing a considerable number of TFG leaders condemned as infidels and a target for immediate physical elimination," Yusuf said in a statement obtained by the *Reuters* news agency.⁹⁴ He cited a document that he said approved both his and Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi's assassinations.⁹⁵

On November 30, 2006, three car bombs exploded at a government checkpoint outside a TFG base in Baidoa, killing eight people, including two policemen. According to TFG police reports, one of the three suicide bombers was a veiled woman.⁹⁶ No one claimed responsibility for the attack. It was the second suicide attack in Somalia since the ICU had come to power in Somalia.

Somaliland and Puntland: Next Targets of the ICU's Islamic Revolution

After the victory over the warlords of Mogadishu and the ongoing conflict with the TFG, the next targets of the Islamic movement were the autonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland. On October 9, 2006, during a visit by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed to Dubai, he said how he viewed the issues of Puntland and Somaliland: "Puntland is an autonomous state, and we are negotiating with them to join the ICU. However, we understand the grievances of Somaliland, and we want to tell them our readiness to address these historical mistakes."⁹⁷ Sheikh Dahir Aweys represented a more hostile position, accusing the Somaliland people of worshiping the wrong idol. "The Somaliland people forgot to worship Allah and instead

worship an idol called Peace,” he said in a statement to the media.⁹⁸ From mid-October 2006, the tension between the ICU and Puntland and Somaliland escalated and turned into violent conflict.

The ICU and Puntland (November 2006)

On November 5, 2006, fighting broke out between the ICU forces in Gilinsor, in the Mudug province in central Somalia, and the militia of Abdi Qeybdid, who had links to the autonomous government of Puntland.⁹⁹ The fighting came as some religious leaders from Puntland had set up an Islamic court in north Galkaayo. The formation of the court had already intimidated authorities in the region who threatened they would either kill or deport its founders.

The ICU chief of national security, Sheikh Yusuf Indha’adde, explained in a press conference that his fighters had been attacked by militia loyal to Abdi Qeybdid and Puntland fighters. The ICU forces had fought back, forcing the enemy to retreat.¹⁰⁰ He indicated that the ICU supported the new Islamic court recently formed at north Galkaayo under the administration of Puntland. Puntland’s rural affairs minister, Ali Abdul Awarre, denied any involvement of forces from Puntland in the fight.¹⁰¹

The ICU and Somaliland (October–November 2006)

On October 17, 2006, *Awdal News Network* published an article titled “Suicide Bombers Heading for Somaliland.”¹⁰² According to the article, based on an internal document written in Arabic and dated on the 6th Ramadan 1427 of the Hijri calendar (September 28, 2006), the decision blasted the Somaliland leadership for being apostates who had renounced Islam and opted to work with Jews and Americans at the expense of their nation’s religion.¹⁰³ “The Shura Council of the Perseverance Alliance has decided to send thirty young martyrs to carry out explosions and killing of the Jewish and American collaborators in the northern regions,” the document said.¹⁰⁴

The list of targeted personalities included Somaliland President Dahir Riyale Kahin, Foreign Minister Abdillahi Mohammed Duale, Finance Minister Hussein Ali Duale, Defense Minister Adan Waqaf, Aviation and Transport Minister Ali Mohammed Waran Adde, Minister of Information Ahmed Dahir Elmi, and seven other senior officials.¹⁰⁵ The council said the decision was made

After the Follow-Up Committee of the Perseverance Alliance submitted reports related to the circumstances in which religious scholars

live in the northern regions [Somaliland], and after the reports mentioned the personalities that carried out the torture against Islamic clerics and after the Council watched a video footage of the torture of Sheikh Mohammed Ismail.¹⁰⁶

Somali Islamist media had been repeatedly showing the alleged torture video of Sheikh Mohammed Ismail, an Islamist cleric jailed in Hargeisa for alleged terrorist acts.

Other measures recommended by the decision included forming a committee tasked with circulating the alleged torture video footage and stirring protest marches and dissent in the Somaliland towns of Buroa, Las Anod, Erigavo, and Buhodle. Those towns were all known to shelter a large—but so far peaceful—opposition to the Hargeisa government. Buroa was the Islamist center of Somaliland.¹⁰⁷

The Islamist council also decided to train 3,000 young mujahideen from the northern regions, or Somaliland, that were currently living in the southern towns of Mogadishu, Kismayo, and Gerille. They would later be dispatched to Somaliland, the document revealed.¹⁰⁸

In an interview with *Awdal News* in early October, Somaliland President Dahir Riyale Kahin said that the torture footage seemed to be a fabrication, underlining that Somaliland was investigating the case and would present the outcome to the public. “We don’t use torture as an investigative method, and we don’t torture anyone in our prisons. It is against our values and our laws,” President Kahin added, pointing out that the whole episode could have been a ruse by some people trying to use the name of Islam for their own agenda. Kahin confirmed that the man was suspected of being behind the explosives found in Hargeisa during the parliamentary elections in September 2005.¹⁰⁹

The ICU, however, seemed to have made some inroads in Somaliland, particularly with the departure to Mogadishu of Sheikh Ali Warsame, a former leader of al-Ittihad. Warsame, who until 2006 had lived in Buroa, was also the brother-in-law of Aweys, the main author of the document threatening Somaliland.¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, a number of demonstrations against the alleged torture video took place in major Somaliland towns such as Hargeisa, Buroa, and Erigavo. A number of Somaliland clerics had also issued statements calling for the Somaliland government to apply Islamic Sharia law without any delay.

On October 13, 2006, a mob led by extremist clerics burned many copies of *Haatuf* newspaper. *Haatuf* had been highly critical of the Somali Islamist movement, terming them “terrorists,” and was the first to

report on their Buroa-based Somaliland link.¹¹¹ The ICU viewed *Haatuf* as a powerful independent voice that stood in the way of their ongoing efforts to mobilize support within Somaliland.¹¹² The *Somaliland Times*, the English publication of *Haatuf*, said the newspaper burners were led by Mubarak Ahmed Diriye, who was suspected of having ties to the ICU in Mogadishu.¹¹³

External Involvement in the Conflict between the TFG and ICU

From the early stages of the confrontation between the ICU and the TFG, both sides were backed by external forces. The most significant external involvement was from Ethiopia, which had sent military forces to protect the TFG in Baidoa, and Eritrea, which had sent arms and a small number of combatants to support the ICU. Shortly after the arrival of Ethiopian forces in Baidoa, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys called in a radio broadcast for a jihad against the Ethiopian forces that had deployed in Baidoa to protect the TFG: "I am calling on the Somali people to wage a holy war against Ethiopians in Baidoa. They came to protect a government which they set up to advance their interests. We must defend our sovereignty."¹¹⁴

As a response to the arrival of Ethiopian soldiers, the ICU mobilized forces and organized anti-Ethiopian demonstrations in Mogadishu.¹¹⁵ President Abdullahi Yusuf, the head of the TFG, repeatedly called for international peacekeeping forces to be sent to restore peace and order in Somalia, an initiative that the ICU strongly opposed.

The external involvement of Ethiopia and Eritrea was condemned by the United Nations and the US State Department. UN envoy Francois Fall said that he thought reports of 4,000–5,000 Ethiopian troops in Somalia were exaggerated, but he said there were indications that there were some Ethiopian troops around Baidoa and near the city of Wajid.¹¹⁶

According to the monitoring group set up under UN Security Council Resolution 1407, which embargoed arms shipments to Somalia, on March 5, 2006, the Islamists were shipped, via Eritrea, 200 boxes of ZSU-23 antiaircraft ammunition, 200 boxes of B-10 antitank ammunition, 200 boxes of DShK antiaircraft ammunition, 200 boxes of Browning M2 heavy machine gun ammunition, ammunition for the ZP-39 antiaircraft gun, fifty rocket-propelled grenade launchers, fifty light antiarmor weapons, fifty M-79 grenade launchers, and communications equipment to be mounted on "technicals" (armed vehicles of ICU militia). This was followed two days later by a consignment of 1,000 short-version AK-47 automatic rifles, 1,000

pairs of binoculars, 1,000 remote-control bombs, 1,000 antipersonnel mines, and ammunition for 120 mm mortars.¹¹⁷

In July 2006, Eritrea sent to the ICU at least twice that much in military supplies.¹¹⁸ The TFG spokesman claimed that on July 26, 2006, an Ilyushin-76 cargo plane landed at the Mogadishu International Airport, carrying weapons from Eritrea for the ICU.¹¹⁹ Then a second large cargo plane delivered tons of equipment to the ICU on July 28, 2006.¹²⁰ The Eritrean arms came shortly after reports that Ethiopian troops had entered Somalia to protect the TFG in the area of Baidoa.

Eritrea and Ethiopia have a long history of tension and hostility, including a two-year border war in 1998–2000. Supplying arms to the ICU in Somalia by Eritrea was in defiance of Ethiopia, and there were concerns that Somalia would turn into a battlefield between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The UN envoy to Somalia, Francois Lonseny Fall, called on neighboring countries to exercise maximum restraint and “not to interfere at this particular moment in Somalia.”¹²¹ The US State Department said that there were external parties involved on all sides and called on them to avoid actions that might harm peace talks.¹²²

In a rare public acknowledgement of Eritrean support for the ICU, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys said Asmara was providing support in gratitude for past help:¹²³ “The previous Somali government [of Ziad Barre] helped Eritrea during its struggle for independence from Ethiopia. Eritrea helps the Somali people, they are returning back the favor.”¹²⁴ Aweys, who had attended a meeting in Mogadishu with UN envoy Fall, said that the ICU would not participate in peace talks with the TFG until Ethiopian troops withdrew from Somalia. While Aweys ruled out peace talks, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, the former head of the ICU, said the ICU’s “peace committee” still had to consider the UN’s call for negotiations, which were scheduled to be held in August 2006 in Khartoum, Sudan.¹²⁵

The TFG had agreed to attend the peace talks with the ICU in Khartoum on August 31, 2006. Aweys, despite his previous call for jihad against the Ethiopian forces protecting the TFG in Baidoa, had also agreed to the peace talks. In an interview, he explained, “Legally the government is still the government, but we are the power in Somalia. . . . In order for the government to fulfill its role, and for us to continue doing what we want to do and to provide leadership to our people, we need to come together.”¹²⁶

On September 4, 2006, the ICU and the TFG reached an agreement under Arab League mediation in Khartoum. The ICU and the TFG agreed to form a united national army. The agreement did not

specify when the plan would take effect, and talks were expected to resume October 30, 2006. The pact stressed that neither side would accept military interference inside Somalia by neighboring countries.¹²⁷ UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan praised the deal and encouraged both sides to “ensure a conducive environment for the next round of talks, which will take up crucial political, power-sharing and security issues.”¹²⁸

One day later, East African leaders gathered for a summit in Nairobi, Kenya. The Nairobi summit had been called by the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) that for years had led peace initiatives to solve the Somali political problems. The summit pushed forward a long-delayed plan to send African peacekeepers to Somalia and to wrest the diplomatic lead on solving Somalia’s political crisis from the Arab League.¹²⁹ The plan faced two major obstacles: the United Nations must lift an arms embargo on Somalia that had been in place for more than ten years to allow peacekeepers to enter the country, and the African Union must release funds to back the mission, which was expected to cost US\$34 million a month.¹³⁰

Ahmed called the IGAD meeting “a plot against our country.” Fuad Mohammed Qalaf, an education official of the ICU, declared that “We will fight a holy war [jihad] against them, and we will train our students in military tactics. There is nothing wrong with our plan to train students.”¹³¹ As a response to the IGAD plan, the ICU organized demonstrations in Mogadishu against foreign interference and called for holy war against any foreign force on the Somali soil.

On September 24, 2006, the ICU militia captured the strategic port town of Kismayo. The ICU claimed that the capture of Kismayo was to prevent the deployment of IGAD’s international forces. The takeover of Kismayo was a blow to the TFG and IGAD.¹³² In response to the growing tension between the ICU and the TFG, Ethiopia sent more troops to reinforce the TFG in Baidoa, although both Ethiopia and the TFG denied any deployment of Ethiopian troops.

Fighting between the ICU and TFG and Ethiopian Forces

On December 4, 2006, General John Abizaid, the commander of US forces from the Middle East through Afghanistan, arrived in Addis Ababa to meet the Ethiopian prime minister, Meles Zenawi. Officially, the trip was a courtesy call to an ally. Three weeks later, however, Ethiopian forces crossed into Somalia in a war on its Islamist rulers.

On October 5, 2006, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed claimed that Ethiopia had shelled the town of Beledweyne, causing an unknown number of casualties.¹³³ “Our forces are on high alert because yesterday [October 4, 2006] Ethiopian soldiers started shelling with mortars and artillery around our bases near Beledweyne,” he said at a ceremony to inaugurate a new Sharia law court in Mogadishu. “We are telling the world that Ethiopian forces are violating our territory,” he told the crowd. “It has been sending thousands to Somalia for the last three days.”¹³⁴ Beledweyne is about thirty km from the Ethiopian border and 300 km north of Mogadishu.¹³⁵

As they have done in the past in response to repeated eyewitness reports of uniformed Ethiopian troops in Somalia, officials in Ethiopia denied the claim, dismissing it as “propaganda.” “These reports are unfounded and categorically false,” foreign ministry spokesperson Solomon Abebe told *Agence France-Presse* in Addis Ababa. “This is propaganda they are always using. We are not attacking Beledweyne or any other town in Somalia.”¹³⁶

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi again denied sending troops to Somalia, but hinted that Addis Ababa would intervene if the Islamists tried to oust the Somali government based in the town of Baidoa.¹³⁷ In an address to Parliament in Addis Ababa, Zenawi said Islamist forces were about fifteen km from the border in central Somalia and warned that Ethiopia would defend itself: “The jihadists are planning to attack Ethiopia, and they are endangering our national security. The Ethiopian government is ready to defend its territory from Mogadishu Islamists.”¹³⁸ In this speech, Meles had for the first time told Parliament that Ethiopia had sent military trainers to help the TFG: “We have sent only trainers, who are soldiers. Other than this, the army has not entered into Somalia.”¹³⁹

The first battle between Ethiopian and ICU forces happened on November 19, 2006. Two Ethiopian trucks were destroyed, and six soldiers were killed and as many as twenty injured. The battle happened near Balanballa, in Galguduud province, central Somalia. The Ethiopian convoy had run into an ambush. The two trucks had been destroyed by landmines and then ICU fighters had opened fire on the convoy. The Ethiopian forces imposed a curfew on Balanballa town and began searching for the ICU fighters.

On November 22, 2006, hundreds of Ethiopian troops were seen patrolling a road leading to Somalia’s transitional government headquarters after a brief but intense firefight in the area. On December 8,

2006, fierce fighting erupted between the ICU and forces loyal to the TFG and Ethiopian soldiers near Dinsoor, 110 km south of Baidoa. "The Islamists have attacked us, and we are defending ourselves," Deputy Defense Minister Salat Ali Jelle told the media from Baidoa. "They have been calling for attacks against our troops, and today they have proven to be real attackers," he said.

In Mogadishu, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed said "heavy fighting" was underway in the Dinsoor area. He told a large crowd after Friday prayers that the battle had begun when a joint Somali government–Ethiopian force attacked Islamist fighters near Dinsoor, where the two sides had been girding for battle for the previous ten days.¹⁴⁰ "Our forces have been raided by Ethiopian troops, so people get up and fight against the Ethiopian troops and oppose a proposed United Nations–authorized peacekeeping mission. Stand up and defeat the enemies who have invaded our land," he told several hundred people protesting the UN Security Council's adoption of a resolution authorizing regional peacekeepers for Somalia.¹⁴¹

Fall of the ICU

On December 13, 2006, fighters from the ICU surrounded the city of Baidoa on three sides, declaring an ultimatum for Ethiopian forces to leave Somalia within seven days.¹⁴² "Starting today, if the Ethiopian don't leave our land within seven days, we will attack them and force them to leave our country," said Sheikh Yusuf Mohamed Sayid Indha'adde, the ICU militia's defense chief.¹⁴³

Heavy fighting erupted on December 21, 2006, hours after the expiry of the ICU ultimatum. The fighting started early in the morning in the ICU-held Beledweyne and Bandiradley townships.¹⁴⁴ The Ethiopians moved tanks and other reinforcements into the battle zone and launched air strikes against the ICU forces.¹⁴⁵ Ethiopian Information Minister Berhan Hailu said the operation had targeted several fronts, including Dinsoor, Beledweyne, Bandiradley, and Bur Hakaba. It was the first time that Ethiopia had launched air strikes against the ICU forces. Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys declared that all Somalis should join the struggle against the Ethiopians. He said that he viewed Ethiopia as the single biggest obstacle to uniting Somalia under an Islamic courts system, which would bring peace and stability to the country.¹⁴⁶

After three days of fierce fighting, the ICU forces had deserted several strategic towns in central and southern parts of Somalia, including Bur

Hakaba and Dinsoor. Ethiopian forces, accompanied by government forces, occupied all strategic towns: Galkaayo, Bandiradley, Adado, Buloburte, and Beledweyne. At that stage in the fighting, several hundred people had been killed, hundreds more were injured, and thousands of people had fled their homes.

On December 25, 2006, Ethiopian fighter jets bombed Mogadishu's airport.¹⁴⁷ On Ethiopian TV, the Defense Ministry claimed that the Ethiopian forces would move toward the city of Jowhar, fifty-five miles north from Mogadishu. On December 27, 2006, Ethiopian and TFG troops took control of Jowhar. After the fighting in Jowhar, the Ethiopian forces and the TFG troops quickly swept across the country, retaking territories that had been captured by ICU, who had left before their arrival.

On the evening of December 27, 2006, Ethiopian and TFG forces arrived on the outskirts of Mogadishu. Surprisingly, the ICU decided not to fight over Mogadishu to avoid bloodshed, and the Islamist fighters fled the city. In the process of the ICU withdrawal from Mogadishu, the ICU had distributed guns and arms to their supporters in the town to create havoc in the wake of their withdrawal. Shortly after the ICU withdrawal, fighting began between armed groups who tried to loot arms storage and offices left by the ICU.¹⁴⁸

On December 28, 2006, Ethiopian and TFG forces captured the capital of Somalia, Mogadishu. Ali Mohammed Gedi, the TFG prime minister, promised thousands of war-weary Somalis peace and stability as he formally took control of Mogadishu.¹⁴⁹ He declared that "Today is the beginning of a new life, new stabilization, and a new future for Somalia."¹⁵⁰ President Abdullahi Yusuf and the Ethiopian forces declared a twenty-four cease-fire to mark the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha on December 30, 2006, as a sign of good will.¹⁵¹

President Yusuf said that Ethiopian troops would stay in Somalia for now because "the government is not up to the level of taking back the entire country overnight."¹⁵² He also said that his forces would take the fight to Kismayo to defeat the last stronghold of the ICU.

After their withdrawal from Mogadishu, the ICU forces had moved south 300 km to the area of Kismayo. Shortly after their arrival, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed urged the thousands of residents gathered in Kismayo stadium to celebrate the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha and to defend their country: "Our country is under occupation so we have decided to fight. We are gearing up to kick these occupiers out of our country."¹⁵³ The ICU rallied several thousand fighters at Jilib, north of Kismayo, and in Kismayo.

Ethiopian and Transitional Federal Government forces engaged the Islamist militias, who were hastily building a network of trenches to defend the town of Jilib. The TFG forces and their Ethiopian allies rained down mortars and rockets on the ICU fighters positions around Jilib and Kismayo. The battle in Jilib began at 5:00 PM on January 1, 2007, and the Ethiopian air force pounded the ICU positions. By 2:00 AM, just nine hours after the fight had begun, the Islamic courts retreated and also withdrew from Kismayo without a fight. Both sides are said to have taken heavy casualties in the fighting. The remnants of the Islamic courts and its leadership fled Kismayo for the area of Ras Kamboni and into the forests west of Kismayo to regroup and to open an insurgency.

On January 2, 2007, Ali Jama, the TFG information minister, declared that "The government has gained control of southern and central Somalia. We will ensure that we restore law and order in that part of the country."¹⁵⁴ He said the government had exerted control of the southern port town of Kismayo, the Islamists' last stronghold that they had abandoned on the arrival of government troops backed by Ethiopian forces. "We will pursue them [the Islamists] until we ensure that they are out of this country," Jama said.

Kenya had reinforced its border with Somalia, and US forces were also said to have been in the region, including at sea, to prevent foreign militants aligned with the Islamists from escaping. Ethiopia says it had 4,000 troops in Somalia, though many believed that the number could have been far higher (up to 20,000 troops).¹⁵⁵ The TFG had not given troop numbers, but it was thought by experts to have been several thousands.

The ICU, who had been offered amnesty by the TFG if they surrendered, said they were ready to negotiate with the TFG, but that the Ethiopian soldiers backing it must first leave.¹⁵⁶

The TFG and Ethiopian Victory over the ICU

In a televised address, Ethiopian Prime Minister Zenawi said, "Our patience was considered as weakness and we were forced to go war and the alternative left to us is to speedily bring the war to a successful and victorious end in the shortest time possible."¹⁵⁷ The military intervention of Ethiopia in Somalia in support of the weak TFG was an impressive military success, but in the long run it was a strategic risk for Ethiopia and the stability of the region.

Ethiopia has one of Africa's largest, best-equipped, and most-experienced armed forces, with more than 100,000 trained personnel.¹⁵⁸

The Ethiopian forces in Somalia, using tanks, artillery, and air forces, had defeated in short time the lightly-armed and ill-trained Islamic force. But the war they were to face next in Somalia would be a new type of challenge. The ICU had already declared their will to conduct a holy war against the Ethiopian invaders and the TFG.¹⁵⁹

The eastern parts of Ethiopia, through which its forces must travel, are remote and have few resources. Its supply lines and communications had been stretched even before they had crossed the Somali border. It is also an area inhabited by Somali speakers, and some of them, Somali and Oromo rebels, operate in the area and are sympathetic to the ICU.¹⁶⁰ Inside Somalia, the Ethiopians were likely to find few allies, and many Somalis, who were united by nothing else, would be determined to resist Ethiopian forces, with whom they have fought two wars in the past fifty years.¹⁶¹

Ethiopia faces two levels of potential threats:

- A long-standing pan-Somali claim to the Ogaden region
- Radical Islam and the threat that Somalia will be turned into an area of jihad with mujahideen from the whole Muslim world

The Ethiopian prime minister said that the Shura Council, which presided over the ICU leadership, had crumbled, adding that the existence of the ICU was no more. "Currently, there are only remnants of the group moving towards the sea coast."

Meles reiterated Ethiopia's objective was to defend against the danger posed to it, and that upon completion of that mission, the Ethiopian army would withdraw from Somalia. He said the mission would continue until those responsible were put under control:

We are planning to stay there for a month. Hopefully it would be completed in days if not a few weeks at most, but once we have done that we are out of it. The Ethiopian mission in Somalia is limited and targeted at defending against the attacks of the extremist force on Ethiopia and Somalia. If this accomplished, Somalis will solve their internal problem.¹⁶²

Meles said his government would provide support to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government in the latter's efforts to stabilize the situation in Mogadishu. He said Ethiopia may provide support to help Somalis solve their problems, but what Somalis needed was beyond the capacity of Ethiopia: "Their demand is a huge humanitarian relief assistance and a peacekeeping force."

The risk was that if Ethiopia could not consolidate its military victory to political achievements stabilizing the situation in Ethiopia, Somalia would be plunged back into “chaos.” In such a chaotic situation, the Ethiopian forces would be forced to participate in an endless Somali civil war.

But the bigger challenge for Ethiopia was that its army was now facing hostile forces on two fronts, in Somalia and Eritrea, with whom it had fought a war that had ended just six years before (1998–2000). Ethiopia had accused Eritrea of sending arms and fighters to support the ICU. Many experts expressed concern that the tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea would escalate into a regional violent conflict.

The Ethiopian government had to also take into consideration that a big portion of the Ethiopian population are Muslims and that a violent conflict in Somalia and the tension with the Muslim neighbor Eritrea could affect this population. A radicalization of the Muslim population in Ethiopia could turn into a major threat to the stability of the Christian-dominated Ethiopia.

Ethiopia had inserted itself into a complex conflict with no real plan or roadmap for how to put an end to the inter-Somali conflict. It seemed that the end state of the Ethiopian intervention was to help the TFG to establish a pro-Ethiopian regime that would restore order and peace in Somalia. But the TFG remained as powerless as it had been before the Ethiopian military intervention. While the joint Ethiopian and TFG forces had regained Somalia from the ICU, the TFG troops were no more than passengers on Ethiopian vehicles.¹⁶³ There was a risk that the TFG would be unable to govern and that Somalia would return to chaos.

The Rise and Fall of the ICU¹⁶⁴

- 1991—Somalia descends into civil war between rival clan warlords
- 1996—Ethiopian forces defeat Islamist fighters (al-Ittihad) in the Somali town of Luuq
- 2004—Longtime Ethiopian ally and warlord Abdullahi Yusuf becomes Somalia’s interim president of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), making Baidoa his base
- June 2006—The Islamic courts take control of the Somali capital of Mogadishu from rival warlords and go on to gain territory in much of the central and southern parts of Somalia
- July 20, 2006—A column of Ethiopian trucks, more than 100-strong and including armored cars, cross into Somalia. Ethiopia only admits to having military trainers in the country to help the interim government
- July 21, 2006—The Islamic courts’ leadership orders a holy war against Ethiopian forces in Somalia

- September 2006—Somalia's interim president, Abdullahi Yusuf, survives an assassination attempt
- October 25, 2006—Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi says Ethiopia is "technically at war" with the ICU
- November 27, 2006—The Islamic courts say Ethiopian forces shelled the northern town of Bandiradley and that it had ambushed an Ethiopian convoy near Baidoa
- November 28, 2006—Eyewitnesses say Islamist fighters ambushed an Ethiopian convoy near Baidoa, blowing up a truck. The ICU claims some twenty Ethiopians died
- November 30, 2006—Ethiopia's Parliament passes a resolution authorizing the government to take all legal and necessary steps against what it terms as any invasion by the ICU
- December 3, 2006—Talks are held between the two sides in Djibouti in an attempt to avert conflict
- December 8, 2006—Islamic courts say they have engaged in battle with Ethiopian troops for the first time, southwest of Baidoa
- December 12, 2006—Islamic courts give Ethiopian troops a one-week ultimatum to leave Somalia or face a "major attack" (holy war)
- December 19, 2006—The deadline for Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia or face a major attack expires
- December 24, 2006—For the first time, Ethiopia admits its forces are fighting in Somalia, saying it had launched a "self-defensive" operation against Islamist militiamen. Fighting spreads across a 400-km front along the border
- December 25, 2006—Ethiopian aircraft bomb Mogadishu airport
- December 26, 2006—Forces loyal to the transitional government are reported to have taken control of the town of Bur Hakaba from the ICU. Other areas of southern and central Somalia are also said to have fallen under heavy assault from Somali and Ethiopian troops. Retreating Islamist militias are attacked by Ethiopian jets for a third day
- December 27, 2006—Ethiopian and TFG troops take control of Jowhar, a strategic town previously held by the Islamists
- December 28, 2006—Ethiopian-backed TFG forces capture the capital, Mogadishu, hours after Islamist fighters flee the city
- January 1, 2007—Somali government troops, supported by Ethiopian troops, seize the southern port of Kismayo, the last remaining ICU stronghold
- January 8, 2007—Ethiopian and TFG forces capture Ras Kamboni, and Abdullahi Yusuf, the TFG president, arrives in Mogadishu.

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Peacekeeping Mission in Somalia

Historical Background

On December 6, 2006, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1725, “reiterating its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia through the Transitional Federal Charter, and stressing the importance of broad-based and representative institutions and of an inclusive political process, as envisaged in the Transitional Federal Charter.” UN Security Council Resolution 1725 further called for “all Member States, in particular those in the region, to refrain from any action in contravention of the arms embargo and related measures, and should take all actions necessary to prevent such contravention.”¹ Moreover, the Security Council expressed its “willingness to engage with all parties in Somalia who are committed to achieving a political settlement through peaceful and inclusive dialogue, including the Union of Islamic Courts.”²

The Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, authorized the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the African Union to establish “a protection and training mission in Somalia.” UN Security Council Resolution 1725 specifically stated that countries bordering Somalia “would not deploy troops to Somalia.”³

On February 20, 2007, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1744, reiterating its support for the Transitional Federal Institutions and authorizing the African Union to establish a mission in Somalia. Resolution 1744 calls for “a national reconciliation congress involving all stakeholders, including political leaders, clan leaders, religious leaders, and representatives of civil society.” The resolution, while it welcomed the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia, did not include a provision that restricts the participation of Somalia’s

immediate neighbors in the peacekeeping operation as Resolution 1725 did.⁴

The Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1772 on August 21, 2007, authorizing the African Union to maintain its operation in Somalia for an additional six months. The resolution also authorized peacekeeping forces on the ground to take all necessary measures to support and protect those involved in the Reconciliation Congress. Finally, Resolution 1772 called on all member states, especially those in close proximity to Somalia, to comply with the arms embargo that was established in 1992 by Resolution 733.

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)

At the African Union summit, in late January 2007, several African countries pledged to contribute troops for a peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Ghana, Nigeria, Burundi, Uganda, and Malawi pledged troops, but the African Union faced difficulties in convincing governments to make serious troop contributions to the mission.

The African Union peacekeeping mission was mandated to

- Support dialogue and reconciliation in Somalia, working with all stakeholders
- Provide, as appropriate, protection to the TFIs and their key infrastructure, to enable them carry out their functions
- Assist in the implementation of the National Security and Stabilization Plan of Somalia, particularly the effective reestablishment and training of all inclusive Somali security forces, bearing in mind the programs already being implemented by some of Somalia's bilateral and multilateral partners
- Provide, within capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support to the disarmament and stabilization efforts
- Monitor, in areas of deployment of its forces, the security situation
- Facilitate, as may be required and within capabilities, humanitarian operations, including the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and the resettlement of IDPs
- Protect its personnel, installations, and equipment, including the right of self-defense⁵

The AMISOM concept of operations was to initially deploy, control, and stabilize the security situation in Mogadishu in Sector 2 before fanning out into the other sectors, indicated as Sector 1 and Sector 3. AMISOM operations would be conducted in four phases as follows:

- a. Phase I—Initial deployment phase. Phase I was the initial deployment of nine infantry battalions to Sector 2, which was Mogadishu.

- This involved execution by the head of the military component, the AMISOM force commander (FC AMISOM), who would ensure the mounting of the AMISOM HQ and also provide for a secure and safe environment in and around Mogadishu, thereby providing for the conditions to execute Phase II and allow the SRCC to relocate to Somalia.
- b. Phase II—Expansion of deployment. Phase II was the expansion of the mission by deployment of predominantly military units to other sectors.
 - c. Phase III—Consolidation. Phase III was the consolidation phase. This involved the comprehensive execution of the AMISOM mandate and key tasks as decided by the AU PSC.
 - d. Phase IV—Redeployment/exit phase. Phase IV was the redeployment or exit of forces, which would coincide with a foreseen handover to the United Nations.⁶

Politically, AMISOM was led by an appointed civilian head of mission, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC), who oversaw the heads of the AMISOM civilian, military, police, and administrative components and who reported to the chairman of the AU commission through the commissioner of peace and security. A deputy SRCC was appointed to support the SRCC in the execution of his duties.

In addition to the management of AMISOM, the SRCC was charged to focus his efforts on the AU's centre of gravity, which was to establish and enhance the institutional credibility of the AU/TFG and solicit international support, while ensuring that the continuation of extant political conditions that threatened peace and security in Somalia were eradicated.

In the AMISOM predeployment phase, the SRCC set up his temporary mission headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, and mounting base in Entebbe, Uganda. Once the AMISOM advance military component and key police leadership completed its deployment and successfully activated its headquarters in Mogadishu, the SRCC relocated to Mogadishu, which was the site for his mission headquarters.

Mission Plan: To ensure coherence and harmonization of effort, the SRCC will develop and issue his Mission Plan for the conduct of AMISOM. The functional AMISOM components will develop and issue their individual plans (concept of operations) predicated on both the SRCC's Mission Plan and the AU PSOD issued Concepts of Operation for the SRCC's subordinate components. A fundamental element will be the Rules of Engagement (ROE) for the AMISOM military component, which will also be issued by the PSOD.⁷

Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS)

The ouster from power of the ICU by Ethiopian forces in December 2006 created a security vacuum that was soon occupied by the more radical elements of the ICU. The leadership of the ICU became marginalized, splintered, and weakened.

US, TFG, and Ethiopian officials labeled the entire leadership of the ICU as extremists and terrorists in 2006. Eighteen months later, however, the same governments supported the inclusion of some former ICU members in a UN-led peace process.

In September 2007, in the wake of the defeat of the ICU by the Ethiopian military, two of the former ICU leaders, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, spearheaded the creation of a new opposition group from exile in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, called the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS). More than 400 people participated at the founding conference. Al-Shabaab did not participate and later condemned the leadership of the alliance.

The ARS was, at the onset, a coalition of both moderate politicians and hard-liner ICU clerics and politicians united against reconciliation talks with the TFG and Ethiopia until its military withdrew from Somalia. The ARS significantly reduced the dominance of the ICU council and brought into the leadership people from civil society, women's groups, former members of the TFG, and people from different regions.

The ARS supported guerilla warfare against Ethiopian military forces in Somalia, while discussing a political solution with foreign negotiators.⁸ According to the ARS, the main objectives of the coalition were as follows:

- The liberation of Somalia from Ethiopia
- Somali solutions by Somali stakeholders through dialogue and peaceful means
- The establishment of a national government that would “completely devote its utmost care to the welfare of the people, protect its rights, properties and promote its spiritual and material development”
- The prevention of crimes and violence targeted against the civilian population, such as raping, killing, fighting, pillaging, dislodging, and displacing
- Resettlement of displaced people
- The organization of general elections once peace and security were established

In January 2008, the ARS leadership declared that it would accept a humanitarian cease-fire, zones of tranquility, and negotiations with the TFG and others once Ethiopian forces were replaced by a neutral force. This position led to a split of the ARS. Many of the top leaders of the ARS left Eritrea for Djibouti to participate in the UN-sponsored negotiations.

In May 2008, the ARS leadership fractured when Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed accepted a UN proposal to mediate between the ARS and the TFG in Djibouti—a proposal vehemently rejected by Hassan Dahir Aweys. The group split into two factions:

- The pro-talks “ARS-Djibouti” faction under Ahmed
- The more hard-line “ARS-Asmara” faction under Aweys

Aweys denounced the discussion, calling it a “waste of time” that did not represent the ARS as a body.⁹ Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed responded by publicly deriding Eritrea and Aweys for working against ARS unity and reiterated his support for the UN-backed reconciliation effort.¹⁰

TFG in Crises (2007–2008)

In November 2007, Prime Minister Nur Adde replaced Ali M. Gedi, who many Somalis had believed was ineffective and highly partisan. Prime Minister Nur Adde, who was seen by many Somalis and Somali observers as a key actor to bridge the gap between the TFG and the opposition, often clashed with President Yusuf.

In July 2008, the prime minister dismissed the mayor of Mogadishu and governor of Benadir region, Mohamed Dheere, because of mismanagement of funds. In protest, ten pro-Yusuf ministers resigned, triggering a crisis within the TFG. In August 2008, the prime minister and the president met in Ethiopia and later reached an agreement on a number of issues.

In mid-December 2008, President Yusuf fired Prime Minister Nur Adde and named Mohamed Mohamud Guled as the new prime minister. Nur Adde rejected his dismissal, arguing that President Yusuf lacked the legal authority to dismiss him and that only Parliament had the power to dismiss the prime minister. On December 15, a majority of the Somali Parliament voted in support of Nur Adde, and the government of Kenya imposed a travel ban and asset freeze against President Yusuf.

Humanitarian and security conditions continued to deteriorate in Mogadishu and south-central Somalia. The TFG forces, under the leadership of President Yusuf, were weak, ineffective, and seriously debilitated by defections. In 2008–2009, an estimated 40 percent of the police force, who had been trained by the United Nations, left the force because of lack of payment. Some donor governments had withheld funds pledged to the TFG because of a lack of transparency and human rights abuses. Infighting within the TFG, especially between Prime Minister Nur Adde and President Yusuf, weakened the TFG.

The TFG remained vulnerable and unable to stand against the insurgents; however, the presence of the African Union force prevented the takeover of Mogadishu by the insurgents. But the African Union force didn't have a Chapter VII mandate, requiring the force to be on the defensive rather than take offensive measures against the insurgents. The AU forces used artillery as a defensive and preventive weapon against the insurgents, and these measures weakened the insurgents and forced them to remain outside the range of the artillery. But the most serious challenge facing the TFG forces and those of the AU was that the insurgents were highly decentralized and moved and operated in small units independently.

Suicide Bombings in Puntland

In late October 2008, simultaneous and well-coordinated suicide attacks in Puntland and Somaliland reportedly killed twenty people and injured many more. The targets of the attacks were the Ethiopian consulate, the office of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and a security office close to the presidential palace. The suicide mission was reportedly carried out by members of al-Shabaab, although no organization claimed credit for the attacks. One of the suicide bombers was an American Somali from Minneapolis, who, according to press reports, had left the United States to take part in the suicide attack in Somalia.¹¹

Djibouti Peace Process

The Djibouti peace process began in 2008. In May–June 2008, TFG and ARS officials met in Djibouti under the auspices of the United Nations. Officials from the United States, Europe, the African Union, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and regional governments took part as observers during the talks. The parties agreed on a wide range of issues, including cessation of hostilities and

a commitment to find a durable peace agreement. They also agreed to support the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force and the phased withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia. The TFG and Ahmed's faction within the ARS reached an accord in June 2008.

Aweys immediately rejected this as untenable and illegitimate.¹² Aweys's refusal to participate in the reconciliation talks cemented the divide between him and Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, as well as their respective wings of the ARS.

The Central Committee of the Somali opposition movement—the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS)—met on July 19, 2008, in the Republic of Djibouti. The meeting in Djibouti City was attended by 160 ARS members, including Chairman Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed and Central Committee head Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, to plan the implementation of the agreement with the TFG.¹³

In late December 2008, President Yusuf resigned from office and left for Yemen. President Yusuf had been opposed to the Djibouti peace process and had repeatedly clashed with his prime minister.

The Ethiopian Withdrawal from Somalia (2009)

On December 4, 2006, General John Abizaid, the commander of US forces from the Middle East to Afghanistan, arrived in Addis Ababa to meet the Ethiopian prime minister, Meles Zenawi. Officially, the trip was a courtesy call to an ally. Three weeks later, however, Ethiopian forces crossed into Somalia in a war on its Islamist rulers.¹⁴

The Ethiopian forces stormed into Somalia in 2006 to depose the Islamic government and install a UN-backed transitional government. Together with the United States, which gave approval and logistical backing for the invasion, Meles Zenawi accused the ICU of terror links as well as irredentist motives that threatened Ethiopian sovereignty. The Ethiopian intervention set off a bitter guerrilla war. Fighting in Somalia had killed 10,000 civilians since early 2007, driven more than a million from their homes, and left more than three million Somalis in need of emergency food aid.¹⁵

In the years 2007–2008, many Mogadishu neighborhoods became ghost towns, while the transitional government's zone of control shrunk to a few city blocks in the capital and in Baidoa, a market town where the Parliament meets. Somalia's Islamist movement made a steady comeback, with Islamist factions again controlling much of the country.¹⁶

On November 28, 2008, Wahide Bellay, a spokesman for the Ethiopian foreign ministry, said, "We have concluded that it's inappropriate

for Ethiopia to maintain its troops in Somalia. We have done our job, and we are proud of it. But the expectations that we had from the international community were never fulfilled. But that said, we will withdraw in a responsible manner.”¹⁷ Ethiopia’s decision prompted a meeting of regional foreign ministers to discuss the Somali crisis.¹⁸

Officials from the Ethiopian military forces, the African Union peacekeepers, and the prime minister of Somalia’s transitional government held a farewell ceremony for the Ethiopian troops at Villa Somalia, the presidential palace.¹⁹ Somali Prime Minister Nur Adde warmly endorsed the beginning of the end of Ethiopian troops in his country: “I welcome the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces from Somalia, which was part of the Djibouti peace between my government and the opposition group.” He called on the Somalis for unity in the pursuit of peace in their nation.²⁰

An Ethiopian commander bid the country farewell:²¹ “We came to Somalia to help the transitional federal government,” said Colonel Gabre Yohannes. “We paid blood and property for that reason. That effort meant that the young generation of Somalis will get peace.” The Ethiopian troops had lost hundreds of soldiers in Somalia.

On January 26, 2009, Ethiopia ended its two-year occupation of Somalia, claiming to have nullified the threat of Islamist rule, even though much of the country remained in the hands of violent insurgents. Somalia’s transitional government confirmed the withdrawal. “The Ethiopians have fulfilled their promise,” said a spokesman, Abdi Haji Gobdon, referring to a pledge late the previous year by Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi to bring his country’s forces home.²²

*Announcement of the Ethiopian Withdrawal by Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Addis Ababa, January 4, 2009:*²³

It is to be recalled that the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) moved into Somalia two years ago to foil the clear and present danger created by extremist forces in Somalia that had repeatedly declared Jihad against Ethiopia. The major mission of the ENDF which was to remove the threat posed to our country was completed immediately and in no time. It would have been possible for the Ethiopian government to remove its troops immediately at that time. The reason this was not done was because it was felt that Ethiopia should help the brotherly people of Somalia bring to an end the country’s statelessness and to help in restoring peace and stability in Somalia in cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). This has been accomplished by the ENDF with great sense of responsibility.

In addition, Ethiopia had been conducting all the necessary diplomatic effort to encourage the African Union and the international community to play their proper role to assist in the realization of peace and stability in Somalia. Ethiopia's own effort in the diplomatic area as well as its activities within IGAD and the AU as a member of those organizations has facilitated support in terms of political position adopted by the international community as well as practical support from the AU, in particular, from Uganda and Burundi who have rendered tangible assistance.

It was agreed in the same talks that the ENDF will be withdrawing from Somalia at the end of 2008. Accordingly, the ENDF, after having drawn up the necessary plan, has begun its activities at the end of 2008 to implement it. With the view to avoiding the creation of vacuum after its withdrawal and to ensure that the security situation in Somalia would not deteriorate, the ENDF has redoubled its efforts that had begun earlier and is at present handling matters that fall within the final phase of these activities. In order to carry out this task effectively and with full common understanding, AMISOM force commander, Commander of the TFG forces and the commander of the Ethiopian Contingent in Somalia have met in Addis Ababa and have carried out the evaluation of the final arrangement in addition to drawing up a plan for subsequent activities. Moreover, since it is now confirmed that Uganda and Burundi have decided to contribute additional troops to AMISOM, the ENDF has reached the final phase of its withdrawal having accomplished its mission with success. Accordingly, the security forces of the TFG and AMISOM have taken over those areas that were earlier covered by the ENDF. It should also be pointed out that the citizens of Mogadishu and other members of the Somali Community have been given the necessary support to defend their peace and security in an organized fashion and enhanced manner, an effort which has been going on for the last two years.

It is after having ascertained that all these activities have been carried out and having seen in practice the readiness of AMISOM to stay in Somalia after the withdrawal of the Ethiopian Contingent that the Ethiopian government began to get the ENDF to withdraw from Somalia in conformity with the commitment it has made. The withdrawal of Ethiopian troops is not going to be conducted with undue haste. This would mean that it will take a few days to be completed and it would be done so as quickly as possible.

The government of Ethiopia realizes that durable peace is still the call of the people of Somalia which is yet to be answered. It is in light of this that Ethiopia appeals to the international community to give more attention to this call by the people of Somalia and discharge its responsibilities by helping the Somalis free themselves from the prevailing chaos. Ethiopia expresses its appreciation to members of IGAD and the AU, in particular to the governments of Uganda

and Burundi who have demonstrated their resolve to carry out their Pan-African Mission in Somalia. Our defense forces have carried out a successful mission to eliminate the clear and present danger that our country had faced two years ago. In addition, the ENDF has over the last two years conducted major efforts to weaken the extremists and to contribute to the creation of peace and stability in Somalia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs pays tribute on behalf of the entire people of Ethiopia and the Ethiopian government for the sacrifices it made to achieve this mission and reiterates that Ethiopia will continue as before to contribute in deeds to the establishment of durable peace and stability in Somalia.

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Addis Ababa
January 4, 2009

The New Regime of Somalia

In January 2009, Ethiopia completed its military withdrawal from Somalia and handed control of the country to the rebranded TFG. The Somali parliament voted to double its size to 550 members to comply with the Djibouti agreement, with most of the new representation going to the ARS.²⁴ On January 31, 2009, the restructured Somali Parliament elected the moderate Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed president as a compromise suitable to both existing parliamentarians and the body's new Islamist bloc.²⁵ In February 2009, President Ahmed appointed Omar Abdirashid Ali Shermarke as prime minister.

In January 2009, President Ahmed went to Ethiopia and took part in the African Union summit, where he was welcomed by member states. In 2006, Ethiopian forces had attacked and forced out Ahmed's Islamic Courts Union from power. However, President Ahmed was warmly welcomed by Ethiopian authorities during the AU summit in Ethiopia.

With the election of Ahmed as Somali president, the ARS-Djibouti faction essentially ceased to exist. However, several prominent clan-based factions rejected the compromise as illegitimate following the election and created Hizb al-Islam in protest.²⁶ Meanwhile, Aweys remained in self-imposed exile in Asmara, not returning to Somalia until April 23, 2009.

In late October 2010, President Ahmed appointed Mohamed A. Mohamed as prime minister, shortly after Shermarke resigned.

The Transitional Federal Government controlled several official security forces:²⁷

- **Somali National Security Force.** The total planned strength of this force during the transitional period was 8,000. In October 2009, with the assistance of the AMISOM force commander, former Somali National Forces units and the Somali troops trained in Djibouti were reorganized into battalion-size formations. As at November 1, 2009, approximately 2,900 soldiers were estimated to be effective and on the government payroll, and it was believed there were additional fighters who had not yet been registered
- **Somali Police Force.** The total planned strength for this force during the transitional period was 10,000
- **National Security Agency.** Headed by General Mohamed Sheikh Hassan, the National Security Agency was responsible for intelligence collection and analysis, counterterrorism, and immigration functions

In addition, the Transitional Federal Government was supported by a variety of militia groups, some of which operated nominally under the authority of the forces listed above. An international assessment of the security sector late in 2009 estimated that some 5,000 to 10,000 government-aligned militias operated in Mogadishu.

In practice, the majority of government forces were irregular, clan-based, and characterized by highly personalized command arrangements. Military and police functions often overlapped. The security sector as a whole lacked structure, organization, and a functional chain of command—a problem that an international assessment of the security sector attributed to “lack of political commitment by leaders within the Transitional Federal Government or because of poor common command and control procedures,” as well as lack of resources.²⁸

The Transitional Federal Government had never managed to deploy regimental or brigade-sized units on the battlefield. The consequences of these deficiencies included an inability of the security forces of the Transitional Federal Government to take and hold ground, and very poor public perceptions of their performance by the Somali public.²⁹

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama’a

Sufism was one of the earliest movements in Somalia, playing a major role in spreading Islam throughout the Horn of Africa, establishing Islamic centers, and teaching the fundamentals of Islam to

the Somali people. It has gained a prominent status in the lives of Somalis to this day.³⁰

- **The Qadiriyya order.** This Sufi order was founded by Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani in the year 1077 and was the first Sufi order to be introduced to Somalia by Yemenis who settled in the coastal areas of Somalia. From its Somali establishment in the coastal city of Zaila, in northern Somalia, the movement transferred to the capital city of Mogadishu and then to Marka and Baraawe in the southern region of Lower Shabelle
- **The Ahmadiyya order.** Founded by Ahmad ibn Idris al-Fasi (1760–1837), this order spread throughout east Africa, gaining wide prominence in central Shabelle Valley
- **The Salehiyya order.** This is a branch of the Ahmadiyya order founded by Mohammed bin Saleh, who died in 1513. This order is considered to be a pioneer in spreading Islam throughout Somalia

For centuries, the Sufis were men of peace. They followed a spiritual current of Islam that emphasizes moral education, tolerance, and a personal link to God. When Somalia plunged into clan wars after the collapse of the central government in 1991, Islam's extremist Wahhabi strain gained strength amid the anarchy.

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a was founded in 1991, following a split from the Islamic Scholars Assembly of Somalia. The main body of the group is composed of Sufi clerics and is not engaged in militancy. There has been confusion regarding Ahlu Sunna's leadership structure since its founding, and the group has been beset by leadership rivalries from the beginning. Sheikh Mohamed Sheikh Hassan is considered the group's spiritual leader.³¹

Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a was initially formed with the objective of delegitimizing the radical Islamist theology promoted by militant groups such as al-Ittihad al-Islamiya (AIAI). Its opposition to such groups took nonviolent forms, with clerics preaching in favor of a rejuvenation of traditional Sufi religious orders and values. To this end, the group sought to unite the three main Sufi religious orders in the country: the Qadiriyya, the Salehiyya, and the Ahmadiyya.³²

The Sufis engaged in neither the conflict nor politics. When Ethiopia invaded Somalia in 2006, the Sufis remained on the sidelines. The invasion sparked the rise of al-Shabaab, which swiftly took control of large patches of southern and central Somalia. Al-Shabaab fighters soon set their sights on the Sufis, whom they branded as heretics, assassinating

Sufi clerics and burning down Sufi shrines. They also opened Sufi graves and pulled the bodies out.

In turn, Ahlu Sunna abandoned its nonviolent stance and mounted an armed resistance to the encroachment of the jihadist groups into its areas of influence. Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), as an armed organization, represented the forefront of the Sufi orders. It was founded to combat al-Shabaab's violation of Sufi sanctities in southern Somalia. Nevertheless, Ahlu Sunna statements continued to stress that they do not believe in attaining their goals through violent means.

In July 2008, however, clashes broke out between ASWJ and al-Shabaab militias in a number of locations in central and southwestern Somalia where al-Shabaab had attempted to ban Sufi religious practices. In December 2008, with the support of the Transitional Federal Government headed by Prime Minister Nur Adde, ASWJ leaders solicited and obtained military support from Ethiopia and embarked upon a campaign to expel al-Shabaab militias from the central regions.³³

By late 2009, ASWJ had emerged as the largest and most effective government-aligned fighting force in southern Somalia. The monitoring group estimated the total strength of those disparate forces at approximately 2,000 fighters.

Like most other Somali factions, ASWJ is an umbrella for various local militia groups, including Sufi sects, clan interests, political opportunists, and external agendas. The largest and most effective wing of ASWJ operated in the western Galguduud region and was anchored mainly in the Habar Gidir, Dir, and Marehaan clans of that region. Affiliated groups also operated in the eastern Galguduud and Middle Shabelle regions (Abgaal Wa'eylsle), in Gedo region (Marehaan), and, since late 2009, in Hiraan region (Hawaadle).

Some other militia leaders, including some serving as proxies for Ethiopian influence (such as Barre Aden Shire "Hiiraale" and Yusuf Ahmed Hagar "Dabageed") have tried to portray themselves as ASWJ to attract greater domestic and international support.³⁴ Despite attempts to unify these efforts, ASWJ lacks a unified chain of command and suffers from a lack of internal cohesion—in part because of bitter disputes over external resources.³⁵

The relationship of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a with the Transitional Federal Government was difficult and at times ambiguous. In July 2008, ASWJ leaders expressed their support for the preliminary

Djibouti agreement and, on June 21, 2009, Abdulqaadir Ma'alin Nuur of ASWJ and the prime minister of the Transitional Federal Government, Omar Abdirashid Shermarke, signed a joint declaration pledging full cooperation. By late 2009, the agreement had yet to be implemented in any meaningful way, however, and the relationship between the two parties was strained. The government's selective engagement with ASWJ during this period further complicated the situation. Late in August 2009, for example, having failed to provide assistance to ASWJ forces in western Galguduud, the Transitional Federal Government sent military aid to embattled ASWJ fighters from President Sharif's own Abgaal clan near Eel Dheer.

On November 30, 2009, ASWJ and the Transitional Federal Government signed a more substantive cooperation agreement, underpinned by a written request from the Transitional Federal Government to the government of Ethiopia for material support, including arms and ammunition for ASWJ in Galguduud. Although ASWJ had been receiving military support from Ethiopia since December 2008, in violation of the United Nations arms embargo on Somalia, this development appeared to indicate that ASWJ was now considered a legitimate local security sector institution, acknowledged and supported by the Transitional Federal Government, and therefore eligible for external assistance.

The Sufi uprising began in central Somalia in 2010. Sufi clans fought clans that backed al-Shabaab. The Sufi forces, widely believed to be backed by Ethiopia, pushed the radicals from several key areas. On March 15, 2010, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a signed a power-sharing agreement with the Somali government, and its forces entered the Somali capital.

The Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a militia posed the strongest challenge yet to al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda-linked organization. The pro-government Sufi Islamist militia controlled some regions in central Somalia and often clashed with al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam.

The Sufis potentially offered an alternative strategy for the United States and its allies in the struggle to stem the rising tide of Islamist radicalism in Somalia. Sufi leaders tried to leverage their moral authority as the only Somali faction not to have fueled the nation's chaos. The Sufis sought both official positions, along with other top ministries, in the power-sharing deal.

The rise of Somalia's moderate Muslims often draws comparisons to the Sunni tribes in Iraq's Anbar province that rose up to fight

al-Qaeda extremism in their country. Like them, the Sufis have wider political ambitions and could bring a measure of stability and relief from the brutality of al-Shabaab.³⁶ The Sufis themselves have suffered divisions because of internal conflicts and rival Sufi militias' claims to be the legitimate representatives of the nation's Sufi tradition. This has resulted in the loss of much of its military and organizational power.

Armed Opposition Groups

From 2006 to 2008, opposition to the Transitional Federal Government took the form of a popular and complex insurgency involving a significant cross section of Somali society opposed to President Abdullahi Yusuf and Ethiopian occupation. After the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces and the election of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as president, popular opposition to the Transitional Federal Government largely subsided, and armed opposition was then essentially limited to a small number of militant groups. However, these groups effectively exploited clan and regional grievances to establish presence and influence throughout much of Somalia.³⁷

The structure, organization, and membership of armed opposition groups were fluid. They suffered internal tensions and divisions, they lacked clearly defined hierarchies, and the relationships between them fluctuated rapidly and often unpredictably between cooperation, competition, and even mutual hostility. Defections of fighters from one militia to another, which were routinely trumpeted by all sides for propaganda purposes, were a natural product of this constant fusion and fission.³⁸

The two main foci of opposition are Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (commonly known as al-Shabaab)³⁹ and Hizb al-Islam.⁴⁰ Although they have cooperated closely at times, and some members of both groups seek to unify them, they pursue separate political and ideological objectives, and the relationship between them has increasingly been characterized by friction and conflict.⁴¹

Islamist Response

On January 13, 2009, gunmen from one Islamist faction rushed into an old pasta factory in central Mogadishu that the Ethiopians had been using as a base. The Islamists were quick to take credit for the Ethiopian withdrawal. "We drove the Ethiopians out by means of muscle and bullet," announced Sheikh Yusuf Mohamed Sayid, an

Islamist leader. “Today, we got the victory we were expecting. We will restore order in this neighborhood.” He added, “We are ready to unite with our brothers now, since the enemy is leaving.”

Many Western diplomats and other Somalia analysts warned that once all the Ethiopians were gone, the various Islamist factions would unleash their considerable firepower on one another in a scramble to take over the country. Some of that fighting had already kicked off, with dozens of people killed in combat between moderate and radical Islamist factions.

With the election of Ahmed as Somali president, the ARS-Djibouti faction essentially ceased to exist. However, several prominent clan-based factions rejected the compromise as illegitimate following the election and created Hizb al-Islam in protest.⁴² Meanwhile, Aweys remained in self-imposed exile in Asmara, not returning to Somalia until April 23, 2009.

Hizb al-Islam

Hizb al-Islam was created in January 2009 from the merger of four separate Islamic groups, with Sheikh Omar Iman Abubakar at the group’s helm:

- Aweys’s Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia-Asmara (ARS-A)
- Al-Turki’s Muaskar Ras Kamboni (Ras Kamboni Brigade)
- Hassan Abdullah Hersi’s Jabhatul Islamiya (the Islamic Front)
- Muaskar Anoole, the Harti clan’s militia

At the time of its formation, Hizb al-Islam’s stated objectives were threefold:⁴³

- To overthrow the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) led by President Ahmed, whom they regarded as an apostate
- To implement Sharia (Islamic law)
- To expel all foreign security forces from the country

Iman Abubakar denounced the new Ahmed government as equally undesirable as the previous one. He said, “The so-called government led by Sharif Sheikh Ahmed is not different from the one of Abdullahi Yusuf [the previous TFG president]. The country was not freed from the enemy, and Sharia law was not imposed. How we can [*sic*] stop Jihad?”⁴⁴ Muse Abdi Arale, then Hizb al-Islam’s spokesman, threatened to fight any TFG forces that entered neighborhoods under his group’s control.⁴⁵

Hizb al-Islam fuses radical Islam and Somali nationalism. Unlike al-Shabaab, it incorporates clan interests and has not adopted a global jihadist mission.⁴⁶ Although Aweys pledged allegiance to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda several times, and has welcomed both into Somalia, foreign fighters have not joined the ranks of Hizb al-Islam the way they have with al-Shabaab.⁴⁷

Hizb al-Islam set two conditions for the end of its hostilities against the TFG: the implementation of Sharia as Somali federal law and the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the country.

As part of his more moderate Islamist agenda, and also in an attempt to neutralize armed Islamist opposition groups such as Hizb al-Islam and al-Shabaab, President Ahmed announced on February 28, 2009, that he would implement Sharia in Somalia—a move that was approved by parliament on April 18 and ratified as law on May 13. Hizb al-Islam denounced the move as a “deception” and stated that they would continue their struggle to overthrow President Ahmed and expel foreign forces from the country. Hizb al-Islam created its own Islamic administration to govern Somalia on May 22, 2010, although the group held little territory outside southern Mogadishu at the time.⁴⁸

Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys reentered the picture several days later from Asmara, criticizing Ahmed and denouncing the TFG as an instrument of Ethiopia’s interests against Islam and Somali nationalism:

Ethiopia blindly supported and praised Sharif [Ahmed], and that shows the country is still run by Ethiopians and their agents, and that is why we are fighting. They are fighting to stop any group that can employ sharia law in Somalia, so this is a religious war. When invaders come in and try to force you to leave our religion, reject your nationhood and independence, and take your resources illegally, there is no option left but to fight.⁴⁹

Iman Abubakar echoed Aweys’s sentiments, even adding that AMISOM was a tool of the United States in its war on Islam: “I want to remind the Somali people that the Burundian and Ugandan troops were trained by American forces and were sent to Somalia to fight with the mujahideen [holy war fighters] and they do not want peace to prevail in Somalia.”⁵⁰ Instead of political reconciliation with the TFG, Hizb al-Islam aligned with al-Shabaab in militant opposition to the government. Al-Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Mukhtar Robow, also known as Abu Mansour, thanked Hizb al-Islam on March 16, 2009,

for its collaborative efforts against pro-government forces in the Galguduud region of central Somalia.⁵¹

In addition to its core goals, as an extremist Salafist group, Hizb al-Islam was also committed to eradicating what it considered to be deviant expressions of Islam within Somalia. This was most noticeable in the targeting of Somalia's Sufi Muslim population, but was also seen when the group attacked television and radio stations it considered un-Islamic. Aweys banned activities such as watching soccer, forced men to grow beards, and enforced harsh restrictions on journalists and radio stations.⁵² On September 19, Hizb al-Islam militants raided the *Global Broadcasting Corporation* (GBC) station in Mogadishu and seized its broadcast equipment. Earlier in 2010, the group issued an order to all radio stations to cease playing music or it would shut them down.⁵³ In September 2009, Aweys advocated for more suicide attacks in the country, just days after suicide bombers struck an African Union base in Mogadishu.

By November 2009, Hizb al-Islam had effectively been reduced to two of its constituent parts, ARS-A and SIF, both of them comprising militias drawn from the smaller Hawiye subclans, and its area of operations confined to Mogadishu, Afgoye, and parts of the Hiraan region.⁵⁴ Perceiving Hizb al-Islam as an increasingly feeble and unreliable ally, at meetings near Afgoye in October 2009, al-Shabaab offered Aweys the option of either joining al-Shabaab or surrendering to the Transitional Federal Government. Aweys chose to remain independent, and by early 2010, Hizb al-Islam had become of only marginal relevance to the broader struggle for power in southern Somalia.⁵⁵

*Ras Kamboni Forces*⁵⁶

The Ras Kamboni forces are a clan militia constituted mainly of fighters from the Mohamed Subeer subclan of the Ogaden. Leaders of this group include Ahmed Mohamed Islaan "Madobe," Ibrahim Shukri, and Abdinasir Seerar. In October 2009, a faction of the Ras Kamboni militia, headed by commanders Mohamed Muhumed Ali "Dulyadeen," Abdiqani Mohamed Yusuf "Kaboje'el," and Isse Kamboni, split with the main force and aligned itself with al-Shabaab in Kismayo. Early in February 2010, led by Hizb al-Islam Deputy Chairman Hassan Abdallah Hersi "al-Turki," this Ras Kamboni splinter group declared it had merged with al-Shabaab.

Ras Kamboni forces under Ahmed Madobe's leadership were overmatched by al-Shabaab and its local allies in November 2009, but withdrew in relatively good order and remained a viable fighting force.

They seemed likely to reemerge in the context of broader Ogaden initiatives to recover control of the Lower Juba region from al-Shabaab.

*Anoole Forces/Al-Furqaan Forces*⁵⁷

Anoole forces are also a clan militia composed of fighters from the Harti subgroup of the Darood (Majerteen, Warsengeli, and Dhulbahante), who are often referred to in the Juba Valley as “Harti Waamo.” The Anoole militia is headed by Mohamed Mire, a member of the Edegfa’le subclan of Majerteen.

Although small in comparison to other militia groups in the region, the group’s military training camp at Laagta Anoole (Anoole estuary) continues to produce more fighters. The al-Furqaan training camp was founded in October 2007 and is located between the villages of Bulo Xaaji and Qudhaa, 110 km from Kismayo. Anoole forces also controlled a number of islands and villages in the Lower Juba region.

*United Western Somali Liberation Front*⁵⁸

An outgrowth of the Ogaden chapter of al-Ittihad al-Islamiya, the United Western Somali Liberation Front operates mainly in Ethiopia, where it opposes the current government and seeks to establish an Islamic authority over the Ethiopian Somali region. Led by Ibrahim Sheikh Muhumed and composed almost exclusively of fighters from the Ogaden clan, the organization held its Central Committee. Like other Somali factions, the United Western Somali Liberation Front is supported by activists in large Somali diasporic communities, including Kenya.

Security Conditions in Somalia (2009–2010)

In 2009, al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam made important gains in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia, in large part because of defections to the insurgency and lack of resources by the TFG.

In early May 2009, Somali extremist groups backed by foreign fighters launched a major offensive against the TFG and AMISOM. More than 300 people were killed during that period and many more wounded. The primary objective of this offensive was to oust the TFG from power and force AMISOM to leave Somalia. Several al-Shabaab factions, Hizb al-Islam, and foreign fighters engaged in a series of battles against government forces. The TFG forces later regrouped, and by mid-June had managed to regain some lost ground in Mogadishu.

Al-Shabaab also reportedly assassinated a number of senior TFG officials, including the police chief and the minister of the interior. Senior

Somali officials, African Union sources, and other regional officials estimated that more than 400 foreign fighters from Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Kenya, and Saudi Arabia had been engaged in support of the al-Shabaab forces. More than 290 fighters reportedly entered Mogadishu in early May, and an estimated fifty fighters were in Mogadishu for much longer. Some of those fighters were killed in battles in Mogadishu, according to senior officials in Mogadishu. The insurgents had received support from outside Somalia and from some Somali businessmen, who were unhappy with the TFG leadership. Over the years, some Somali businessmen have backed one faction or another to protect business or clan interests.

In late-September 2009, government forces seized control of Beledweyne from Hizb al-Islam. Beledweyne, a town near the Ethiopian border, had changed hands several times in the previous six months. Meanwhile, attacks against government forces and African Union peacekeeping troops in Mogadishu intensified in September. An estimated twenty-one people, including seventeen African Union peacekeepers, were killed in a suicide attack in late September 2009. The deputy force commander was one of the victims in the attack. Al-Shabaab used two stolen United Nations trucks to carry out the attack against the AMISOM headquarters in Mogadishu. Two of the suicide bombers are believed to have been Somali Americans.

In mid-September 2009, US forces killed Saleh Ali Saleh al-Nabhan, a senior al-Qaeda member suspected of attacks against the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the leader of the terrorist attack against the Paradise Hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, in 2002. Several other foreign fighters were killed along with al-Nabhan. The killing of al-Nabhan reportedly shook the leadership of al-Shabaab, according to regional and Somali security sources. Of the three most-wanted al-Qaeda leaders in East Africa, the only one left was the leader of the group and the mastermind of the US embassy bombings: Haroon Fazul.

As of January 2010, insurgent groups were in control of most of south-central Somalia, including the third-largest town, Kismayo. TFG forces, as well as the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), did not have control or presence outside of Baidoa and Mogadishu. Even in the case of Mogadishu, the insurgents controlled some parts of Mogadishu, and some of their forces were active outside the capital. The al-Shabaab forces had also expanded their military operations to other parts of Somalia and routinely assassinated opponents and government officials.

Transitional Federal Government (TFG) (2010–2012)

The Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia signed a power-sharing agreement with the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) group. The Framework for Cooperation Agreement was formally signed on March 15, 2010, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during a ceremony chaired by the chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Jean Ping. The signing occurred after lengthy negotiations and broad consultations between the parties and within their respective organizations. Present at the ceremony were ministers from various countries, AU commissioners, ambassadors, and other dignitaries, including the prime minister of Somalia and the spiritual leader of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a.

The agreement provided for cooperation between both parties in the quest for a peaceful resolution of the Somali conflict. It formally brought Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a into the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia by offering the group some cabinet positions, ambassadorships, and other high-level appointments in the Somali government. In a statement released to the media following the signing ceremony, the African Union described the agreement as "clear testimony to the TFG's strong and continuous commitment to reach out to those still outside the Djibouti peace process, with a view to broadening the scope of reconciliation among Somali interlocutors."⁵⁹

Reforms of the government

On October 14, 2010, diplomat Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed (Farmajo) was appointed the new prime minister of Somalia. The former prime minister, Omar Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, had resigned the month before, following a protracted dispute with President Sharif over a proposed draft constitution.⁶⁰

Per the Transitional Federal Government's (TFG) charter, Prime Minister Mohamed named a new cabinet on November 12, 2010, which was lauded by the international community.⁶¹ As had been expected, the allotted ministerial positions were significantly reduced in numbers from thirty-nine to eighteen. Only two ministers from the previous cabinet were reappointed: Hussein Abdi Halane, the former minister of finance (finance and treasury), and Mohamud Abdi Ibrahim. Additional members of the Independent Constitutional Commission were also appointed to engage Somali constitutional lawyers, religious scholars, and experts in Somali culture over the nation's upcoming new constitution, a key part of the government's Transitional Federal Tasks. In addition, high-level federal delegations were dispatched to defuse

clan-related tensions in several regions. To improve transparency, cabinet ministers fully disclosed their assets and signed a code of ethics.⁶²

An Anti-corruption Commission, with the power to carry out formal investigations and to review government decisions and protocols, was also established to more closely monitor all activities by public officials. Furthermore, unnecessary trips abroad by members of government were prohibited, and all travel by ministers required the prime minister's consent. A budget outlining 2011's federal expenditures was also put before and approved by members of Parliament, with the payment of civil service employees prioritized. In addition, a full audit of government property and vehicles was put into place. On the war front, the new government and its AMISOM allies also managed to secure control of Mogadishu by August 2011. With increasing troop strength, the pace of territorial gains was expected to greatly accelerate.

On June 19, 2011, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed resigned from his position as prime minister of Somalia. As part of the controversial Kampala Accord's conditions, the agreement also extended the mandates of the president, the Parliament speaker, and deputies until August 2012.⁶³ Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Mohamed's former minister of planning and international cooperation, was later named the permanent prime minister.

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Al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen of Somalia

The Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen (Movement of Warrior Youth), or al-Shabaab, is an offshoot of the former Islamic Courts Union.¹ By 2006, the ICU were in control of much of southern Somalia, including the capital Mogadishu. At that time, al-Shabaab was the youth wing of the Islamic Courts Union and was “integrated quite tightly with the ICU armed forces, acting as a sort of ‘special forces’ for the ICU.”²

In December 2006, the ICU was defeated by a coalition of the transitional government and Ethiopian forces. Backed by the Ethiopian armed forces, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) asserted rule in 2007. The defeat of the ICU in 2006 served as the immediate context for al-Shabaab’s evolution into an insurgent group.

Since 2007, ICU members, as well as others, formed insurgent forces for different reasons related to their opposition to either the transitional government, the Ethiopian occupiers, the US relationship, or specific losses of power related to clan politics. One of these groups was organized under Aden Hashi Ayro, (a former member of ICU) and called itself the al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen movement. Al-Shabaab was headed by Aden Hashi Ayro until he was killed by a US airstrike in early May 2008. After the death of Ayro, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow (also known as Abu Mansour) became leader until he was succeeded by Abu Zubeyr.

Al-Shabaab emerged as a distinct force during the course of the insurgency. The break between al-Shabaab and other insurgent groups came in late 2007. That September, the ICU attended a conference of opposition factions in the Eritrean capital, Asmara, and reemerged as the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS). Al-Shabaab boycotted the conference, and its leaders launched vitriolic attacks on the ARS for failing to adopt a global jihadist ideology.³ In late February 2008, fighting between supporters of the ARS and al-Shabaab in Dhobley killed several people.⁴

Al-Shabaab and the National Reconciliation Process

In the years 2008–2009, a national reconciliation program took place, and the ICU came to the negotiation table with the transitional government. In January 2009, UN-sponsored peace talks concluded in Djibouti. The Ethiopians agreed to withdraw from Somalia, and Islamist leader Sheikh Sharif Ahmed “agreed to stop fighting.”

On January 31, 2009, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was elected as the president of the Transitional Federal Government. Divisions about reconciliation led to the formation of al-Shabaab as an opposition to the “moderate” ICU. Opposing any negotiated settlement with Ethiopia, al-Shabaab “declared war on him.” As Ethiopian forces left Somalia in early 2009, fighters affiliated with al-Shabaab took over the areas that had been occupied by the Ethiopian forces and implemented a strict version of Sharia in areas they came to control.

The group described itself as waging jihad against “enemies of Islam” and engaged in combat against the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). It also declared war on the United Nations and on Western nongovernmental organizations that distributed food aid in Somalia. Al-Shabaab was designated a terrorist organization by several Western governments and security services, and described as having ties to al-Qaeda.

Al-Shabaab’s Ideology⁵

Al-Shabaab represents a further step toward a global jihadist vision. Like al-Ittihad and the Islamic courts, it believes that religious governance is the solution to Somalia’s ills. When addressing a rally in the southern city of Marka, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow emphasized the importance of complying with Islamic law.⁶ In an effort to show that Sharia is equitable, Robow stated that “punishment would be meted out to anyone,” including mujahideen, citing a mujahid executed in Wajid as an example.⁷

One important document explaining al-Shabaab’s outlook was written by the American mujahid Abu Mansour al-Amriki. He gained notoriety in the United States when he appeared in a sophisticated al-Shabaab video dated April 2, 2009, “that employs hip-hop and looks more like an extreme version of *Survivor*.”⁸

In January 2008, al-Amriki wrote a document titled “A Message to the Mujahideen in Particular and Muslims in General” that rapidly made its way around the jihadist web. In it, he reiterated the need to establish Sharia, citing as exemplars Sayyid Qutb, the leading

theoretician of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Abu A'la Maududi, founder of the Islamist Jama'at-i-Islami in India and Pakistan, both of whom "refused to accept entering into the *kaafir* [infidel] governments as a solution."⁹ He specified commitment to Islamic law as a means of distinguishing al-Shabaab from the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia.

Al-Amriki explained that al-Shabaab had boycotted the Asmara conference because it refused to work with the non-Muslim Eritrean state.¹⁰ He argued that cooperation with "infidels" would corrupt the jihad because Eritrea would open "the door of politics in order for them to forget armed resistance," leaving "members of the Courts in the lands of the *Kuffaar*, underneath their control, sitting in the road of politics which leads to the loss and defeat they were running from."¹¹ Indeed, al-Amriki's screed underscores the gradations from al-Ittihad to the ICU and finally to al-Shabaab. His criticisms of the Islamic courts emphasized al-Shabaab's global jihadist perspective. He touted al-Shabaab's pan-Islamism in opposition to the ICU's clan-backed politics, saying that "the Courts used to judge over each individual tribe," whereas "al-Shabaab were made up of many different tribes."¹²

Al-Amriki also attacked the Islamic courts for having "a goal limited to the boundaries placed by the *Taghoot* [a ruler who fails to implement the divine law]" while "the Shabaab had a global goal including the establishment of the Islamic *Khilaafah* [caliphate] in all parts of the world."¹³ While this criticism was not entirely accurate ("Greater Somalia" was not strictly limited by colonial borders), al-Amriki showed that key al-Shabaab leaders now saw their efforts as part of a global struggle.

Al-Shabaab leaders had said that the group wanted to undermine the country's clan structure. When Robow addressed the Marka rally, *Kataaib* reported that he declared that from now on it is prohibited to say that so-and-so clan cannot control over there, or so-and-so clan cannot govern so-and-so region." He made it clear that this land belongs to Allah and anyone who imposes the Islamic law in it can govern it. Al-Amriki also provided an extended discussion of al-Shabaab's *manhaj*, or religious methodology. He wrote:

"It is the same *manhaj* repeatedly heard from the mouth of the *mujaahid shaykh* Osama Bin Laden . . . the doctor Ayman al-Zawahiri [bin Laden's right-hand man] . . . and the hero, Abu Mus'ab al-Zarqaawi [leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq]. He thus made clear that al-Shabaab was aligned ideologically with al-Qaeda."

Other al-Shabaab leaders had said that they saw the continuation of jihad beyond Somalia as a religious imperative. In early 2009, *Kataaib* reported that Sheikh Ali Muhammad Hussein, the group's Banadir region governor, gave a media briefing on Ethiopia's withdrawal. He said that "the fact that the enemy has left Mogadishu does not mean that the mujahideen will not follow him to where he still remains," adding that in compliance with the command of God, "he will be pursued everywhere and more traps will be laid for him." Hussein added that the idea that the jihad had ended with Ethiopia's withdrawal was "in clear contradiction with the statement of Prophet Muhammad . . . that jihad will continue until Doomsday."

In early 2008, when the United States designated al-Shabaab a global terrorist entity, prominent members struck a celebratory tone. Robow told the *BBC* that he welcomed the designation as an "honor" because "[w]e are good Muslims and the Americans are infidels. We are on the right path." Though Robow then denied a connection to al-Qaeda, his position has since changed. In August 2008, he said that al-Shabaab was "negotiating how we can unite into one" with al-Qaeda. He continued, "We will take our orders from Sheikh Osama bin Laden because we are his students."

And Saleh Ali Saleh al-Nabhan, al-Shabaab's chief military strategist, formally reached out to al-Qaeda's senior leadership in a twenty-four-minute video titled *March Forth*, which circuited the jihadi web on August 30, 2008. In it, al-Nabhan offers salutations to bin Laden and pledges allegiance to "the courageous commander and my honorable leader."

Al-Shabaab's Doctrine and Role

Al-Shabaab supports the implementation of Sharia and has imposed a strict version of it in the areas it has captured, normally forming an administration to oversee Sharia and other matters related to law and governance. In September 2008, it announced a new administration for Kismayo that included "several committees that will run the town:" a district commissioner, head of information, head of security, head of finance, and head of preaching.¹⁴ It later formed a similar administration in Marka.¹⁵

The strictness of al-Shabaab's Sharia rulings can be seen in the laws that it has implemented and the punishments it has meted out. Amnesty International claims that a thirteen-year-old rape victim was stoned to death in Kismayo for alleged adultery.¹⁶ In late 2008, as al-Shabaab seized Marka, leaders informed residents that cinema houses and music recording studios were banned.¹⁷ It also warned that action would be

taken against anyone found on the streets or opening their shop during prayer times. In January 2009, al-Shabaab executed a politician in Marka for apostasy, alleging his cooperation with Ethiopian forces.¹⁸ On January 28, they amputated the hand of a Kismayo man convicted of stealing fishing nets. In February, they sentenced a number of youths caught using narcotic drugs in Baidoa to public lashings.¹⁹

Al-Shabaab intends to continue expanding Sharia. In an audio message in January 2009, the group's emir, Sheikh Mukhtar Abdirahman Abu Zubeyr, said that democracy and communism had failed in Somalia because both political systems "were incongruent with the teachings of the Islamic religion." His message called for widespread implementation of Sharia.²⁰

In addition to Sharia, al-Shabaab has implemented other rules designed to help it maintain power. It has implemented rules directed at journalists "requiring that no reports be disseminated of which the administration was unaware, that only 'factual' news be presented, that nothing detrimental to the practice of Sharia be reported, and that no music be played on the radio that encouraged 'sin.'"²¹

Al-Shabaab's rules have been enforced not only by administrative methods but also through intimidation. In 2008, London's *Sunday Times* reported that al-Shabaab was shutting down "objectionable" business sectors in Mogadishu by carrying out selective attacks and sending "night letter" warnings to other business owners.²² At times, Somalis have expressed violent displeasure with these new rules. In January 2009, for example, Kismayo residents rioted after al-Shabaab transformed a soccer stadium into a market.²³

But there were also signs that the group listens to public outcries and that there was a pragmatic side to its activities. For example, al-Shabaab undertook public works programs such as building a canal connecting Jannaale, Golweyn, and Bullo Mareer.²⁴ Additionally, because Somalia has been mired in anarchy since the early 1990s, many Somalis find even al-Shabaab's strict version of Sharia preferable to lawlessness.

In 2010, al-Shabaab controlled much of southern Somalia (at least a third of Somalia), including most of Mogadishu, the capital, where they enforced strict Islamic Sharia law. It has led to executions, amputations, and patrols of young men who seek out anyone in breach of strict, puritanical, and increasingly arbitrary codes of behavior. News reports tolled of al-Shabaab banning such practices as watching movies, dancing at wedding ceremonies, wearing bras, ringing school bells (because Christian churches also ring bells), and playing or watching soccer.

The Merger of al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam²⁵

On December 21, 2010, al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam officially joined together after a highly-decorated ceremony in the Afgoye district. The local residents of Afgoye district were forced to attend this ceremony to witness the union of the two rebel groups. Senior leaders of al-Shabaab, the leader of the Somali rebel group Hizb al-Islam, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, and the local residents were present at the uniting ceremony. Sheikh Hassan, who made a speech at the unification ceremony, said that he backed the decision to join up with al-Shabaab in their struggle to topple the power from the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who had previously strongly criticized the Islamist group al-Shabaab for their unlawful actions and also for their relations with the al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, welcomed publicly for the first time the union of the two groups and promised that they would jointly increase their attacks against TFG forces and the African Union peacekeeping troops in Mogadishu.

Al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam had repeatedly fought together against the troops of the Somali government and the African Union peacekeeping troops in Mogadishu, but they were also rivals and had been separately controlling some areas of Mogadishu and the southern regions of Somalia. The two had been allies but had fallen out over the previous year. Relations between al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam worsened after the groups began to battle in Kismayo over control of the southern port city, with Hizb al-Islam losing ground.²⁶

Al-Shabaab's Links to al-Qaeda

As early as 2006, bin Laden accused the West of interfering in Somalia's politics as part of its "crusade" against Islam. "We promise the almighty Allah that we will fight soldiers on the land of Somalia with his help and power," bin Laden said. "We also reserve the right to punish them on their own land and in any available place at any time or in any way which is convenient for us."²⁷

Top al-Qaeda leaders, including Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Abu Yahya al-Libi, had praised al-Shabaab in propaganda tapes and encouraged the group to carry out attacks against the Somali government, neighboring countries, and the West.²⁸ In December 2008, Anwar al-Awlaki, the spiritual leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), sent a communiqué to al-Shabaab, congratulating them. He thanked them for "giving us a living example

of how we as Muslims should proceed to change our situation. The ballot has failed us, but the bullet has not.” In conclusion, he wrote, “If my circumstances would have allowed, I would not have hesitated in joining you and being a soldier in your ranks.”²⁹

In September 2009, al-Shabaab pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda for the first time. The emir of Somalia’s al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, Abu Zubeyr, lent his support to bin Laden in a video distributed on jihadi blogs. The tape was al-Shabaab’s response to a message from bin Laden to Somalis in March 2009, asking them to rebel against their newly elected president, Islamic militant-turned-politician Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. In the tape, Abu Zubeyr said:

We answer your call, our Sheikh and our Emir. The Mujahideen here are fine and the winds of victory are still blowing on them and the enemy’s plans are collapsing, one after another.

We bring you glad tidings and tell you; rejoice, we are awaiting your guidance in this advanced stage in the life of Jihad in which the challenges of fighting the occupiers have overlapped with the requirements of establishing the Islamic State. Allah willing, the brigades for Global Jihad will be launched from the land of the two migrations [Somalia] to deprive the disbelievers of sleep and destroy their interests around the world.

It was al-Shabaab’s first open acknowledgment of ties to al-Qaeda—made less than a week after the assassination of al-Qaeda’s chief of operations in East Africa, Saleh al-Nabhan, in a US special forces’ operation in the coastal city of Baraawe, southern Somalia.

Before 2009, al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen and its main ally, the Islamic party (Hizb al-Islam), had always denied links to al-Qaeda. The motivation behind the change in the group’s public position might have been prompted by a desire to give the group a more global dimension, which the leader Abu Zubeyr mentioned in his statement. Al-Qaeda had been instrumental in appointing al-Shabaab leaders to posts in the terror network. Over the previous several years, al-Qaeda commanders had taken over some of the top leadership positions in al-Shabaab.

In late 2009, Osama bin Laden appointed Fazul Abdullah Mohamed, who had extensive experience in Afghanistan before moving to Somalia and Kenya, to serve as al-Qaeda’s operations chief in East Africa. The announcement was made at a ceremony in Mogadishu that was attended by al-Shabaab’s spiritual leader. Fazul had been indicted by the United States for his involvement in the 1998 attacks in Kenya and Tanzania. In addition to his role in the embassy attacks, Fazul was the

suspected mastermind of the 2002 bombing of an Israeli-owned hotel in the Kenyan city of Mombasa that killed fifteen and of a failed attempt to shoot down an Israeli airliner at the same time.

Fazul was al-Qaeda's link to al-Shabaab and was critical of the Somali group as al-Shabaab's top intelligence official and senior military leader. In his autobiography posted on a jihadi website in 2009, he called himself al-Qaeda's "confidential secretary" and one of the "Sheikh's men," taking orders only from bin Laden. This claim was supported by several terrorists detained at the Guantanamo Bay facility.³⁰

Fazul was killed just six weeks after bin Laden by Somali troops at a checkpoint outside of Mogadishu on June 3, 2011. US officials called his death another major blow to al-Qaeda. "It is a just end for a terrorist who brought so much death and pain to so many innocents in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and elsewhere—Tanzanians, Kenyans, Somalis, and our own embassy personnel," US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said at the time.³¹

Some experts claim that Fazul had warned bin Laden that some regional groups were misrepresenting al-Qaeda and had criticized the al-Shabaab's political immaturity and its attacks on civilians. Fazul's criticism of al-Shabaab is believed to have influenced bin Laden to deny a request from al-Shabaab's Somali leaders to formally merge with al-Qaeda. That is why many believe Fazul's death was a setup.³² The theory among intelligence officials is that with bin Laden gone, Somali leaders wanted Fazul out of the picture, too, and gave him erroneous coordinates for an al-Shabaab safe area on the day he was killed.

In January 2012, six months after Fazul's death, al-Qaeda's new head, Ayman al-Zawahiri, welcomed a merger with al-Shabaab.³³ Other foreign al-Qaeda operatives also held key leadership positions in al-Shabaab. Sheikh Muhammad Abu Fa'id, a Saudi citizen, served as a top financier and "manager" for al-Shabaab; Abu Musa Mombasa, a Pakistani citizen, served as al-Shabaab's chief of security and training; Mahmud Mujajir, a Sudanese citizen, was al-Shabaab's chief of recruitment for suicide bombers; Abu Mansour al-Amriki, a US citizen, served as a military commander, recruiter, financier, and propagandist.³⁴

As al-Qaeda camps in areas like Pakistan and Afghanistan came under increasing international scrutiny, al-Shabaab camps developed into a cheaper and more readily-available alternative for jihadi recruits living in the West and seeking an appropriate venue to obtain expert instruction in terrorism. Al-Shabaab camps not only provided their

fighters with weapons and ammunition, but also offered courses on bomb construction taught by al-Qaeda experts.

In December 2010, al-Shabaab's spokesperson openly called for al-Qaeda to send more fighters to Somalia to fight the Transitional Federal Government and African Union forces from Uganda and Burundi. "We call on our brothers [al-Qaeda] to come to Somalia and to help us expand the East Africa jihad," he told reporters at a press conference in Mogadishu, in December 2010, while announcing the takeover of a rival Islamist group.³⁵

Al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda after the Death of Osama bin Laden

After the death of Osama bin Laden, the founder of al-Qaeda and the emir who had led the terror group over the course of three decades, al-Qaeda's central command appointed his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, as the new emir of the group, on June 16, 2011. Al-Shabaab's spokesman announced in a statement that the group had sworn allegiance to Ayman al-Zawahiri and would follow his orders: "In an initiative and in [a demonstration of] loyalty, love and support amongst the mujahideen in the world, the Shabaab al-Mujahideen Movement announces the renewal of its allegiance to the Emir of Qaedat al-Jihad."³⁶ It continued, quoting Rage, "The mujahideen in Somalia confirm to the mujahideen in al-Qaeda: 'You are more experienced than us and you have better views than us in the future of the jihad of our *Ummah* against the enemy, as we experienced from you before. We await your instructions and we will act according to what you see in the coming stage to be in the interests of jihad and the Muslim *Ummah*.'" Rage said that al-Shabaab and "the mujahideen in Somalia are an inseparable part of the *Ummah's* jihad against the Zionist Crusader invasion of the lands of Islam, and they see Qaedat al-Jihad as the teacher in whom they find instructions and advice." "They, the mujahideen in Somalia, said to the new emir: 'Here we are, here we are, and we are waiting for your instructions,'" the statement concluded.³⁷

Al-Shabaab Financial Resources

Al-Shabaab leaned on different sources of revenue to finance terror activities, including state sponsors, local sources, charities, individuals in the Somali diaspora, piracy, and businesses. Al-Shabaab moves funds through the standard system of banks and couriers, but also through the traditional Muslim system of *hawala*, an informal means of transferring value and remittances through networks of brokers.³⁸

Hawala, which is common throughout Somalia, is based on trust and honor and can be effective, reliable, and efficient; the fact that few, if any, records are kept is an added bonus for groups like al-Shabaab.³⁹ The money mainly goes to support the group's members and for the training, recruiting, weapons, and equipment required to sustain the Somali insurgency and wage jihad against nonbelievers.

State Sponsorship

A United Nations report claimed that Eritrea had sent US\$80,000 per month to some members of al-Shabaab through the Eritrean embassy in Nairobi for almost a decade. Eritrea has consistently denied the allegations.

Local Somali Resources

Southern Somali communities contributed to al-Shabaab in the form of *zakat* for the benefit of jihad in southern Somalia against Ethiopians and the TFG. It must, however, be clearly noted that there were a large number of south-central Somalis who genuinely believed that Somalia was being forcefully occupied by Ethiopian power and saw al-Shabaab as liberators. They, therefore, felt that they were legitimately making political and financial contributions as well as moral support for al-Shabaab. The religious principles to motivate local Somalis to contribute to al-Shabaab's "financial Jihad" are:⁴⁰

- a) Financing the al-Shabaab jihad—Somalis can join in jihad by donating to jihad through al-Shabaab. The donation's value is determined by its quality and destination and not only by the amount of money given—life (sacrifice) being the highest donation quality.
- b) Supplying the fighters' needs—Somalis who are unable to take part in physical jihad (for example, women and the handicapped) can perform their duty by supplying food and temporary shelter to al-Shabaab. By doing so, the donor is considered al-Shabaab/mujahid and gets the same reward by Allah.
- c) Taking care of an al-Shabaab's warrior's family—Somalis who support the mujahid's family are considered mujahid and deserve half of their reward in heaven. On the other hand, neglecting the mujahid's family may bring them misfortune and death by the hand of God.
- d) Assisting the families of the fallen—Somalis may support jihad by supplying the special needs of orphans and widows.
- e) Assisting the families of prisoners and wounded warriors—Somalis may support jihad by supplying the necessities for the families of those who have been imprisoned or wounded.
- f) Collecting funds for al-Shabaab—Money and materials is the lifeline of jihad. Its importance also stems from the action of gathering donations, which arouses the spirit of jihad in the hearts of Somalis.

- g) Granting charity donations to the “Somali” Wahhabi jihad—These charitable donations are a priority in Islam.
- h) Financing medical treatment for wounded mujahideen—Somali doctors inside and outside Somalia are encouraged to join the jihad indirectly by providing medical supplies and direct medical assistance by treating the wounded.

“Taxes”

It is said that businesspeople are forced to pay “taxes” equivalent to the cost of an AK-47 to keep from losing their entire business inventory. In addition, al-Shabaab exacts high tariffs from the informal Islamic banking system of *hawala* to boost its income, with little apparent regard for the effect this financial drain has on Somalia’s economic activity. According to some sources, big companies such as Dahabshiil Bank, which is based in Mogadishu, send payments to al-Shabaab in exchange for safe access to areas under al-Shabaab’s control.⁴¹

The Dahabshiil company normally paid al-Shabaab half a million dollars annually, according to a report from the Dutch-Somali *Suna Times*. In 2013, however, because of sagging business, Dahabshiil could only afford to offer al-Shabaab US\$100,000. Al-Shabaab threatened to attack the financial institution if payment was not made in full and followed through on the threat by bombing Dahabshiil’s offices in Mogadishu on April 2, 2013. This version of events differs from the explanation by the bank and *Reuters* that Dahabshiil was being threatened by al-Shabaab for working with international aid agencies.⁴²

Kismayo as a Main Source of Revenues (until October 2012)

In 2008, al-Shabaab took over Kismayo, the third-largest city in Somalia. Since 2008, the port of Kismayo has become the main source of revenue for the terrorist group. According to one report, the United Nations believes that “Al-Shabaab collects an estimated US\$35–50 million annually in custom tolls and taxes on businesses in Kismayo and two secondary ports higher up the coast.” The United Nations estimated that port revenues provided al-Shabaab up to US\$50 million a year, or roughly half of its total funds.⁴³

The most important economic activities in Kismayo are fishing, the import of goods such as rice from Pakistan, and the export of primary goods such as livestock (camels, sheep, and goats), charcoal, and *qat* to the Gulf States. To raise revenue, al-Shabaab increased the fees for importing and exporting goods through the port, one of the largest in

the country, by 30 percent.⁴⁴ One analyst for African affairs estimated that the taxes al-Shabaab collected from the business community in Kismayo included “over US\$1 million quarterly in port-use charges alone.”⁴⁵

Al-Shabaab earned considerable money from the charcoal industry, one of Somalia’s main exports, and the chief commodity to pass through Kismayo’s port facilities. Vast deforestation in the areas under al-Shabaab’s control was a sign of the lucrative charcoal trade between al-Shabaab and the Gulf States. It was estimated that al-Shabaab had exported charcoal worth US\$500,000 per month to the Gulf States.⁴⁶

Besides the considerable income al-Shabaab received through heavy taxes on imports and exports, militants also systematically collected taxes from farmers on Kismayo’s outskirts. In March 2010, the government’s minister of agriculture, Muhammad Ibrahim Habsade, claimed that al-Shabaab was extorting US\$150 per hectare from farmers in the fertile Lower Shabelle Valley and blamed the group’s predations for a decrease in agricultural production.⁴⁷

Local and International Trade

The United Nations reported in 2011 that at least US\$15 million of al-Shabaab’s annual revenues came from the charcoal and sugar trade. The United Nations also found that networks of Somali businessmen operating in Dubai had been able to manage the trade cycle between sugar and charcoal for the benefit of al-Shabaab. As many as 10,000 bags of sugar were being smuggled from Somalia into Kenya each day.⁴⁸

The sugar trade had become even more important to al-Shabaab after losing control of the port in Kismayo in 2010. Al-Shabaab ventured into the sugar trade after losing its steady stream of revenue raised through taxing goods at the port. Al-Shabaab operatives posing as traders were doing business with Kenyan merchants as a way to fund the militant group’s terrorist activities. Investigations in Kenya also revealed that weapons were being smuggled into Kenya in the sugar sacks.

The import of Somalia-produced sugar is worth an estimated 100 billion shillings (US\$1.2 billion) annually, according to Garissa County Development Officer Kenneth Rutere, but much of it is not declared to Kenyan customs officials, making it the country’s largest illicit market. According to the Kenya Sugar Board, the industry regulator, Kenyans consume 800,000 tons of sugar annually, but domestically produce only 500,000 tons. To meet demand, more than 50,000 bags are imported

daily into the northeastern region from Somalia, some of which is smuggled in illegally, Rutere told *Sabahi*.⁴⁹

Islamic Charities

Some charitable organizations that formerly channeled funds to al-Ittihad, the Islamist group that preceded al-Shabaab, are likewise suspected of maintaining links with al-Shabaab (e.g., the World Assembly for Muslim Youth [WAMY] and the International Islamic Relief Organization [IIRO]). These organizations include the African Muslims Agency in Kuwait; the Red Crescent Society of the United Arab Emirates; the Al-Islah Charity, which is linked to Harakat al-Islah, a Somali diaspora group founded in Saudi Arabia; the Muslim World League (Rabitat al-Islam al-Âlamiyya) and its subsidiary, the International Islamic Relief Organization, both based in Saudi Arabia; Dawa al-Islamiya; and the Al-Wafa Charitable Society, which is listed as a “specially designated terrorist entity” by the US government for its suspected support to terrorist organizations.⁵⁰

Fund-raising and Donations from the Somali Diaspora

Al-Shabaab has developed a significant financial support network that extends outward from Somalia to the diaspora abroad. There are many ways to carry out this duty. In the West, this is done at mosques, public venues, family gatherings, charity events, by monthly donations, or by urging the Somali Wahhabi-leaning businessmen to open their hearts to the al-Shabaab jihad. Somali businesses and individuals in the Gulf States, Europe, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Singapore are active financiers of radical Islamic movements in the Horn of Africa.⁵¹

More than one million Somalis now live outside the country in sizable Somali communities in the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Some of these diaspora Somalis financially support al-Shabaab. The Somalis in the diaspora are estimated to remit US\$500–800 million annually back to friends and family in their homeland, according to at least one researcher.⁵² Some of this money, even when it comes into the country legally, ends up in the hands of extremists.

A substantial portion of the funds for al-Shabaab most likely use *hawala* networks. The money flows from Western cities via *hawala* networks to Dubai where value is exchanged for cash or goods. Then the cash is either smuggled into Somalia by air or the value is transferred using trade-based mechanisms.⁵³

Fund-raising and Donations from the Somali Community in Kenya

Al-Shabaab has benefited from Somalis residing in Nairobi (particularly the Kenyan neighborhood of Eastleigh) and in the Dadaab refugee camps in northern Kenya. The Kenyan neighborhood of Eastleigh is located just outside of Nairobi's central business district and is a well-known economic and community center for displaced Somalis. Over the last twenty years, Eastleigh has been a bustling hub for commerce and an important conduit for the flow of remittance monies. The remittance flow through Eastleigh is primarily for displaced Somalis living in Nairobi, the Dadaab camps in Kenya's North Eastern Province, and family members who remain within Somalia.⁵⁴

It is well known throughout Eastleigh that al-Shabaab utilizes incoming remittance flows to fund its operations in Somalia and has direct financial involvement with many of the businesses in Eastleigh. Many of the shops sell al-Shabaab propaganda videos produced by local Eastleigh studios. In this way, al-Shabaab can advertise their message, provide revenue to local businesses, and reinforce their position within the community.⁵⁵

Al-Shabaab invests large sums of money in the construction and operation of mosques within Eastleigh to attract the support of religious clerics by influencing the preaching within local mosques. Al-Shabaab is said to have links with the Pumwani Riyadya Mosque Committee (PRMC) religious organization in Nairobi, which has a network of sympathizers who raise money for the group.⁵⁶ A good deal of money for al-Shabaab is also collected from the PRMC under the pretense of reconstructing a mosque. Ahmed Imam Ali, a Kenyan and the PRMC's secretary, is reported to be siphoning off funds raised for social projects in Nairobi to facilitate the training and recruitment of insurgents in Kenya.⁵⁷ In Kenya, an estimated sum of up to US\$3 million passes through *hawala* networks in Nairobi's Somali enclave each year.⁵⁸

Al-Shabaab and Piracy

Al-Shabaab had long been thought to be connected with Somali pirate groups operating in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean, but it had been difficult to establish a direct connection between the Islamists and pirates. In December 2010, however, al-Shabaab took control of a pirate base called Haradere from Hizb al-Islam and reportedly reached a compromise with the local pirate gangs that would give the militants a 20-percent share of all ransoms received from the hijacking of ships.⁵⁹ While there was no documentation to confirm such a

deal, its share of the ransom money has certainly been lucrative for al-Shabaab. Revenues from piracy have also boosted development in parts of Somalia, making it politically even more difficult to put a stop to pirate activity.⁶⁰

Al-Shabaab and the Terror Attacks in Somalia (2007–2010)

Al-Shabaab has been suspected in countless acts of violence, though they have infrequently taken responsibility for specific acts of terrorism, including assassinations, bombings, and beheadings. The following are some notable attacks attributed to al-Shabaab:

- March 27, 2010: Al-Shabaab destroyed grave sites of foreign soldiers and a prominent Sufi scholar and hid the body of the scholar
- February 15, 2010: An al-Shabaab suicide car bomber attempted to assassinate Somalia's state minister of defense, Yusuf Mohamed Sayid, when he drove his explosive-laden vehicle toward Sayid's car and detonated, injuring two security guards
- January 2, 2010: A man linked to al-Shabaab tried to kill Danish cartoonist Kurt Westergaard at his home in Aarhus, Denmark. Westergaard was not hurt, and the assailant was shot, wounded, and arrested
- June 18, 2009: Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the 2009 Beledweyne bombing, which killed thirty-five people, including Somali security minister Omar Hashi Aden
- May 2009: Al-Shabaab, along with allied group Hizb al-Islam, launched a major offensive in the city of Mogadishu to take over the city, leaving hundreds killed and injured and tens of thousands displaced. The group took over most of the capital
- February 22, 2009: Al-Shabaab carried out a suicide car bomb attack against an African Union military base in Mogadishu, killing eleven African Union soldiers who were part of the peacekeeping force in Mogadishu
- January 2009: The group captured the National Parliament building in Baidoa and took control of the city without the use of violent force
- 2007–2008: The group claimed responsibility for a number of assassinations of government officials
- June 2007: A suicide bomber blew himself up outside the Somali prime minister's house. The prime minister was not killed, but there were other injuries and substantial property damage

The violence of al-Shabaab has also caused the deaths of dozens of foreign aid workers, which in January 2010 led the United Nations' World Food Program to end operations in parts of southern Somalia controlled by al-Shabaab, moving staff members and supplies and ending aid distribution to about one million people.

Al-Shabaab is said to have non-Somali foreigners in its ranks, particularly in its leadership. Fighters from the Persian Gulf and international jihadists had been called to join the holy war against the Somali government and its Ethiopian allies. According to UN Security Council documents, there are several hundred non-Somali fighters being used by Somali rebel groups, mostly al-Shabaab. Though Somali Islamists did not originally use suicide-bombing tactics, the foreign elements of al-Shabaab have been blamed for several suicide bombings. Later, local Somalis joined the suicide campaign of al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab also called for jihad against Ethiopia for assisting Somali's government and Kenya for allegedly training Somali troops (which Kenya denied). On January 31, 2007, al-Shabaab released a video that warned African Union peacekeepers to avoid coming to Somalia, claiming, "Somalia is not a place where you will earn a salary—it is a place where you will die." Al-Shabaab blamed African Union forces, who had tried to maintain some semblance of order in Somalia for years, for the suffering of Somalis in the capital city of Mogadishu and its surrounding areas. In 2009, al-Shabaab published a tape under the title *Butcheries of the Crusader Forces* that showed video of street clashes between well-armed al-Shabaab militants and pro-government militias and African Union forces.

Uganda may have been the target of July 11, 2010, explosions because, in addition to Ugandan troops present in Mogadishu, Uganda also hosted Somali soldiers trained in US- and European-backed programs.

*Al-Shabaab Terror Plot in Australia*⁶¹

A cell linked to al-Shabaab in Australia was responsible for the most prominent terrorist plot in that country's history. Four young Australian citizens of Somali and Lebanese origin had planned to carry out suicide attacks on Holsworthy army barracks in Sydney. Two of the terrorists had traveled to Somalia to train with al-Shabaab. The other two had been unable to travel and so had turned their attention to their home country. Members of the Australian cell had made calls to Somalia, requesting the approval of a Muslim cleric and seeking a *fatwa* for the planned suicide attack to lend credibility to support their "martyrdom." Al-Shabaab denied operational links with the Australians, indicating that a homegrown threat may be present and growing.

*Al-Shabaab Terror Plot in Denmark*⁶²

Two Danish brothers of Somali origin were arrested in Denmark on suspicion of plotting a terror attack. The country's intelligence police issued a statement saying that the arrests had foiled "a concrete act of terror." The two brothers, aged eighteen and twenty-three, held Danish citizenship and had been living in the Aarhus area for the past sixteen years. They were arrested, one at his home in the city of Aarhus and the other as he arrived by plane at Copenhagen airport, the statement said. "The arrested are suspected of having been in the process of preparing an act of terror, among other things through conversations about methods, targets and the use of weapon types," it said. "One of the arrested is also suspected of having undergone training, instruction and teaching at an al-Shabaab training camp in Somalia with the aim of carrying out an act of terror."

Al-Shabaab and the United Kingdom

Up to fifty British "volunteers," including white Christian converts and British Somali men, have been recruited to fight for al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab has managed to generate tens of thousands of pounds in funding through the UK-based Somali population, which is estimated at 250,000. While some British Somalis willingly donate to the terrorist organization, a proportion of the cash legitimately sent back to extended families in the country is syphoned off by the Islamists. It is understood that the group is using the same connections to recruit young men from the Somali diaspora in the United Kingdom as well as British Muslims. The Security Services fear that British volunteers who survive the bloody civil war in Somalia may return home as hardened terrorists eager to launch attacks against the United Kingdom.

In 2007, Ahmed Hussein Ahmed, a twenty-one-year-old student from Ealing, west London, dropped out of a business studies course at Oxford's Brookes University to serve as a volunteer with al-Shabaab, flying first to Kenya and then crossing into Somalia by foot on bush tracks. He then detonated a suicide bomb at a checkpoint manned by Ethiopian army troops, killing twenty soldiers. In a "martyrdom" video shot before his death, he issued a call to fellow British Somalis to follow his example, delivered in a soft, earnest, English accent. "I advise you to migrate to Somalia and wage war against your enemies," he said, speaking against a backdrop of a black-and-white Shabaab banner. "Death in honor is better than life in humiliation."⁶³

On September 17, 2010, Jonathan Evans, the head of MI5, announced that it was “only a matter of time” before a terror attack was carried out in Britain by UK subjects. He suggested that people who had gone from Britain to Somalia to attend al-Shabaab training camps would be the assailants. Shortly after Evans’s warning, a British terror suspect, with apparent ties to al-Shabaab, was arrested at Amsterdam’s Schiphol airport by the Netherlands’ Royal Marechaussee military police. The man, of Somali origin, had intended to board a plane bound for Entebbe, in Uganda. He had taken a linking flight from Liverpool’s John Lennon airport in Britain. His arrest had resulted from a tip-off from UK counterterrorism officials.

In January 2012, British volunteer Bilal al-Barjawi, from west London, was killed when missiles fired from an American drone hit his vehicle outside Mogadishu. At twenty-seven, al-Barjawi was already an Afghanistan veteran and a seasoned al-Shabaab commander.

In January 2012, Shabaaz Hussein, twenty-eight, pleaded guilty to sending £10,000 for terror training in Somalia. Woolwich Crown Court was told that he had transferred cash to three British friends “engaged in terrorist activities in Somalia.”

In October 2012, al-Shabaab threatened to inflict on the United Kingdom a terrorist attack worse than the London bombings of July 7, 2005, for extraditing the Islamist cleric Abu Hamza to the United States. Britain extradited Abu Hamza and four other terrorism suspects to the United States in October 2012 after a lengthy legal battle that went all the way to the European Court of Human Rights.⁶⁴

Al-Shabaab made the threats in a series of messages on Twitter. One tweet threatened the biggest Islamist terrorist attack yet on Britain: “The nightmare that surreptitiously looms on British shores is bound to eclipse the horrors of 7/7 and 21/7 combined.” Another read, “Britain will pay the heftiest price for its brazen role in the war against Islam and endless brutality against innocent Muslims.” Al-Shabaab also said it would “go to every possible length to attain the freedom of imprisoned Muslim scholars.”

Al-Shabaab Terror Attacks in Uganda (July 11, 2010)

Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for twin bombings in Kampala, Uganda, on July 11, 2010, one an outdoor screening at a rugby club and the other an Ethiopian restaurant.⁶⁵ The blasts went off as people watched the game between Spain and the Netherlands in the World Cup. Seventy-four people died and eighty-five people were wounded

in the twin blasts. Among those killed were sixty Ugandans, nine Ethiopians or Eritreans, one Irish woman, and one Asian; two people could not be identified. Kale Kayihura, the inspector-general of Ugandan police, said that the attacks could have been carried out by suicide bombers. Investigators found the severed head of what appeared to be a Somali suicide bomber.

The near-simultaneous attacks in Uganda were the first time the group, which had carried out multiple suicide attacks inside Somalia, had struck outside of the country. The terror attacks of al-Shabaab in Uganda were the expression of two main trends: radicalization and internationalization of the organization. Internationalization has meant a pledge of allegiance to al-Qaeda's senior leadership as well as a number of foreign volunteers joining al-Shabaab's ranks. The main reasons for the bombings in Uganda were most likely to be local:

- Uganda is an overwhelmingly Christian nation
- Uganda was the first country to send peacekeepers to Somalia

Ugandan troops provided most of the 5,000 African Union peacekeepers who replaced Ethiopian troops when they pulled out in 2009 and were the main reason Somalia's UN-backed government had not yet been entirely driven out of Mogadishu by al-Shabaab. Pledges to reinforce the peacekeepers from neighboring states had drawn threats of jihad from al-Shabaab against any countries that sent more troops.

Al-Shabaab had long threatened to attack outside of Somalia's borders, but the bombings in Uganda were the first time the group had done so. "We warned Uganda not to deploy troops to Somalia; they ignored us," said Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, al-Shabaab's spokesman. "We warned them to stop massacring our people, and they ignored that. The explosions in Kampala were only a minor message to them. . . . We will target them everywhere if Uganda does not withdraw from our land." Rage also said that a second country with peacekeeping forces in Mogadishu, Burundi, could soon face attacks.

Despite the threats, Lieutenant-Colonel Felix Kulaigye, the Ugandan army spokesman, said the county would not withdraw: "Al-Shabaab is the reason why we should stay in Somalia. We have to pacify Somalia." Ugandan President Museveni said the terrorists behind the bombings should fight soldiers, not "people who are just enjoying themselves. . . . We shall go for them wherever they are coming from. We will look for them and get them as we always do."

Al-Shabaab had chosen to target an Ethiopian restaurant in Kampala because Ethiopia was a longtime enemy of al-Shabaab and other Somali militants, who accused their neighbor of meddling in Somali affairs. Ethiopia had fought two wars with Somalia and had troops in Somalia between December 2006 and January 2009 to back Somalia's government against the Islamic insurgency.

Al-Shabaab had attacked people watching the World Cup because al-Shabaab had already made clear it disapproved of football, threatening players and fans with violence in Somalia. In a web posting, one extremist scholar said that watching the World Cup was un-Islamic, as it involved gambling, competition, women being shown on TV, sinful behavior by players, cursing among supporters, and "unnecessary fun."

International Responses to the Attacks

In Washington, President Barack Obama spoke with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni to express his condolences for the loss of life in the bombings. Obama offered to provide any support or assistance needed in Uganda, said White House spokesman Robert Gibbs. The FBI sent agents based at the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, to assist in the investigation and look into the circumstances of the death of the American citizen. The US State Department had declared al-Shabaab a terrorist organization in 2009.

The UN Security Council condemned the attacks. A council press statement stressed the need "to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice." Nigeria's UN Ambassador U. Joy Ogwu, the council president, when asked whether the attack might deter African Union peacekeepers in Somalia, replied: "There is peace to be kept in Somalia, and I don't believe that all member states, contributing states, will be daunted by such acts."

*The Terror Plans of al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda: The "Fazul Documents"*⁶⁶

Fazul Abdullah Mohamed, the al-Qaeda commander of East Africa, was shot dead by Somali forces in June 2011. A cache of intelligence had been found on the body and inside the bullet-ridden Toyota truck he had tried to ram through a Somali government checkpoint. The documents provided a chilling look at the global aspirations of Somalia's al-Shabaab. They detailed plots for a kidnapping and attacks on the prestigious Eton College, Jewish neighborhoods, and the posh Ritz and Dorchester hotels in London.

The Fazul documents showed that the group's ambitions go beyond the Horn of Africa. When found in 2011, they gave intelligence officials the clearest picture yet of some of their foreign goals, prompting the United States and the United Kingdom to increase security around sites that had been named as targets. Intelligence officials feared that such plans had not died with the al-Qaeda leader.

The documents were chilling, both in the level of terror they described and in their tone. They were written with a businesslike formality that analyzed the pros and cons of proposed attacks. It was not clear who had authored the reports. "Our objectives are to strike London with low-cost operations that would cause a heavy blow amongst the hierarchy and Jewish communities," begins the document labeled "International Operations." "These attacks must be backed with a carefully planned media campaign to show why we chose our targets to refute hypocrites, clear doubts amongst Muslims and also inspire Muslim youth to copy."

The next two pages showed specific plans for the hotels, for Eton school on opening day, and for London's Stamford Hill and Golders Green neighborhoods, which are populated with "tens of thousands of Jews crammed in a small area." The document continued:

The plan is to hit the hotel when it's fully booked to ensure maximum casualties . . . key players from all around the world stay in these hotels.

We plan to book in advance and take plenty of petrol with the brother and then set the 1st, 2nd, 3rd floor on fire . . . while we block the stairs so no one can run down.

The martyrdom seeker would then make his way to the exits and start killing any one fleeing the area.

Other scenarios were also laid out, including one where a fire alarm is pulled and as guests emerge, attackers would "shower them with petrol bombs and gunfire." Under "general summary of mission," the report states that the attackers should be trained in Somalia for two months and that the operatives alone would know their mission. "The brothers will be pushed through many battles to see how they react under pressure and they will be analyzed to see if they can keep their composure."

Although time periods were specified, such as striking the Jewish community during Hanukkah, there was no mention of London's Olympics, which was starting that month and had security agencies

worldwide on high alert. There was also no indication in the documents obtained by the *Star* that the plans were anything but aspirational.

In addition to the London plots, the Burundian, Ethiopian, and Ugandan embassies in Nairobi were also on the hit list, presumably in retaliation for their joining the joint operations to battle al-Shabaab in Somalia. A separate document outlined another plot to kidnap Sudan's deputy ambassador to Kenya in Nairobi and listed his phone number, license plate, a route he traveled frequently, and his preferred mosque, among other details. The plot was an attempt to press Sudan to release one of the group's fighters, identified only as Abu Abdullah. The "Plan B" kidnapping scenario involved taking the diplomat to a safe house in Garissa, a Kenyan town near Somalia's border.

Al-Shabaab and Volunteers from the United States

Most of the American men training with al-Shabaab are believed to have been radicalized in the United States, especially in Minneapolis, according to US officials. The FBI believes that these young men have been recruited by al-Shabaab both on the Internet and in person. One such recruit from Minneapolis, twenty-seven-year-old Farah Mohamad Beledi, was one of two suicide bombers who attacked a military base in Mogadishu on May 30, 2011, according to the FBI. Two African Union peacekeepers and a Somali soldier were killed in the attack.⁶⁷

Beledi is the second confirmed American suicide bomber. The first, Shirwa Ahmed, carried out a suicide bombing at the Ethiopian consulate and the presidential palace in Hargeisa, killing twenty-four people, in October 2009. Federal investigators had also looked into reports about whether another American was involved in a suicide attack in Mogadishu in September 2009 that killed twenty-one people. The identity of that attacker was never confirmed.

FBI director Robert Mueller said he was "absolutely" concerned that young American men may return to the United States with their passports and attempt to carry out an attack on US soil similar to the foiled plot in Australia, in which Somali Australians allegedly affiliated with al-Shabaab planned to carry out a suicide attack on a Sydney army base after returning from Somalia. While there have been no similar plots in the United States to date, al-Shabaab's desire to expand its operations outside of Somali and its ability to attract American recruits presents a significant threat to the United States.

Recruitment in the United States

A wave of Americans traveling to Somalia to fight with al-Shabaab has been described by the FBI as one of “highest priorities in anti-terrorism.” Americans began traveling to Somalia to join al-Shabaab in 2007, around the time the group stepped up its insurgency against Somalia’s transitional government (TFG) and its Ethiopian supporters, who have since withdrawn.⁶⁸ These Americans have received weapons training alongside recruits from other countries, including Britain, Australia, Sweden, and Canada and have used the training to fight against Ethiopian forces, African Union troops, and the internationally-supported Transitional Federal Government in Somalia, according to court documents.

Al-Shabaab, the FBI alleges, has made an “active and deliberate attempt” to recruit young American men both in person and on the Internet. “These young men have been recruited to fight in a foreign war by individuals and groups using violence against government troops and civilians,” said B. Todd Jones, US attorney for the district of Minneapolis, who brought charges against some of the men.

Mahamud Said Omar, a former janitor at Abubaker As-Saddique Islamic Center, a mosque many of the defendants had attended, played a major role in recruiting some of the young men, according to the Department of Justice. In November 2009, Omar was arrested in the Netherlands and charged in a Minneapolis district court with providing the young men funding to travel to Somalia. He had also allegedly visited an al-Shabaab safe house and donated money to the group for the purchase of AK-47 rifles for the Minneapolis men to use. The Department of Justice found no evidence that the mosque’s leadership was involved in recruitment.

In the summer of 2007, twenty-eight-year-old Daniel Maldonado, from Houston, Texas, shocked his country when he became the first American ever to be convicted of receiving military training at a terrorist camp in Somalia. Daniel Maldonado had committed himself to waging jihad outside of the United States and went to Somalia to receive training. It was there that he mastered the violent “arts” of homicide bombing, building IEDs, and engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Maldonado had left his wife and three young children behind to pursue a life of jihad, beginning with his training at an al-Shabaab camp. Early in 2007, he fled the camp when it was invaded by the Ethiopian military. He was later arrested by Kenyan authorities and transferred to US custody.⁶⁹

On February 29, 2008, the US State Department added al-Shabaab to its list of foreign terrorist organizations, and concerns over Somali migrants grew when the first-ever US suicide bomber blew himself up in Hargeisa, the capital of Somaliland. Since then, there have been several reported incidents of Somalis from the United States.

In 2009, twenty or so Somali American youth from the Minneapolis–St. Paul area of Minnesota, whose families had emigrated to the United States, had reportedly been recruited to fight in Somalia, joined the ranks of al-Shabaab, and committed suicide operations. In September 2009, a Somali American from Seattle drove a truck bomb into an AMISOM base in Mogadishu, killing twenty-one peacekeepers and himself.⁷⁰ But so far, the flow has always been from the US Somali community toward Somalia. There have been no known cases of movements the other way, yet.

A video, released in September 2009, included pictures of an American citizen who has become a jihadi commander in charge of military training for al-Shabaab, Omar Hammami, also known as Abu Mansour al-Amriki. He appears in the video supervising a small group of Somali jihadists as they train in military tactics. Al-Amriki was an American convert to Islam. He was raised Baptist by his mother, though his father was a Syrian Muslim. He grew up in the city of Daphne, Alabama, from which he vanished. He reappeared in 2007 as a military commander for the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia. Al-Amriki released an audiotape in response to US President Obama's Cairo speech, advising the Muslim world not to be fooled by President Obama's "sweet talk."⁷¹

On June 5, 2010, two New Jersey men, Mohamed Mahmoud Alesla and Carlos Eduardo Almonte, who were bound for Somalia, seeking to join al-Shabaab, were arrested at Kennedy International airport in New York City.

The biggest concern is not what these individuals do while in Somalia but what happens when they return to the countries from which they came. Because of the relatively large number of Americans who travel to Somalia for military training, individuals linked to al-Shabaab are among the top US domestic terrorist threats.⁷²

It is a concern not only for the United States but also for Britain. *The Times* of London reports that British security services believe that "[d]ozens of Islamic extremists have returned to Britain from terror training camps in Somalia."⁷³ British intelligence analysts are concerned about possible terror attacks in the United Kingdom, and British television has

reported that an October 2007 suicide bombing in Somalia was thought to have been carried out by a UK-raised bomber.⁷⁴ Peter Neumann of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence at King's College, London, told *Channel 4 News*: "The numbers I hear [going from Britain to Somalia] are fifty, sixty, or seventy, but in reality we don't know. You don't need big numbers for terrorism."⁷⁵

Al-Shabaab and Israel

On October 30, 2009, al-Shabaab held a rally in Mogadishu, where crowds of people chanted anti-Israel slogans. "It is time to go for open war against Israel in order to drive them from the holy cities," Sheikh Fuad Mohamed Shangole, a top al-Shabaab official said.⁷⁶

On November 1, 2009, in response to standoffs between Israeli police and Palestinians at the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, al-Shabaab threatened to attack Israel. Media reports indicated that in a sermon delivered after Friday prayers in Baidoa, Somalia, al-Shabaab commander Mukhtar Robow Abu Mansour urged his followers to attack Israel. "The Jews started to destroy parts of the holy mosque of al-Aqsa and they routinely kill our Palestinian brothers, so we are committed to defend our Palestinian brothers," he said.⁷⁷

Al-Shabaab announced the establishment of al-Quds Brigade, a military unit specifically tasked with attacking Israel and Jewish interests in Africa. In a rally held the previous week in Mogadishu, a top al-Shabaab official said, "It is time to go for open war against Israel in order to drive them from the holy cities."⁷⁸ In addition to threatening Israel, al-Shabaab warned of attacks on Jewish interests in Africa, declaring an "open battle with the oppressing Zionist entity as well as targeting its interests, especially in Africa."⁷⁹

Israeli Arabs and al-Shabaab

In May 2010, seven Israeli Arabs from the city of Nazareth were arrested for allegedly murdering a taxi driver and carrying out a series of terrorist attacks.⁸⁰ According to police, the group had become more radical over the previous few years after being exposed to online video clips posted by Osama bin Laden and his followers, which had also helped them obtain knowledge on the use of weapons and explosives. The group had regularly watched bin Laden's lectures online and wanted to join the fight against Jewish and Christian "infidels."

In a joint police and Israel Security Agency (ISA) operation, the seven men, aged nineteen to twenty-six, were arrested in May 2010 for

a series of attacks that had been carried out with nationalistic motivations. The suspects had become acquainted while praying at the Shihab a-Din mosque in Nazareth, led by the radical imam Nazim Abu Salim, also known as Abu Osama al-Nasiri.⁸¹

Some of those arrested had allegedly been involved in the murder of taxi driver Yafim Weinstein, who was killed on November 30, 2009, in Kfar Hahoreh, near Nazareth, as well as other attacks. The ISA also found that two of the men, Ahmed Ali Ahmed, twenty-one, and Galeb Ganayim, twenty-two, had flown to Ethiopia in April 2010 to join al-Shabaab in Somalia to fight “infidels.” They had failed to cross into Somalia from Ethiopia and moved to Kenya. In Kenya, they had been caught by the Kenyan authorities on the border with Somalia and handed over to Israel.

Al-Shabaab’s Internal Problems (2011–2012)

There are signs that al-Shabaab has become increasingly internally divided. As the allied forces of Somalia (TFG), the African Union peacekeepers (AMISOM), and various pro-government militias push the al-Shabaab militant group from key areas in Somalia, more than 1,500 previously-loyal soldiers of al-Shabaab have deserted the group, according to Ahmed Carale, a former al-Shabaab fighter who spoke to *Wadanka.com*. Somalia’s Transitional Federal Government officials have claimed that more than 500 youths have deserted; however, the official number remains unknown as some fighters merely went back home without officially surrendering or defecting.⁸²

A number of reasons have caused the split and defections:⁸³

The allied advances: Some defectors said, “Things are tough these days. The whole world is against us and it is true we can’t withstand all the pressure. We deviated from al-Shabaab because we didn’t want to fight a losing battle any longer.”

The increased killings of innocent people: Many youth fighters from the al-Shabaab militia surrendered or defected after they felt guilty and shameful over the killings of innocent people, according to those who had left the group. Some al-Shabaab defectors explained that they objected to the mass killing of innocent people, the hijacking of trucks carrying aid for civilians, the forceful taking of animals and taxes from people, and child abuse in the name of jihad. Examples of killings of innocent people include that of the late district commissioner of the Garboharey town, Ahmed Abdille Magan (Harawe), who was killed on the road between Baled Hawo and Garboharey by al-Shabaab. Also

included in the list of grievances was the Hotel Shamow explosion, which killed many students on their graduation day. There were also a number of aid trucks that were stolen by the al-Shabaab militia in the Gedo region while they were heading to Garboharey.

The matter of defection has also affected the top leaders of the al-Shabaab, including Hassan Dahir Aweys, who accused other al-Shabaab leaders of shedding the blood of innocent people in the name of jihad.

Clan-based politics: Tribalism and clan loyalties within al-Shabaab is reportedly the biggest worry of the soldiers in al-Shabaab. Although al-Shabaab has many followers from all walks of life and from different tribes and even nations, tribalism is still an issue driving many loyal soldiers from the group. Tribalism exists in the al-Shabaab militia when a group dominated by a certain clan is operating in a region where the people of that region mostly do not support al-Shabaab. These forces execute people from the other clans, take their property, and harass them just because they are not part of al-Shabaab and their men are not in the group or have few soldiers in the militia. This has caused many clans to contribute hundreds of men to join al-Shabaab with the agenda of safeguarding their tribe and their property from the other members of al-Shabaab who would otherwise cause problems for these clans and their property.

The lack of countrywide militia operations: Some reports from inside al-Shabaab said that the al-Shabaab phenomenon only exists in southern Somalia and the militia has no plans to operate in the northern part of the country. This raised many questions among the al-Shabaab soldiers and the leaders of the insurgents. Abdiyare, a member of the Bay al-Shabaab militants, said that some members of al-Shabaab had raised questions to the top leaders about expanding the group's activities to Somaliland, in the north part of Somalia. He complained that their suggestions went neglected by the al-Shabaab senior officials, who finally admitted that Somaliland region was peaceful and that al-Shabaab would not interfere there.

This angered many officials within al-Shabaab, including Hassan Dahir Aweys, and all the other less-radical officials, such as Sheikh Abdifatah Mohamed Ali, the former treasurer of the disbanded Hizb al-Islam, hinting that there exists an individualistic agenda behind the war and the conflict in the southern part of Somalia.

Disputes over the role of the foreigners in the group: The involvement of foreign forces operating among and sometimes dictating policy

for al-Shabaab has been another major factor in defections. Most of the al-Shabaab fighters refuse to take orders from foreigners, who sometimes demand the fighters to commit suicide when they themselves refuse to do so.

Al-Shabaab's pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda: The continuing rift between al-Shabaab members was also sparked by the group's allegiance to the terror group al-Qaeda. Al-Shabaab officials such as Hassan Aweys are against giving its loyalty to the al-Qaeda group. "Al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda are merely a small part of the larger Islamic group and al-Qaeda's ideology should not be viewed as the sole, righteous path for Islam," Aweys was quoted as saying by *Sabahi Online*.

Despite the defections, surrenders, and internal squabbles, the group remains formidable and united against TFG, AMISOM, and Ethiopian troops and local militias, vowing to hold on to their main base in Kismayo. The group has been equally effective at conducting guerrilla warfare and hit-and-run attacks against allied forces throughout southern Somalia.

Al-Ittihad al-Islamiya, Islamic Courts Union, and al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen

Al-Shabaab emerged from two previous Somali Islamist groups: al-Ittihad al-Islamiya and the Islamic Courts Union. There are three strands of evolution from the AIAI to the ICU and finally to al-Shabaab.

The first is ideological, in which the groups went through a funneling process and slowly became less ideologically diverse. Though all three strove to implement Sharia (Islamic law), a significant faction of Islamic Union (IU) and ICU leaders had a vision that focused on the Somali nation itself—that is, inside the borders of Somalia and in neighboring territories where Somalis are the predominant ethnic group, such as Ethiopia's Ogaden region. In contrast, key al-Shabaab leaders are committed to a global jihadist ideology. They view the group's regional activities as part of a broader struggle.⁸⁴

When the Islamic Courts Union (from which al-Shabaab was born) was first instituted and sought to implement Sharia law, there was broad community support, and even some of the diaspora returned. Many people in Somalia admired and supported Islamic rule in the country after the era of warlords, as Muslims believe Islamic Sharia to be the best and supreme law on earth. Some Somalis even came from Western countries in large numbers to take part in what they saw as a new dawn in the country. Somali people supported the group even

more after they battled the Ethiopian forces who invaded the country in 2006. At that time, Somalis offered support, either financially or by taking up arms to fight with the ICU against Ethiopia, for the common cause of implementing Sharia law in Somalia.

The second strand lies in the groups' relations with al-Qaeda. Bin Laden's organization has long had a presence in Somalia. It dispatched trainers to liaise with the Islamic Union prior to the 1993 battle of Mogadishu, where eighteen US soldiers were killed.⁸⁵ Despite that connection, some scholars have questioned how deep the ties between al-Qaeda and the IU really were.⁸⁶ In contrast, after al-Shabaab emerged as a distinct entity, its leaders reached out to al-Qaeda's senior leadership, and its chief military strategist openly declared his allegiance to bin Laden.⁸⁷

The final strand is the groups' opportunity and ability to govern. Because all three have been dedicated to implementing Sharia, they would ideally like a governing apparatus through which to apply Islamic law and mete out God's justice. The Islamic Union could not control any territory for a sustained period, apart from the town of Luuq. In contrast, the Islamic Courts Union and al-Shabaab came to control broad swaths of Somalia, and the governing strategies they put in place indicate that both groups thought hard about how to maintain and expand their power. But both Islamic organizations were defeated by a coalition of local and foreign forces.⁸⁸

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The Battle of Mogadishu

The Battle for Somalia's Capital: Mogadishu (2010–2012)

Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, and its two million inhabitants have endured more than two decades of conflict. The battle between the armed al-Shabaab group and Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the AMISOM forces is another chapter in the history of the war-torn city.¹

Controlling less than one-third of the capital city, a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) barely functioned behind the protection of some 6,500 African Union peacekeepers. Daily attacks from the insurgents, often drawing retaliatory fire from heavy weaponry, forced many of Mogadishu's residents to flee to sprawling camps on the outskirts of the city or further afield to neighboring countries.

In the areas of Mogadishu under the control of al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam—the Islamic groups who sought to overthrow the TFG and expel the African Union force—a deterioration in civil liberties, traditional Somali culture and society, and the most basics of freedoms created an atmosphere that was increasingly regressive and brutal for those who disobeyed. Once a devout yet secular and tolerant Muslim society, the area was gradually “Talibanized” by militants who imposed draconian and oppressive laws on the Somali people, banning music, the playing of video games, and watching sports or movies. The punishment for failing to comply was both vicious and swift; public stoning, beheading, or the forced amputations of limbs awaited those deemed to be “un-Islamic.”

Suicide attacks and roadside bombs showed an increasing sophistication and influence from the many hundreds of battle-experienced foreign jihadists who had flocked to Somalia. But the poorly-funded yet determined AU force (AMISOM) held the line in their support of the TFG in an effort to stop Somalia from being engulfed completely.

Al-Shabaab's Ramadan Offensive (August–October 2010)

In August–October 2010, the Somali capital of Mogadishu was pounded by heavy fighting that pitted the hard-line Islamic extremist groups al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam against Transitional Federal Government forces backed by African Union troops from Uganda and Burundi. The fighting was fierce, brutal, and mostly at close quarters. The offensive came after al-Shabaab fighters declared a “massive, final” war. Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, al-Shabaab's spokesman, said that their fighters would start a new war against “invaders,” an apparent reference to the African Union troops deployed in the country to support government forces.²

The major offensive coincided with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and sought to overrun government and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) positions along the Maka al Mukarama Road, the main thoroughfare through the center of the capital. The offensive's main objective was to cut off Villa Somalia, the complex that housed the fragile TFG, from AMISOM's main base surrounding the airport to the west in Xalane District. It began on August 23. Al-Shabaab militants, disguised as government workers, launched an attack at the Muna Hotel, which was known for hosting many Somali government officials and politicians. The hotel was close to the presidential palace, Villa Somalia. Thirty-one people were reported killed in the hotel incident, including eleven lawmakers.³

On September 20, Islamic militants seized two radio stations in the capital and a suicide bomber blew herself up at the gates of the presidential palace in Mogadishu, slightly injuring two soldiers. On September 27, al-Shabaab militants attacked the National Parliament building with mortars while lawmakers were assembled; however, government soldiers and African Union forces repelled the attack.

Many insurgent fighters died in the all-out assault against the heavier weapons and established positions of the AU. Intelligence sources reported that al-Shabaab lost 500 to 700 fighters in the month-long pitched battles in Mogadishu.⁴

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) Forces Counterattack

The AU forces' counterattack came as a response to the al-Shabaab offensive in Mogadishu and the double suicide bombing in the Ugandan capital Kampala during the World Cup final, which claimed over seventy civilian lives. In the wake of the counteroffensive, AMISOM

reinterpreted its rules of engagement to allow for preemptive defense. Having stood their ground, AMISOM forces had weakened the extremists, whose failed offensive had resulted in a significant loss of fighters and hardware. AMISOM forces pushed forward.

On October 7, 2010, it was reported that AU troops had captured more territory and were expected to control half of the city in the next few weeks. By the end of the month, officials in Mogadishu claimed that they had the upper hand in six of the capital's sixteen districts as fighting continued. Outside the capital, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, an ally of the TFG, had also made additional progress by chasing al-Shabaab out of a few towns. Al-Shabaab, however, continued its terror and smart guerrilla tactics.

Civilians were often caught in the crossfire. At AMISOM's Level II hospital, Ugandan and Burundian doctors treated all casualties of the fighting, whether they were their own troops, civilians, or wounded insurgents. Yet the AU held the line in the face of the al-Shabaab onslaught, which AMISOM commanders conceded at times came close to achieving its goal.

After more than three years of al-Shabaab's controlling some 90 percent of Mogadishu and enforcing its violent interpretation of Islam on the population, this was the beginning of sustained operations that would eventually force them to withdraw from the city they had fought in and held for so long. The tide was finally beginning to turn against al-Shabaab.

Fighting in Mogadishu (November–December 2010)

On November 28, 2010, the president of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, visited Mogadishu and urged the international community to provide more support for the government of Somalia. However, the next day, fifteen people died and twenty-five were injured when Islamist fighters attacked government positions in the northern part of the city.

More AMISOM troops were deployed on December 2 as attacks continued, mostly in the northern part of the city. On December 10, al-Shabaab tried to cut off Maka al Mukarama, which is the only street in Mogadishu that the Somali government officials and the African Union troops use for their especial purposes. After three days of heavy fighting, al-Shabaab failed to gain control over the road and stopped the attack.

On December 20, Hizb al-Islam officially surrendered to al-Shabaab, and the two organizations merged. As a result, al-Shabaab fighters took

over Hizb al-Islam positions, while Hizb al-Islam fighters were allowed to enter al-Shabaab's controlled territories as well. On December 23, the two sides formally declared unity in Mogadishu with a ceremony held in the Nasrudin mosque, which was attended by al-Shabaab's official spokesman, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, and Sheikh Abdifatah Mo'allin Mohamed, Hizb al-Islam's head of information.

New fighting broke out on December 25, killing two and injuring twenty-five. The fighting happened as al-Shabaab declared it would increase its attacks after its merger with Hizb al-Islam.

Fighting in Mogadishu (2011–2012)

January 2011 began with a violent mutiny staged by government forces that resulted in three soldiers being killed and seven wounded over nonpayment of salaries. Nineteen people were also killed in clashes on January 1, 2011, as insurgents attacked the bases of Somali government forces.⁵

The AMISOM offensive in Mogadishu, February–March 2011

On February 19, 2011, AMISOM forces clashed with al-Shabaab in the Sigaale and El Hindi areas of the Hawl Wadag district. The fighting lasted for two days, with a death toll of more than twenty people, including several foreign al-Shabaab fighters. The next day it was reported that AMISOM troops had destroyed a large complex of al-Shabaab trenches and killed six al-Shabaab commanders in Mogadishu.⁶

AMISOM and TFG forces then advanced northwest into the Hodan district of Mogadishu. On February 23, 2011, several strategic places were captured, including the former Ministry of Defense that al-Shabaab had used as a base and from where they had launched their attacks from during the Ramadan Offensive. A former milk factory and sections of Industrial Road were also captured. At least eighty-six Somali soldiers, eight AU soldiers, seventy al-Shabaab fighters, and forty-five civilians were killed during the battles.⁷

On February 21, a suicide car bomb exploded at a police post in the Hamarjabab district of Mogadishu. At least twenty people were killed, including TFG policemen and a woman.⁸ On February 25, AMISOM and TFG forces took over the Florence junction (Hararyale) and advanced towards Bakaara Market. A trench system used by al-Shabaab was also discovered and destroyed.⁹

As the offensive continued, it was reported, on March 5, that fifty-three AMISOM soldiers had died in the clashes. Of those, forty-three

were Burundian and ten Ugandan. Burundi announced on March 12, that they had deployed 1,000 extra soldiers to AMISOM over a two-day period, bringing the total Burundi contribution to 4,400 soldiers. On March 16, Abdikadir Yusuf Aar, also known as Sheikh Qalbia, a senior al-Shabaab official serving as the group's leader in the Juba and Gedo regions, was killed in Mogadishu.

The Battle of the Bakaara Market (May–June 2011)

Bakaara Market, located in the Hawl Wadag district of Mogadishu, had for several years been one of the main strongholds and an income resource (together with the port in Kismayo) for al-Shabaab. The market had been used for launching attacks and for shooting mortars toward the AMISOM and TFG controlled areas of Mogadishu. It had been difficult to target the al-Shabaab hiding in the market as it was the largest in Somalia and was always packed with civilians.

On May 12, TFG, AMISOM, and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a forces launched an offensive at Bakaara Market. It was a part of a major offensive that went on in several places in Somalia to take control over the areas that had been under al-Shabaab control. Two days into the battle, on May 14, the al-Shabaab commander of Bakaara Market, Abdifatah Muhamed, was killed along with his intelligence officer Abdiwahab Sheikh Dole. On May 15, heavy fighting occurred and more than thirty-five people were killed, including the al-Shabaab commander of Hawl Wadag district, Ali Burhan "Ayatuulah."

After four days of fighting, TFG, AMISOM, and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a forces had advanced 500 meters toward Bakaara Market. The frontline was reached on May 16, 500–700 meters north and west of the market and 200 meters south of it. The areas seized from al-Shabaab included a former Sufi shrine that al-Shabaab had used as a military base.

A major breakthrough happened on May 22 when most of the marked roads, including the Wadnaha Road (National Road), were overtaken by the TFG and AMISOM. That same day, al-Shabaab lost one of their top leaders in Mogadishu, Abu Hubeyda, who had coordinated the al-Shabaab attacks from Bakaara Market. As the AMISOM and TFG forces advanced, they captured the famous Red Mosque on May 23.

On May 25, in an attempt to open a second front and relieve some of the pressure from Bakaara Market, 300 al-Shabaab fighters attacked AMISOM and TFG bases in Bondere, Shingani, and Scibis. On May 30, fifteen vehicles carrying reinforcements of foreign al-Shabaab fighters (of African origin and one truck of Pakistani and Yemenite) left

Abdul Aziz district in Mogadishu and headed to Afgoye. At the same time, al-Shabaab deployed fighters from the Lower Shabelle and Bay regions to the frontline in Bakaara Market to try to put a halt to the AMISOM and TFG offensive.

Al-Shabaab insurgents disguised as SNA soldiers in a white minivan opened fire on AMISOM and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a forces at the Dabka base. Their objective was the Ugandan AMISOM soldiers stationed in Maka al Mukarama. But the insurgents mistakenly attacked the building next to the one holding the AMISOM soldiers and instead attacked the one holding Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a fighters. The area was heavily guarded, and three of the al-Shabaab insurgents were killed in the firefight while two others exploded (suicide bombers), killing several civilians on the Maka al Mukarama Road. The remaining three insurgents then ran toward the Liberian village, where SNA soldiers were stationed. Two AMISOM soldiers and six insurgents were killed in the attack, and three AMISOM soldiers and six Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a fighters were injured. One of the al-Shabaab suicide bombers killed during the attack was Abdullahi Ahmed, a Somali American from Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the United States.¹⁰

Al-Shabaab launched hit-and-run attacks on AMISOM and SNA bases on Warshadaha Street in the early morning of June 2.¹¹ Seventeen civilians were killed and forty-six injured in the fighting that continued on Wadnaha Road, the location of the former Ministry of Defense in the Hodan district. Most of the casualties occurred when artillery fire hit a bus station. AMISOM and the SNA continued their advance and penetrated deep into al-Shabaab's trenches. The result of the fighting was that AMISOM (Burundi troops) and the SNA gained full control over Taranbunka Road, which leads from Kilometer 4 to Industrial Road and provides western access to Bakaara Market.

On June 4, AMISOM and the SNA attacked with tanks in the north-eastern parts of Mogadishu. The whole district of Bondere (including the former embassies of Italy and Syria), Siinay Village in Wardhigley district, Afarta Jardiino in Yaqshid district, and the Damanyo military camp (Shirkole Ofshiale) were captured by AMISOM and the SNA. The commander of the Ugandan 23rd Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Tibihwa, and three other Ugandan soldiers were killed on June 4. Lieutenant-Colonel Tibihwa was the highest-ranking Ugandan officer killed in Somalia.

Fighting continued on June 5. The Suqa Holaha, Jungal, Siisii, and Fagah neighborhoods were hit by artillery shells. Eight civilians were

killed and fifteen injured. On June 8, the top al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda commander, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, and senior al-Shabaab commander Ali Dheere were reported killed. They had been in a car carrying US\$40,000, medicine, phones, laptops, and passports. When they refused to stop at a checkpoint in the Afgoye corridor, northwest of Mogadishu, the SNA opened fire and killed them.

On June 9, a suicide attack occurred at the Mogadishu port. Two al-Shabaab suicide bombers passed a checkpoint at the port and blended in with other traders. They then climbed over the fence, proceeded to the AMISOM base, and opened fire. One of the terrorists was shot and killed before being able to detonate his charge. The second terrorist detonated and killed one civilian. Three AMISOM soldiers were injured in the attack.

At the end of June, AMISOM and SNA forces gained full control of the Bakaara Market and most parts of Mogadishu. Despite the success of AMISOM and SNA forces, in early August, four civilians were killed by snipers at Bakaara Market. The area had been almost deserted after the heavy battles, but snipers could be seen on most of the rooftops.¹²

Withdrawal of al-Shabaab from Mogadishu (August 2011)

After coming under increased pressure from SNA and AMISOM forces, several al-Shabaab leaders, including Fuad Mohamed Qalaf and Omar Shafik Hammami, fled from Mogadishu on August 4, 2011, and almost all al-Shabaab had left the bases in Suqa Holaha, Tawakal village, and Dayniile.¹³

During the night of August 6, al-Shabaab abandoned all areas in Mogadishu. This move came after heavy fighting on August 5, which included some of the most intensive firepower used by AMISOM. SNA and AMISOM had penetrated Bakaara Market and closed in on Mogadishu Stadium, which had been al-Shabaab's main base in the capital. Al-Shabaab fighters fled in small cars from all areas, and some left their weapons and al-Shabaab uniforms to slip into civilian dress. Al-Shabaab leaders Sheikh Mukhtar Robow and Hassan Dahir Aweys are believed to have fled to the Bakool region of Somalia.¹⁴

On the morning of August 6, SNA and AMISOM were in control of most of the areas abandoned by al-Shabaab, including Bakaara Market, Mogadishu Stadium, and the Sodonka and Warshadaha Streets.¹⁵ That same day, President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed said that al-Shabaab had been completely defeated and expelled from Mogadishu.¹⁶ At a press conference, he said, "The Somali government welcomes the success attained

by the Somali government forces backed by AMISOM [peacekeepers] who defeated the enemy of al-Shabaab.”¹⁷

A spokesman for the African Union peacekeepers in Somalia said the force would treat the rebel withdrawal with caution in case it was a trap. Soldiers would not immediately deploy across Mogadishu, Lieutenant-Colonel Paddy Ankunda told the *BBC*. However, a spokesman for al-Shabaab, Ali Mohamud Rage, told a local radio station there would be no withdrawal from other regions of southern Somalia: “The retreat by our forces is only aiming to counterattack the enemy. People will hear happy news in the coming hours. We shall fight the enemy wherever they are.”¹⁸

On August 9, 2011, al-Shabaab militants attacked SNA army bases in the Dayniile district. Nine people were killed and thirteen injured in the attack. The following day, al-Shabaab launched new attacks on the SNA in the Yaqshid district. Two SNA soldiers were killed and two others injured. Later that day, a car full of explosives blew up in the outskirts of Mogadishu, leaving fourteen people dead and twenty injured. On August 9, al-Shabaab attacked AMISOM bases in the Abdiaziz district. Four were killed and five injured.¹⁹

On August 14, al-Shabaab declared they were switching from conventional tactics to hit-and-run attacks and vowed to continue such attacks because they inflicted more casualties on AMISOM that way. The following day, al-Shabaab claimed the tactic to be successful in killing one AMISOM soldier from Uganda.²⁰

On August 31, 900 SNA soldiers graduated from Bihanga Military Training School in Bihanga, Uganda, and joined the forces in Mogadishu.²¹

The Battle over the Dayniile District (October 2011)

Two months after the rebels had pulled out of the city, African Union and Somali government forces launched an offensive to flush out remnant Shabaab militia from Mogadishu.²² The push came after al-Shabaab carried out their deadliest single attack when a suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden truck at a government compound, killing eighty-two people.

The battle broke out after government soldiers, with the help of AU peacekeepers, launched a predawn offensive on the al-Shabaab bases in Dayniile, northwest of Mogadishu.²³ Abdikarim Yusuf Adam, the deputy Somali army chief, told *Shabelle Media Network* that Somali forces, endorsed by AMISOM troops, attacked al-Shabaab’s last pockets in a bid to completely clear them from the capital.

After the battle, al-Shabaab's spokesman, Sheikh Abdiaziz Abu Mus'ab, held a press conference in Mogadishu and told the reporters that they had come under attack from AMISOM and government forces. He added that they had killed more than fifty AU peacekeepers and Somali soldiers in the battle and that they had also seized military supplies and equipment. An al-Shabaab commander, who did not want to be named, said they had repulsed the offensive: "The allied enemy of Allah failed this morning after attempting to take control of locations where Mujahideen fighters are. We have inflicted heavy casualties on them forcing them to retreat to their positions."

"The Somali troops and the African peacekeepers supporting them moved into new locations in Mogadishu to ensure full control of the city," said Abdullahi Mohamed Roble, the head of the northern Karan district from where the operation had been launched. "The forces took control of Keysaney hospital early in the morning and advanced deep into the district. The mission is aimed at eliminating remnants of the terrorist group from the whole city," he added.

According to the AU commander, Major-General Fred Mugisha, AU troops controlled 95 percent of war-torn Mogadishu. While al-Shabaab had abandoned positions in Mogadishu, where they had waged a four-year war to dislodge the Western-backed Somali government, they remained a serious security threat to the capital.

Amid the withdrawal of al-Shabaab and the chaos of the war-torn city, Mahamoud Nur, the mayor of Mogadishu, tried to make a difference, in part by "altering the mind-set of the people."²⁴ One of his most symbolic and ambitious initiatives was a street festival that celebrated Somali culture—the first event of its kind in many years and an obvious target for an attack.

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Operation Linda Nchi: The Incursion of Kenyan Armed Forces into Somalia

Background

In September–October 2011, armed groups, alleged members of al-Shabaab, kidnapped foreign citizens from Kenya three times. The incidents were just a few in a spate of kidnappings that not only targeted tourists and aid workers but also soldiers, government officials, and ordinary Kenyans. Kenya was in no position to bear the effects of a collapsed tourism sector that made up 12 percent of its GDP. The kidnappings had exposed the country's vulnerable security situation, and many foreign governments had almost immediately issued travel advisories to their citizens in Kenya and potential tourists. The kidnappings had damaged Kenya's coastal tourism just as it had rebounded following two months of violence after the 2007 presidential election that had left 1,100 people dead.

British Woman Kidnapped in Kenya (September 2011)

On September 10, 2011, armed men killed a British man, David Tebbutt, and kidnapped his wife, Judith, from a beach resort in northern Kenya near the border with Somalia. A British diplomat in Nairobi said the attackers had broken into the Kiwayu Safari Village resort, which consists of eighteen luxury cottages spread along a private beach, about fifty kilometers north of the island resort of Lamu. The couple was attacked minutes after midnight. Police Commissioner Mathew Iteere said they were the only guests at the resort.

The kidnappers murdered David Tebbutt and took fifty-six-year-old Judith Tebbutt from their beachside cottage in a speedboat. No group claimed responsibility, but the way in which the attack had occurred and the proximity to the border with Somalia pointed to the involvement

of Somali bandits or Islamist terrorists. It was thought the attack could have been timed for the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the United States.

An al-Shabaab radio broadcast claimed on September 14, 2011, that it was the group holding Mrs. Tebbutt and that her husband had been killed because he had refused to obey their orders. One day later, on September 15, 2011, Somali al-Shabaab said it was not behind the kidnapping of the British woman. "Al-Shabaab has not abducted any Briton from Kenya. We believe bandits carried out the attack," a senior official of al-Shabaab told *Reuters* by telephone from an undisclosed location. "We shall release a statement later that al-Shabaab is not involved," the rebel official said.

Disabled French Woman Kidnapped in Kenya (October 2011)

On October 1, 2011, a French woman was kidnapped by an armed gang on Kenya's northern resort island of Manda and taken to Somalia. The disabled woman, sixty-six, was attacked at her bungalow at Ras Kitau. Kenya's government said it believed the abductors were al-Shabaab militants. Marie Dedieu, who used a wheelchair, was a retired French journalist who spent more than half of the year at a house she had bought on Manda.

At least ten armed gunmen landed two small speedboats on Manda's main beach at 3:00 AM on October 1. Six of the men stormed into the living area, shooting at guards and shepherding staff into a separate room. Four others remained with the boats, which had been docked on the beach in front of the house. Dedieu was dragged down the beach, thrown over the shoulders of one kidnapper, and put into one of the speedboats. Her kidnappers did not take her wheelchair with them.

By mid-afternoon, Kenyan forces had found the boat with the gang and the Frenchwoman still on board, said Najib Balala, Kenya's tourism minister. Coast Guard and Kenyan navy speedboats had given chase and were assisted from the air at first light by an army helicopter that later spotted the kidnappers more than halfway to the Somali border. Forces tried to fire warning shots to make them stop, but the gang fired back, targeting the helicopter as it hovered above the boat on the open seas. Despite repeated attempts to force the vessel to stop, and amid sustained gunfire that injured several of the gang, Kenya's government admitted that it had been unable to rescue the woman before her kidnappers crossed into Somali waters.

The Kidnapping of Two Spanish Aid Workers (October 2011)

On October 13, 2011, two Spanish women, Blanca Thiebaut, thirty, from Madrid, and Montserrat Serra, forty, who were working for Doctors Without Borders in the Dadaab refugee camps near the border with Somalia, were kidnapped by gunmen. The kidnapping of the two Spanish aid workers was the third attack in Kenya in six weeks that had targeted foreigners close to the border with Somalia. The attackers, who were armed with AK-47 rifles, had waited for the victims outside the camp. As soon as the vehicle carrying them left the gate, they blocked it and shot the driver. Al-Shabaab denied responsibility for the kidnappings.

Dadaab, the world's largest refugee complex, was home to some 450,000 refugees, most of whom had come from Somalia, fleeing either drought or war or a combination of the two. Security had long been a concern at Dadaab, where representatives from various Somali factions sought to recruit disaffected young male refugees as fighters. The Kenyan authorities had on several occasions expressed fears that Islamist extremists would infiltrate the Dadaab camps from Somalia, as the border lies barely 100 kilometers away. Aid workers lived in guarded compounds surrounded by high barbed-wire walls, and the United Nations required its staff to travel in the camps with armed escorts.

The Incursion of Kenyan Armed Forces into Somalia (October 2011)

On October 16, 2011, Kenya's government ordered the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) to launch a military operation against al-Shabaab in the southern part of Somalia. Kenya had previously accused al-Shabaab of being behind the kidnappings of several foreigners. The operation appeared to be spontaneous, triggered by the spate of kidnappings and crossovers by alleged members of al-Shabaab into Kenya, forcing the nation into self-defensive action. Beneath that, however, was a professionally drafted operation whose plans stretched back as far as 2010.

The KDF had reconnaissance and intelligence officers from its Military Intelligence Corps and Special Forces planted inside Somalia in 2010, a year before the operation began. Moreover, the country had been secretly mobilizing and moving troops and equipment near its borders. In October 2011, the Kenyans sensed an opportunity to deliver a knockout blow against al-Shabaab, which had already been driven from most of the Somali capital of Mogadishu.¹ It was an operation

well timed to provide leeway and a legally acceptable opportunity to execute.

The military operation started a day after two security ministers, Internal Security Minister Professor George Saitoti and his defense counterpart Yusuf Haji, announced that the government would no longer tolerate actions by the Somali militant group al-Shabaab because the group intended “to undermine Kenya’s territorial integrity and national economy.” The joint statement read:

In light of this, the Kenyan government has decided to take robust measures to protect and preserve the integrity of the country and national economy and security. These measures will involve invoking Article 51 of the UN Chapter [*sic*] that pronounces self-defense as an inherent right and which is also in keeping with the Kenyan Constitution.

“If you are attacked by an enemy you are allowed to pursue that enemy until where you get him. We will force them far away from our border,” Haji said.² Saitoti branded al-Shabaab “the enemy” and vowed to attack them “wherever they will be.”³ Saitoti said that in the scheduled offensive into Somalia, the government hoped to rescue the Spaniards and two other women—a Briton and a Frenchwoman—who had been seized from Lamu in the previous three weeks.⁴

Operation Linda Nchi

Kenya began its operation into Somalia. They called it *Linda Nchi*, which means “protect the country” in the local language, Swahili. Thousands of Kenyan troops entered Somalia, backed by helicopters and fighter jets that bombed al-Shabaab camps. The KDF operation was coordinated with the TFG forces and AMISOM. Kenya pressed its attack on ten Somali towns on the approaches to Kismayo. Kenyan military officials said their strategic target was the port city of Kismayo, one of Somalia’s biggest towns and a major money earner for al-Shabaab. That was where they believed the foreigners who had been kidnapped in Kenya were being held.⁵

The United Nations estimated that port revenues provided al-Shabaab up to US\$50 million a year, or roughly half of its total funds. The Kenyan and Somali governments issued a joint appeal for international support in blockading Kismayo until al-Shabaab’s grip on the city was broken. Kenya Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who held a series of talks with his Somali counterpart, said a diplomatic campaign would

seek UN approval for a naval blockade. “Kismayo is the major port for the al-Shabaab. Our intention is blockade it and terminate the supply lines for al-Shabaab,” Odinga said.

Army spokesman Major Chirchir said the Kenyan navy had also positioned ships along the coastline from the Kenyan border toward Kismayo. “Any vessel that is there with a militia we will take it down,” he warned.⁶

The KDF plan was to squeeze the port of Kismayo from two sides in a pincer movement, with troops massing to the west near Afmadow and to the south in Ras Kamboni.⁷ In the battle for Kismayo, Kenyan generals had been plotting full control of the strategic town of Afmadow, a regional capital, advancing on Burgavo and later into Kismayo. “The Defense Forces projected their forces across Burgavo channel with the Kenya Navy providing logistical support and the Kenyan Air Force providing surveillance. All this is designed to achieve our advance on Kismayo,” Major Chirchir said.⁸

First Phase of the KDF Operation Linda Nchi

The KDF Air Force

Five Kenyan soldiers died when their military helicopter providing air cover for ground troops crashed on October 16, 2011, because of reported “technical problems” near Liboi, just inside Kenya’s border, army spokesman Emmanuel Chirchir said.⁹

On October 24, 2011, a military jet targeted the southern Somali port and al-Shabaab stronghold of Kismayo, as Kenyan and Somali government forces prepared to attack another town held by the rebel group. An al-Shabaab official confirmed the news. “There were no casualties. We fired at the plane after the second bombardment and it has not come back,” the senior official told *Reuters*.¹⁰

The Jilib Incident

On October 30, 2011, a Kenyan air strike on a camp packed with displaced women and children killed at least five people and wounded forty-five others, including thirty-one children, according to the aid agency Medicines Sans Frontiers (MSF).¹¹ “I can confirm five dead and forty-five wounded,” Gautam Chatterjee, head of the mission for MSF Holland in Somalia, told the *Reuters* news agency. Chatterjee later told *Al Jazeera* that his medical team had “admitted thirty-one children, nine women and four men for treatment,” explaining that most had “shrapnel wounds.”

A Kenyan army spokesman could not confirm the incident but had said earlier that Kenyan forces had killed ten al-Shabaab fighters in the same area. "We bombed an al-Shabaab camp, killed ten and wounded forty-seven," military spokesman Emmanuel Chirchir said. "We are sure about this assessment, no collateral damage, no women, no children."¹²

Al Jazeera's Peter Greste, reporting from the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, said that the Kenyan military later "acknowledged that there may well have been civilian casualties, but not as a direct result of their aerial attack." "What they're saying is that they had information, they had intelligence on the ground, that there was a high-level al-Shabaab meeting taking place at an al-Shabaab base very close to this particular camp," Greste said. In the process of attacking the camp, there was one particular vehicle that was loaded with ammunition and high explosives. "The vehicle caught fire, but the driver tried to escape. He drove into the camp and that's where the Kenyan authorities are saying that the vehicle exploded, causing the civilian casualties." *Al Jazeera* was not able to independently confirm the military's claims.¹³

Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga said that any loss of civilian life was regrettable and would be investigated. Odinga had dismissed reports that its fighter jets struck the camp as al-Shabaab propaganda.¹⁴ Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, the Somali prime minister, said he did not believe the Kenyans were behind the attack:

I doubt the Kenyans did this. Even if that's the case, I doubt that they have done this on purpose. The Kenyans wouldn't target IDPs. But if that happened, then it's an unfortunate incident. But the fight is not towards this IDPs; the fight was towards the al-Shabaab who are a common enemy for both of us. They are an enemy for the Somalis and Kenyans. So that's where our focus is and that's where our target is.¹⁵

An al-Shabaab official who spoke to *AFP* on condition of anonymity accused the Kenyan military of "having killed ten civilians after targeting an aid distribution centre."¹⁶ The militants, however, dismissed the reported air deliveries as an excuse by Kenya to legitimize civilian deaths ahead of the expected assault. "This is cheap propaganda to legalize the indiscriminate killing of Somalis," the al-Shabaab statement added, posted in Somali on an Islamist website.

The jihadists who could care less about inflicting civilian casualties suddenly decided they had a problem with civilian casualties, at least some of the time. Rebels, however, said they feared that there could be more civilian deaths when Kenya ramped up its military attacks on

its positions. Claiming victim status, the al-Shabaab statement added, “This is a plan to carry out collective punishment against the Muslim people of Somalia. . . . The killing of civilians at Jilib by Kenya is clear testimony of this.”

The Ground Forces

The incursion started on October 16, 2011. A Kenyan battalion, with air and armored vehicle support, crossed the Somali border from Liboi, entering the town of Dhobley in Lower Juba region. The troop columns were supported by four tanks, along with an estimated forty armored vehicles, some of which towed artillery. On October 17, 2011, a Kenyan battalion reached the Somali town of El Waq in Gedo region, and Kenyan forces established a forward-operating base (FOB) in Qoqani in Lower Juba region. The Kenyan forces with the assistance of the Somali Transitional Government Forces (TFG), established a defensive position at Tabta.¹⁷

On October 18, 2011, KDF headquarters in Nairobi said its forces were advancing deep inside Somalia to seize the rebel-held town of Afmadow in Lower Juba region.¹⁸ The next day, on October 19, 2011, Kenyan troops and TFG forces said they had captured a key base belonging to al-Shabaab and killed seventy-five of its fighters. The next target was Ras Kamboni, a port town in Lower Juba region near the Kenyan border that was considered a launching pad for the lucrative piracy trade.

On October 20, 2011, Kenyan air strikes targeted al-Shabaab’s positions in the town of Ras Kamboni. The TFG-aligned Ras Kamboni Brigade and Kenyan troops captured the town of Ras Kamboni after 300 Ras Kamboni fighters entered the town, forcing al-Shabaab to flee. On October 21, 2011, Kenyan military spokesman Major Emmanuel Chirchir reported that Kenyan forces had secured Oddo and Kolbio, towns along the border. A company of Kenyan troops advanced from Oddo to Burgavo and another from Kolbio to Badhadhe. A third company advanced on Hayo town. The next day, Kenyan air strikes targeted an al-Shabaab command center in Munarani, about ten km from Oddo.

On November 8, 2011, Kenyan military spokesman Major Emmanuel Chirchir reported that Kenyan and Somali troops were conducting door-to-door searches for al-Shabaab militants in Ras Kamboni, Munarani, Burgavo, Tabta, Qoqani, Dhobley, Busar, and Jilib. Chirchir added that a Kenyan objective was to secure areas for humanitarian operations in Somalia. Ahmed Madobe, the leader of the Ras Kamboni

Brigade, called for international aid agencies to begin humanitarian operations in newly secured areas of southern Somalia.¹⁹

On November 11, 2011, hours after heavy fighting between the Kenyan military forces, Ras Kamboni Brigade, and al-Shabaab took place at Tabta and Dhobley in Lower Juba region in southern Somalia, the fighters of al-Shabaab claimed victory over the Kenyan forces.²⁰ Sheikh Abu Mus'ab, a spokesman for al-Shabaab, talked about the fighting between the Kenyan military forces and al-Shabaab fighters in southern Somalia. He said they had ambushed and burned six battle wagons from Kenya, adding that they had also damaged three others in the fighting.²¹

Abdinasir Seerar, the spokesman of Ras Kamboni Brigade, disproved the al-Shabaab statement and affirmed they had inflicted more casualties to the al-Shabaab forces. He also said that al-Shabaab had executed three civilians in the areas of the gun battle.²² In the second week of November 2011, the joint forces advanced toward four al-Shabaab-controlled towns as preparation for capturing Afmadow in Central Jubaland.²³ By the end of November 2011, the KDF forces had liberated seventeen towns and controlled about 95,000 square kilometers of Somalia.²⁴

Operations to Cut al-Shabaab's Supply Lines

Kenyan forces, backed by the navy, laid siege to the key supply route of Kismayo, and a diplomatic campaign targeting the UN Security Council and the international community to seek a naval blockade on Kismayo was agreed upon by Nairobi and Mogadishu. Military spokesman Emmanuel Chirchir said the Kenyan navy had also been conducting patrols in the Indian Ocean to keep out the militants and had sunk two enemy boats, killing over ten members of the al-Shabaab.

On November 1, 2011, a Kenya military spokesperson said Kenya had tracked two consignments of weapons destined for al-Shabaab that had been flown into Somalia the previous two days and would strike any rebel bases where the arms were delivered.²⁵ Chirchir said al-Shabaab rebels in towns near the Mogadishu, including the port city of Kismayo, Baidoa, and Afgoye, would be "under attack continuously." "We will attack the camps where weapons are being delivered. We are tracking the weapons right now. All these towns have camps. If weapons go to a camp, we'll hit it," Chirchir said. When asked when the strikes would happen, Chirchir replied, "Imminently." It was not clear where the arms cache—reportedly flown into Baidoa, 270 km

northwest of the capital—had originated from or what it contained. “We are asking people not to enter the camps in those towns. If they are going to stand in [al-Shabaab] camps, they must know we will deliver any minute,” Chirchir said.²⁶

On November 4, 2011, Major Chirchir used Twitter to warn Somalis not to sell their donkeys to the al-Shabaab Islamist group. He said that the price of donkeys had risen from US\$150 to US\$200 following the increased al-Shabaab demand for the animals. “Any large concentration and movement of loaded donkeys will be considered as al-Shabaab activity,” he wrote, suggesting they would be targeted by Kenyan firepower. “Selling donkeys to al-Shabaab will undermine our efforts in Somalia,” he continued. It was not clear whether al-Shabaab was using donkeys because the muddy roads were impassable for vehicles or to avoid detection from aircraft.²⁷

On November 2, 2011, the Kenyan navy sunk a skiff off the coast of Somalia that was allegedly transporting fuel to al-Shabaab militants in Kudha. Eighteen militants were killed, according to officials. Two days later, the Kenyan navy fired on a second boat that was “challenged to stop for identification but continued to approach the Kenya Navy at high speed.” Locals claimed that those in the boat were fishermen.²⁸

The TFG Response to the Kenyan Incursion

Somalia’s transitional government (TFG) acknowledged that it had given Kenya permission to undertake the operations without parliamentary approval. A Somali government spokesman, Abdirahman Omar Osman, said his government welcomed logistical support from “our Kenyan brothers,” but also said Somalia did not need Kenyan troops. “Our forces are ready to combat al-Shabaab and they are doing so effectively. They are ready at the borders, so sending troops is not needed,” Osman said.²⁹ The Somali ambassador in Nairobi, Nur Ahmed, said Kenya “has a right to defend its people.”³⁰

Amid the operation against al-Shabaab, Yusuf Haji, the Kenyan defense minister, and Moses Wetangula, the foreign minister, visited the Somali capital of Mogadishu to map out a common strategy. Both countries signed an agreement to “co-operate in undertaking security and military operations,” including “co-ordinated pre-emptive action,” the *AFP* news agency reported.³¹

As Kenya inserted its ground forces into southern Somalia, the TFG leadership backpedaled and claimed that it had never consented to Kenya’s intervention. On October 24, 2011, Somalia’s president

criticized Kenya's military offensive into his nation to root out Islamist rebels, raising questions about how bilateral the military action was. "There are things we see as inappropriate," President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed said during a tour of a Mogadishu neighborhood, "such as Kenyan troops crossing the border into Somalia." He added that only African Union troops could operate legally in Somalia. A Somali government spokesman, echoing Sheikh Sharif's sentiments, said that while Somalia welcomed assistance from Kenya, the Somali government's territorial sovereignty must be ensured.³² Sheikh Sharif's comments on October 24, 2011, suggested that the two countries might not agree on the Kenyan incursion.³³

Kenyan leaders lambasted the TFG leadership and accused them of complicity with al-Shabaab unless it officially endorsed the intervention. The Somali prime minister hurriedly flew to Nairobi and signed a memorandum of agreement with his Kenyan counterpart without a sanction from the other officers and organs of the TFG, let alone a briefing of the Somali people.³⁴

Al-Shabaab's Response to the Kenyan Incursion

The Kenyan assault prompted dire warnings of revenge from al-Shabaab, who denied they were behind the abduction of four foreigners in three separate incidents along the Kenyan coast and a refugee camp in the previous weeks and said the kidnappings were being used as a pretext for the incursion. Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage, a spokesman for al-Shabaab, warned that fighters from al-Shabaab would attack Kenya unless it withdrew its troops from Somalia: "Kenyan troops have entered 100 kilometers into Somalia and their planes bombarded many places and killed residents. We shall come into Kenya if you do not go back."³⁵ "Kenya has peace, its cities have tall buildings and business is booming there, while Somalia is in chaos. If your government ignores our calls to stop its aggression on Somali soil, we will strike at the heart of your interests," he said, addressing the Kenyan population.³⁶ Hassan al-Turki, a senior southern al-Shabaab leader, immediately promised that his men would force the Kenyan troops "to test the pain of the bullets."³⁷ An al-Shabaab official asked Somalis whether they were ready to "live under Christians" and urged them to fight: "Get out of your homes and defend your dignity and religion. Today is the day to defend against the enemy."³⁸

On October 18, 2011, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, the leader of Hizb al-Islam, said that Kenya would face the consequences of moving

troops into Somalia. “Kenya has joined the list of occupiers of another country’s land, and history will tell what happens to their aggression,” Aweys told *AFP* by telephone from Somalia.³⁹ Al-Shabaab fighters were reported to have boosted defenses and sent trucks and pickup trucks mounted with machine guns and hundreds of fighters toward Kenyan and government positions. Al-Shabaab commanders confiscated trucks from the Lower Shabelle region, outside of Mogadishu, to transport fighters to the battle zones.

The al-Shabaab fighters claimed victory over fighting with the Kenyan military in southern Somalia. Sheikh Abdiaziz Abu Mus’ab, a spokesperson for al-Shabaab, told the local press that they had battled with Kenyan forces just outside of Dhobley in Lower Juba region. The fighting started after al-Shabaab fighters ambushed the Kenyan military in Lower Juba region, according to the al-Shabaab spokesman. He said they had killed a number of Kenyans and burnt down five of their military wagons during the combat. Three of the burnt wagons were dragged back by Kenyan forces, the official added.⁴⁰

On October 28, 2011, a Kenyan army spokesman, Major Chirchir, said Kenyan forces were ambushed about sixty km from the border, along the route that leads toward the port of Kismayo—an al-Shabaab stronghold. Major Chirchir said nine al-Shabaab fighters were killed and two Kenyan soldiers wounded, one critically. Al-Shabaab disputed the figures, saying twenty Kenyans died, and the group’s spokesman, Abdiaziz Abu Mus’ab, told reporters that it was just the start of the fighting and that more attacks would follow.⁴¹

Two weeks after Kenyan troops stormed into Somalia to hunt for al-Shabaab, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Ali, also known as Abu Mansour, told supporters protesting in Mogadishu against the Kenyan incursion that if Kenya struck targets in Somalia, the militant group would strike back. Robow urged what he said were al-Shabaab-trained fighters in Kenya to take action in return, with the Kenyan port of Mombasa as a target. “Carry out attacks with heavy losses on Kenya,” Robow said. “If Kenya closes the sea port in Kismayo, attack its banks, its port, its foreign guests and wherever there is a high-value target.”⁴²

On November 4, 2011, Somalia’s al-Shabaab rebels said they were building defenses that would plunge Kenyan forces battling them into an “endless war.” “The al-Shabaab mujahideen will defend Somalia, and will put Kenya into an endless war,” they said in a statement. “We will defeat you like the other major countries that have suffered when they attacked Somalia, you will see the consequences.”

Al-Shabaab started to recruit Kenyan youth to fight in Somalia against the TFG and the Kenyan army. No one is sure how many Kenyans al-Shabaab recruited. Many came from slums in the capital of Nairobi, with only a handful of them from ethnic Somali communities.⁴³ The vast majority of the recruits were from other tribes across Kenya, and that made it much harder for the authorities to confirm.

Kenya military information and operations officer Colonel Cyrus Oguna told reporters in Nairobi that:

Initially when this operation began, al-Shabaab was concentrating in large groups, but in the last two to three weeks we have seen them changing from large groups to small groups of between two and five. We have also seen them moving away from using major weapons. They are getting into using small weapons like IEDs [improvised explosive devices] and landmines.⁴⁴

Negotiations between al-Shabaab and Kenya

On October 27, 2011, the al-Shabaab leaders were said to be reaching out for possible negotiations and trying to make arrangements for a “*hudna*” (cease-fire), two weeks after Kenyan troops stormed into Somalia to hunt for al-Shabaab.⁴⁵ In Kenya, conflicting accounts emerged over whether al-Shabaab had signaled a desire to negotiate with Kenya amid the Kenyan military offensive targeting the group. “They want to talk,” said a Kenyan official who did not want to be named because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

A spokesman for the Kenyan government, however, disputed that account and said Kenya would not talk with al-Shabaab, even if the group did want to negotiate. “Al-Shabaab has not contacted Kenya in any way,” said the spokesman, Alfred Mutua. “There are no plans whatsoever for Kenya to negotiate with al-Shabaab. Kenya does not negotiate with outlawed groups.” He said Kenyan troops had enjoyed success since crossing the border into Somalia to pursue al-Shabaab, which the United States and several Western nations viewed as a terrorist organization. “They are running scared. I think they are busy running for their lives,” Mutua said. “They don’t have time to talk.”

Al-Shabaab’s Revenge Attacks in Kenya and Somalia

Al-Shabaab attacks against Kenya could take two forms:⁴⁶

- The group could mount direct attacks using Somali operatives
- The group could use homegrown Kenyan Islamist militants inspired and mentored by al-Shabaab

Al-Shabaab had an extensive presence in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, home to an estimated quarter-million Somalis, and operated a network of safe houses in the Eastleigh district of the city known as “Little Mogadishu” because of its high concentration of Somalis.⁴⁷ A report issued by the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea in July 2011 found that while “in the past al-Shabaab’s presence in Kenya was concentrated primarily within the ethnic Somali community, since 2009 the group has rapidly expanded its influence and membership to non-Somali Kenyan nationals.”⁴⁸ Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki acknowledged the threat, saying, “Our security forces have begun operations within and outside of our borders against militants who have sought to destabilize our country.”⁴⁹

Following the incursion, al-Shabaab and other groups have targeted Kenya with a series of grenade and landmine attacks, especially in North Eastern Province.⁵⁰

2011

October 17—A Kenyan navy patrol boat was hit by a suspected rocket-propelled grenade off the coast of Lamu, injuring three navy officers.

October 23—A grenade was hurled at Mwaura pub on Mfangano Street in Nairobi, wounding fourteen people.

October 24—A grenade attack hit an OTC bus terminal in downtown Nairobi, killing one person and injuring eighteen.

October 27—Suspected al-Shabaab militants attacked a vehicle transporting exam materials in Lafey district in Mandera, killing four people, including two education officials and a Kenyan police reservist.

October 28—A vehicle in a convoy carrying members of Kenya’s paramilitary General Services Unit heading to Liboi hit a roadside landmine seven km from Garissa town, injuring three people.

November 5—Two grenades were hurled at the East African Pentecostal Church in Garissa town, killing two, including an eight-year-old girl. Five others were injured.

November 6—Suspected al-Shabaab militants attacked a border post in Damasa village in Lafey district in Mandera, killing a police reservist.

November 7—Gunmen attacked a vehicle carrying Kenyan Certificate of Primary Examination papers in Damajale, near Liboi, which is on the Kenyan-Somali border. No one was injured.

November 9—Al-Shabaab militants attacked a Rural Border Patrol Unit of the Administration Police near El Waq in Mandera district. No casualties were reported.

November 15—A remote-controlled improvised explosive device was detonated in Dadaab refugee camp, injuring two private security officers in a police escort vehicle driving workers to their residences.

November 23—Al-Shabaab militants ambushed a military convoy on Abdi Sugow Road, less than ten km from Liboi, injuring one soldier.

November 24—Twin grenades targeted a Holiday Inn hotel and a shop in Garissa, killing three people and injuring at least twenty-seven others. A roadside bomb in Bulla-Garaay, near Mandera town, killed a Kenyan soldier and wounded four others on patrol.

November 26—Suspected al-Shabaab militants attacked Arabia, a trading center near Mandera, and hit the local police station, taking arms and ammunition and destroying communications equipment.

December 5—A landmine targeting a United Nations convoy exploded at Ifo refugee camp in the Dadaab complex, killing a police officer and injuring three others.

December 11—A remote-controlled explosive device exploded near Mandera Border Point Three, killing one police officer and injuring three. Another landmine in Wajir town targeting a military convoy exploded, injuring nine soldiers.

December 12—A landmine targeting government vehicles leaving Jamhuri Day celebrations exploded, injuring the Wajir District intelligence chief, his driver, and four women of the local peace committee.

December 15—Twin grenade attacks at Florida Hotel in Garissa town and the local prison officers' mess hall injured four people.

December 19—A landmine attack on a patrol vehicle in the Dadaab complex killed a police officer and injured two other people.

December 20—A bomb exploded in the Dadaab refugee camp, targeting a senior police officer. No one was injured.

December 25—Two grenades were hurled at a government-owned club in Wajir town, injuring seven people, including an army officer and a policeman.

December 29—A refugee leader, the chairperson of the Community Peace and Security Team in Hagadera camp, was killed by gunmen.

2012

January 1—Gunmen killed a second refugee community leader, a member of the Lutheran World Federation peace committee, in the Dadaab refugee complex.

January 3—A landmine in Mandera targeting Kenyan army vehicles injured three soldiers.

January 5—Kenyan police seized explosive equipment in Ifo camp in the Dadaab refugee complex and arrested nine suspects.

January 11—Armed al-Shabaab militants killed six people, including three police officers, in Gerille camp, Wajir District. The militants also kidnapped two government officials.

February 19—Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for an attack on a police station in Hulugho, Garissa, which killed a policeman and a civilian and injured two other civilians.

February 22—Scores were injured in Mandera after a military vehicle hit a landmine.

March 10—Six people were killed and more than sixty injured when four hand grenades were hurled at Machakos bus station in Nairobi.

March 31—At least one person was killed and eighteen wounded in two attacks targeting a church gathering in Mtwapa and a restaurant in Mombasa.

April 29—A grenade attack in God's House of Miracle International Church in Nairobi killed one person and injured at least fifteen others.

May 14—Four soldiers were wounded when a landmine exploded beneath their vehicle in Mandera town.

May 15—A police officer was killed and three others seriously wounded when their vehicle drove over a landmine in the Dadaab refugee complex. They were escorting aid workers near the Dagahaley camp.

May 15—A security guard was killed and five people injured when a gunman opened fire at the Bella Vista restaurant in Mombasa. When guards at the restaurant prevented the gunman and two accomplices from entering, they hurled grenades into the restaurant and fled.

May 21—Four Kenyan soldiers were injured when their patrol vehicle hit a landmine in the northeastern Mandera region.

May 26—Five people were wounded when a grenade was hurled at a construction site at a school in the Ifo II section of the Dadaab refugee complex. At around the same time, attackers in Wajir threw a grenade into a restaurant, wounding three.

May 28—An explosive device ripped through shops in central Nairobi, wounding thirty-eight people.

June 12—Police arrested a woman in Nairobi who had in her possession a hand grenade and three pistols.

June 24—Three people were killed and thirty wounded when a hand grenade was thrown into Jericho Beer Garden in Mombasa as football fans watched the Euro 2012 quarter-final match.

July 1—Masked gunmen hurled grenades and fired bullets as worshippers gathered at the African Inland Church and the Catholic Central Cathedral in Garissa, killing seventeen people and injuring more than sixty others.

July 5—Police arrested a man carrying two grenades at the Nakuru Agricultural Show shortly before President Mwai Kibaki arrived to deliver a speech.

July 18—Four people were injured when two grenades exploded at a barbershop and a hotel in Wajir.

July 22—Police arrested two young men with four hand grenades in Kitale as they were boarding a Nairobi-bound bus. A third man escaped capture.

July 25—Three police officers were injured when their patrol vehicle hit a landmine in the Dagahaley camp in the Dadaab refugee complex.

August 3—Two separate attacks in Nairobi's Eastleigh neighborhood killed four people. The bombs used in the attack were disguised as a transistor radio and a gas cylinder.

August 28—Three Kenyan policeman were killed and over a dozen wounded in a grenade attack during riots in the port city of Mombasa over the killing of Islamist cleric Aboud Rogo Mohamed.

September 15—Al-Shabaab was blamed for a roadside-bomb attack that injured two Administration Police officers who were responding to an earlier explosion in Mandera.

September 21—Two police officers were injured when their lorry hit an improvised explosive device while on routine patrol near the Garissa Provincial General Hospital. A second explosion targeting responders injured four civilians gathered at the scene.

September 30—A suspected grenade attack killed one child and wounded nine others at the Anglican Saint Polycarp Church in Nairobi. In Garissa, two officers were shot from behind and killed while on patrol in the Ngamia Road area.

Car Bomb in Mogadishu

On October 18, 2011, in what appeared to be a revenge attack, at least four people were killed and fifteen others injured in a car-bomb blast near the Somali foreign ministry building in Mogadishu. The attack occurred while Kenya's defense minister, Yusuf Haji, and foreign minister, Moses Wetangula, were meeting Somali officials in the offices of the foreign ministry.⁵¹ The explosion did not damage the ministry building, but did tear down a stone wall in front of it.

The blast came two days after Kenya had declared war on al-Shabaab and sent troops across the borders to pursue fighters of the group inside Somali territory. Al-Shabaab had threatened to hit Kenyan targets in retaliation.⁵² The attack was the second in the capital that month. A suicide lorry bomb had struck a compound housing several government ministries in Mogadishu on October 4, killing more than seventy people.⁵³

Eritrea's Response

During the 2006 Ethiopian-led offensive against the ICU and the Ethiopian occupation of Somalia until 2009, Eritrea had harbored the top leaders of the group, even as the United Nations published a scathing report accusing Asmara of supplying military hardware to al-Shabaab.

The Kenyan army spokesman, Major Emmanuel Chirchir, said two planes had landed in Baidoa with weapons and ammunition for al-Shabaab. It did not specify where the aircraft had come from. Media reports in Kenya and Somalia had suggested they came from Eritrea. Major Chirchir warned that air strikes against al-Shabaab targets were imminent to prevent the weapons from reaching militant bases. He advised civilians in ten towns to stay away from al-Shabaab camps.

Eritrea denied reports that it had delivered weapons in the previous few days to the Somali Islamist group al-Shabaab. "The government of Eritrea states categorically that these accusations are pure fabrications and outright lies as Eritrea has not sent any arms to Somalia," Eritrea's foreign ministry said in a statement. "Tuesday's baseless accusations are the latest product of a misinformation campaign orchestrated to undermine Eritrea and frustrate its constructive regional and international engagement."

A UN report of July 2011 accused Eritrea of supporting al-Shabaab. The United Nations had accused Eritrea of posing a threat to the East African region, partly by financing Somalia's antigovernment fighters. The UN's report said that al-Shabaab controlled two large airports and one former military airport with asphalt runways. Al-Shabaab may then be capable of chartering and receiving deliveries by aircraft, it said. Eritrea also gave about US\$80,000 a month to al-Shabaab-linked individuals in Nairobi, the report said. The UN report said Eritrea consistently denied providing military support to armed groups in Somalia, but that "new information . . . not only confirms many previous allegations of Eritrean military involvement, but also offers firm grounds to believe that Eritrea still retains active linkages to Somali armed groups."

Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki had been on record denying his country's backing of the al-Qaeda-affiliated group. In August 2011,

Afewerki denied the accusations contained in the UN report. "These accusations are built on assumptions, innuendos and guesses," said the Eritrean leader. He added, "Al-Shabaab is serving the interests of those who want to maintain the disintegration of Somalia and give them [al-Shabaab] an opportunity to flourish and broaden its influence in Somalia."⁵⁴

Eritrea denied the report. Araya Desta, Eritrea's ambassador to the United Nations, said:

The UN so-called Somalia-Eritrea monitoring group did not accuse Eritrea of sending arms or finance. What it said was there is no evidence that Eritrea has sent arms or finance. Eritrea's principal stand is clear. We have been saying that military will not bring peace in Somalia, that Somalis should be given the opportunity to sit and discuss their own problems and come out with their own solutions.

Eritrea said Ethiopia, which routinely accused its neighbor of supporting the fighters, was behind the allegations.

IGAD's Response

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states endorsed the military operation against the militants during a special conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on October 20, 2011. The IGAD council of ministers urged the United Nations Security Council to impose a blockade on Kismayo, a move that would effectively cut off the main sources of funding and supply of the militants. Kenya Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula appealed for international support for ending al-Shabaab's stranglehold on Somalia. "We as a region have called upon the international community to support implementation of previous decisions to impose no-fly zones in al-Shabab dominated areas and a blockade of the port of Kismayo," said Wetangula.⁵⁵

Ethiopia's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn said his country was considering joining the military campaign. He said it was "high time" for a regional response to al-Shabaab's provocations. "The long-term goal is to eradicate al-Shabaab from Somalia, and this is the proper time and the process shows al-Shabaab is coming to an end," said Hailemariam.⁵⁶

The Intervention of the West

The Kenyan assault caught the United States "on its heels," one American official told *The New York Times*.⁵⁷ The official said Kenyan

authorities had provided “zero” information to their US counterparts before the attack began.⁵⁸ But a week into the offensive, Washington was tentatively offering support, in apparent acknowledgment of America’s historically close ties to Kenya.⁵⁹ On October 23, 2011, the American ambassador to Kenya, Scott Gration, told *The Financial Times*, “We are talking with the Kenyans right now to figure out where they need help.”⁶⁰ A US State Department release on October 25 said that the United States had helped Kenya build its border defense capacity for years,⁶¹ but added, “The United States is not participating in Kenya’s current operation in Somalia.”⁶²

On October 27, 2011, Katya Thomas, the US embassy’s press officer, said that Kenya had the “right to defend itself,” but the United States was not part of the decision to send troops to Somalia. “The United States did not encourage the Kenyan government to act nor did Kenya seek our views,” Thomas said. “We note that Kenya has a right to defend itself against threats to its security and its citizens.”⁶³

On October 30, 2011, Kenya’s military chief, General Julius Karanga, responding to a question regarding any other countries operating in Somalia through the Kenyan intervention, said that while Kenya had bilateral military agreements with several countries, they were not involved in Nairobi’s Somalia operations. “There has been a lot of talk about other friends of ours participating militarily in what we are engaged in, and the answer is no,” he said. “I think the American ambassador yesterday made it very clear . . . that they are not militarily involved in the campaign with us.”⁶⁴

Already, the battle against al-Shabaab was widening. On October 23, 2011, officials in Kenya announced that a French naval ship had bombarded a city to the south of Kismayo. A French official in Paris on October 24, 2011, denied the statement, but he said France would send equipment and logistical support to Kenya in its operation. “It will start either this afternoon or tomorrow,” said Thierry Burkhard, a French military spokesman.⁶⁵

The End of Phase One of Operation Linda Nchi⁶⁶

Three weeks into their offensive against al-Shabaab, Kenyan forces stopped their advance. The KDF commanders gave four main reasons:

Weather: With no roads in much of the Somali countryside, heavy rains had slowed Kenya’s tank-equipped infantry to a near halt. That left most of the offensive to Kenya’s air force, while Kenyan-trained Somali government troops and friendly militias led the way on the

ground. Military spokesman Emmanuel Chirchir said that “We are being delayed by heavy rains. . . . Our aim was to be in Afmadow by now, but the rains have made that impossible. We will push until we chase al-Shabaab from Kismayo.”

Humanitarian Reasons: The slowdown was also because of humanitarian reasons, as it was meant to allow civilians to receive relief assistance in areas that had been liberated. “We need the support of the locals, so any action we take must be in the best interest of them as we require their total cooperation,” said the KDF spokesperson. It was meant to give civilians time to vacate the towns and abandon the militia.

Political and financial reasons: According to a statement made by Kenya’s minister of defense, Mohamed Yusuf Haji, in mid-January 2012, Kenya was unwilling to take Kismayo without international financial and logistical support. Thus, it was plausible that there was a correlation between the KDF’s progress in Afmadow en route to Kismayo and the fact that Kenya and the African Union signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that officially made the KDF in Somalia a part of AMISOM.

Operational reasons: At the sector headquarters in Dhobley, Somalia, Brigadier Johnson Ondieki explained the uneasy lull since December, saying that it was necessary to take time before proceeding to liberate the town from the militia.⁶⁷ Intelligence reports had convinced the KDF generals that the right time for advancement was during unfavorable weather. The logic was that al-Shabaab transport units would be bogged down in mud, making it easier for KDF helicopters to identify them and swoop in for the kill.

The KDF planners were convinced that al-Shabaab would fully prepare its best men for the Kenyans and that the best way to wear down al-Shabaab was to keep them eagerly waiting for the Kenyan onslaught, for months. Thus, as an intelligence brief argued, it was better to delay the capture of Afmadow for “as long as it would take.” It was concluded that a delayed approach might actually achieve something. The sector headquarters in Dhobley started preparing the soldiers for an imminent war that it knew it would take months to launch.⁶⁸

On the other hand, a lengthy preoperation stage could have a negative effect. If it dragged on for too long, it might give the militia enough time to reorganize its defenses. It might also give them time to tactically retreat and move their fighters, weapons, command structures, finances, and other assets to safe havens elsewhere from where they

could continue their terror. Al-Shabaab forces had avoided direct contact with the Kenyan troops, preferring instead to ambush Kenyan supply lines. Simultaneously, they prepared the “mother of all battles” in Afmadow and Kismayo. Al-Shabaab also threatened to retaliate within the borders of Kenya. Meanwhile, in Kenya, police stepped up security and strengthened their intelligence mechanisms, particularly in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.⁶⁹

On October 22, 2011, the US embassy in Nairobi issued a warning over possible attacks, citing “credible information of an imminent threat of terrorist attacks directed at prominent Kenyan facilities and areas where foreigners are known to congregate, such as malls and nightclubs.”⁷⁰

Prime Minister Raila Odinga said Kenya supported a “united, strong and liberated” Somalia. “We want to see a united, liberated and strong Somalia to join the East African Community,” Odinga affirmed. “Kenya has no imperialistic intentions in Somalia.” Amid reports that al-Shabaab was preparing for the “mother of all battles” in Afmadow and Kismayo, Odinga said the troops were “prepared for the eventualities and the consequences of the assault on those cities.”

KDF Forces Join AMISOM

After several months of negotiations on command relationships, financial arrangements, and a revised concept of operations, Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the AU in June 2012. On July 6, 2012, the full integration of the troops was formalized during a colorful ceremony at Department of Defense headquarters in Nairobi. The Special Representative of the Chairman of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Boubakar Diarra, thanked Kenyans and the government for responding to the union’s invitation to join AMISOM. “We are proud to welcome our brothers and sisters from Kenya in this African effort to help the people of Somalia,” he said. AMISOM force commander Lieutenant-General Andrew Gutti was present.⁷¹

UN Security Council Resolution 2036, in February 2012, had previously authorized the expansion of AMISOM from 12,000 soldiers to just over 17,700; under AMISOM’s strategic concept for future operations, approximately 4,700 KDF forces were to be “re-hatted” and assigned to Sector 2 (Middle and Lower Juba) to work alongside troops from Sierra Leone.

Although the AU mission had been prone to chronic funding shortfalls, joining AMISOM mitigated early concerns over Kenya's ability to financially sustain its operations in Somalia. As a troop contributor to AMISOM, the KDF contingent would have access to funding for predeployment training, payment of troop allowances, logistic support, and the reimbursement for contingent-owned equipment. More importantly, becoming part of AMISOM placed the KDF in a more favorable position to initiate the assault on Kismayo.

The Second Phase of Operation Linda Nchi

The Battle of Xayo and Afmadow

Planning and preparations: Intelligence reports had convinced the KDF generals that the right time for advancement was during unfavorable weather. The logic was that al-Shabaab transport units would be bogged down in mud, making it easy for KDF helicopters to identify them and swoop in for the kill. Armed with this intelligence, military planners were convinced that al-Shabaab would fully prepare its best men to have them ready for the Kenyans, and that the best way to wear down these al-Shabaab forces was to keep them eagerly waiting for the Kenyan onslaught, for months.

It was concluded that a delayed approach might actually achieve something. The sector headquarters in Dhobley started preparing the soldiers for an imminent war that it knew it would take months to launch. Meanwhile, numbers of al-Shabaab fighters kept on moving away from Afmadow to other areas.

Intelligence gathering: Thanks to three months of hard work by KDF military intelligence, the KDF knew more about the town than al-Shabaab expected. The intelligence officers had entered the town disguised as smugglers to lay the groundwork for the operation, and by the time the forces moved in, they had a clear understanding of enemy positions and had been briefed on the political, economic, and social climate of the town.

The information came in through a three-tier system. After the arrival of the Kenyan spies, informers were planted in the town, where they started running all kinds of businesses, ensuring a constant flow of human intelligence (referred to in military lingo as "humid briefs." Informers from the town relayed information to the Kenyan forces on every move al-Shabaab made.

The "humid briefs" were then carefully cross-checked with still and recorded images from drones (unmanned aircraft) and clips of

movements captured from a light surveillance aircraft flying about six to seven kilometers above the ground. The drone observations had started about two and a half years ago. Military intelligence officers in Nairobi and Somalia had analyzed the data and estimated Afmadow's population with an aim of avoiding civilian deaths, or "collateral damage."

Operation Free Afmadow had two stages:

- Phase one—to capture Xayo town, located along the way, before proceeding to the much bigger Afmadow
- Phase two—to capture Afmadow

The attacking force was under three commanders: Lieutenant-Colonel Nyaga, the commanding officer (CO); Brigadier-General Ismail Sahardid of the Somali National Army (SNA); and Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, the leader of Ras Kamboni Brigades (RKB), a warlord who had joined the KDF in the war against al-Shabaab. The combat forces included tanks, artillery units, infantry, and engineer units. They moved in more than 100 vehicles into Afmadow's suburbs.

A few days before the offensive, a team of KDF Special Forces and Rangers, trained in the United States and Britain, had infiltrated the nearby Xayo town. From there, they had neutralized—or switched off, as they said—communication infrastructure, ensuring that al-Shabaab fighters had remained in the dark about the impending assault.⁷²

But, despite all the reconnaissance and intelligence gathering, the rag-tag militia still had the nerve to prove its mettle. Hours before the operation started, Kenyans drawn from the Nanyuki-based A Company survived an ambush on the way from Tabta to Belles Qocani after triggering an improvised explosive device (IED) along the road. Eight al-Shabaab fighters were killed in the ensuing gunfight, a source at the KDF said.⁷³

The plan was that 500 SNA and RKB fighters would lead the way with the Kenyans reinforcing them. By early afternoon of May 30, 2012, after about an hour of fighting and several stops along the way to either take a break, wait for intelligence reports, repair vehicles, or push stalled trucks, the forces made their way into Xayo town. About eight al-Shabaab fighters were mowed down with deadly force as they tried to defend their positions. After capturing Xayo, Lieutenant-Colonel Nyaga ordered his men to prepare for a hasty defense some few kilometers outside the town.⁷⁴

The next day, Kenyan and Somali forces advanced to Afmadow, a town that was seen as a major obstacle to a concerted advance on al-Shabaab's main bastion, the port city of Kismayo.

On May 31, 2012, al-Shabaab said that it had left its stronghold of Afmadow, and the strategic town had fallen into the hands of Somali and Kenyan soldiers. "The Kenyan and Somali troops have now entered Afmadow. No fighting took place inside the town," Sheikh Abdiaziz Abu Mus'ab, the spokesman for al-Shabaab's military operation, told *Reuters*. "First we fought fiercely outside the town and then our fighters left the town as part of our tactics. However, we shall not stop fighting," he said.⁷⁵

The spokesman for Somali government forces in the Juba region painted a similar picture of how the town fell, seven months after Kenya had sent troops into the country to battle al-Shabaab. "There were no casualties. Al-Shabaab fled, and no fighting took place. We are going to consolidate security for now," Mohamud Farah told *Reuters*.⁷⁶

Seizing Afmadow was a crucial step in the Kenyan drive toward the southern port city of Kismayo, the hub of al-Shabaab operations. Upon seizing Afmadow, both Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga and KDF Chief of General Staff, General Julius Karanga, projected that Kismayo would fall by August 20, 2012—the date of the expiration of the mandate of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Like previous targets articulated during the course of the Kenyan military's involvement in Somalia, the attack on Kismayo was delayed.

The Battle of Kismayo (September–October 2012)

The Planning and Coordination Phase of the Battle of Kismayo

Senior AMISOM, Ras Kamboni Brigade, and Somalia National Army officials visited Nairobi in August 2012 to make final arrangements of the attack on Kismayo, but it was postponed after three Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) transport and attack helicopters on their way to join AMISOM troops crashed into Mt. Kenya.⁷⁷ Senior military officials and the African Mission in Somalia met on September 17, 2012, to plan and coordinate the attack on Kismayo following the fall of Miido, a strategic al-Shabaab defense position. The military officials met to strategize on the attack on Kismayo, which was al-Shabaab's last stronghold in Somalia after the fall of Marka and Afmadhow in the Juba area.⁷⁸ This was believed to be among the last planning meetings for the attack that would involve aerial, land, and sea attacks by troops from Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Sierra Leone, and Djibouti under the AMISOM umbrella.⁷⁹

The Battle of Miido

Kenyan forces, Ras Kamboni militia, and Somali government forces battled al-Shabaab in the town of Miido in the Lower Juba region on September 1, 2012. Miido is situated sixteen km south of Afmadow, which was secured by AMISOM troops in July 2012. Both sides used heavy artillery, and the allied forces were assisted by helicopters during their battle with al-Shabaab.⁸⁰ After two days of fighting, AU and Somali forces captured the fortified town of Miido, which is 86 kilometers from the port of Kismayo.

Al-Shabaab suffered about 100 casualties trying to defend Miido, and most survivors fled toward Kismayo. Helicopter gunships attacked the fleeing al-Shabaab men, increasing their total casualties for the Miido battle to over 200, with at least seventy killed. AU losses, including Kenya's, whose troops were now part of the AU peacekeeping force, were about fifty.⁸¹ The spokesman for Somali government troops in the Juba region, Adan Ahmed Hersi, stated that Kismayo would be captured in the coming days.⁸²

Pro-al-Shabaab websites wrote that battle of Miido was a disaster for the allied forces and resulted in the loss of a helicopter in battle. Neither the Somali government nor the Kenyan military released a statement on the battle. Al-Shabaab released a video of their fighters dragging the bodies of four allied soldiers, reportedly two Kenyan and two Somalis, through the streets of Kismayo behind a vehicle.⁸³ In a tweet, KDF spokesman Emmanuel Chirchir appealed to residents of Kismayo to be on the lookout for the KDF soldiers' graves. "To the people of Kismayo, be on the lookout where the remains of our heroes will be buried. That will be the welcome gesture," Chirchir said.⁸⁴

Al-Shabaab's leader in Kismayo, Sheikh Hasan Yaqoub, spoke to media and said that his militants would keep fighting the allied forces and added that their capturing of Kismayo was just a dream.⁸⁵

The Battle of Birta Dheer

Somali troops backed by African Union forces clashed with al-Shabaab fighters as they tried to advance toward the key port town of Kismayo. Heavy fighting broke out near Birta Dheer, about forty km from Kismayo. Military officials confirmed that Somali and Kenyan troops had launched an attack on the barracks of al-Shabaab fighters in the area: "The fighting is going on for the second day after our forces supported by Kenyan troops launched a final military offensive on al-Shabaab positions in the Kismayo corridor," said Mohamud Farah,

the Somali military spokesman at the frontline.⁸⁶ The battle in the village of Birta Dheer, located on the outskirts of Kismayo, had been heavy, with both sides exchanging mortar and machine-gun fire.⁸⁷

Al-Shabaab commander Sheikh Abdallah Mohamed said the group was defending Kismayo. "The enemy is trying to take control of Kismayo, but the soldiers of Allah are defending it; they have tried several times since yesterday, and all of their attempts have failed and they were defeated," he told the *AFP* news agency by phone.⁸⁸

The Battle of Kismayo: Al-Shabaab's Last Stronghold (September–October 2012)

*The Psychological Warfare of the Battle of Kismayo*⁸⁹

A massive information battle blazed about Somalia's southern port of Kismayo as new reports poured into local and global media. Pressing forward on rumors that al-Shabaab's local commanders had fled the city, Somali General Ismail Sahardid told the *BBC's* Somali Service: "In the last battles we defeated al-Shabaab's defense forces, and they ran away and we are chasing their remnants." He was referring to the security sweeps between Biibi and Jana Cabdalla, located roughly twenty miles from Kismayo, where AMISOM remained locked in asymmetric warfare with al-Shabaab. The looming threat of this "final offensive" had reportedly dislodged some of the insurgency's presence in Kismayo, spawning cautiously optimistic rhetoric from Somali and AU sources. "We are very, very near Kismayo," Kenyan military spokesman Colonel Cyrus Oguna told *Reuters*. "It is not a tarmac road that we are walking on. We have to be cautious. The way is littered with explosives. Nevertheless, it will happen. Kismayo will fall."

However, Kenyan and other AMISOM forces had encountered relatively stiff resistance on their way to the port. Seeking to refute AMISOM and Mogadishu's account of battle, al-Shabaab spokesman Muhammad Usman Arus told the *BBC* that "around 100 Kenyan and Somali troops" had been killed on the way to Kismayo. He also denied the existing reports of a withdrawal: "We are in Kismayo—this is a propaganda war." That much of his statement, at least, was true for the moment. Judging the degree of the resistance was a riddle to AMISOM's strategic planners and civilian observers alike. Al-Shabaab had vacated most of its cities over the last year under the banner of guerrilla warfare. In the near-term, though, insurgents were reportedly flooding back into the port just as quickly as they left.

While Kenyan forces had inflicted a great human toll on al-Shabaab throughout their year-long campaign, the insurgency had yet to abandon Kismayo and appeared to have decided on organizing a resistance. Local residents spoke of al-Shabaab “technicals” patrolling the streets, in coordination with hundreds of gunmen, as they staged a show of force for AMISOM and Somalia’s government. According to several eyewitnesses, the insurgency “drafted in fighters from the nearby Bay, Bakool, and Lower Shabelle regions,” a triangle that marks al-Shabaab’s territorial stronghold. Antiaircraft guns had also been trucked into Kismayo under the alleged supervision of several “high-ranking” commanders, who may have “fled” to conduct recruitment drives. *Radio Andalus* returned to the airwaves after a two-day break.

Fuad Mohamed Aden Qalaf (Fuad Shangole), an al-Shabaab officer, had called on the population in Kismayo to take weapons and attend the battles against Somalia’s government and AMISOM. The officer particularly called the teenagers in Kismayo to partake in what he called jihad (holy battle) against the allied troops. Fuad said the teenagers in Kismayo of Lower Juba region were required to fight: “The population in Kismayo, particularly teenagers, are required to attend the war against the infidels. They should side with jihad and defend the Islamic religion from the enemy.”⁹⁰

But al-Shabaab’s efforts to mobilize Kismayo’s population on their side failed. Unlike Ethiopia’s occupation, Kenyan troops had been welcomed by locals and operated with a greater sense of political awareness in their backyard territory—factors that had kept Operation Linda Nchi from degenerating into a quagmire.

On the eve of the battle of Kismayo there were two main options for al-Shabaab:

- To flee the city and by doing so reduce the losses of combatants and military equipment. After reorganization, they would be able to continue the jihad using large-scale forces
- To fight till the end in Kismayo and build the narrative of the self-sacrifice of the mujahideen

*Al-Shabaab’s Main Weapons in Kismayo*⁹¹

Intelligence gathered from Kismayo showed the positions of several man-portable antitank systems and ZSU-23 antiaircraft batteries. In their Kismayo inventory, al-Shabaab had armored vehicles, ZSU-23 antiaircraft batteries, man-portable air-defense systems (MANPADS), artillery batteries, shoulder-fired missiles, heavy and light machine

guns, rocket-propelled grenades, AK-47 rifles, and pistols. On the seaside, they had dozens of speedboats that carried well-trained fighters who fired rockets and machine guns from the boats at enemy craft. Motorcycle commando units trained to fire both pistols and machine guns from motorcycles riding at top speed and to hurl grenades and even fire rockets from the moving vehicles were also positioned and stationed at various strategic areas perceived as enemy entry points to the port city.

Arms Supplies from al-Qaeda⁹²

Al-Qaeda in Yemen had been supplying the militants with arms, including shipments of explosives to make bombs, switches for IEDs, rockets, guns, ammunition, and rocket-propelled grenades. Fighters drawn from the Yemeni al-Qaeda had also started joining the troops in Kismayo as a morale booster. The number of fighters in Kismayo was, however, very low compared to previous numbers. This was attributed to deserters, defectors, and neutralization during operations. Kismayo had a force of slightly more than 3,000 strong fighters. Their numbers had been halved because of the previously mentioned factors as well as from massive escapes from the port city to other safe areas.

The Fall of Kismayo: Operation Sledge Hammer

The final assault came two days after KDF jets and ships had destroyed al-Shabaab armory stores and a warehouse after shelling Kismayo airport in an attack that shaped up the takeover of the port. Operation “Sledge Hammer,” the AMISOM-led offensive to take Kismayo, began early the morning of September 28 with an amphibious landing on beaches just north of the city.⁹³

On the eve of the KDF assault on Kismayo, the Islamist group Hizb al-Islam had broken ranks with al-Shabaab militants. This had weakened the gang in many ways.

Kenya military spokesman Colonel Cyrus Oguno said Kismayo fell at 2:00 AM Friday, September 29, 2012, after a fierce battle with al-Shabaab militants, and Kenya Defense Forces alongside AMISOM had taken control of the al-Shabaab stronghold and headquarters of Kismayo.⁹⁴ In a tweet, the KDF said they had captured Kismayo and offered amnesty to Kenyans fighting in Somalia as al-Shabaab. There were tens of Kenyans who had crossed to Somalia to fight alongside the militants. Some had been killed there, while others had yet to come back.⁹⁵

Kenyan troops had been occupying positions about five km from the city since launching their first assault on September 29, 2012, until moving in on October 2, 2012. The KDF and the Somali troops went in on foot, rather than in armored personnel carriers or tanks. They moved in after al-Shabaab fighters withdrew on September 29, 2012, following an earlier Kenyan and Somali air, sea, and ground assault.⁹⁶ Members of AMISOM had been cautious about pouring into the port city from its outskirts, and the Somali government had earlier said that it would not enter the city until peace negotiations with local clan leaders had been completed.

Kenyan leaders congratulated the KDF and allied AMISOM troops for the decisive triumph over the al-Shabaab militants, signaled by the capture of the port city of Kismayo. Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka said that in liberating Kismayo, the KDF and AMISOM, together with the Ras Kamboni Brigade, had laid down the first building block toward the reconstruction of Somalia, which had not known peace and development for over two decades. "Our forces have shown a high sense of professionalism, strategy and planning in the execution of the well-laid out attack. Those who used to criticize our military, that it has no experience, have now seen for themselves what it is capable of achieving," Musyoka said.

The vice president, however, made it clear that Kenya had no expansionist agenda in the issue, adding that it would soon be up to the Somali government and her people to run their security and help consolidate peace in their country. He called on all citizens of Somalia to unite and embrace peace, saying the most difficult task in nation building lay ahead, and success depended on their unity of purpose. "The international community must now help provide the necessary resources that will accelerate resettlement of the displaced citizens and provision of basic infrastructure and services, such as education, healthcare and water," he said.⁹⁷ Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta said, "I would like to congratulate our soldiers for taking over the port of Kismayo from al-Shabaab."⁹⁸

AMISOM force commander Lieutenant-General Andrew Gutti said on September 29, 2012, that AMISOM troops had successfully inserted into Kismayo and further AMISOM forces were making their way toward the city:

AMISOM appeals for all in Kismayo to remain calm. AMISOM's intent is to liberate the people of Kismayo to enable them to lead

their lives in peace, stability, and security. Operations are ongoing to neutralize specific al-Shabaab targets in Kismayo. We urge all fighters remaining in Kismayo to lay down their arms. In recent days and weeks, a number of them have contacted AMISOM indicating their wish to cease fighting, and we have assured them of their safety if they give themselves up peacefully to our forces.⁹⁹

Al-Shabaab's Response to the Fall of Kismayo

The port of Kismayo was the last bastion for the Somalia militants al-Shabaab, which had been in control for the previous couple of years. Rebel al-Shabaab fighters pulled out of the city of Kismayo, their last stronghold in the country, after a military assault by Kenyan and Somali troops. "The military command of al-Shabaab mujahideen ordered a tactical retreat at midnight," said Ali Mohamud Rage, a spokesman for the rebel group, on September 30, 2012. Rage said, however, that the group would continue to fight for control of the town. "Let them enter Kismayo, which will soon turn into a battlefield," he said.¹⁰⁰ Abu Omar, a military commander for the group, told *Al Jazeera* that al-Shabaab had not abandoned the battle for the city: "The battle in Kismayo has not really ended, [it] has just started. The only thing that has changed is that the focus is now gradually shifting from conventional methods of warfare to some asymmetrical means. . . . This is a battle we are determined to fight, and a battle that is ongoing."¹⁰¹

Al-Shabaab fighters on the ground also confirmed the withdrawal. "We got orders from our superiors to withdraw from the city. . . . This is part of broader military tactic we have set for the enemy," Sheikh Mohamed Abu Fatma, a commander for the group, told the *AFP* news agency by telephone. Abu Omar, the al-Shabaab military commander, said that the group's fight in Kismayo and elsewhere was not about territory, but ideology: "[Territorial control] is not what we are basing our battles on. It's not based on territory lost or gained. This is an ideological warfare. We are fighting for an ideology that transcends geographical boundaries. . . . We will continue to fight this war until we establish the laws of Allah on Earth."¹⁰²

Al-Shabaab tried to rally international support for its demoralized fighters after losing the port city stronghold of Kismayo by issuing threats to a number of countries. They had been updating the group's Twitter account regularly since the loss in an attempt to remain relevant and to incite its followers to defend themselves against what it called war and brutality against innocent Muslims.¹⁰³

The militant group had threatened to attack Britain as well as neighboring countries to Somalia. In a series of fifteen Twitter posts on October 22, 2012, al-Shabaab said Britain would “pay the heftiest price for its brazen role in the war against Islam and endless brutality against innocent Muslims.” “The nightmare that surreptitiously looms on British shores is bound to eclipse the horrors of 7/7 and 21/7 combined,” al-Shabaab said.¹⁰⁴ Al-Shabaab also pledged retaliation for a decision by the High Court in London to extradite radical cleric Mustafa Kamel Mustafa, better known as Abu Hamza al-Masri, to the United States on October 5. Mustafa was charged with setting up a training camp in Oregon, which he denied on October 9, 2012, in a New York court.¹⁰⁵

On October 28, 2012, the militant group renewed its threats against Kenya, whose military had been fighting al-Shabaab in Somalia for over a year. “The enemies we are facing have made historic miscalculation when they sent Kenya to invade the Muslim land of Somalia,” said one tweet attributed to al-Shabaab leader Mukhtar Abu Zubeyr, also known as Ahmed Godane. “Kenya will soon regret having embarked on this particular course of action, *Insha Allaah* [God willing].”¹⁰⁶

Al-Qaeda’s Response to the Fall of Kismayo

Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, in a statement on an Islamist website, urged Somalia’s al-Shabaab insurgents to fight back against what he called “crusader invaders” after Kenyan forces forced them out of their last urban bastion in Kismayo. “This is a flagrant Crusader invasion of the Muslim countries and it makes jihad obligatory on every Muslim who is capable in Somalia and its surroundings and in the rest of the world until the invaders are expelled.”¹⁰⁷

Al-Zawahiri singled out Kenyan forces that in September had driven al-Shabaab out of its last stronghold, the port of Kismayo, telling the militants not be worried by the large number of what he said were US-backed African troops in Somalia. “Don’t worry about the numbers of the Crusaders and their equipment, for these are spoils of war that are brought to you by the help of Allah,” al-Zawahiri said. “Show them the fire of jihad [Islamic holy struggle] and its heat. Chase them with guerrilla warfare, ambushes, martyrdom [suicide attacks],” al-Zawahiri said in the video posted on a website used by Islamists (*A Sahab*).

He said AU forces were bound to be defeated, just as US forces had been forced to leave Iraq and Afghanistan, and their missions in Libya, Yemen, and Egypt had been attacked in a wave of anti-American violence across the Arab world that September. “With God’s grace,

these people are to be defeated. They have been defeated in Iraq, they are withdrawing from Afghanistan, their ambassador was killed in Benghazi, and their flags lowered in Cairo and Sanaa," he added. He was referring to demonstrators who had attacked US missions over an anti-Islam film produced in the United States.

Al-Zawahiri also urged Somalis to back al-Shabaab against Kenyan troops that had entered Kismayo, in south Somalia, in September 2012.

The Humanitarian Crises

The United Nations and United States had warned that civilians must be protected as forces battling Somalia's rebels tightened the noose around the key insurgent bastion of Kismayo. More than 6,000 civilians had fled ahead of the anticipated assault on the strategic port city, the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR said, with aid agencies preparing for a potential swift escalation of those needing support. "We understand that humanitarian agencies have begun contingency planning to respond to the needs of those civilians fleeing from Kismayo," the US embassy in Nairobi said in a statement. "We call on all parties to ensure full, safe and unhindered access for humanitarian assistance to reach those civilians affected by the fighting."¹⁰⁸

Mark Bowden, the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Somalia, met with Kenyan officials following a "spike in civilian displacement" as people fled from the town, whose population was estimated at between 160,000 and 190,000. While Bowden said Kenya had vowed to provide humanitarian access to those in need, he repeated a call "for all parties to the conflict to make every effort to minimize the impact of conflict on civilians."¹⁰⁹ The KDF also appealed to humanitarian agencies to come to the aid of the people fleeing to areas liberated by AMISOM and Somali security forces.¹¹⁰

Somalia after the Fall of Kismayo

After a string of bombings in Kismayo, in November 2012, government-backed Somali forces detained over 300 people suspected of being affiliated with al-Shabaab. Abdinasir Seerar, a spokesman for the Ras Kamboni Brigade, a militia ally of the KDF and the Somali government forces, said that the operations in the port city of Kismayo were strengthening the unsteady security situation in the city. He also stated that the allied forces were successful in capturing explosives from the houses they raided.¹¹¹

One major potential problem was who would control Kismayo and whether fights over the territory would detract from the gains made on

the military front. As AMISOM and the KDF forces entered Kismayo, they had had to respond to the city's administrative vacuum by negotiating with three major clans that resided in the long-contested area. In fact, Kismayo would be a true test of the success of AMISOM and Kenya's strategy of cooperating with nominally TFG-affiliated militias such as the Ras Kamboni Brigade and ASWJ.

At the center of the debate of Kismayo was a clash of two narratives. The Kenyan-backed armed group the Ras Kamboni Brigade wanted to unilaterally decide the fate of the city and, ultimately, form a regional administration called Jubaland, which would theoretically come under the control of the federal government. But the new Mogadishu-based government wanted to shape the administration of Kismayo as well as the future regional state. The administration viewed itself as the legitimate authority in the country, but with 4,000 soldiers from neighboring Kenya still deployed in the region, the Somali government was understandably nervous about the possibility of a proxy regional state based in Kismayo.¹¹²

Not only would the durability of these relationships be tested once al-Shabaab had been driven from Kismayo, but so would AMISOM's ability to act as a mediator and, if necessary, a peace enforcer. This would be a crucial role, as it would be necessary to prevent al-Shabaab—or any other potential spoilers—from capitalizing on disarray in Kismayo or trying to rebuild its support base by leveraging the grievances of weak and disenfranchised clans.¹¹³

Both Kenya and Ethiopia were worried about the future of Kismayo, but for entirely different reasons. Kenya wanted a buffer zone to protect its nearby tourist sites and a friendly regional administration. Some of its key politicians—who are ethnic Somalis—had a vested interest in who dominated the region. But Ethiopia feared that its own Somali ethnic rebel group—the Ogaden National Liberation Front—would be emboldened if their kinsmen became the dominant group in Jubaland. The two countries, which claimed to be allies, were in effect rivals on the issue of Kismayo.¹¹⁴

Kenya and Jubaland (or Azania) as a Buffer Zone

Kenya blamed al-Shabaab for several attacks against European citizens in their territory, including the abduction on October 13, 2011, of the Spanish aid workers Blanca Thiebaut and Montserrat Serra in the Dadaab refugee camps, which had been the trigger for Kenya's military offensive. The kidnapping of European citizens in Kenyan

territory had given the perfect excuse to Nairobi to launch a military incursion that had been in the making.

At first, the military offensive, launched in on October 16, 2011, was intended “to push al-Shabaab away from the border,” as claimed by Kenyan authorities. As the conflict between Kenya and the Somali militia al-Shabaab continued, it seemed that the main and final objective of the offensive was to establish an autonomous region free of al-Shabaab in southern and western Somalia. That would be the current Azania, which corresponded to Jubaland region in the south and west of Somalia. Jubaland would supposedly be composed of three Somali regions: Lower Juba, Middle Juba, and Gedo.

Officially, the authorities in Nairobi denied that it had that kind of agenda. “Our goal is simply to clear the area of the presence of al-Shabaab and, as a country, what interests us is that Somalia is stable and support that is united,” responded Alfred Mutua, the Kenyan government spokesman. However, several US State Department diplomatic cables revealed by *Wikileaks* show that Kenya had been pressing for the creation of an autonomous government in the Jubaland region since at least 2009.

The State of Azania

The State of Azania would be headed by a professor named Muhammad Abdi “Gandhi,” who had briefly served as the defense minister in Mogadishu in February 2009. He was formerly a professor of anthropology in France. Professor Gandhi had hardly engaged publicly in politics before 2000, when he became an active member of the peace talks held in Arta, Djibouti, that had resulted in the establishment of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. In fact, technically, Azania was created on April 3, 2011, when Muhammad Abdi Gandhi was sworn in as the interim president of the newly-created State of Azania in Nairobi.¹¹⁵

Azania includes the provinces of Lower Juba, Middle Juba, and Gedo, which correspond to the Jubaland area, with about 1.3 million people. In theory, the capital of Azania would be the city of Kismayo. Professor Gandhi outlined his strong desire to create a new, stable substate entity, analogous to Somaliland and Puntland, to “liberate Jubaland from extremists.”¹¹⁶

In June 2013, the government of Somalia claimed that Kenya was quietly and tacitly creating a buffer state out of the territory of Jubaland. They also alleged that Kenya was backing Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, the

leader of the Ras Kamboni Brigade, which had fought in Jubaland with Kenyan troops in an effort to drive out the forces of al-Shabaab.¹¹⁷

In July 2013, Madobe flew to the Somalian Puntland region, which, like Jubaland, is semiautonomous and wishes to remain so. In Puntland, Madobe was received with a guard of honor and spoke at a public square, praising his hosts for their semi-independent status and calling Puntland “the mother of Jubaland.”¹¹⁸

The Somali government has repeatedly said it does not recognize Madobe as the leader of Jubaland; some six warlords now claim to represent the Jubaland area that stretches along the Kenyan border. Kenya officially denies that it is creating a borderland buffer state, or taking sides in Somalia, or backing Madobe. Kenya denies taking sides in Somalia and calls itself neutral.¹¹⁹

The US Policy

An autonomous region such as Azania as a buffer zone between Kenya and Somalia would be welcomed by powers such as the United States, which at present would have been forced to support the Kenyan military initiative. Publicly, the United States has distanced itself from the operation at all times, but its diplomatic circles do recognize the interest and support from Washington for what is happening in Somalia. US officials have been drawn to this circumstance by seeing the establishment of Azania as a “lesser evil,” as they still do not consider the situation on the ground stable enough to allow the creation of a strong and stable Azania.

Somali Kenyan Region and People

In 1963, before independence, the Somali Kenyans voted overwhelmingly to join the Somali Republic. But their choice was rejected, and they were forcibly united with the Republic of Kenya. That vote and the initial attempt to resist the forced unification with Kenya, which was confronted with brutal force, earned them the distinction of “un-patriots.” Kenya’s ethnic Somali majority in North Eastern Province has historically been threatened by the Greater Somalia movement and deeply-rooted notions of pan-Somali irredentism. From November 1963 to April 1968, a pro-Somali movement fought government forces in what was then called the Northern Frontier District. Known as the “Shifta War,” the conflict pitted Jomo Kenyatta’s Kenya, in alliance with Haile Selassie’s Ethiopia, against ethnic Somali rebels and their backers in the Republic of Somalia.¹²⁰

The simple perception that Somali Kenyans are sympathetic toward their brethren of Somalia has been sufficient reason for harsh treatment against them. They have been treated like conquered people and suffered years of well-documented atrocities. This harsh treatment has fueled from time to time sporadic agitations, and the response has been indiscriminate violence and abuses by the Kenyan security forces. The area inhabited by the Somali Kenyans has been under state-of-emergency rule for more than thirty years. The Kenyan majority leaders wanted the land of Northern Frontier District (NFD) but not the inhabitants. In 2010, the Kenyan government accepted the establishment of a national Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) that investigated the Wagalla massacre, in which more than 5,000 Somali Kenyans were killed on February 10, 1984, and other human-rights violations.

The Kenyan invasion of Somalia could deepen existing rifts among the country's Muslims—some 2.5 million ethnic Somalis that live in Kenya.¹²¹ After Kenya's invasion into Somalia, crackdowns and mass arrests intensified in Wajir, Mandera, and other areas where Somali Kenyans live. Fear and anger rose high in the local population. More than 100 Somali Kenyan citizens were arrested after a bomb exploded near the Dadaab refugee camps, killing one Kenyan officer and wounding others. In another incident, fifty individuals were arrested when a bomb blew up a security officer's car in Mandera.

In support of Kenya's military operation in Somalia, on October 26, 2011, the Kenyan minister of immigration, Otieno Kajwang, said:¹²²

No Somali will be issued with a Kenyan identity card until it is proven beyond doubt that they are Kenyans, especially in Mombasa, Garissa, Lamu and border Areas. It is important that we do this because of the situation the country is facing right now. Every person of Somali origin will have to be subjected to thorough scrutiny before they are issued with ID.

He called on Kenyans "to cooperate with the police and give information about suspicious people in their neighborhoods." This policy statement has endangered the lives of many Somali Kenyans in different parts of Kenya.

The Azania State project has trapped the Somali Kenyans in an unbearable situation, and it has diluted the political fortune achieved through political unity in the democratic transition period. The Somali Kenyan politicians have the responsibility to defend the human rights

of their people and to be vigilant to the national policies that compromise the strategic interests of their communities as Somali Kenyans.¹²³

Summary

Internal instability in Somalia has long been a worry for Kenya, although previously the government seemed to prefer militarizing its northeastern border rather than venturing into its neighbor's territory. The Kenyan operation was largely a response to a spate of kidnappings in the country's coastal regions and along the border with Somalia. The kidnapping of the two Spanish aid workers was the third attack in Kenya within six weeks that had targeted foreigners staying close to the border with Somalia. In September 2011, British tourist David Tebbutt was killed and his wife, Judith, abducted at a resort in Kiwayu. On October 1, Marie Dedieu, a sixty-six-year-old disabled French woman, was kidnapped from a house on nearby Manda Island by gunmen from al-Shabaab.

Al-Shabaab launched the kidnapping campaign to avenge Kenyan support for Somalia's government, which was battling the Islamic terror group. As a part of this strategy, it had changed tactics and added economic sabotage against Kenya to their arsenal of threats. By targeting isolated resorts in areas such as Lamu and Manda Island, where the presence of security forces is limited, the militia had sent the message that they could undermine Kenya's tourism industry.¹²⁴

This was not the first Kenyan incursion into Somalia, and troops have pursued al-Shabaab fighters across the border before. But those raids were usually brief and involved limited forces, and Nairobi had never confirmed any involvement and was always cautious to minimize its exposure to reprisals.¹²⁵ The operation that started on October 16, 2011, was much larger, and the Kenyan forces had moved deep into the Somali territory.

The Somali government was suspicious that Kenya might want to leave troops behind to create a buffer zone against the possibility of al-Shabaab's return. The Somali government feared such a buffer zone would turn into another semiautonomous region outside its control, similar to Puntland and Somaliland in the country's north, which have operated autonomously for years. If Kenya tried to create a security zone along the border with Somalia, holding and pacifying the territory as well as keeping al-Shabaab out would be a challenge for them. Kenya would need to induce the cooperation of the Somali government and the local tribes in southern Somalia.

It is unclear, as well, how long Kenyan troops planned to stay in Somalia. A Kenyan official said that troops would stay in Somalia as long as it took to accomplish the mission's objectives.¹²⁶ The military intervention risked dragging Kenya deeper into Somalia's two-decade civil war and raised the risk of retaliatory attacks on Kenyan interests by al-Shabaab.¹²⁷ Both the United Nations and Ethiopia had earlier sent forces into Somalia at different times to stabilize the country during its twenty-year civil war, but both were forced to withdraw without ending the conflict.

There is a parallel between the Kenyan incursion and Ethiopia's 2006 invasion of Somalia. The Ethiopian invasion and the years-long occupation that followed is widely credited with strengthening al-Shabaab, which was able to portray itself as a resistance movement fighting an occupying power. The group has attempted to frame the Kenyan incursion in the same way.¹²⁸ But Kenya hopes this time will be different, in part because Somalis do not share the same levels of historic antagonism against Kenyans as they do against their archrival Ethiopians, but also because analysts believe that al-Shabaab is weakened. But that does not stop some analysts from believing that an extended Kenyan presence could become an al-Shabaab rallying cry.¹²⁹

Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) Operation in Somalia (2011–2012)

On November 17, 2011, the African Union openly discussed asking Ethiopia to send troops to assist its AMISOM peacekeeping units. The Ethiopian army crossed the border into Somalia on November 19, with more than twenty Ethiopian military vehicles supported by helicopters immediately seizing towns in central Somalia, close to al-Shabaab bases. Ethiopian forces created a large military base on the outskirts of Gerille, Abduqwaq, and Balanballa, near the Somalia-Ethiopia border.¹³⁰

On November 25, 2011, leaders from several East African nations met in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, to discuss Kenya's military incursion into Somalia. The leaders met under the auspices of East Africa's IGAD. Ethiopia agreed to support Kenya's military operation, calling it an operation against terrorists. Ethiopia said that Kenyan and Ethiopian forces should cooperate with forces deployed by Somalia's Transitional Federal Government.

A US embassy cable released by the *Wikileaks* site stated: "[Prime Minister] Meles [Zenawi] said the GoE [Government of Ethiopia] is

not enthusiastic about Kenya's Jubaland initiative, but is sharing intelligence with Kenya and hoping for success. In the event the initiative is not successful, the GoE has plans in place to limit the destabilizing impacts on Ethiopia."¹³¹

On November 26, 2011, several hundred more Ethiopian army troops crossed the Ethiopia-Somalia border. The military operation commenced one day after the Ethiopian government agreed to support Kenya's incursion into Somalia. However, Ethiopian military forces were already operating in central and southern Somalia. On November 30, 2011, Ethiopia opened a new camp for Somali refugees (from famine and al-Shabaab). There were now nearly 100,000 Somali refugees in Ethiopia. These exiles would not go home until there was peace in Somalia.

The Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), working with the government-aligned Somali militia Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) reentered Somalia, this time restricting their operations to the Bay, Bakool, Galguduud, Gedo, and Hiraaan regions immediately adjacent to Ethiopia's border with Somalia. Al-Shabaab responded to the Ethiopian action by saying the incursion was required after the Kenyan Army, a "non-combat tested yet highly bumptious force," had failed in its attempt to secure southern Somalia because of fierce resistance from the mujahideen of al-Shabaab. The movement further appealed to Somali nationalism to increase its numbers:

We . . . urge the Muslims of Somalia to set their differences aside and unite against their common enemy as they have done in the past in order to defend their country as well as their religion from the aggressive invasion of the allied African crusaders. You are facing a barbaric enemy that has no appreciation for the sanctity of human life; be firm and steadfast against them and fight them with all your might.¹³²

*The Liberation of Beledweyne*¹³³

Ethiopian forces captured the central Somali town of Beledweyne from al-Shabaab. Beledweyne is a strategic town near the Ethiopian border on the road to Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. It was through the town that Ethiopia entered the country in 2006 and from it that its troops were driven in 2009, finally withdrawing back into Ethiopia. Armored vehicles and heavy artillery were used in the attack, which Ethiopia said was made at the request of the Somali government. Twenty people were killed in the fighting, mostly Ethiopian troops and al-Shabaab fighters.

Al-Shabaab said its forces were surrounding the town after making what it called a planned withdrawal. Al-Shabaab fighters withdrew from Beledweyne after a fierce hours-long battle in which local residents had joined the mujahideen to fight against more than 3,000 Ethiopian troops, according to messages posted on a Twitter account reportedly run by al-Shabaab's press office.

The TFG and the Liberation of Beledweyne

Somalia's prime minister meanwhile announced an operation "to liberate the tyranny of . . . al-Shabaab from Somalia." "Early this morning, the Somali National Army recaptured some al-Shabaab-occupied territories engaging the enemies in Hiiraan and other regions of the country," said Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, head of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG). "We are officially requesting for momentous support from neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and the international community at large to assist the Somali people and its government with this historic operation."

The first official confirmation of Ethiopia's military incursion only came when its forces captured the strategic central town of Beledweyne from al-Shabaab on December 31, 2011. At the time, Addis Ababa suggested that it had deployed troops at the request of the TFG and the regional Inter-Governmental Authority on Development.¹³⁴ Rather than facing these offensives head-on, al-Shabaab either melted into the local population or dispersed to the Galgala Mountains in Puntland in northern Somalia, as well as to Yemen and parts of East Africa.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi suggested on January 27, 2012, that the Ethiopian troops fighting alongside forces belonging to Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) could leave the neighboring country at the earliest possible opportunity and as soon as the regional African Union peacekeeping mission (AMISOM) was in a position to take over. Speaking during a press conference, Meles said he would pull his troops out of Somalia "as soon as feasible," while ensuring that they did not leave behind a power vacuum. "We expect the AMISOM troops to fill in the gaps before we withdraw and so at this stage there is no rush for us to withdraw before the AMISOM troops have come in," Meles added.

The Post-Meles Era

The death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi was announced on August 20, 2012, by Ethiopian state television. The passing of the leader, who had

been Ethiopia's epicenter for twenty-one years, would have profound national and regional consequences.¹³⁵ In Somalia, Ethiopia's military presence had been instrumental in putting the pressure on the militant group al-Shabaab, and Ethiopian troops controlled a number of key strategic areas in south-central Somalia including the city of Baidoa.

On November 28, 2012, the new elected Somali president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, met the Ethiopian prime minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn, in Addis Ababa. Dessalegn declared that Ethiopian troops would remain in Somalia until African Union forces fighting Islamists could take over. "We are waiting for AMISOM forces to come and replace us, and until we get that assurance then we will be waiting there," he told reporters. Dessalegn gave no timeline for a pull out of troops.¹³⁶

Eritrea and the KDF Invasion of Somalia

Basically, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda had gone to war with al-Shabaab, which they regarded as an Eritrean proxy force. Uganda deployed peacekeeping troops with the African Union's peacekeeping force in Somalia (AMISOM), and al-Shabaab repeatedly threatened Uganda with terrorist attacks. IGAD includes Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia (the TFG), Djibouti, South Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya. Representatives from each of those nations attended the conference, as well as an African Union delegation. Eritrea also nominally belongs to IGAD but did not send a delegate to the conference.

On November 29, 2011, Eritrea's UN delegation asserted that Eritrea did not support al-Shabaab or any other Somali rebel groups. Moreover, Eritrea wanted the United Nations to reprimand Kenya for lying. The Eritrean delegation was responding to a case filed on November 27 by Kenya before the UN Security Council's sanctions committee. Kenya and Ethiopia had accused Eritrea of arming and training al-Shabaab's militias and terror cells.

However, the evidence that Eritrea had provided support for al-Shabaab and (at times) several Somali clan militias was solid. Intelligence agencies claimed to have tracked ship and aircraft supply runs to Somali militia groups that traced back to Eritrean territory or that were aided by Eritrean government agents. Eritrea claimed that al-Shabaab got its support from Somalis who lived overseas (the Somali diaspora).

On December 3, 2011, the United Nations discussed a new sanctions regimen that would permit investment in Eritrea. The offer was an undisguised attempt to see whether Eritrea was interested in cooperating with the United Nations on several issues, but especially whether it would halt its support for Somalia's al-Shabaab Islamic terror organization.

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International Involvement in Somalia

US Involvement in Somalia

In 1992, President George H. W. Bush agreed to enforce a March 1992 UN resolution that pledged to rehabilitate Somalia's economy and reestablish national and regional institutions. State Department official David Shinn spoke of "basically re-creating a country," while then-UN ambassador Madeleine Albright said America's mission in Somalia "aimed at nothing less than the restoration of an entire country as a proud, functioning and viable member of the community of nations." The United States deployed thousands of marines to help deliver relief supplies to starving Somalis as part of Operation Restore Hope.¹ The humanitarian effort met resistance from Somali warlords, and in a dramatic two-day battle in October 1993, eighteen American soldiers were killed in what has become known as the "Black Hawk Down" incident.²

The consequences of the action were disastrous for the United States. The heavy losses and traumatic film footage aired on television channels worldwide of masses mutilating the bodies of American soldiers aroused strong opposition in American public opinion and in the Congress to American involvement in Somalia. Following the military fiasco in Mogadishu and because of the combined pressure of public opinion and the Congress, President Clinton decided to discontinue the activities of the US task force in Somalia. As a lesson drawn from the activities of the American forces in Somalia, the Clinton administration established the principle of "involvement without intervention," according to which the United States will refrain from sending soldiers to fight in foreign countries to realize goals that do not directly serve American interests.

An inquiry committee was set up in the US Senate, which heard testimony about the action in Somalia. At the end of the hearings, the

committee published a paper that placed the blame for the debacle on the president and Defense Secretary Les Aspin. Aspin submitted his resignation two months later.³

The American experience in Somalia in general and in the October 3 battle in particular became a warning sign for the United States in all matters related to the sending of troops to resolve conflicts overseas. This was apparently the reason for the lack of UN and US intervention in the civil wars in Zaire and Rwanda. The American policy was revised in connection to Bosnia and Kosovo when there was a fear that the conflict would spread outside of the Balkans. It also underwent change as a result of the attacks of September 11, 2001, which led to the US declaration of war against terror, the offensive in Afghanistan, the resultant collapse of the Taliban regime (bin Laden's sponsor), the destruction of the al-Qaeda organization's infrastructure in this country, and later operation "Iraqi Freedom" against the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq.

For years, the United States remained on the sidelines of Somalia's struggle to form a central government and restore peace in the country. While America continued to pledge humanitarian assistance to Somalia, it has not reinstalled an embassy there since the overthrow of the Somali government in 1991 and conducts any business through the embassy in Kenya.⁴

Post 9/11 American Policy in Somalia

The Bush administration clearly identified the risk inherent to the spread of Islamic terror throughout Africa in general and in East Africa in particular. Against this background, President Bush undertook an African tour in the course of which he visited five countries (Senegal, South Africa, Botswana, Uganda, and Nigeria) with the aim of signaling a message to all of the countries on that continent. President Bush emphasized the US commitment to assisting African states in their battle against starvation and AIDS as well as the promotion of democratic values. During his visit, the president also underlined his determination to persevere in the war against terror, including upon the African continent.⁵

It is to be noted that even prior to the president's African tour, a plan had been prepared by the Pentagon to establish US bases throughout Africa to enable ongoing activity against terror organizations in the light of indications gathered by US intelligence agencies that the activities of al-Qaeda and other terror organizations were on the rise in the

continent. The combination of US military presence in the region as well the offering of economic and political enticements constitute the main leverage preventing the spread of al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorists in the states of the region.

Somalia became a focus of US counterterrorism efforts after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, and even more of a concern when the Islamists took over. As part of the Global War on Terrorism, the United States has followed a policy in Somalia—through both military operations and diplomatic efforts with the international community—to prevent Somalia from becoming a haven for terrorists. US officials believed that al-Qaeda elements were either part of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) or found shelter under their rule and that the lack of a central government could provide a safe haven for terrorists. The effort revealed a high level of cooperation between the United States and its regional allies, Ethiopia and Kenya, and for the first time a US base in Djibouti was used to conduct military operations.

Since September 2001, a task force of the US-led coalition has been active in the region of the Horn of Africa. The commander of the US force (Combined Joint Task Force), Major-General John Stellar, stated that the force included some 1,500 soldiers, about 900 of which were members of special units stationed at the Lemonier base in Djibouti. The force was equipped with transport planes and helicopter gunships, which enable immediate response in the entire action arena.⁶ The Combined Joint Task Force has also trained regional armies in counterterrorism efforts.⁷ The United States has established some other smaller bases, including Jijiga and Kebre Dahre in Ethiopia, Manda Island in Kenya, and Bosasso in northeastern Somalia.⁸

Major-General Stellar also operated a sea task force that patrolled the movement of ships in the Bab al-Mandab Strait along the shores of the Horn of Africa. This task force has been granted the approval of the states in that region—Djibouti, Yemen, Eritrea, and Ethiopia—to act within their boundaries if the need arises.

Alarmed at the ICU's growing strength and popularity, in early 2006, the CIA began supplying significant quantities of arms and money to a coalition of secular Mogadishu warlords under the name Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism. Part of the CIA program had been a poorly-conceived attempt to hunt down the small number of al-Qaeda-affiliated individuals involved in the 1998 bombings of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania who were thought to be hiding in Somalia.⁹ But the operation failed

disastrously. Recognizing the increasing power of the US-backed alliance, the Islamists struck preemptively and decisively, routing the warlords and seizing control of Mogadishu within a matter of weeks.

The Bush administration, seeing Somalia through the lens of its War on Terror, and having botched the earlier warlord program, began stepping up aid to longtime ally and neighboring Ethiopian, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Since 2006, Washington has sponsored the Ethiopian government to militarily intervene on behalf of their interests in Somalia. When Ethiopian forces entered Somalia, the United States gave tacit support to their intervention before openly backing the operation on December 26, 2006. In Ethiopia, the United States had developed an ally in the region that could act as a boots-on-the-ground force and be used to gather intelligence without sending US troops. Ethiopia benefited from the counterterrorism training and loans to buy military equipment.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi denied US involvement in the country's counterattacks on Somalia's Union of Islamic Courts (ICU).¹⁰ "The U.S hasn't contributed a single bullet, a single soldier, or a single military equipment to this operation," Meles told a press conference in Addis Ababa. "We have with the US long-standing arrangements to share intelligence on terrorist activities in the neighborhood, and that sharing of activities in the neighborhood and that sharing of intelligence has not been stopped during the conflict. This is the sum total of our close partnership with the US and the so-called involvement of the US in the Somali crisis."¹¹

The Bush administration continued to support the UN-backed Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in Somalia and encouraged the country's competing factions to participate in open reconciliation talks. The defeated ICU forces and the al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen declared jihad (holy war), conducting guerilla and terror warfare against the Somali government and the Ethiopian forces that occupied Somalia. The United States maintained its support to Ethiopia and the TFG and began fighting al-Shabaab in January 2007.

American Operations against Terror in Somalia (2006–2012)

The CIA and Pentagon were advancing plans for a far-reaching, but subtle, campaign to defeat militants and prop up a fledgling UN-backed government in Somalia. It was a campaign that, in stark contrast to the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, would not include any large, permanent American ground forces. American CIA agents, mercenaries,

commandos, and drones would provide intelligence, training, raiding prowess, and air cover while Ethiopian, Ugandan, and Kenyan troops did most of the day-to-day fighting inside Somalia. The Pentagon's Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) is the lead agency in the covert War on Terror in Somalia, although the CIA also has a strong regional presence.

The United States has been carrying out extensive covert military operations inside Somalia since 2001. Elite troops from the Pentagon's JSOC are routinely deployed on the ground for surveillance, reconnaissance, and assault-and-capture operations. In June 2011, the US also began carrying out drone strikes in Somalia. JSOC has its own fleet of armed Reaper drones, which are flown from various bases in the region, and the CIA also operates drones in the region. While some of these are part of the US War on Terror, many provide support for peacekeeping operations in the region.

The United States' primary target is currently al-Shabaab, the militant group that until the end of 2012 had controlled much of the country's south. After the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces from Somalia in 2009, the United States equipped and trained thousands of African soldiers, mainly with private contractors. For now, outsourcing the combat to African countries (AU) appears to bring the United States minimal risk.

In recent years, both Kenya and Ethiopia have invaded parts of Somalia, the latter allegedly with the military aid of the United States. JSOC forces are reported to have taken advantage of these events to carry out more intensive operations against militants, often using helicopters, air strikes, AC-130 gunships, and boots-on-the-ground.

Since 2007, the United States has hunted al-Qaeda and Somali jihadists on scores of occasions. The US forces have used airplanes, drones, naval gun bombardment, cruise-missile attacks, raids by Special Operations Forces, and assistance to regional armies such as Uganda's. In all, air raids by manned and unmanned US aircraft have killed at least 112 Somali militants, according to a count by the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism. Fifty-seven innocent civilians have also died in the raids, the nonprofit bureau found. The dead jihadists have included several senior members of al-Qaeda and the affiliated al-Shabaab extremist group.¹²

Examples of US Operations in Somalia¹³

On January 8, 2007, the United States first conducted an air strike against a terror target in Somalia. A JSOC AC-130 gunship that took

off from Djibouti attacked a suspected al-Qaeda convoy under cover of darkness after tracking it with a Predator drone. Up to a dozen militants were killed. US officials, speaking anonymously, named various al-Qaeda members as potential targets, including Abdullah Tariq, Aden Hashi Eyro (or Ayro), Fazul Abdullah Mohamed, and Sudanese explosives expert Abu Talha al-Sudani. According to several reports, targets were those believed to be responsible for the 1998 embassy bombings, which killed 225 people.

Somali government spokesman Abdul Rashid Hidig told *The New York Times* that two civilians were killed. US officials said the strike killed eight to ten people with suspected terrorist ties but failed to kill any “high-value targets.” According to *The Washington Post*, a US search team entered Somalia following the attack to verify the casualties.¹⁴ The strike was condemned by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other international actors.

On January 9, 2007, another US air strike hit four towns near Ras Kamboni, including a training camp on Badmadow Island. US officials denied that air strikes were the work of US forces and blamed Ethiopian air attacks, although this appears to be contradicted by a January 12, 2007, US secret cable obtained by *Wikileaks*, which refers to a “US military . . . strike Jan. 9 against members of the East Africa Al Qaeda cell believed to be on the run in a remote area of Somalia near the Kenyan border.” A US intelligence official, speaking anonymously, told *AP* that five to ten people targeted by the strike were believed to be associated with al-Qaeda. The US military’s main target on the island was thought to be Fazul Abdullah Mohamed.

On January 23, 2007, an AC-130 strike in Somalia, reportedly operating from an air base in eastern Ethiopia, targeted Ahmed Madobe, a deputy of ICU leader Hassan al-Turki. Madobe survived the attack but was wounded and captured. His companions, who Madobe said included men and women “on the run” with him, were all killed.

On September 14, 2009, in an operation code-named Celestial Balance, US Special Forces launched a helicopter raid into Somalia, killing Kenyan Saleh Ali Saleh al-Nabhan, who had been wanted in connection with the Mombasa attacks. The United States learned that al-Nabhan’s convoy would be setting off from Mogadishu to meet Islamic militants in the coastal town of Baraawe. As the convoy neared Baraawe, JSOC struck. A number of 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment AH-6 “Little Bird” helicopters flew from a navy ship and attacked the militants as they were breakfasting, killing six, including al-Nabhan, according to news reports.

On June 23, 2011, in the first known lethal drone strike in Somalia, Predators struck a militant training camp ten km south of Kismayo. Other missiles hit a second target near the airport. The attacks were aimed at two senior militants who were planning an imminent terrorist attack on the United Kingdom, US officials told *The Washington Post*. Abdul Rashid Mohamed Hidig, Somalia's deputy defense minister, told *AP* the strike killed "many" foreign fighters. "I have their names, but I don't want to release them," he claimed.

Ibrahim al-Afghani, also known as Ibrahim Haji Jama Mead, a senior leader in al-Shabaab, was reportedly wounded or killed, although *Strategic Forecasting* claimed on August 11 that Afghani was alive and had replaced Ahmed Abdi Godane as the leader of al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab did not respond to either report, and Afghani has not appeared in public since. Two militants were wounded, according to a local al-Shabaab leader, Sheikh Hasan Yaqoub, among them British citizen Bilal al-Barjawi, who was killed in a subsequent drone strike. US helicopters reportedly landed after the attack, with troops retrieving some dead and injured. The strike was the first joint mission conducted by JSOC and the CIA, *CNN* claimed.

On January 21, 2012, three missiles fired from a suspected drone operated by JSOC killed British Lebanese militant Bilal al-Barjawi, also known as Abu Hafsa. US intelligence services and military had had him under surveillance for days, according to the *Associated Press*. Al-Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage said, "At around 1400, a US drone targeted our mujahideen. One foreigner, a Lebanese with a British passport, died."

On February 24, 2012, hours after US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told the London Somalia conference that air strikes against al-Shabaab "would not be a good idea," a US drone strike killed up to seven alleged Islamists in Lower Shabelle. An American official in Washington confirmed the attack was carried out by a US drone. A second official said an "international" member of al-Shabaab had been the target of the strike.

Al-Shabaab identified one of the dead as Moroccan Sheikh Abu Ibrahim. Also among those reported killed was a man named only as Sakr, the former deputy of Bilal al-Barjawi. The strike was the ninth Pentagon military strike in Somalia confirmed by US officials.

In January 2012, President Obama authorized the successful hostage rescue mission by US Special Operations soldiers of two foreign aid workers, American Jessica Buchanan, thirty-two, and Poul Thisted,

sixty, of Denmark, who were being held by nine armed terrorists in Somalia. This was thought to be the first major direct military intervention in Somalia by the United States since the 1990s.¹⁵

Buchanan and Thisted had been working for a Danish relief organization, the Danish Refugee Council, in northern Somalia, when they were kidnapped in October 2011. The humanitarian group had been providing relief to some 450,000 refugees in the Somalia-Kenya border region.¹⁶ News reports at the time said the two were kidnapped October 25, 2011, along with a Somali colleague, when their three-car convoy was stopped on the way to an airport. A self-proclaimed Somali pirate said they had been kidnapped for ransom by pirates who had been stymied by Western nations' efforts to stop the seizure of ships off the coast. The fate of the Somali colleague was unclear. US officials described their kidnappers as heavily-armed common criminals with no known ties to any organized militant group.¹⁷

The SEALs gathered up Buchanan and Thisted, loaded them onto the helicopters, and flew them to safety at an undisclosed location. The two hostages were not injured during the rescue operation and were reported to be in relatively good condition.

In late-June 2011, an American helicopter fired on a convoy carrying suspected militants in southern Somalia. Several foreign fighters were reported dead.

On October 5, 2013, the SEALs, the special operations force that killed Osama Bin Laden in 2011, attacked a senior al-Shabaab commander's seaside villa in the southern town of Baraawe, where Ahmed Abdi Godane, the group's leader, had stayed in the past. The SEALs approached from the sea before engaging in an hour-long battle.

The target of the raid was Abdikadir Mohamed Abdikadir, who used the nom de guerre "Ikrimah" and was suspected of helping orchestrate a series of grenade attacks and shootings that have killed Kenyan civilians and security personnel.¹⁸

According to a Kenyan intelligence report, he has been connected to plots against Kenya's Parliament, the United Nations' office in Nairobi, Kenyan military installations, an Ethiopian restaurant in the Kenyan capital, and an airport, none of which materialized.

But perhaps most important, he is seen as a pivotal connection for an array of extremists across vast distances, from Tanzania to Yemen—a veteran militant with intimate knowledge of the ties among Kenyan terrorists, al-Shabaab, and al-Qaeda.

The navy SEALs approached the coast under cover of darkness, killing several al-Shabaab militants and escaping without any casualties of their own. But they retreated empty-handed, failing to seize Mr. Abdikadir or the potential trove of intelligence he may have possessed. The intelligence flaws were partly to blame, American officials said. As a group of about twenty commandos entered the al-Shabaab compound, they encountered far more civilians than they had anticipated, including women and children, American officials briefed on the operation said.

When the gun battle with al-Shabaab fighters erupted, not only was the element of surprise lost, but the mission commander also feared that a prolonged firefight could kill large numbers of civilians.¹⁹

An al-Shabaab spokesman claimed his group had beaten back the US assault but said one fighter had been killed. Another report said as many as seven militants were killed.²⁰

The US defense secretary, Chuck Hagel, said the operation in Somalia, along with a near-simultaneous one in Libya, demonstrated the “unparalleled precision, global reach and capabilities” of US counterterrorism. “These operations in Libya and Somalia send a strong message to the world that the United States will spare no effort to hold terrorists accountable, no matter where they hide or how long they evade justice,” Hagel said.²¹

Pentagon spokesman George Little suggested that more special operations raids against al-Shabaab were yet to come. “Working in partnership with the government of the Federal Republic of Somalia, the United States military will continue to confront the threat posed by al-Shabaab,” Little said in a statement on Monday. “The United States military has unmatched capabilities and could rely on any of them to disrupt terrorist networks and plots.”²²

The US and Kenyan Military Invasion of Southern Somalia²³

The *Wikileaks* website released cables showing that plans for the Kenyan military invasion of southern Somalia had been mapped out for nearly two years, refuting claims that the intervention had been done without Washington’s knowledge. The documents showed that high-level meetings had taken place in early 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, that had laid the groundwork for renewed attempts to eliminate the al-Shabaab Islamic resistance movement that controlled large sections of Somalia.

This secret plan, dubbed the Jubaland Initiative, outlined the creation of an artificial state in southern Somalia in an effort to choke

off al-Shabaab from the border areas near Kenya. At the meeting in Ethiopia, in January 2010, the Kenyan delegation, led by Foreign Affairs Minister Moses Wetangula, appealed for US support for the operation. Other Kenyan officials in the delegation included Chief of General Staff Jeremiah Kianga, Defense Minister Yusuf Haji, and Director of National Security Intelligence Services Major-General Michael Gichang'i. This meeting in Addis Ababa was just one in a series of discussions designed to enlist US support for the current military operations.

Cables released by *Wikileaks* revealed that Kenyan Foreign Minister Wetangula had informed US Undersecretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson of developments being made in preparation for the invasion of Somalia. The plan was to invade Somalia, drive away al-Shabaab units from the border, and then seize the port at Kismayo. One US diplomatic cable indicated that Kenyan Director of Military Intelligence Brigadier Philip Kameru told visiting US Ambassador-at-Large for Counterterrorism Daniel Benjamin that al-Shabaab had plans to begin incursions inside Kenyan territory. The US diplomatic cable stated, "[Kameru] added that the Director of Military Intelligence expects al-Shabaab to begin cross-border incursions into Kenya and he claimed to have received reports indicating al-Shabaab has plans to use improvised explosive devices and landmines against security personnel and civilian traffic inside Kenya."

Other claims reported to the US ambassador involved unsubstantiated reports that al-Shabaab was circulating currency obtained through piracy and purchasing real estate inside Kenya. Officials from Kenya also told Washington that al-Shabaab was radicalizing youth inside the East African country.

American Policy in Somalia (2012)

On February 23, 2012, at the London summit on Somalia, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the "US will look for ways to increase our involvement in Somalia, including considering a more permanent diplomatic presence."²⁴ The United States was going beyond the "diplomatic mission" objective Clinton made mention of in London. It had expanded its unmanned-drone missions to Somalia territory, and the CIA had set up two secret facilities in Mogadishu, the capital. Some American military and intelligence officials saw al-Qaeda affiliates in Yemen and Somalia as a greater threat to the United States than the group that operated in Pakistan.

The US military's Africa Command, known as Africom, runs two sites that look like ordinary news sites, centering on the regions hosting dangerous terror cells, one in Somalia and one in northwest Africa, an area known as the Maghreb. Africom says the websites are part of a larger project in the struggle with extremist groups such as al-Shabaab for the hearts and minds of local populations. The US military and State Department, partners on the project, say the goal of the sites is to counter propaganda from extremists "by offering accurate, balanced and forward-looking coverage of developments in the region."²⁵

In a letter to Congress, President Obama said American forces had engaged in "a limited number" of operations against members of al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, arguing that both posed a terrorist threat to "the United States and our interests."²⁶ He gave no further details in the unclassified letter, which accompanied the latest update to lawmakers under the War Powers Act about military operations around the world. More details about the scope of the operations were included in the classified section of the report, administration officials said.²⁷

The disclosure formally confirmed what had long been known, that the American war on al-Qaeda had spread far from the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where it had begun more than a decade before. In the past, officials had acknowledged helping Somalia and Yemen battle extremists without confirming that American forces were sometimes involved in the fight.²⁸

The declassification of the Yemen and Somalia actions in the letter had the strong support of General Martin E. Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who argued that the military needed to be open when it could about operations, an administration official said.

At present, large flotillas of warships from the United States, Europe, and other states are patrolling the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia under the pretext of fighting piracy. Nonetheless, all these efforts have failed to stabilize Somalia.

The huge area of the Horn of Africa is teeming with a large and poverty-stricken Muslim population and constitutes a wide field of action for Islamic terror organizations. Therefore, in the foreseeable future, East Africa will continue to be an arena with a high potential for terror attacks and the development of terror infrastructures that will pose a threat against the United States and the free world.

In July 2012, President Obama sent a letter to Congress declaring that the situation in Somalia poses "an unusual and extraordinary national

security threat to the United States.” The president cited “piracy, escalating violence, and the deterioration of the security situation in Somalia” as reasons for his actions:

I found that the deterioration of the security situation and the persistence of violence in Somalia, and acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, which have repeatedly been the subject of United Nations Security Council resolutions, and violations of the arms embargo imposed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 733 of January 23, 1992, and elaborated upon and amended by subsequent resolutions, constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. To address that threat, E.O. 13536 blocks the property and interests in property of persons listed in the Annex to E.O. 13536 or determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, to meet criteria specified in E.O. 13536.²⁹

The letter was delivered to Congress on July 23, 2012, and read into the Congressional Record and referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

The president also amended order 13536 in such a way as to give the president “designation of persons authority” to go after anyone who had engaged in activities that “directly or indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia” or who “threaten the Transitional Federal Institutions or future Somali governing process.”³⁰ Examples include people who obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance, who have stolen from the Somali public assets, or who finance or render financial assistance relating to military activities, training, or assistance to a designated terrorist organization, such as al-Shabaab.

The letter sought to prohibit the importation into the United States, directly or indirectly, of charcoal from Somalia. Charcoal was a “significant revenue source” for the al-Shabaab terrorist organization in Somalia, according to the president. The president also wanted the authority to cut off all “nonlocal” commerce to al-Shabaab-controlled ports:

In view of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2002 of July 29, 2011, persons who engage in non-local commerce via al-Shabaab-controlled ports that constitutes support for a person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to E.O. 13536 may be subject to designation pursuant to E.O. 13536, as amended by the order. The order was effective on July 20, 2012. I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions,

including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order. I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued, signed on this date, July 20, 2012, Barack Obama, The White House.

America's history of intervention in Somalia aptly demonstrates the resiliency of unintended consequences. Although developments in Somalia have some observers arguing that America should become more involved, the more reasonable conclusion to draw—looking at the historical record—is that America has tried and failed repeatedly to transform Somalia at an acceptable cost.³¹

Turkey's Involvement in Somalia

Turkey has traditionally maintained good relations with the African continent. In the context of the Turkish policy of opening up to Africa, initiated in 1998, Turkey was determined to improve and develop the political, economic, commercial, and cultural interaction with the African countries. In 2003, Turkey announced its new foreign policy toward Africa, which was fast-tracked by Prime Minister Erdogan's 2005 high-profile visits to South Africa and Ethiopia. After those visits, Turkey welcomed the decision of the Tenth African Union Summit, in January 2008, declaring Turkey as a strategic partner.

The Turkish foreign policy toward Africa is not only based on economic and trade objectives but also incorporates a comprehensive approach that includes development of Africa through technical and project assistance in the fields such as fighting against diseases, agricultural development, irrigation, energy, education, and a regular flow of humanitarian aid.

The Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit held with the participation of forty-nine African countries on August 18–21, 2008, in Istanbul, is considered the beginning of a steady and sustainable cooperation process. The Turkish initiatives to help Somalia out of its dire political and economic crisis has to be considered as a part of Turkey's new "African strategy."

First Istanbul Conference on Somalia

Turkey hosted the Istanbul Somalia Conference organized within the UN framework on May 21–23, 2010. The conference provided

an important support for the Djibouti peace process and the TFG. The Istanbul Declaration adopted during the conference constituted a roadmap for the settlement of the Somali issue.³² In 2010, Turkey signed an agreement to train Somali soldiers at a UN-backed international Somalia summit in Istanbul.

The Istanbul Declaration (May 23, 2010)

The Conference was held within the framework of the Djibouti Agreement, which provides Somalia and its leaders with a clear and viable path for achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia.

The Djibouti Process remains open for all Somalis to work towards peace, reconciliation and development. The Conference expressed its full support to President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed and the Transitional Federal Institutions in their efforts to implement the Djibouti Agreement. It reiterated its commitment to improve the lives and security of the Somali people, foster reconciliation, human rights and good governance, increase access to basic services, initiate reconstruction activities and set Somalia firmly on the path to peace and sustainable development.

The Conference noted the existence of several outstanding commitments made in previous forums on Somalia and urged the Transitional Federal Institutions and the International Community to implement them. The Conference placed particular emphasis on the urgency for the Transitional Federal Government to address its considerable political, economic and security challenges. It also encouraged the private sector to play a positive role in strengthening peace and stability.

1. The Conference Recognized that:

- Somalia's people and leaders face a determined effort, fuelled by internal and external interference, to hinder social, economic and political progress. Overcoming the current hardships and insecurity will require a determined, long-term effort to promote political cooperation and build strong government institutions, while countering the pervasive influence of those profiting from the conflict, as well as the presence of foreign fighters and other elements of extremism
- It is important that the Djibouti Peace Process and transition are kept on track. The successful implementation of the Djibouti Agreement demands the rejection of violence and extremism; continued outreach and political reconciliation with those outside the peace process who accept dialogue. The Conference welcomed progress made by the

Transitional Federal Government in this regard, as illustrated by its agreement with Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa in March 2010, and a security accord related to countering piracy with the Puntland region in April 2010 and on bilateral cooperation in August 2008. The Conference encouraged Puntland to continue maintaining its stability and political cooperation with the TFG. It welcomed the current democratization process in Somaliland and urged for peaceful completion of its upcoming elections in a transparent manner

- Somalia needs to establish loyal and professional security forces with a strong and unified command and control structure and reintegrate those armed groups that have joined the TFG. The re-establishment, training, equipping, payment and retention of Somali security forces is vital for the long-term stability of Somalia. The Conference commended all those Member States and international organizations providing training for the Somalia security forces. It emphasized the importance of coordinated, timely and sustained support from the international community and appealed for the prompt and timely disbursement of funds pledged in support of the Somali security institutions. In addition, the Conference welcomed the increased number of trained Somali recruits, as well as the senior Transitional Federal Government military appointments which will significantly enhance the command and control structure
- Somalia's reconstruction and development can only be realized when governmental institutions, the business sector, civil society, women, the Diaspora and the international community work together in an effective and coherent manner. Recovery activities can make a greater contribution to social, economic and cultural development in Somalia, through further investment, continued employment-creation and training. The Conference encourages focus on the six initial priority areas identified by the Transitional Federal Government and the business community: telecommunications; transport infrastructure; livestock exports; fisheries, banking and remittances and; alternative energy. In particular it called for support to fund the completion of Bossaso and Garowe airports
- It is critical to have a renewed emphasis on Somalia's economic recovery and development. The Conference committed itself to work towards concrete action plans which would include identifying pilot projects for private-public investment with a view to creating economic zones
- The Conference welcomed the discussion among the business community, the United Nations and development partners and the Transitional Federal Government on the margins of the Conference regarding the Principles for an enabling Environment for Responsible Business Activities in Somalia. The Conference recognized the need to develop business-friendly conditions that would benefit the entire population. It looks forward to further consideration of a business Compact for Somalia
- The Transitional Federal Government, in partnership with the international community has a major responsibility to respond to the

humanitarian suffering of the Somali people. The Transitional Federal Government must discharge its responsibilities to assure safe access to vulnerable populations, deliver basic services, manage public resources wisely and ensure a just distribution of revenues; introduce anti-corruption measures, develop and support the private sector; and build the capacity of its financial institutions. The international community should continue its support to the Somali people. The Conference accepted that the reconstruction outcome of the Istanbul Conference will complement existing humanitarian assistance activities and will not prejudice efforts to organize a more comprehensive development and reconstruction conference at a later stage

2. *The Conference:*

- Commended the contribution of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) to lasting peace and stability in Somalia and expressed appreciation for the continued commitment of troops and equipment to AMISOM by the Governments of Burundi and Uganda and AMISOM Police Contributing Countries- Burundi, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia. It condemned any hostilities towards AMISOM and the Transitional Federal Institutions. The Conference also called on other African countries to provide troops to AMISOM to reach its mandated strength. It appreciated financial support to AMISOM by the international community and stressed the need for predictable, reliable and timely provision of resources to the AU by all partners. In this regard, the Conference called for the expeditious disbursement of all pledges made at the Brussels Pledging Conference held on 23 April 2009
- Took note of the important role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and Somalia's neighbors in promoting peace, security and development in Somalia and the region. It re-affirmed the principles of good neighborly relations and urged Somalia's partners to continue to support effort towards this end
- The conference welcomed the decision of the Summit of the League Arab States held in Sirte in March 2010, to convene a conference on boosting early recovery activities for Somalia, the next few months. It expressed its appreciation for the determination of the Arab League to build on the spirit and results of the Istanbul Conference, and to prepare its conference in full cooperation with the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, the Republic of Turkey, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), United Nations, and the Organization of Islamic Conference
- Expressed its grave concern over the increase in acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea against vessels off the coast of Somalia. Noted with appreciation the assistance being provided by the United Nations and other international organizations and donors, in coordination with the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS),

to enhance the capacity of the judicial and the corrections systems in Somalia, Kenya, Seychelles and other States in the region to prosecute suspected, and imprison convicted, pirates consistent with applicable international human rights law. In this regard, it welcomed the establishment of the International Trust Fund supporting initiatives of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia to defray the expenses associated with prosecution of suspected pirates and to support other counter-piracy initiatives and welcomed Member States and other potential donors to contribute to the fund. Also commended the efforts of other States to prosecute suspected pirates in their national courts and appealed to other States to facilitate the prosecution of suspected pirates in their national courts, consistent with applicable international law, including human rights law. It also expressed appreciation for the role of the EU operation Atalanta [*sic*], North Atlantic Treaty Organization operations Allied Protector and Ocean Shield and Combined Maritime Forces Combined Task Force 151, in the fight against piracy off the Coast of Somalia

3. *The Transitional Federal Government reaffirmed:*

- Its primary responsibility to provide security to the people of Somalia by increasing the number of trained Somali recruits, ensuring integration of all security forces, including those of the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaâ and improving the control and command structure of the Somali Forces
- Its commitment to continue its outreach, dialogue and reconciliation efforts, implementing concrete collaboration with Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaâ and extending partnerships with regional and local administrations
- Its commitment to avoid internal disputes so that they will not hinder the work of the Transitional Federal Institutions and delivery of services to its people. This also entails working to strengthen its governance structures, ensure transparency and accountability and efficient functioning of the Transitional Federal Institutions
- Its efforts to seek innovative ways to engage with the Somali people to draft the Somali Federal Constitution. The TFG confirmed that a fully inclusive and consultative process would be advanced by the third quarter of 2010. It is also crucial for the TFG to take ownership of the tasks necessary to facilitate the full implementation of the transitional arrangement

The Istanbul Conference has reaffirmed the world's commitment to Somalia and its rejection of all efforts to sow violence and instability in the country. We send a clear and strong message to the people of Somalia that they are not alone in the search for peace, reconciliation and prosperity after so many years of poverty, hardship and suffering.

With determined efforts by, the Transitional Federal Institutions, Somali civil society and the private sector, in partnership with the international community, a bright future for Somalia is possible.

The Conference took note that the Government of Spain will host the next high-level International Contact Group Meeting in Madrid in September 2010.

The Conference expressed its deep appreciation to the Government and people of Turkey for hosting the Istanbul Conference which is a significant contribution to the efforts towards achieving peace, security and development in Somalia.

Turkish efforts in Somalia in 2011

During Somalia's devastating drought in 2011, Turkey launched a major diplomatic, economic, and humanitarian push to help Somalia. Turkey organized a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) on August 17, 2011. The meeting was attended by forty member states of the OIC. It ended with a pledge to donate US\$350 million of humanitarian aid to Somalia.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan Visits Mogadishu

On August 19, 2011, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan visited Mogadishu. Against a backdrop of volatile security, he brought with him his wife, his children, ministers, businessmen, and artists. The visit to Mogadishu was the first by a non-African leader in two decades. The primary objective of the visit was symbolic, as Turkey wanted to negate the perception that Mogadishu was irreversibly insecure and a no-go area. The second objective was to draw international attention to the need for more emergency humanitarian assistance to Somalia.³³

Erdogan's visit was unquestionably a morale booster for the TFG. As Somali political analyst Abdihakim Aynte argued, the visit "gave unprecedented validity to the Turkish efforts and reinforced the popular theory that Turkey is distinctly—and uniquely—a reliable fellow Muslim nation that can create global awareness about Somalia's plight."³⁴ During his visit, Erdogan stressed that the international community's response to Somalia was a "test for civilization and contemporary values."³⁵

Turkey has since been at the forefront of helping the reconstruction of Somalia.³⁶ Since Erdogan's audacious visit, the Turkish embassy in Mogadishu has been reopened, and an ambassador, Cemalettin Torun, who has practical experience in humanitarian assistance, was speedily appointed.³⁷ The challenges awaiting Torun are Herculean as

Turkey embarks upon a major reconstruction program in Somalia. It will rebuild the greatly-damaged road from Mogadishu airport to the city center and plans to build hospitals and rehabilitate existing medical facilities. It also plans to build a waste-disposal facility in Mogadishu and to provide trucks to remove the city's uncollected garbage. Schools run by Turks have opened up in Mogadishu, and hundreds of university scholarships have been provided for Somalis to study in Turkey.³⁸

Moreover, the Turkish Red Crescent established an Internally Displaced Persons' site where food is distributed and shelters are built. It is also digging water wells and plans to support the construction of an urban water system in Mogadishu. Turkish aid workers work and move safely in Mogadishu, and no major attacks have directly targeted them.³⁹ Yet, the terrorist blast in Mogadishu on October 4, 2011, which killed more than seventy Somalis, had apparently targeted students queuing up to apply for Turkish scholarships. Turkey provided medical care in the wake of this dreadful attack, which showed that not all sides in Somalia appreciated Turkey's involvement.⁴⁰

Turkish Airlines has become the first major non-African airline in twenty-one years to operate regular flights to Mogadishu. The flights are operated twice a week from Istanbul to Mogadishu via Khartoum, Sudan's capital. The stated objective of the flights is to reconnect Somalia to the rest of the world and to make it easier for the large Somali diasporas scattered across the world to go back to Somalia.⁴¹ Turkey's Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdağ arrived in Mogadishu on March 6, 2012, to launch the first Turkish Airlines' flight. Bozdağ's visit was also intended to assess how best to manage and implement Turkey's assistance to Somalia.⁴²

In September 2011, in his speech during the general debate of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly, Erdogan also forcefully drew attention to the humanitarian catastrophe in Somalia. The speech further enhanced Turkey's reputation in Somalia as a trustworthy and respectful stakeholder. This fact was not lost on more security-conscious and geopolitically-competing regional players who were used to bullying Somali political actors into submission.⁴³

Second Istanbul Conference on Somalia (May 31–June 1, 2012)

The Second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, under the theme Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015, took place on May 31 and June 1, 2012. Maintaining the multidimensional and multilayered

approach of the First Istanbul Conference on Somalia in 2010, it was attended by high-level representatives from fifty-seven countries and eleven international and regional organizations, as well as by the TFG leadership, the regional administrations, and representatives from wide-ranging segments of Somali society, including youth, women, business community, elders, religious leaders, and the diaspora.⁴⁴

Somali-based NGOs came together to deliver recommendations for the conference. The Somali Humanitarian Operational Consortium (SHOC) brought together over sixty local NGOs in Somalia and diaspora Somali NGOs as well as twenty-two UK-based Somali NGOs led by the Somali Relief and Development Forum that met to discuss possible actions for the conference in Istanbul.⁴⁵ The participants agreed to have one voice before all stakeholders in articulating the needs of the Somali people.⁴⁶

Meeting with his Somali counterpart at the Tarabya Residence, Turkish President Abdullah Gül said that he was the first head of state to have welcomed President Ahmed after he was elected Somali president in 2009. They had also met in 2010 in Istanbul as part of the First UN Conference on Somalia, adding that Turkey had afterward opened an embassy in Mogadishu. Turkey's corroboration for Somalia will continue, declared the president, who further stated that Turkey had also held another meeting during which 300 Somali opinion leaders had gathered in Istanbul. President Gül, during his visit to Chicago for a NATO summit, had also received representatives of Somali diaspora in the States.⁴⁷

Offering his thanks and gratitude to President Gül for Turkey's generous aid to his country, President Sheikh Ahmed of Somalia said the Second Istanbul Conference on Somalia was of great importance in that it coincided with a significant stage of the transition period in his country, pointing to the importance of the reconstruction of the state institutions. He further introduced the newly-appointed Somali ambassadors to Ankara to the president.⁴⁸

Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu said Turkey was ready to provide military assistance to Somalia to help establish political stability. Wrapping up talks in London after the summit on Somalia, Davutoğlu urged the international community to bolster the strength of African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces and to provide them with more resources, saying Turkey was ready to provide such assistance, at a press conference.⁴⁹

In 2010, Turkey signed an agreement to train Somali soldiers at a UN-backed international Somalia summit in Istanbul. Davutoğlu

highlighted Turkey's important role in mediating between conflicting factions in Somalia, saying that Turkey would continue to provide all kinds of support to establish permanent peace in the country. Davutoğlu claimed that Somalia was currently passing through an important political phase, adding, "All the conflicting parties [in Somalia] respect Turkey. That is the reason they give importance to Turkey's presence in the mediation process."⁵⁰

Denying claims that Turkey and France were battling to influence the political transitional process in Somalia, Davutoğlu stressed that by assisting the country Turkey was only fulfilling its responsibilities to a country that shares the heritage of the Ottoman Empire, which had close links with Somalia. He said Turkey was not involved in rivalry with any country in that sense. "Turkey extends aid to Somalia as a humanitarian obligation, not as a result of strategic interests," Davutoğlu said, adding that Somalis were grateful to Turkey for its efforts.⁵¹

Istanbul II Declaration, June 1, 2012

1. The Second Istanbul Conference on Somalia, under the theme "Preparing Somalia's Future: Goals for 2015," took place on 31st May and 1st June 2012. Maintaining the multi-dimensional and multi-layered approach of the first Istanbul Conference in 2010 on Somalia, it was attended by high level representatives from 57 countries and 11 international and regional organizations, as well as by the TFG leadership, the regional administrations, and representatives from wide-ranging segments of Somali society, including youth, women, business community, elders, religious leaders and the Diaspora.

Introduction

2. The Conference reaffirmed its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Somalia. It agreed that for genuine peace to take hold in Somalia, Somali people should seek dialogue, reconciliation and political cooperation including in establishing inclusive, accountable and legitimate governance. The Conference is grateful for the wide-scale and strong Somali participation, including women, in this Conference, and the powerful and meaningful messages they have pronounced.
3. The Conference noted that at this critical period in Somalia's history, the security, political, social and economic achievements of the past year have given Somalis and the international community a renewed hope for the future. Somalia has made considerable progress towards achieving stability, security and reconciliation: this opportunity should not be missed. The Conference emphasized that August 2012 is the beginning of a new phase of peace-building, in which all Somalis would contribute to peace and have their voices heard.

4. The Conference highlighted that primary responsibility for establishing a political solution in the country lies with Somalis. The role of the international community is to support Somalis to provide leadership and ownership in rebuilding a functioning state and local governments that can provide security, ensure the rule of law and respect for human rights, provide basic social services and create an enabling environment that allows for economic opportunity for all its citizens.
5. It reconfirmed the importance of the London Conference that constituted a milestone in gathering the international momentum on Somalia, and pledged to ensure a continued coherent and cooperative international approach.

Political

6. The Conference reiterated that the transitional period will come to an end in August 2012 in accordance with the Kampala Accord, the Roadmap, the Garowe I and II Principles, the Galkayo Agreement and re-affirmed commitment made by the Signatories to the Roadmap through the Addis Ababa Communiqué. It called for the timely implementation of these decisions and delivery of pledged funds. The Conference commended the convening of the Traditional Elders in Mogadishu who are carrying out their task of selecting the members of the Constituent Assembly and the new Parliament. It welcomed their efforts to ensure that women meaningfully participate in the process and constitute 30 percent of the Constituent Assembly and the new Parliament and the role of women is enshrined in the constitution.
7. The Conference welcomed the intention that the Constituent Assembly adopts the provisional constitution of Somalia. It highlighted the importance of Somali ownership of the constitution through a public debate and future adoption through a referendum. The Conference also commended the ongoing public consultations and civic education process in order to allow the Somali people to have their voices heard and participate in the political process. The Conference urged the Roadmap signatories to expand this effort to include newly recovered areas.
8. The Conference expressed the firm expectation that the selection process of the leaner and more representative Federal Parliament is completed in a fair and transparent way without any hindrance and that the elections for the positions of Speaker (and Deputies), and President by the new Parliament are carried out smoothly by August 20, 2012.
9. The Participants reiterated their firmness in not allowing internal and external actors or groups to disrupt the smooth implementation of the end of the Transition. In this context, they commended the joint AU-IGAD-UN letter of May 2012 to such potential actors in Somalia. They agreed to consider appropriate follow-up action against those judged to be blocking progress in the political process.

10. The Conference reiterated the crucial need for the international community to support dialogue that Somaliland and the TFG have agreed to pursue.
11. The Participants looked forward to the beginning of a new political dispensation, with a new Parliament and Government, and emphasized the importance of those institutions coming to fruition through a more representative, transparent and legitimate process.
12. In keeping with the London Communiqué, the Conference reiterated that respect for human rights must be at the heart of the peace process. It welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Transitional Federal Government and the United Nations on May 11, 2012, and called on the Somali authorities to follow through with their commitment to uphold human rights and the rule of law, and put an end to the culture of violence and impunity, and bring about accountability. The Conference called for all parties to commit themselves to transitional justice mechanisms in the Post-Transition period.
13. The Conference emphasized that in the post-Transition period, the new political dispensation in Somalia must begin with a new program aimed at re-establishing of state and local institutions and administrative structures, based on and complementary to the current Roadmap including the newly recovered areas.
14. The Conference noted need to adjust international support to the political structures in Somalia and called on the UN to review the shape of its future engagement in Somalia.

Security and Justice

15. The Conference agreed on the need to revitalize funding arrangements. The Conference took note of the proposal for the establishment of a new “Rebuilding and Restructuring Fund for the Somali Security Sector” initiated by Turkey to offer additional support to the Somali security forces.
16. The Conference recognized the need for the international community to continue to support the re-establishment of a professional, inclusive, disciplined and well-equipped security apparatus, including the Somali national army, police, navy, coastguard and intelligence agencies, as well as mechanisms to ensure civilian oversight of the security sector. The Conference emphasized the urgency to approve and implement the National Security and Stabilization Plan and the need to bring all Somali forces under a unified command. In this context, it recognized the significant contributions that the EU, including through the EU Training Mission, the United States and Italy are providing in support of the Somali security sector institutions. The Conference encouraged broader support to these institutions.
17. The Conference commended the ongoing support of the international community for AMISOM, particularly by the United Nations, the

European Union, IGAD member-states and the United States and other bilateral partners. The Conference called on new donors to provide financial support to AMISOM troops including salaries, entitlements, reimbursement of contingent-owned equipment (COE), and enabling assets.

18. The Conference praised the efforts of the African Union through AMISOM and particularly those of Uganda and Burundi who have made troop contributions to AMISOM, and looking forward to the completion of troop deployments from Djibouti, Sierra Leone and Kenya. Today AMISOM, alongside its Somali Security Force allies is the main military instrument in ensuring security and stability in Somalia. We emphasized that the TFG and AMISOM have to be strongly supported by the international community at this critical juncture to meet objectives.
19. The Conference agreed that insecurity in Somalia, including sustained inter clan conflict, persistent violence, illegal charcoal trading, misappropriation of funds, piracy, kidnapping, terrorism and human rights abuses and violations, is exacerbated by the crisis emanating from the deficiency of the state structures and institutions in large parts of the country. It condemned all acts of violence against civilians, including journalists, and humanitarian workers in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law.
20. The Conference reiterated its commitment to coordinate its efforts in support to the security and justice sectors through a re-invigorated Joint Security Committee and its technical working groups and looked forward to discussing proposals in this regard.
21. The Conference reiterated the need for effective rule of law institutions. The Conference stressed the importance of a broad consultative process in developing a plan to strengthen justice and correctional institutions and called for the establishment of a task force consisting of the TFG and international partners.
22. The Conference rejected all forms of terrorism, violations of human rights and violent extremism which endanger the lives of the Somali people, as well as regional and international peace. The Somali population has suffered a great deal at the hands of violent extremists and participants agreed to work together to help build capacity to confront the root causes of terrorism, tackle terrorism in the region, and disrupt their travel to and from Somalia. It agreed to work with the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and other international and regional bodies to deliver this important work.
23. It condemned the use of child soldiers and sexual violence by the combatant sides. The Conference also deplored the recent attacks against journalists. Those who are responsible must be held to account. The Conference called on all Somalis to renounce unlawful acts of violence, to operate within a constitutional framework and to support the ongoing political process. Those who refuse to do so, and instead engage in or support violence and crime, should be dissuaded, isolated, or

- otherwise prevented from derailing the Roadmap and the process of Somali reconciliation and state-building. The Conference resolved to develop further a programme to support those who renounce violence.
24. The Conference reiterated that the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia requires a comprehensive approach on land as well as at sea that addresses the root causes of the phenomenon and combines development, capacity-building, rule of law, deterrence and prosecution on the basis of UNSC Resolution 2020 (2011) and full compliance of international law. It called for the reinforcement of Somali-owned judicial capacities. The Conference looks forward to discussing the issue of piracy in depth and at length during the UAE's Second High Level Piracy Conference "A Regional Response to Maritime Piracy: Enhancing Public Private Partnership and strengthening global engagement to be held in Dubai on June 27–28, 2012 and the International Piracy Conference to be held in Perth, Australia on July 15–17, 2012. The Conference further supports the ongoing work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, including its forthcoming Plenary Meeting to be held in New York on July 25, 2012.

Local Stability

25. The Conference recognized that the Somali leaders with the support of the international community face a huge challenge in ensuring a stable and secure environment in the recovered areas as soon as possible. A power vacuum must not be allowed to develop in those areas.
26. We took note of the work undertaken by the TFG and local governance structures to promote stabilization and reconciliation in the newly recovered regions in Somalia. We welcomed the establishment of the National Policy for Reconciliation and Stabilization in these areas and noted the need for continued political cooperation, through a transparent and inclusive process that facilitates the development of effective governance and stability. The Conference further takes note of the TFG national reconciliation and stabilization plan for the newly recovered areas and urges regional and international partners, including AU, IGAD and the UN to support this comprehensive plan.
27. The Conference called upon the international community to consider further ways and means of stabilizing and securing emerging areas of stability and sustaining these through governance programs. The Stability Fund established at the London Conference shall serve this purpose and thus should be supported.

Economic Development and Recovery

28. The Conference recognized the continued fragility of the humanitarian situation. With international support in the summer of 2011, Somalia was able to overcome the famine and avoid further exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis. However, more than 2.5 million Somalis remain in crisis and the risk of a further deterioration persists.

- The Conference called for immediate, unhindered access to all populations in need, respecting agreed humanitarian principles.
29. The Conference recognized the primary role of the Somali authorities as well as the important role of the international community in assisting Somalis in strengthening resilience. The Conference welcomed the Partnership Forum's efforts to build consensus on preventive and preemptive policies in this regard, and pledged to continue the dialogue.
 30. The Conference underlined the importance of finding durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). It stressed in particular that protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian and refugee law must be maintained at all times by all parties.
 31. The Conference recognized the need for a new phase in the approach to Somalia's economic recovery.
 32. The Conference underscored its belief that without special and equal emphasis on the reconstruction area, work in other spheres would be incomplete. Starting to rebuild Somalia's infrastructure in Mogadishu and other areas will contribute to Somalis' confidence in their future and constitute an incentive and encouragement for all segments of Somalia to reconcile.
 33. Following the outcomes of the working groups on the first Istanbul Conference on Somalia, participants took note of the discussion of the four Partnership Forums on May 31, attended by participants from Government, international organizations, donors, civil society and the private sector. It stressed that large-scale multi-year predictable financing was urgently needed both for infrastructure projects and to enhance the resilience of Somali communities. The Conference recognized the importance of harnessing the skills and capacity of the private sector and the Somali Diaspora.
 34. The Conference noted the importance of creating the right investment climate and agreed that offering conditional investment guarantees will provide a strong incentive for economic development with equity.
 35. The Conference emphasized the importance of encouraging equitable growth to reduce poverty and deprivation in Somalia including through the promotion of inclusive business practices and service provision. Participants agreed on the need for capacity building in the public and private sectors. It was noted that institutional development was needed to ensure government can establish a socially responsible and business-friendly regulatory environment. They recognized the importance of diversification of energy sources, improvements in the quality and scope of the transport infrastructure in a way that supports economic development and investment in urban water supply, rural water supply, water resource management and water governance.
 36. The Conference resolved to continue the discussion through further public-private dialogue, supported by the United Nations as well as the Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development.
 37. The Conference welcomed ongoing negotiations to establish a mutual accountability regime built around the proposed Joint Financial

Management Board (JFMB). It urged the early conclusion of the negotiations establishing the JFMB and noted that the international community remains committed to helping Somalia better regulate its finances and development assistance.

38. The Conference welcomes the establishment of a multi-donor Trust Fund for post-Transition financing.

Conclusion

39. The Conference expected the ICG to be held in Rome on July 2–3 to take stock of the progress made here in Istanbul and give the final impetus to the very last part of the Transition.
40. The Conference commended the UN, the African Union, the IGAD, the EAC, the EU, the OIC and League of Arab States, and other bilateral partners for their relentless efforts in stabilizing Somalia. It welcomed the relocation of UNPOS and encouraged the UN to continue to relocate staff inside Somalia. Donors are encouraged to support this. The Conference also encouraged other organizations and countries to increase their presence in Somalia.

Turkish Role in Somalia⁵²

“Turkey has kept all its promises towards Somalia in the short time since last year’s Istanbul conference,” Davutoğlu asserted, highlighting Turkish efforts to provide medical assistance and develop a diplomatic presence in the country. Davutoğlu stressed that every country attending the conference in London referred to Turkey’s efforts and added that the second international conference on Somalia would be held in Istanbul in June 2012.⁵³

Citing that Turkey was one of the few countries that had opened an embassy in Mogadishu, Davutoğlu called on other countries to open embassies in Somalia during the conference.⁵⁴ Analysts said they hoped the momentum of the conference would put Somalia on the right path for building a new future.

Hassan al-Bisri Sheikh Abdulqadir, head of the East Africa Studies and Media Centre in Mogadishu, said Turkey had recently taken a series of political and humanitarian initiatives to help lift Somalia out of its current crisis: “Turkey is quickly becoming a strong and active ally in the Somali issue and was the first major country to offer humanitarian assistance to reduce the impact of drought and famine that struck Somalia last year.” Abdulqadir said Turkey was playing an important role in Somalia:

When . . . Erdoğan decided to visit Mogadishu last August, it reinforced the credibility of Turkish efforts towards Somalia in an unprecedented way. Turkey is implementing several development

programs to rebuild Somalia, including building roads and hospitals and opening new schools. Turkey has also provided hundreds of university scholarships for Somali students to study in Turkey.

University Professor Mukhtar Hussein said Turkey's role was unique and came "at a time when an Islamic and Arabic role in confronting the Somali crisis is almost negligible." "Ankara is currently spearheading targeted initiatives to create a unified vision shared by the international community towards Somalia to rebuild the country and allow Somalis to be self-reliant," he said. "Turkey has also played a role in bringing closer the differing views of Somali factions."

Hasan Ozturk, a prominent African expert from the Ankara-based think tank *Bilgesam*, said Turkey's role in Somalia was political, but not limitless. "The current crisis of confidence being encountered in Somalia can only be overcome by the presence of a third party such as Turkey, who has already established the basis of such a confidence," he told *SES Turkey*. Ozturk said, however, that Turkey could not resolve Somalia's problems alone. "Turkey should endeavor to produce fair results, but Turkey should not remain the main decisive actor," he said. "This issue requires international co-operation."

On November 14, 2012, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu had a short visit in Mogadishu. "Turkey will continue to stand side by side with the Somali people. You are the first MPs ever to be elected in more than twenty years. And you have great opportunities ahead," Davutoğlu said in an address to lawmakers at the Somali national assembly. As part of his visit to Mogadishu, the Turkish foreign minister met with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud before departing for Djibouti to participate in a ministerial meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference.⁵⁵

British Involvement in Somalia **London Conference on Somalia (February 23, 2012)**

Background

In November 2011, British Prime Minister David Cameron called Somalia a "failed state that directly threatens British interests." Cameron scheduled a London summit in February 2012 to bring together the countries currently active in the Horn of Africa to discuss how to address the situation. Key decisions were expected to be made on a number of issues, ranging from humanitarian aid to a possible military mission. UK international development minister, Andrew Mitchell,

called for “urgent action” in the impoverished country, as “Somalia is a very direct threat to the security of the United Kingdom.” However, he ruled out any “intention of putting boots on the ground,” as quoted by *Agence France-Presse*.⁵⁶

Britain’s secret services claimed that Somalia was a new training ground for terrorists. According to the *Independent* newspaper, MI5 chief Jonathan Evans warned that Somalia had become the next destination after Pakistan for terrorist training. Andrew Mitchell appeared to confirm MI5’s assertion, saying, “There are probably more British passport holders engaged in terrorist training in Somalia, than in any other country in the world.”⁵⁷

There was a real risk, according to Jonathan Evans, that returnees from Somalia could carry out bomb attacks in British cities. However, some analysts doubt that the United Kingdom is motivated purely by concern about British tourists and aid workers being attacked and kidnapped in Somalia and the rise of piracy in the region. Somalia holds vast oil and gas reserves and other natural resources, including uranium, that the United States and other countries have had their eyes on for years. Many also point to Somalia’s strategic position, with critical oil transport routes crossing its territory to the Gulf of Aden.

The London Conference

A major conference on Somalia opened on February 23, 2012, in London, with world powers meeting to discuss the failed state’s future. The conference brought together representatives from forty countries and various international and regional organizations, such as the UN, the World Bank, the Arab League, and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).⁵⁸ British Prime Minister David Cameron said he hoped the discussions would generate “new momentum” toward finding peace in Somalia after more than two decades of anarchy, the *BBC* reported. The conference was aimed at tackling security issues, including the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabaab militants and piracy. “These problems in Somalia don’t just affect Somalia. They affect us all,” Cameron said, according to *Agence-France-Presse*.⁵⁹

Cameron, who hosted the conference, said setting up an inclusive government was vital to the country’s future, and that it must work alongside AU military action. “Those young people who take up guns for al-Shabaab need to be able to see that there is a future in a prosperous stable Somalia that offers them what everyone wants, which

is a job and a voice,” he told a news conference. “So the connection between military action to put huge pressure on Shabaab, which has been happening, and the political process, they are two sides of the same coin.”⁶⁰

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the world must keep the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab “on the run.” Clinton ruled out talks with al-Shabaab, saying that its decision to join forces with al-Qaeda showed “it is not on the side of peace, stability, or the Somali people.” However, she said the international community was ready to engage with anyone willing to renounce violence and embrace the peace process. Somali officials had earlier urged targeted air strikes against al-Shabaab targets, but Clinton said there was no case for that kind of action.⁶¹

Somalia’s President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, in his opening speech, called for an end to the arms embargo, the *BBC* said. Ahmed said Somalis wanted to shake off “horrendous memories of the past,” but feared the gathering might be just another diplomatic talking shop.

The conference agreed a seven-point plan that promised more humanitarian aid, support for African Union peacekeepers, and better international coordination.⁶² In a final communiqué, the fifty-five countries and organizations gathered in London said they would:

- back the handover of power from the transitional government to an inclusive administration by August
- provide more support for African Union peacekeepers
- better coordinate humanitarian aid, shifting focus to long-term needs
- crack down on piracy by expanding on agreements to bring suspects to trial in countries away from Somalia

After the conference, Cameron said he hoped the one-day summit in London would be a “turning point” in achieving greater security for the troubled East African nation. “There is a very real opportunity within our grasp,” Cameron said. “We must now follow through on all of the agreements we have reached today so together we can make this conference a turning point in achieving stability, greater security and greater prosperity for Somalia, for the region and for the world.”⁶³ But Cameron accepted that Somalia, which had been without a permanent government since 1991, was a “complex jigsaw puzzle” to which there was “no single solution.”⁶⁴

Other delegates insisted Somalia must quickly install a permanent government. Clinton said there would be “no further extensions” to the timetable and threatened to penalize those stopping progress.

London Conference on Somalia: Communiqué

1. The London Conference on Somalia took place at Lancaster House on 23rd February 2012, attended by fifty-five delegations from Somalia and the international community.
2. We met at a key moment in Somalia's history. Somalia is emerging from the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. African and Somali troops have pushed Al Shabaab out of Mogadishu and other areas. The transitional institutions come to an end in August 2012, and the people of Somalia want clarity on what will follow. The situation remains precarious, and in urgent need of support from the international community.
3. Decisions on Somalia's future rest with the Somali people. The Somali political leadership must be accountable to the people. The international community's role is to facilitate Somalia's progress and development: our strength is in unity and coordinated support to Somalia. We noted the importance of listening to and working with Somalis inside and outside Somalia, and welcomed their engagement in the run-up to this Conference.
4. The Conference focussed on the underlying causes of instability, as well as the symptoms (famine, refugees, piracy, and terrorism). We, the international community, agreed: to inject new momentum into the political process; to strengthen AMISOM and help Somalia develop its own security forces; to help build stability at local level; and to step up action to tackle pirates and terrorists.

Political

5. We agreed that the Transitional Federal Institutions' mandate ends in August 2012. There must be no further extensions. We welcomed the agreements that chart the way towards more representative government: the Transitional Federal Charter, the Djibouti Agreement, the Kampala Accord, and the Roadmap. We welcomed the progress represented by the Garowe Principles, endorsed the priority of convening a Constituent Assembly, and emphasised that the Assembly must be representative of the views of the Somali people of all regions and constituencies, and that women must be part of the political process. In line with Garowe II, we agreed to incentivise progress and act against spoilers to the peace process, and that we would consider proposals in this regard before the Istanbul Conference in June.
6. The Conference recognised the need for the international community to support any dialogue that Somaliland and the TFG or its replacement may agree to establish in order to clarify their future relations.
7. We condemned terrorism and violent extremism, whether perpetrated by Somalis or foreigners. We called on all those willing to reject violence to join the Djibouti peace process. We agreed to develop a defectors' programme to support those who leave armed groups.

8. We emphasised the urgency of Somalia funding its own public services, and using its assets for the benefit of the people, as well as tackling corruption. We welcomed the progress that has been made in establishing a Joint Financial Management Board to increase transparency and accountability in the collection and efficient use of public revenues, as well as international development aid, and which will help strengthen Somali public financial management institutions. A declaration by the initial members of the JFMB is at Annex A.
9. Respect for human rights must be at the heart of the peace process. We called for action to address in particular the grave human rights violations and abuses that women and children face. We emphasised that journalists must be able to operate freely and without fear. Civilians must be protected. We called on the Somali authorities to take measures to uphold human rights and end the culture of impunity. We agreed to step up international efforts including through the UN human rights architecture.

Security and Justice

10. We agreed that security and justice were essential both to a successful political process and to development. Better security could only be achieved sustainably in parallel with better justice and the rule of law.
11. We expressed gratitude to those countries whose troops had served as peacekeepers and paid tribute to the achievements and sacrifices of AMISOM and other forces. We welcomed joint planning by the UN and African Union and reiterated the importance of effective command and control. We welcomed the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2036, which expands AMISOM's mandate and raises the troop ceiling. We encouraged AMISOM to ensure the protection of civilians. We encouraged partners, especially new donors, to contribute to funding for AMISOM, including through the EU.
12. We agreed that, over time, Somalis should take over responsibility for providing their own security and develop their own justice systems to deal with the threats to their security and improve access to justice. We noted that Somalis themselves must decide what security and justice arrangements they need.
13. We acknowledged the good work underway in supporting the Somali security and justice sectors. We agreed that we would build an international framework of partners in order to bring much needed coordination and focus to those efforts, underpinned by a set of principles at annex B, and working closely with the UN's Joint Security Committee.

Piracy

14. We reiterated our determination to eradicate piracy, noting that the problem requires a comprehensive approach on land as well as at sea. We expressed our concern that hostages in Somalia are being held

longer and with more use of violence. We welcomed the work of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. We also welcomed the success of international military efforts, and remain committed to such efforts with robust rules of engagement and sufficient force generation. We agreed that piracy cannot be solved by military means alone, and reiterated the importance of supporting communities to tackle the underlying causes of piracy, and improving the effective use of Somali coastal waters through regional maritime capacity-building measures. We welcomed those initiatives underway and agreed to coordinate and support such initiatives better. We called for full implementation of the Djibouti Code of Conduct and the adoption of an Exclusive Economic Zone. We look forward to reviewing progress including at the Piracy Conference in the UAE in June.

15. We welcomed the efforts of partners in industry against piracy, and called for greater take-up of Best Management Practice on ships. We welcomed current work on international guidance on the use of private armed security companies.
16. There will be no impunity for piracy. We called for greater development of judicial capacity to prosecute and detain those behind piracy both in Somalia and in the wider region and recognised the need to strengthen capacity in regional states. We welcomed new arrangements, which enable some states and naval operations to transfer suspected pirates captured at sea for trial by partners across the Indian Ocean region, and if convicted, to transfer them to prisons in Puntland and Somaliland which meet international standards. We noted the intention to consider further the possibility of creating courts in Somalia specialised in dealing with piracy.
17. We reiterated our determination to prosecute the kingpins of piracy. Recognising work already undertaken, we agreed to enhance coordination on illegal financial flows and to coordinate intelligence gathering and investigations. We noted the establishment of a Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecutions Intelligence Coordination Centre in the Seychelles.

Terrorism

18. Terrorism poses a serious threat to security in Somalia itself, to the region, and internationally. It has inflicted great suffering on the Somali population. We agreed to work together with greater determination, and with full respect for the rule of law, human rights, and international humanitarian law, to build capacity to disrupt terrorism in the region, and to address the root causes of terrorism. We agreed on the importance of disrupting terrorists' travel to and from Somalia, and on the importance of disrupting terrorist finances, and called on countries in the region to implement the Financial Action Task Force's recommendations on combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism. We noted that effective intelligence gathering and investigation, and support to the Somali criminal justice system, were critical to the fight against terrorism. We agreed to work with

the Global Counter Terrorism Forum and other international and regional bodies to deliver this important work.

Stability and Recovery

19. We welcomed the success in some areas of Somalia in establishing local areas of stability, and agreed to increase support to build legitimate and peaceful authorities, and improve services to people living in these areas. We acknowledged the importance of creating the conditions inside Somalia for durable solutions for the displaced, that respect international laws. We agreed that such efforts should promote local and regional cohesion, and converge with the national political process.
20. We considered the implementation of the Mogadishu Recovery and Stabilisation Plan important. We agreed to expand programmes to newly-recovered areas. We would focus support on enabling the delivery of immediate and sustainable benefits to ordinary Somali people: safety and security, economic opportunities and basic services. We would promote effective and accountable local administrations, and support the resolution of disputes.
21. We agreed that all support to local areas of stability should be in accordance with the New Deal for engagement in fragile states recently adopted in Busan, and build on the stabilisation strategies prepared by both IGAD and the Transitional Federal Government. We endorsed a set of principles to guide international support to local areas of stability in Somalia (Annex C). We agreed to continue funding local stability through existing programmes, and noted the establishment of a new Stability Fund to which a number of us will contribute.
22. We agreed that Somalia's long-term reconstruction and economic development depended on a vibrant private sector, and that both aid and Diaspora finance could develop Somalia's considerable potential in livestock, fisheries and other sectors. We noted that stability was a prerequisite for most sustainable investments in infrastructure such as electricity, roads and water systems. We looked forward to further discussion on all these issues at the Istanbul Conference.

Humanitarian

23. The Conference was preceded by a separate meeting on humanitarian issues co-chaired by the United Nations and the United Arab Emirates. Notwithstanding the end of the famine, participants expressed concern at the ongoing humanitarian crisis, and committed to providing humanitarian aid based solely on need. They agreed a set of conclusions on humanitarian issues and linking relief with longer-term recovery.

International Coordination

24. We agreed to carry forward work agreed at London through the International Contact Group on Somalia (ICG), and welcomed

the ICG's decision in Djibouti to look at restructuring to become more effective. We recommended that the ICG establish working groups on the political process, security and justice, and stability and development. We noted that, within the ICG, a core group of engaged countries would drive progress in support of UN, AU and IGAD efforts.

25. We welcomed the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) in facilitating progress in Somalia. We also welcomed the role of IGAD and the African Union, and the support of the League of Arab States, the European Union, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. We encouraged effective coordination between UN entities working on Somalia. While recognising the still challenging security situation in Somalia, we welcomed UNPOS' relocation to Mogadishu and agreed that we would aim to spend more time on the ground in Somalia in order to work more closely with Somalis on the challenging tasks ahead.

Conclusion

26. We expressed the hope that a new era of Somali politics, supported by the international community, will bring peace to Somalia. We are determined to place the interests of the Somali people at the heart of all our actions. We looked forward to the day when the situation in Somalia would have made sufficient progress for an international conference to be held there. In the meantime, we will redouble our efforts to support the people of Somalia in their search for a better future for their country.

London Somalia Conference (May 7, 2013)⁶⁵

The Somalia Conference took place at Lancaster House on 7 May 2013, co-hosted by the UK and Somalia, and attended by fifty-four friends and partners of Somalia. At the Somalia Conference, the international community came together to agree practical measures to support the Federal Government's plans in three key areas—security, justice and public financial management. In addition, the Federal Government presented its vision for the implementation of federalism, the adoption of a permanent constitution, and holding of elections. The conference also agreed to work together to tackle sexual violence in Somalia.

During the conference, Somali Government ministers shared detailed plans for developing the country's armed forces, police, justice sector and public financial management systems. The international community endorsed those plans and committed expertise and funding of over \$300m to deliver them. They also agreed to work together through joint funding mechanisms, with the Federal Government taking the lead on coordination.

Security

The conference welcomed the Government's plans for national security architecture and for developing its armed forces, including the integration of militias. The Government is committed to ensuring that these security structures are accountable, inclusive, proportionate and sustainable; and respect a civilian chain of command, the rule of law, and human rights. The international community agreed to support implementation of the Federal Government's security plans, and to provide assistance which should be coordinated by the Federal Government.

The conference also commended the Somalis and international partners for progress made in combating piracy over the last year including the efforts of Puntland and other regional or local governments and welcomed the Federal Government's Maritime Resource and Security Strategy. The international community expressed its determination to work with Somalia to eradicate piracy and other maritime crimes, and expressed support for the Federal Government's ongoing efforts to establish internationally recognised Somali waters, as well as partners' efforts to support the development of Somali maritime security capacities and to bring to justice those behind piracy.

Justice and Policing

The conference welcomed the Federal Government's vision for equal access for all to a robust, impartial and effective justice system, and commended its justice action plan setting out immediate priorities for assistance.

It also welcomed the Government's four-year action plan to create an accountable, effective and responsive police service for Somalis and agreed to align assistance for both justice and police behind Federal Government plans. The conference looked forward to the establishment of one Rule of Law Fund, under the leadership of the Federal Government and donors, to channel funding for the justice and policing plans to dramatically improve coordination of their support.

The conference also committed to support the Government's efforts to combat terrorism. An effective and secure criminal justice system, including the establishment and maintenance of prisons administered with respect for human dignity, will be central to Somalia's ability to tackle terrorism in a human rights-compliant manner and to reduce the threat from al-Shabaab in the long-term.

Public Financial Management

The Federal Government set out its determination to tackle corruption, and fund public services. The conference welcomed the Government's four-year plan to establish transparent and effective public financial management systems and committed to coordinate

assistance using the structure set out by the Government. Partnership between Somalia and the international community will form the basis of future cooperation: the international community is committed to provide coordinated and sustained support for implementation of the Federal Government's plans. As part of this, a number of partners also announced new funding and initiatives such as equipment and plans to send experts and provide training.

The UK and the Oil and Gas Resources of Somalia

According to oil industry experts, Somalia has some of the largest prospective resources within East Africa. Somalia hopes to gain revenue from oil and gas, currently hidden underground in Somalia (onshore) and below the Indian Ocean floor (offshore). In the 1980s, there was an "oil and gas exploration rush" to Somalia, driven by the country's huge oil and gas potential. The rush had been led by Conoco-Phillips, Shell (Pecten), Amoco, Eni, Total, and Texaco, who left the country in 1991 in "force majeure" but were waiting to come back at the right time, security-wise.

In August 2013, the British Soma Oil & Gas Company signed an agreement with the Somali government to conduct a survey of its territorial waters to assess oil and natural gas reserves. The company had been founded in early 2013 with the purpose of exploring the reserve potential in Somalia. The agreement was the first oil and gas deal reached since the country formed a federal government in 2012.⁶⁶ Soma said it would help update historical data on Somalia's energy sector using modern techniques. In exchange for providing seismic mapping data to the Somali government, Soma would be granted the right to apply for up to twelve offshore oil blocks of its choice.⁶⁷

Iranian Involvement in Somalia

Relations between Iran and Somalia were hampered for several years as a result of Iranian support of antigovernmental insurgent groups in Somalia.⁶⁸ In 2006, Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi accused Iran of providing support to the Union of Islamic Courts' militia, an Islamist insurgent group that had seized control of southern Somalia.⁶⁹ According to a United Nations Security Council report that year, Iran had supplied three shipments of arms to the insurgents between July and September 2006. The report detailed that the Iranian government had supplied the Union of Islamic Courts' militia with three consignments of ammunition, medical supplies, and doctors during that period in violation of a 1992 United Nations arms embargo on the region.⁷⁰

Despite these difficulties, Iran and Somalia have explored political ties in recent years. In July 2008, Iran and Somalia discussed Somali political developments and bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Days later, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki offered to mediate an ongoing Somali political conflict involving several internal Somali political factions.⁷¹

In April 2009, Mottaki joined representatives from the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and other international donors to discuss Somali security and humanitarian issues. At this gathering, Iran said that outside involvement from various countries had intensified a nineteen-year-old internal conflict in Somalia. He said that Somali stability would come from internal political reconciliation. Mottaki also pledged Iran's support in establishing peace and security in Somalia.⁷²

Iran's diplomatic relationship with Somalia has focused on drawing international attention to regional and strategic concerns presented by Somali insurgents and pirates. In November 2009, the commander of the Iranian navy, Rear-Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, stated that Iran's warships would maintain their presence in the Gulf of Aden for as long as necessary to contain Somali piracy.⁷³

In December 2009, the Iranian Foreign Ministry issued an official condemnation of a suicide bombing in Mogadishu that had occurred early in the month. The December 4 attack had killed twenty-three people at Banadir University, including Somalia's education minister, Abudullahi Wayel; health minister, Qamar Aden; and higher-education minister, Ibrahim Hassan Adow. Iranian officials articulated their support for the legal Somali government and said that a successful counterinsurgency relied on a peaceful diplomatic process.

In late December 2009, Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, met with his Somalian counterpart, Ali Ahmed Jama Jangeli, in Tehran to discuss the terrorist activities carried out by Somali groups both within the African country and around the region. Mottaki asserted the need for regional and wider Islamic cooperation in containing Somali terrorism and further stated that Iran would be willing to participate in the reestablishment of peace and security in Somalia.⁷⁴ In March 2010, Mottaki attended a four-way meeting between Iran, Kenya, Somalia, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to raise regional and global awareness about Somalia's political situation.⁷⁵

Iran is among the countries with the highest nonmilitary investment and aid delivery to Somalia. In 2011, drought and famine affected

millions of people across Africa, with Somalia being the hardest-hit country, in what was described as the worst drought in the Horn of Africa in sixty years. The Iranian Red Crescent was among the first groups to initiate a program to resettle internally displaced persons after the United Nations declared that three regions of Somalia were no longer experiencing famine. Iran's Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation (IKRF) launched a feeding program in the famine-stricken capital city of Mogadishu. IKRF opened up offices in Mogadishu during the peak of the 2011 famine as a part of its continued assistance to the people of Somalia. Iran dispatched thousands of tons of food aid and medical supplies to the people of Somalia in April and August 2011.⁷⁶

On November 14, 2012, top government officials from Turkey and Iran arrived in Mogadishu on a one-day visit to bolster diplomatic and economic ties with Somalia. Leading the two delegations were Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Ali Akbar Salehi and Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu.⁷⁷ Salehi told journalists at the airport upon his arrival that Iran would soon establish a diplomatic presence in Somalia. "Our purpose in coming to Somalia is to keep extending our brotherly hand to the Somali people," Salehi said. "We are delighted to be in Mogadishu today, and very soon the Iranian government will open the Embassy of Iran in Somalia."⁷⁸ The two ministers pledged their countries' support in improving Somalia's infrastructure, with Iran planning to construct a hospital and Turkey offering to build a road.

Salehi met with the Somali Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon Saa'id in Mogadishu and wished stability, security, and progress for the Somali government and nation, saying that the Islamic Republic of Iran was ready to develop all out cooperation with the African state.⁷⁹ The Somali premier, for his part, expressed gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Iran for sending aid to Somalia and welcomed further promotion of cooperation between the two countries. During the meeting, Saa'id described relations between the two countries as historical and explained measures taken by Mogadishu to improve the situation in the African state.

In a meeting with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Salehi announced the reopening of the Iranian embassy and the inauguration of an Iran Red Crescent Society office in Mogadishu. He added that Iranians send humanitarian aid to Somalia in accordance with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei's remarks about supporting the Somali people.⁸⁰

Sheikh Mohamud, for his part, said that the Iranian foreign minister's visit to Mogadishu and the reopening of the Islamic Republic's embassy in the Somali capital showed that the two countries were eager to boost cooperation.⁸¹

Eritrean Support to Armed Opposition Groups⁸²

On May 15, 2009, by a presidential statement, the Security Council expressed concern at reports that Eritrea was providing arms to Somali opposition groups and called on the monitoring group to investigate. On December 23, 2009, the council, by Resolution 1907 (2009), expanded the mandate of the monitoring group and demanded that all member states, in particular Eritrea, cease arming, training, and equipping armed groups and their members, including al-Shabaab, that aimed to destabilize the region.

The government of Eritrea continued to provide political, diplomatic, financial, and—allegedly—military assistance to armed opposition groups in Somalia, in violation of Resolution 1844 (2008). By late 2009, possibly in response to international pressure, the scale and nature of Eritrean support had either diminished or become less visible, but had not altogether ceased. In the past, Eritrea had supported non-Somali armed opposition groups in the Horn of Africa, including (but not limited to) the Oromo Liberation Front, the Ogaden National Liberation Front, and the United Western Somali Liberation Front.

Eritrean Policy toward Somalia

Eritrean engagement in Somalia can be understood only in terms of Asmara's broader regional policies, most importantly its continuing dispute with Ethiopia. Since the cessation of hostilities between the two countries in 2000, Asmara had sought to counter Ethiopian influence in the region and supported armed groups within Ethiopia who opposed the current government. Since 2006, and possibly earlier, Eritrea had supported opposition to the Transitional Federal Government, which it perceived as a proxy for the government of Ethiopia.

In this context, it had been the stated policy of the government of Eritrea to oppose the Djibouti agreement of August 18, 2008, deny the legality and legitimacy of the Transitional Federal Government established pursuant to that process, and call for the expulsion of the AMISOM forces based in Mogadishu. In support of this policy, the government of Eritrea had provided significant and sustained political,

financial, and material support, including arms, ammunition, and training to armed opposition groups in Somalia since at least 2007.

The government of Eritrea acknowledged that it did not recognize the Transitional Federal Government, but denied supporting “one party against another regarding the Somali issue.”⁸³ This position contradicted previous statements of the government of Eritrea that had portrayed the Transitional Federal Government as illegal, illegitimate, and externally imposed,⁸⁴ while describing Asmara’s support to Somali armed opposition groups as a “legal right and moral obligation.”⁸⁵

Late in May 2009, during al-Shabaab’s and Hizb al-Islam’s most significant offensive against the Transitional Federal Government and AMISOM, ARS-Asmara leader Hassan Dahir Aweys expressed his gratitude to Eritrea: “Eritrea supports us, and Ethiopia is our enemy—we once helped both countries but Ethiopia did not reward us.”⁸⁶

Political Support

During the course of 2007, the government of Eritrea sponsored the establishment of ARS as an opposition movement.⁸⁷ According to ARS officials present in Asmara at the time, who participated in these events, senior government officials—notably the minister of information, Ali Abdou; the head of political affairs for the ruling People’s Front for Democracy and Justice, Yemane Ghebreab; and a senior military intelligence officer known as Te’ame⁸⁸—played a direct role in decisions concerning key ARS appointments. In particular, the government of Eritrea insisted on several key ARS appointments, namely, that Yusuf Indha’adde become secretary of defense (or military affairs), that Yusuf Hassan Ibrahim “Dheeg” become foreign secretary, and that Abdifatah Mohamed Ali become finance secretary. ARS leaders resisted these appointments in discussions with senior government officials, but were overruled. In effect, the senior military commander for the ARS-Asmara wing, Yusuf Indha’adde, was appointed on instructions issued by the government of Eritrea.

Between November 2007 and April 2009, Eritrea hosted the senior leadership of ARS (later the ARS-Asmara faction), including Hassan Dahir Aweys, while its forces conducted repeated attacks on the Transitional Federal Government and AMISOM. Because the Somali passport is not considered valid for travel to most countries, the government of Eritrea provided Eritrean passports to ARS leaders, as well as at least one senior al-Shabaab leader, Mukhtar Robow. Following the split in ARS and the formation of the new Transitional Federal Government

administration headed by Sharif Sheikh Ahmed on January 31, 2009, Eritrea continued to host and support ARS-Asmara, headed by Hassan Dahir Aweys, and subsequently facilitated the formation of a new opposition alliance, Hizb al-Islam.

Financial Support

In addition to military support, the government of Eritrea has consistently provided financial support to Somali armed opposition groups, including ARS-Asmara, Hizb al-Islam and al-Shabaab. The provision of cash permits armed opposition groups to purchase weapons from government forces, thereby arming themselves while disarming their adversaries.

Following the formation of ARS in September 2007, the government of Eritrea principally directed financial support via the ARS. However, according to ARS officials, during the course of 2008, Eritrea had established direct links with other opposition groups, including al-Shabaab and the Ras Kamboni forces. Colonel Te'ame told ARS officials, "We have experience of this kind of struggle, and we must have direct relationships with groups in each region." According to these same sources, payments to each group were in the order of US\$40,000–50,000 per month, plus additional funds for large-scale operations.

Cash transfers were usually undertaken by Eritrean diplomats or intelligence officials, often in foreign countries. Intelligence officials of the Transitional Federal Government informed the monitoring group that they had arrested a German national acting as a cash courier for the government of Eritrea as he arrived at Mogadishu International Airport in July 2009. The monitoring group had received numerous mutually-corroborating reports from credible Somali sources and foreign intelligence agencies identifying several Eritrean officials engaged in such transactions. Payments were delivered either directly to representatives of Somali armed groups (in Eritrea or in Somalia) or transferred via *hawala* money transfer companies or Somali businessmen to field commanders.

Cash for opposition groups was also funneled via the Eritrean embassies in Kenya, Djibouti, and Dubai. The monthly payments typically consisted of US\$40,000–60,000 to each group, plus additional funds for specific operations. An estimated US\$1.6 million of such funding may have passed through Kenya alone in 2008. In September 2008, one such courier (an Eritrean government official) traveled from Kenya by land to a location in the Lower Juba region, where he handed over an estimated US\$60,000 to a senior official of the Ras Kamboni forces.

Operational Support

On April 23, 2009, the government of Eritrea facilitated the return of Hassan Dahir Aweys to Somalia in order that he assume the leadership of Hizb al-Islam. Aweys and four other individuals traveled from Asmara to Mogadishu, landing at the K50 airport southwest of the city, where they were met by other Hizb al-Islam leaders and supporters. Aweys left Asmara in possession of an estimated US\$200,000, which he subsequently distributed to various Hizb al-Islam leaders.

In 2009–2010, Eritrea continued to send arms to Somalia in small vessels via the northern Somali port of Laasqoray for onward shipment to al-Shabaab forces in southern Somalia by Mohamed Sa'iid Atom. In May 2009, Eritrea allegedly sent Ukrainian-made small arms and antitank weapons to Hizb al-Islam via the port of Kismayo.

In August 2009, the Kenyan authorities acknowledged that they had expelled two Eritreans, one of them a diplomat named Negash, on security grounds. Negash had reportedly entered Kenya through a land border and then traveled overland to Somalia where he met with leaders of both Hizb al-Islam/Ras Kamboni forces and al-Shabaab.

Training

Eritrea has maintained training facilities for members of Somali armed opposition groups since at least 2006 and has at times deployed trainers or military advisers to assist armed opposition groups inside Somalia. Eritrea also maintained training camps for members of Ethiopian opposition groups. Multiple Somali and international sources have described training facilities for ARS fighters near Assab, in eastern Eritrea. In May 2008, when the ARS split into two wings, the government of Eritrea moved nearly two-thirds of its training activities to another camp near Teseney, to the west. Consignments of weapons and ammunitions destined for Somalia were smuggled overland via eastern Ethiopia. Ethiopian soldiers reportedly captured some of the arms and ammunition near the border.

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The Democratization and Peace Process in Somalia

Somalia has been without a stable central government since the ouster of former president Ziad Barre in 1991. While until recently (the end of 2012) the transitional government controlled only a few parts of Mogadishu, a coalition of African Union (AMISOM), Kenyan, and Ethiopian forces have since made key territorial gains in their fight against al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen's radical Islamic fighters. After decades of warfare, Somalia has been undergoing a peace and national reconciliation process, with the country's Transitional Federal Institutions implementing the Roadmap for the End of Transition, devised in Mogadishu on September 6, 2011. The roadmap is a detailed nine-page list of dozens of tasks designed to steer Somalia toward more permanent political institutions and greater national security and stability. These tasks are grouped under the headings of security, a new constitution (due by June 2012), political outreach and reconciliation, and good governance.

The roadmap includes measures for countering piracy, co-opting local militia groups (although there is no specific reference to al-Shabaab), preventing the recruitment of children into armed groups, demarcating territorial waters, reducing the size of parliament and planning for elections, developing peace-building initiatives, and tackling corruption.¹ It was initialed by the Somali prime minister, the leaders of the regional entities Puntland and Galmudug, the head of the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a (ASWJ) militia group, the UN envoy to Somalia, and representatives of the League of Arab States, the African Union, and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The roadmap spells out priority measures to be carried out before the current transitional governing arrangements end on August 20, 2012.

Milestones in the Somali Peace Process

- **The UN-brokered Djibouti Peace Agreement**, signed between the TFG and the opposition Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) in August 2008, was a major step forward in the peace process. The agreement led to the election in January 2009 of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, chairman of the ARS, as president of Somalia; the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces from Somalia; and the deployment of AU (AMISOM) forces to support the new government to stabilize the situation in the country
- **The Kampala Accord**, signed on June 9, 2011, was a key breakthrough on the political front. The president of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, and the speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan, signed the Kampala Accord in meetings hosted by the Ugandan government and supported by UNPOS and other international partners. It established a detailed political roadmap for the way ahead. The roadmap charted a clear course forward, including elections, to end the transitional period in August 2012. It set out four priority tasks for ending the transition—security, a constitution, reconciliation, and good governance—and was based on the concept of transparency, inclusiveness, and Somali ownership of the process. The document also established compliance mechanisms and made clear that future international assistance was based on the Somalis following through on their commitments
- **A consultative meeting on ending the transition in Somalia** convened successfully in Mogadishu on September 4–6, 2011. The meeting brought together high-level representatives of the Transitional Federal Institutions, the regional States of Puntland and Galmudug, and the government-allied group Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, as well as most of the major international partners. Having all of the main parties sign the roadmap in Mogadishu was a significant step in the Somali peace process
- **UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Somalia** on December 9, 2011. The UN secretary-general was the highest-ranking foreign official to visit the war-torn city for many years. In his historic visit to Mogadishu, the secretary-general reiterated his personal commitment to work for sustainable peace, saying the Somalis had waited long enough to realize the dream of a safe, secure, prosperous, and democratic country at peace with itself and its neighbors²
- **UNPOS relocated to Mogadishu** January 2012. The United Nations' efforts to achieve peace, reconciliation, and stability in Somalia are led and coordinated by the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), a field operation of the Department of Political Affairs. UNPOS was first established in 1995 and operates under a mandate from the United Nations Security Council, under the leadership of the special representative of the secretary-general, Augustine P. Mahiga. Stepping up the UN's political support to the Somali transition, UNPOS relocated to Mogadishu from its former current base in Nairobi, Kenya,

in January 2012. The relocation demonstrated the strong commitment of the United Nations to work alongside the Somali people and their leaders to build peace, political stability, and a hopeful future

- **Delegates met in Addis Ababa** on May 23, 2012, and agreed on a series of deadlines to build relevant institutions to review and adopt a new constitution. The meeting was attended by Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Speaker of Parliament Sharif Hassan Sheikh Adan [*sic*], and the presidents of Puntland and Galmudug, as well as delegates from the United Nations, the African Union, the Arab League, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, and the Somali government-allied militia Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a. According to the meeting's final communiqué, the signatories recommended that the president of the Transitional Federal Government be provided a legal basis to steer the constitutional process, that the National Constituent Assembly should convene as soon as possible, and that an arbitration board should be established to handle any disputes that might arise among the elders. They also agreed to create a coordination office in Mogadishu to monitor and ensure effective communication between all parties involved in the transition. At the conference's closing ceremony, President Ahmed pledged to work toward implementing all agreements to facilitate the end of the transition period³

The military achievements and relative improvement in the security conditions in Mogadishu paved the way for the implementation of the Somali political roadmap. The key security breakthrough came in August 2011, when the militant organization al-Shabaab withdrew from Mogadishu following an offensive by African Union peacekeepers mission, known as AMISOM. Later, Kenya and Ethiopia sent troops into Somalia, joining in the effort to defeat al-Shabaab. At year's end, Kenya had joined AMISOM, and the United Nations had expanded its package of support to the mission.

In addition, there had been a series of internal disputes between al-Shabaab leaders. All this altered the political and military situation significantly. With embattled al-Shabaab forces on the run, the most important achievement of the military operations was that it had shifted the military balance to the side of the TFG and its allies. A rift between the al-Shabaab leaders Abdi Godane and Dahir Aweys on the role of international jihadists in the organization underlined the ideological crisis in the group. Drifting between its bizarre and implausible agenda of unifying the Muslim states of the world and building a Taliban-style theocratic state in Somalia, al-Shabaab's appeal to the youth of Somalia was waning.

The Somali Elders Assembly

For a very long time, Somali elders have been the leaders of Somalia. For centuries they have served as judges under the Somali customary legal system known as *xeer* and most recently during the last twenty years of the Somali civil war because of an absence of proper judicial institutions. Respected by many, they are considered to derive their authority as the guardians of their various communities and the Somali nation. With the absence of direct elections because of security conditions, the Somali elders were the next-best solution in terms of creating a representative government and a step forward toward a full democracy in Somalia.

The Constitution

The first phase of the creation of the new permanent government was guided by the Somali elders as 825 members of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) were selected to prepare and approve the draft constitution. The NCA took eight days to debate and vote on the new constitution. The provisional constitution was adopted on August 1, 2012, in Mogadishu.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia is the supreme law of Somalia and provides the legal foundation for its existence. It sets out the rights and duties of its citizens and defines the structure of government.⁴ Here are some of its significant features:

- Inclusion of a bill of rights that declares everyone to be equal, regardless of clan or religion
- The stipulation that Islam is the only religion of the state, disallowing the propagation of any other religion in Somalia (as has heretofore also been the case)
- The clear stipulation that Sharia (Islamic law) is the legal foundation of the country and all laws must be in compliance with it
- The outlawing of female genital mutilation
- Protection of the right to an abortion to save the mother's life
- A proscription against the use of children in armed conflict
- Inclusion of citizens' right to education up to the secondary school level
- Provision for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- An emphasis on the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes
- The provision of a federal system for Somalia

But such matters as the status of Mogadishu, the capital, and of the borders and the distribution of power and resources between the regions were left undecided.

Although the constitution applied immediately, it was originally planned that it be put to a national referendum to take effect. However, the referendum was cancelled because of the impossibility of holding it in areas controlled by al-Shabaab. “We are very happy today that you . . . responsibly completed the procedure by voting for the constitution,” Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali told the assembly after it approved the draft by a landslide of 96 percent.⁵

The United Nations Security Council warned the al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabaab rebels against trying to impede the peace process in Somalia.⁶ The fifteen council members hailed the adoption of the new provisional constitution by the NCA, saying it marked an “important milestone” in the eastern African nation’s transition toward “more stable and accountable governance.”

“The members of the Security Council strongly condemn ongoing attempts, including by the Shabaab, to undermine the transition process,” they said in a statement. “They recall in this regard the Security Council’s willingness to take measures against both internal and external actors engaged in actions aimed at undermining the peace and reconciliation process.” The council members called for new members of Parliament to be chosen “as quickly as possible, and in a transparent manner,” stressing that the lawmakers should be picked “without fear of violence or intimidation.”⁷ The UN’s special representative to Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, had reported instances of bribes and intimidation in the designation process for new members of Parliament.

The Selection of Parliamentarians

The provisional constitution allowed for the creation of the Houses of the Federal Parliament, consisting of the House of the People and the Upper House.⁸ The members of Parliament were selected by 135 clan elders according to the “4.5 formula,” whereby key positions were distributed between the four major clans (Hawiye, Darood, Dir, Digil) and 0.5 positions given to a coalition of communities. Under the formula, each of Somalia’s four main clan families named thirty members to the group of elders nominating the members of Parliament. The remaining fifteen were drawn from a coalition of minority groups.

Following their selection, the nominees’ credentials were reviewed and vetted by the Technical Selection Committee (TSC). In that process, the TSC required that the new legislators to be Somali citizens, at least high-school graduates, free from having ties with any warlord, and not to have committed any atrocity during the civil war. The TSC

rejected close to seventy parliamentary nominees who did not meet the criteria.

On August 20, 2012, the selected members of the Parliament of the Republic of Somalia were sworn in as members of the House of the People for a term of four years. The house members were well educated, youthful, and had good female representation. Over 54 percent of the members had university degrees, and out of the 275 members, 14 percent (thirty-eight) were women.⁹

The members were sworn in at a ceremony held in the airport base, which was under the protection of the African Union. The fortified airport zone adjoined the base for the nearly 17,000-strong AMISOM force that had been working with the transitional government and other allied forces to eliminate al-Shabaab militants from Somalia.¹⁰ The ceremony marked the end of eight years of UN-backed TFG transitional federal governance and the long-awaited end of the transitional period in Somalia. “The conclusion of the Transition should mark the beginning of more representative government in Somalia,” said a statement from the international partners, including the United States and European Union.¹¹

The Election of the President

The new Parliament—comprising a 275-member lower house and a yet-to-be-launched upper house with a maximum of fifty-four members—was tasked with electing the president, the speaker, and two deputy speakers. It was allowed to go ahead with voting if a quorum of more than two-thirds of the lower house—184 members—was present.

The new president would then appoint a prime minister, who in turn would form a council of ministers. By August 25, 228 members of Parliament had been appointed, and they voted to elect the former labor minister, Mohamed Osman Jawari, as speaker of Parliament. On August 28, 2012, the speaker of the House of the People and two deputy speakers were elected by the members of the House of the People.

Twenty-four candidates ran to become Somalia’s first post-transition president. Many of the candidates—including the current president, Sharif Ahmed, Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, and the Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden—had already served in a government that had been tainted by corruption allegations, although President Sharif Ahmed denied the allegations. Apart from the front-runners, some new faces also competed, including returning members of the diaspora, such as Yusuf Garad Omar, the former head of the

BBC's Somali Service, and Ahmed Ismail Samatar, the former dean of the Institute for Global Citizenship and a professor of international studies at Macalester College in Minnesota, in the United States.¹²

According to the end of the transition roadmap, a new president and government should have been elected by August 20, 2012, but this was pushed back to September 10, 2012, following delays in the process.

The New Elected President of Somalia

Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was chosen by lawmakers on September 10, 2012, to be Somalia's new president.¹³

President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was born on November 29, 1955, in Jalalaqsi, in the central Hiraaan region of Somalia.¹⁴ He was from the powerful Hawiye tribe, the majority clan in Mogadishu, and was married with children.

From 1978 to 1981, Mohamud attended Somali National University and received a bachelor of technology degree. In 1988, he received a master of technical education degree from Bhopal University in India. From 1989 to 1990, he attended the MBA program at the Somali Institute of Management and Administrative Development in Somalia in collaboration with State University of New York (SUNY at Albany) but did not complete it.

In academic and NGO circles, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, the cofounder of the Somali Institute of Management and Administrative Development (SIMAD), is said to be a respected and influential figure who specializes in education. SIMAD was set up to ensure that war-ravaged Somalia got its fair share of managers and administrators. Currently, SIMAD is a leading university in academics, consultancy, research, and training in Somalia. As of September 2011, close to 4,000 students were registered in its undergraduate programs and more than 1,500 students have graduated since 2002 in various disciplines.

Mohamud did stints with the UN children's agency UNICEF in the first years after the 1991 ouster of Ziad Barre. In 2001, he joined the Center for Research and Dialogue (CRD) as a researcher. He extensively traveled in south central Somalia, conducting research in the postconflict reconstruction issues and local people's priorities. Later on, he became a principal researcher. In 2004, CRD appointed him as a focal point for the issues related to the civil society strengthening. In consultation with other prominent civil society members, he worked on establishing the Mogadishu monthly forum, which became the first open neutral space for the public to express their views regarding the pertinent issues of the time.

In late 2005, he became program coordinator in CRD. The civil society in Mogadishu collectively appointed him to lead the formation of the Somali Civil Society Forum—a conglomerate of networks, coalitions, and action groups engaged in different sectors. Since then, the forum has become a unified voice for the Somali Civil Society.

In 2009–2010, he worked as consultant in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in establishing the Somali Aid Coordination and Management Unit within the ministry. In 2009, he coauthored a report for the UN Development Program in which he underlined the importance of the huge but politically-fragmented Somali diaspora, arguing that it should play a more “systematic” role in peace building in Somalia.

In 2011, he became a founding member and the first chairman of the Peace and Development Party (PDP) in Somalia. It was the first political party established in Mogadishu.

Laura Hammond, a British academic who worked with SIMAD, said Hassan Sheikh Mohamud had managed to hold talks with the extremist al-Shabaab, who, even after they had chased other groups out of the areas they controlled, had allowed SIMAD to remain.¹⁵

The Nomination of a New Prime Minister and Cabinet

On October 5, 2012, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, Somalia’s new president, named Abdi Farah Shirdon Saaid as the country’s new prime minister. Saaid, a political newcomer, was a prominent businessman in neighboring Kenya and is married to Asha Haji Elmi, an influential Somali peace activist. Saaid had a reputation for being above Somalia’s notoriously volatile clan politics, similar to the new president, and the news of his appointment was welcomed by foreign governments. Saaid’s appointment as the prime minister was approved by Somali legislators.¹⁶

On November 4, Saaid unveiled the ten-minister cabinet for Somalia, which he said was capable to “address the demands, the concerns and the expectations of all the different components and players in Somalia.”¹⁷ The following are the names of the ministers he proposed:

- Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister—Fauzia Yusuf Haji Aden
- Defense Minister—Abdihakim Mohamed Haji Fiqi
- Finance/Planning Minister—Mohamed Hassan Suleyman
- Industry and Trade Minister—Mohamed Ahmed Hassa
- Information Minister—Abdullahi Ilmoqe Hersi
- Interior and Security Minister—Abdikarin Hussein Guuled

- Justice Minister—Abdullahi Abyan Nur
- Natural Resources Minister—Abdirizak Omar Mohamed
- Reconstruction Minister—Muhiyadin Mohamed Kaalmoy
- Social Development Minister—Maryan Qasim

He said that taking into account the current situation he had “appointed a lean, effective cabinet that can lead the government in this difficult situation and that can bring full, reliable peace.” With the appointments, he tried to balance the main clans. The list also included two women and retained three ministers who had served during the former transitional government. President Mohamud said the government had “made the cabinet of ten members to save Somalia” as it was difficult to include all subclans in cabinet. He stressed that “subclans who missed themselves in the list should know that they are not hated.”

Several features of the cabinet drew special attention, including the nomination of the country’s first female foreign minister, the cabinet’s mix of old and new faces, and the lineup’s break with the “4.5 system” of clan representation.¹⁸ The next step was to have the cabinet list approved by Parliament and the speaker of Parliament, Mohamed Sheikh Osman Jawari.

But on November 8, thirty members of Parliament rejected Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon’s incomplete Cabinet of Ministers. The members wrote a statement to Speaker Jawari, stating that it was a violation of the Somali Federal Constitution for Parliament to take a vote of confidence on the incomplete list of proposed cabinet members.

On November 13, Somalia’s new Parliament endorsed all ten ministers appointed by the prime minister, approving one of the smallest-ever cabinets for the recovering nation.¹⁹ According to Speaker Jawari, 219 parliamentarians had endorsed the cabinet in the vote. He added that three lawmakers voted against the cabinet, while three others abstained from voting.²⁰ On November 15, Somalia’s Chief Justice Aidid Abdullahi Ilka Hanaf presided over the swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet ministers at the presidential compound in Mogadishu.²¹

Al-Shabaab’s Response to Somali Democratization and the Peace Process

Al-Shabaab vowed to disrupt the process of democratization of Somalia. According to pro-al-Shabaab media, the officials said that they would by all means attempt to interrupt the election whose agenda is to promote Western ideologies in Somalia, which they do

not accept, said Sheikh Mohamud al-Mujtahid, an al-Shabaab official.²² He further added that they had supplied enough mujahideen to carry out suicides and heavy explosions to inflict casualties on Parliament while meeting in Mogadishu to elect a president. Meanwhile, Transitional Federal Government of Somalia officials said that security had been beefed up to ensure a peaceful election free from al-Shabaab hindrance and other related attacks and promised that the TFG forces would defend and use all forces at their disposal.

A senior official of the radical Islamist group, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, said that the elections would have no negative consequences on the group. "I urge al-Shabaab fighters to multiply their struggle against the government and the supporting forces from the regional countries, under the auspices of the African Union Mission in Somalia," he said. Speaking via *Al-Andalus*, the broadcast mouthpiece of al-Shabaab, Sheikh Aweys underlined that the convening of a (federal) parliament and election of a president was a show staged by Western powers. According to Sheikh Aweys, those contesting for the post of president served the interests of the enemies of Allah. He went on to accuse the UN secretary-general's special envoy to Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, of "shamefully masterminding the process." He said the elections would achieve "nothing" except to bring forth a team of stooges under the protection of foreign armies.²³

In July–August 2012, al-Shabaab launched a campaign of suicide attacks to undermine the election process, killing dozens of people. The United Nations, African Union, and East Africa's main diplomatic body, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), warned in a rare joint statement that efforts at establishing peace in Somalia were at risk. The three organizations said they were "greatly concerned" at efforts to undermine a roadmap signed by Somalia's disparate leaders, the latest effort to bring peace after more than two decades of war. "The roadmap continues to be jeopardized by the actions of individuals and groups in and out of Somalia, working to undermine the fragile progress we have collectively made in recent months," the statement read. "We have come too far, and too much is at stake, for us to allow the process to backslide at the exact moment Somalia has its best opportunity for peace in decades."

The UN, AU, and IGAD said their statement was a "warning and a final opportunity" for those standing against peace. The "unambiguous warning to all potential spoilers" did not specifically name any people or groups, but said noncompliance with the order would result

in requests for sanctions from IGAD nations or from the UN Security Council. The trio would take “concrete action” in coming weeks if it continued.²⁴ Al-Shabaab responded to the declaration with additional suicide attacks in Mogadishu and Dhusamareb.

*The Assassination Attempt against the Somali President*²⁵

At least eight people were killed and six wounded on September 12, 2012, when at least two explosions rocked the Jazeera Hotel where President Mohamud, in office less than forty-eight hours, was meeting with other African diplomats. A United Nations statement said three suicide bombers in Somali military uniforms had attempted to enter the hotel but that security forces killed them before they got inside. According to eyewitnesses, a man wearing a government military uniform tried to enter the hotel and then blew himself up outside. Gunfire broke out between the attackers and government and African Union troops before a car bomb exploded.

Neither Mohamud nor any of the visiting foreign officials were harmed in the attack, but the attempt put a quick and bloody end to the president's short “honeymoon” after defeating incumbent President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed in a parliamentary vote. Mohamud had been meeting with Kenyan Foreign Minister Sam Ogeri and other officials from the African Union when the suicide bombers attacked. The Jazeera Hotel was near the Mogadishu airport, which was the base for the AMISOM forces that protected the fragile government. Mohamud was living at the hotel until arrangements could be completed for him to move into the presidential palace.

A spokesman for al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack in an interview with the French news agency *Agence France-Presse*. “We are responsible for the attack against the so-called president and the delegation,” Ali Mohamud Rage said. Al-Shabaab did not recognize Mohamud's government, saying it was illegitimate and foreign-backed.

In an *Al Jazeera* interview, Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage spoke about the new president's initiative to start talks with the armed group: “The president you are talking about is not a man who came by the will of the Somali people or for their sake. He was brought by the West and Somalia's neighbors. He was voted for by people with foreign passports. He has nothing to offer so there is no reason for us to talk to him.”²⁶

Speaking briefly to reporters after the incident, Mohamud vowed that his government would improve security. “You see what is happening in

front of this hotel,” he said. The United Nations’ top official in Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, condemned the attack: “Somalia has achieved tremendous progress over the last few months. Such attempts to push the country back into chaos and violence will not deter the Somali people’s determination to move forward.”

On September 16, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was inaugurated amid tight security in Mogadishu. The ceremony took place only four days after the assassination attempt. The attack highlighted the serious security challenges he and the country faced. Somalia’s new leader put reconciliation and security as a priority, saying that he was willing to start talks with al-Shabaab, the same group that had claimed responsibility for trying to kill him.²⁷

On September 22, 2012, Mustafa Haji Maalim, a member of Somalia’s new Parliament, was shot dead in Mogadishu. Gunmen attacked Maalim after he left a mosque following evening prayers in front of his house in Mogadishu’s southern district of Waberi and later died from his injuries at a nearby hospital. Mustafa was the father-in-law of former president Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. The speaker of Parliament, Mohamed Osman Jawari, said Maalim was killed by “elements that are known for cruelty,” an apparent reference to the Islamist militant group al-Shabaab.²⁸

Al-Shabaab militants claimed responsibility for the assassination and threatened to kill every member of Parliament in the country. “How many times had we warned Somalis against joining the infidel government?” a spokesman for the group said afterward. “Let it be a good lesson for the rest.”²⁹

Al-Shabaab Terror Attacks in 2013

In 2013, terrorist bombings and targeted assassinations continued to plague Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia.

*Attack on the Courthouse in Mogadishu*³⁰

On April 15, a nine-man suicide squad blasted its way into Mogadishu’s main court complex, some blowing up their explosive vests while others sprayed gunfire. Interior Minister Abdikarin Hussein Guled told reporters that “Six detonated themselves, and three were shot dead by security forces. All the attackers were killed in the courthouse raid.” Twenty-nine civilians and nine al-Shabaab militants were killed and fifty-eight people injured in the terror attack.

Al-Shabaab spokesman Sheikh Ali Mohamud Rage said only five suicide attackers died in the fighting at the court complex and vowed there would be fresh attacks: "This was a holy action which targeted nonbelievers who were in a meeting within the court complex. We will continue until Somalia is liberated from invaders."

*Attack on the UN Development Programme (UNDP) Compound*³¹

On June 19, al-Shabaab militants carried out a deadly assault on the main UN compound in the Somali capital. The assault began before midday when a car bomb exploded outside the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) base. Rebel gunmen forced their way into the compound and fought with security guards. Twenty-two people were killed in the attack.

It was the first significant attack on UN premises by al-Shabaab since they were driven out of Mogadishu in fighting with AU and Somali government forces in 2012. On July 24, al-Shabaab claimed it had carried out more than fifty attacks in Mogadishu during the preceding two weeks.

*Attack on the Turkish Embassy in Mogadishu*³²

On July 29, al-Shabaab attacked the Turkish embassy in Mogadishu. The attack started when an al-Shabaab suicide bomber detonated a car bomb at the entrance of the complex. Two armed al-Shabaab fighters then tried to enter the complex but were intercepted by Turkish security forces and killed before they gained access to the building. At least six people were killed in the attack, including a Turkish security guard, two Somali civilians, and three al-Shabaab militants. Nine people were injured, including four members of the Turkish security force that was charged with protecting the complex.

In an attempt to justify the attack, al-Shabaab posted a message on Twitter, calling Turkey "anything but Islamic." It went on to say that "The Turkish are part of a group of nations bolstering the apostate regime and attempting to suppress the establishment of Islamic Shari'ah."

Al-Shabaab spokesman Ali Mohamud Rage vowed that the militant group would continue to target Turkish people in Somalia. "The mujahideen will continue their attacks targeting the offices of Turkish employees in Mogadishu unless Turkey stops its intervention in Somalia's affairs," Rage said in a statement broadcasted by *Andalus Radio*, the mouthpiece for the group. Rage described Turkish relief workers and diplomats in Somalia as infidels "who have truly caused

the Muslim people, particularly in Somalia, a lot of problems and have plotted against them.” He continued, “It is possible that many among the people will ask themselves why the Turkish people, who are Muslims, were attacked, but we want to make it clear to the people that Turkey has abandoned Islam and God’s religion. They have attacked the home of the Muslims.”

End of the al-Shabaab and Hizb al-Islam Alliance

On September 24, 2012, the Somali militia Hizb al-Islam announced that it was parting ways with al-Shabaab, *Press TV* reported. Hizb al-Islam spokesman Mohamed Moallin made the surprising announcement. Moallin told reporters that al-Shabaab fighters were no different than unbelievers. He went on to say al-Shabaab had misinterpreted Islam, and Hizb al-Islam was ready to hold talks with the new government. Hizb al-Islam also announced that it had only has one condition for joining the new government, and that condition was that it should be an Islamic government.³³

In July 2013, reports suggested that Godane, the leader of al-Shabaab, had removed a number of senior al-Shabaab figures, including Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. Sheikh Aweys flew to Mogadishu and was arrested on arrival at the airport by government security forces despite objections from the delegation accompanying him. Yusuf Mohamed Sayid, “Indha’adde,” a member of the same Ayr subclan of the Hawiye as Aweys, who arrived in Mogadishu with him, said Sheikh Aweys had gone to Mogadishu on the understanding he would hold talks with government officials. He claimed the government had broken its promises when it arrested Sheikh Aweys.³⁴

Nairobi Westgate Mall Hostage Crisis (September 2013)

The siege of the Westgate mall in Nairobi, Kenya, began on September 21, 2013, when gunmen marched into the building, firing from automatic weapons and throwing grenades. Al-Shabaab, a Somali-based group, claimed responsibility for the attack.³⁵

After four days, Kenya’s president, Uhuru Kenyatta, announced that his country had “ashamed and defeated” its attackers. The attack left sixty-one civilians, six security officers, and four alleged terrorists dead. President Kenyatta declared three days of national mourning and said, “Fellow Kenyans, we have been badly hurt and feel great pain and loss—but we have been brave, united and strong.”³⁶

The Preparations

The plot was hatched weeks or months in advance on Somali soil, by al-Shabaab's "external operations arm," Kenyan officials said. A team of English-speaking foreign fighters had been carefully selected, along with a target: Nairobi's Westgate mall.³⁷ Al-Shabaab may have recruited English speakers from the United States and possibly other Western countries so that they would be able to operate effectively in Kenya, where English, along with Swahili, is the national language. The building's blueprints were studied, down to the ventilation ducts. The attack was rehearsed and the team dispatched, slipping undetected through Kenya's porous borders.

American officials said the militants must have had a back office in Kenya, a safe house to finalize their plot and store their guns. A Kenyan interior ministry spokesman said that the band of assailants had rented a shop in the mall for three months, storing weapons and plotting the rampage.³⁸ A day or two before the attack, powerful belt-fed machine guns were secretly stashed in a shop in the mall with the help of a colluding employee, officials said. Witnesses said several militants had toted G3 assault rifles, a bulky weapon that Kenyan security services use. Intelligence analysts have said that this may mean the militants acquired their weapons from corrupt Kenyan officers, who are known to sell or rent out their guns, charging as little as a few dollars an hour.

Saturday, September 21

At midday, four attackers marched into the four-story Westgate mall, which is popular with wealthy Kenyans and expatriates and generally packed on weekends. They sprayed shoppers with machine-gun fire and tossed grenades. Attackers then went from store to store, taking hostages or randomly firing upon people. The gunmen asked customers whether they were Muslim and apparently allowed people of that faith to escape from the mall.

After killing scores of shoppers, the militants retreated into a supermarket and used belt-fed machine guns to hold off Kenyan forces, killing at least six members.³⁹ The chaos included an unclear report on deaths. By day's end, thirty-nine people were reported killed—a number that would grow.

Somalia's al-Qaeda-linked al-Shabaab rebels claimed responsibility for the attack, saying on Twitter that it was in retaliation for Kenya's military intervention in Somalia. It claimed that its fighters had killed

100 people in the attack. The international community condemned the terror, including the Kenyan president, whose nephew and his fiancée were among those killed.

Sunday, September 22

The terrorists continued their siege of the mall, and confusion prevailed over the number of deaths and hostages. Soldiers had surrounded the mall, and gunfire punctuated the day. Between the bullets were moments of silence.

Authorities numbered the gunmen involved in the attack as ten to fifteen attackers (the real number of attackers was four). Unconfirmed reports emerged about their identities: as many as three were from the United States, two were from Somalia, and one each from Canada, Finland, Kenya, and the United Kingdom. That information came from sources within al-Shabaab who spoke to *CNN* about nine names published on Twitter who were purported to be the alleged hostage takers.⁴⁰

The Kenyan government said an unknown number of hostages were held “in several locations” of the mall, but no communication had yet been established with the Islamists. Since the previous day, more than 1,000 people had been brought to safety. Late in the evening, the Kenyan army said that most of the hostages had been rescued and most of the complex secured. It said it is seeking to bring a “speedy conclusion” to the siege.

Monday, September 23

The first announcement about deaths on the other side of the siege was made: three terrorists had been killed and more than 200 civilians rescued. But eleven Kenyan soldiers had been wounded, the military said.

Heavy gunfire and loud explosions were heard at the mall as Kenyan troops battled the militants. Al-Shabaab spokesperson Ali Mohamud Rage threatened to order the killing of the remaining hostages. Kenyan security forces were locked in a fierce, final battle with al-Shabaab, as huge explosions and a barrage of heavy gunfire echoed out of the mall. Three floors of the Westgate mall collapsed toward the end of the operation by security forces.⁴¹ Security forces had freed some but not all of the hostages, Kenya’s police chief said, adding, “We’re increasingly gaining advantage of the attackers.”

In the afternoon, Interior Minister Joseph Ole Lenku said security forces would soon end the siege. “We are in control of all the floors.

The terrorists are running and hiding in some stores. . . . There is no room for escape.” He reported that two attackers had been killed. The army chief said the mall attackers had come from different countries.

Authorities also released a few details about the death toll: Most of the dead were apparently Kenyans, but the slain included six British citizens, two French nationals, two Indians, and two Canadians, including a diplomat. Among the 175 people wounded were five Americans.⁴²

September 24, 2013: The End of the Hostage Crisis

On September 24, officials reported that at least sixty-two people had been killed in the attack on the Westgate (the final number published later was sixty-seven) and more than 170 wounded (the final number published later was 200). The figures were expected to rise once the siege finally ended and the mall was secured. The dead included six Britons; two French women; two Canadians, including a diplomat; a Chinese woman; two Indians; a South Korean; a South African; and a Dutch woman, according to their governments. Also killed was Ghanaian poet and former UN envoy Kofi Awoonor, seventy-eight, and his son was injured. Western security officials feared that several fighters slipped out of the mall during the mayhem of the attack, dropping their guns and disguising themselves as civilians, an account echoed by some witnesses.⁴³ But Dennis Brady, the FBI legal attaché in Nairobi, said in an interview posted on January 11, 2014, on the bureau’s website: “We believe, as do the Kenyan authorities, that the four gunmen inside the mall were killed. Our ERT [Evidence Response Team] made significant finds, and there is no evidence that any of the attackers escaped from the area where they made their last stand,” he said. A very secure crime-scene perimeter made an escape unlikely, Brady added.⁴⁴

In a series of Twitter posts from an account believed to be genuine, al-Shabaab said that “having failed to defeat the mujahideen inside the mall, the Kenyan government disseminated chemical gases to end the siege.” They added, “To cover their crime, the Kenyan government carried out a demolition to the building, burying evidence and all hostages under the rubble.”⁴⁵ Government spokesperson Manoah Esipisu immediately denied the claim, saying that no chemical weapons had been used and that the official civilian death toll remained at sixty-one. He insisted that the floors of the mall collapsed after a fire started by al-Shabaab fighters caused structural weakness in a third-floor parking

lot, which then came down onto the second floor and brought it down onto the ground floor.⁴⁶

Kenya's president, Uhuru Kenyatta, whose nephew was killed in the mall attack, announced that the siege of Nairobi's Westgate shopping mall had ended, calling for three days of national mourning for the victims. Kenyatta said that sixty-seven people had been killed in the attacks and added that five members of the armed group had been killed by gunfire and another eleven suspects taken into custody. "We have been badly hurt, but we have been brave, united and strong. Kenya has stared down evil and triumphed. We have defeated our enemies and showed the whole world what we can accomplish," he said in a televised address to the nation.

Kenyatta said his government would not be dissuaded by the assault. "I want to be very clear and categorical: We shall not relent on the war on terror. We will continue that fight," he said.⁴⁷ In a speech on September 23, 2013, the Somali president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, described al-Shabaab as a threat to the world: "They are a threat to the continent of Africa, and the world at large."

The Mystery of the Terrorist Women

Many witnesses have said that they saw at least two female militants, armed to the teeth and dressed in fatigues. Earlier, Kenyan officials asserted that there had been no women among the shooters, but on September 24, 2013, President Kenyatta seemed to revive the possibility that one of the assailants was a British woman.⁴⁸

Several intelligence analysts speculated that the woman was Samantha Lewthwaite, a Muslim convert who had been married to one of the suicide bombers who struck London in 2005. Kenyan authorities suspected that Ms. Lewthwaite had risen up through the ranks of extremist groups and was leading a terrorism cell on the Kenyan coast; though they nearly swooped in on her in 2011, she escaped. In Kenya, she is now known as "the white widow."

Al-Shabaab's Allies in Kenya

Nairobi is vulnerable to al-Shabaab attacks because of the large Somali community, many of them refugees from the country's long-running clan warfare, that lives in the Eastleigh district. Known as "Little Mogadishu," Eastleigh is now home to an estimated 250,000 Somalis. Al-Shabaab is well established there, raising money, finding recruits, and setting up safe houses.⁴⁹

The al-Hijra Group

Al-Shabaab has an ally in the militant Kenyan group al-Hijra, formerly the Muslim Youth Center, which has a strong presence in Eastleigh, known as “Little Mogadishu,” and in the coastal city of Mombasa. Founded in an Eastleigh mosque in 2008, al-Hijra took advantage of growing radicalization among a minority of Kenya’s 4.3 million Muslims to build a significant presence in Nairobi and Mombasa. In February 2012, al-Hijra (then known as the Muslim Youth Center) declared it was “part of al-Qaeda East Africa,” just one day after al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab formalized their long-standing relationship and announced their merger.⁵⁰

Investigators are still examining whether al-Hijra played a role in the attack on the Westgate mall. Kenyan al-Hijra militants are suspected to have been responsible for several of the small-scale terrorist attacks that have hit the country.

While al-Shabaab’s Somali fighters are not used to operating abroad, non-Somali East Africans have been training with the group in southern Somalia. Al-Hijra is the most potent outgrowth of that training. Investigators have established that the group had close links to the attacks in Kampala in July 2010. According to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia, most of the operatives who conspired in the attack were Kenyan and close to al-Hijra leaders.

A crackdown against al-Hijra by Kenyan authorities, helped by the United States, has weakened the group. In July 2013, the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea said al-Hijra had suffered unexplained killings and disappearances of its members, believed to be the result of covert operations by Kenyan and international security services.⁵¹

But al-Hijra is far from defeated. According to the UN report, it has established links with al-Shabaab affiliates elsewhere in East Africa and is enlisting the services of fighters returning from Somalia “to conduct new and more complex operations.” Its leadership has become closer to al-Qaeda through figures such as Abubakar Shariff Ahmed, known as “Makaburi.” According to the UN’s July 2013 report, Makaburi “has exerted a growing influence over al-Hijra and is determined to redirect the group’s resources and manpower from hitting ‘soft targets’ to conducting complex, large-scale attacks in Kenya on behalf and in support of al-Shabaab.”⁵²

On January 15, 2014, four men charged with helping al-Qaeda-linked militants launch a murderous attack on a Kenyan shopping mall

appeared in court at the start of their trial. Mohamed Ahmed Abdi, Liban Abdullah Omar, Hussein Hassan, and Adan Mohamed Ibrahim were accused of giving support and shelter to gunmen who killed at least sixty-seven people during the assault on Nairobi's Westgate complex that started on September 21. Prosecutors say the four committed a "terrorist act" under Kenya's antiterrorism laws and used false documents. The men denied all the charges.⁵³

The other al-Qaeda-affiliated terrorist guiding al-Hijra's operations, according to the UN, is Jermaine John Grant. Even while imprisoned, Grant has "effectively provided assistance, albeit remotely, to ongoing plots involving both al-Hijra and Makaburi."⁵⁴ Grant, a British citizen, was arrested while allegedly planning a terrorist attack against tourists in Mombasa in 2011. Samantha Lewthwaite, the widow of one of the July 7, 2005, London bombers, was reportedly involved in Grant's plot as well.⁵⁵

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Intercultural Conflicts, “Failing States,” and al-Qaeda: Reciprocal Links

The objective of this study is to explore the links and reciprocal relationships between the phenomena or processes specified below:

1. The link and connection between radical Islam and the creation and existence of the phenomena of failing states and ungovernable regions (UGRs).
2. The intercultural conflict between radical Islam and other cultures, particularly the Western culture.

At the center of this discussion stands al-Qaeda (al-Shabaab is the Somali branch of al-Qaeda)—which according to this study’s claim represents radical Islam—and the reciprocal relationships between the latter and the failed state of Somalia.

Phenomenon of State Failure

The phenomenon of state failure has become a current issue on the agendas of politicians, military personnel, and academia in the West because these states and regions have turned into a significant threat to the security and interests of the West. Scholars cannot agree on how to define the state failure, but most concur that state failure is one of the world’s gravest challenges. The former Secretary-General of the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali described state failure as follows:

The collapse of state institutions, especially the police and the judiciary, with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos. Not only are the functions of the government suspended, but its assets are destroyed or looted and experienced officials are killed or flee the country. This is rarely the

case in inter-state wars. It means that international intervention must extend beyond military and humanitarian tasks and must include the reestablishment of effective government.

Below are outlined a set of existing definitions or, better, a set of characterizations of the general phenomenon of state failure.

World Bank: The World Bank frets about thirty “low-income countries under stress” (LICUS). It presents the LICUS as fragile countries characterized by a debilitating combination of weak governance, policies, and institutions. The World Bank notes that there is a consensus for analytic and operational purposes that some countries’ policies, institutions, and governance can be defined as exceptionally weak when judged against the criterion of poverty reduction, especially with respect to the management of economic policy, delivery of social services, and efficacy of government.

Fund for Peace: A state is failing when its government loses physical control of its territory or lacks a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Other symptoms of state failure include the erosion of authority to make collective decisions, an inability to provide reasonable public services, and the loss of capacity to interact in formal relations with other states as a full member of the international community.¹

State Failure Task Force: State failure refers to the complete or partial collapse of state authority. Failed states have governments with little political ability to impose the rule of law.²

State Failure, International Terror, and Organized Crime

The reality of the twenty-first century has taught us that there are two non-state-oriented elements—international terror and crime—that have turned the failing states and the UGRs into havens and activity bases from which they can promote their interests in the regional and global theaters.

During the years of the hegemony of the nation-states, states developed political, military, and economic patterns that were relevant and effective for contact between states and state blocs in the international framework. However, the international terror organizations and the criminal organizations posed new challenges to the nation-states and served as a provocation against the main component of the state-oriented entity—the monopoly over the use of force.

International terror and crime act as networks with global dispersion, while the failing states and UGRs constitute the main infrastructure focal

points and bases for action. Because of the lack of an effective central government in these places, the organizations' activities are unrestricted, and they also receive support and protection from power brokers and local interested parties with whom they form alliances and ties.

International terror and criminal organizations do not view territory as an asset of moral significance, but rather as a basis that may be temporary and can be swapped with other territories according to evolving circumstances. As stated earlier, the area of the failing state or the UGR serves as a refuge for criminal and terror organizations; however, sometimes it also serves as an arena of confrontation and rivalry vis-à-vis "alien" state-oriented entities acting in the same arena or as a base for attacking neighboring countries.

Significances of State Failure

When governments collapse, it is not only bad for citizens who thereby lose the law's protection. The main reason why the world should worry about state failure is that it is contagious. Civil war in one state can infect its neighbors, thus destabilizing the region.

Robert Bunker points out a cyclical process in human history of order and chaos that alternate with each other. He claims that the process of institutionalizing nation-states and enhancing law and order in Western states began with the Westphalia peace compact (in 1648), while the current era is characterized by a change in direction from order to chaos, an era that challenges the nation-state as a regulator of social order.

Historical experience indicates that when the internal violence in a nation-state, which can be described as criminal activity or "a private war," grows to a level that threatens the population of the nation-state, this entity may collapse if it does not succeed in suppressing the anarchy.³ The international reality in the current century points to a decline in the status of the nation-state's status as an entity that regulates and organizes social and political systems in parts of Africa, South America, Asia, and areas that were part of the Soviet Union.⁴

Bunker maintains that the threat against the nation-state will rise from non-state actors: "The challenge to the legitimacy of the nation-state will come from armed non-state actors intent on legitimizing forms of behavior that current societies consider to be criminally or morally corrupt."⁵ Based on historical experience, Bunker claims that entities currently defined as criminal and non-legitimate elements according to our normative standards may triumph in the struggle with the state entity and form political entities that in time will constitute a

substitute for today's normative systems and ultimately replace them and gain legitimacy.⁶

As the result of the social and political processes described above, the nature of the confrontation also changes. The declared wars between the military forces of the nation-state steadily decrease, and we witness the development of new forms of war.

In his article "Privatization of War in the Twenty-First Century," Herfried Muenkler argues that in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century many new nations joined the international system that did not succeed in obtaining control when managing war and imposing peace, as European states have achieved since the seventeenth century. Thus, internal conflict (civil wars) became a characteristic trait of countries that were established on the ruins of colonial powers, not only in the third world, such as in Somalia, but also in Europe itself (the Balkans). Thus, it is possible to infer that war is no longer waged between countries and armies, but rather there are more and more conflicts in which sections of the population defined socially, ethnically, or religiously fight against each other. In this situation partisans or gangs, warlords as well as groups of international mercenaries, are the main players. The result of this development is the loss of the state's monopoly and a process of "privatization of war." This concept indicates that in the future there will be war between competitive groups on a social and cultural basis, and less on the basis of state interests.⁷

Robert Cooper, in his book *The Breaking of Nations*, argues that there are three types of states in the world that deal with each other in different ways: "pre-modern" parts of the world, without fully functioning states; "modern nation-states", concerned with territorial sovereignty and national interests; and "post-modern" states in which foreign and domestic policy are inextricably intertwined, tools of governance are shared, and security is no longer based on control over territory or the balance of power.⁸ Among first-world nations, societies may operate on the basis of laws, openness, and cooperative security. But when dealing with a hostile outside enemy, civilized countries need to revert to tougher methods from an earlier era—force, preemptive attack, and deception—if we are to safeguard peaceful coexistence throughout the civilized world.

Categories of State Failure

Robert Rotberg claims that the rise and fall of nation-states is not new, but in a modern era when national states constitute the building

blocks of legitimate world order, the violent disintegration and palpable weakness of selected states threatens the very foundation of that system. Robert Rotberg proposes the following taxonomy of the "health of states"⁹:

- **Strong States** are in full control of their territories and provide high-quality political goods to their citizens. They perform well in GDP per capita (and the growth of this), the UNDP's Human Development Index, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, and Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* report
- **Weak/Fragile States** contain ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other tensions that limit or decrease their ability to deliver political goods. These conflicts are on the edge of exploding into open conflict. GDP per capita has fallen or is falling. Interestingly, the privatization of education and health care is a sign of state weakness. Corruption is common. The rule of law is weakly applied. Despots rule. Examples are Iraq (under Saddam), Belarus, North Korea, and Libya
- **Failed/Failing States** provide very little political goods. They forfeit the distribution of political goods to warlords or non-state actors (e.g., Hamas). Security is nonexistent in all but the major cities (if that). The economic infrastructure has failed, the health-care system is in decline, and the educational system is in shambles. GDP per capita is in a precipitous decline. Inflation soars, corruption flourishes, and food shortages are frequent. Failed states often have a very rich minority that take advantage of the failed system. Examples are Nepal, Congo, Liberia, Afghanistan (since 2001), and Iraq (since 2003)
- **Collapsed States** are failed states with a complete vacuum of authority (rare). They are black holes in regard to all indicators of state health. Collapsed states can become failed states with intervention. In our study we will use two main categories: the weak/fragile state and the failed/failing state

Weak/Fragile States

A fragile state is one where the government cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people, including the poor. The most important functions of the state for poverty reduction are territorial control, safety and security, capacity to manage public resources, delivery of basic services, and the ability to protect and support the ways in which the poorest people sustain themselves.¹⁰ There are four broad categories of features of fragile states: state authority for safety and security, effective political power, economic management, and administrative capacity to deliver services. Each can be categorized in terms of capacity to provide them, and the willingness to provide them.¹¹

Robert Rotberg claims that weak/fragile states include a broad continuum of states that are inherently weak because of geographical, physical, or fundamental economic constraints; basically strong, but temporarily or situationally weak because of internal antagonisms, management flaws, greed, despotism, or external attacks; and a mixture of the two.¹²

Weak states typically harbor ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal tensions that have not yet, or not yet thoroughly, become overtly violent. Urban crime rates tend to be high and increasing. In weak states, the ability to provide adequate measures of other political goods is diminished or diminishing. Physical infrastructural networks have deteriorated. Schools and hospitals show signs of neglect, particularly outside the main cities. GDP per capita and other critical economic indicators have fallen or are falling, sometimes dramatically; levels of venal corruption are embarrassingly high and escalating. Weak states usually honor rule of law precepts in the breach. They harass civil society. Weak states are often ruled by despots, elected or not.

Failing/Failed States

Failing states stem from the collapse of the governmental and political structure in the country and the loss of the state's ability to enforce law and order. The process is initiated and accompanied by manifestations of anarchy and forms of violence.

The term "failing state" has different degrees and many definitions. I chose for this study the following definition:

A failing state is one in which the government does not have effective control of its territory, is not perceived as legitimate by a significant portion of its population, does not provide domestic security or basic public services to its citizens, and lacks a monopoly on the use of force. A failing state may experience active violence or simply be vulnerable to violence.¹³

"Symptoms of state failure can appear in any country in any region of the world, but there are several neighborhoods with concentrations of weak states. Africa produces the largest number of unstable states."¹⁴

The failing state not only lacks an effective government; the situation includes the collapse of the systems that compose the state entity. Therefore, the term "failing states" actually refers to countries that have disintegrated. It addresses a relatively wide range of situations and serves as the starting point for various interpretations vis-à-vis

the phenomenon (legal, political, sociological, etc.). The following are the main political and judicial aspects characteristic of a failing state:

- The collapse of the government systems, that is, disintegration of the central government and the other mechanisms that compose the state institutions (the judicial system, law enforcement authorities, the economic system, and more), and disintegration processes according to segmentation and cross-sectioning that characterize the society and its political system (interest groups, ethnic and religious groups, etc.), that generate internal conflicts within the country's territorial boundaries
- The collapse of lawful government, meaning not only disintegration processes, but also disobeying laws and lack of ability to enforce them
- Loss of the ability to represent the state as a uniform entity within the international system for the purpose of presenting its positions and negotiating with external states and entities

From the sociological aspect, the failing state is characterized by what the sociologist Max Weber calls "loss of the monopoly over power." In this type of reality, the legal system, the police, and other entities that serve the role of maintaining law and order stop functioning or cease to exist. These entities may join various armed groups or criminal elements that take over the state infrastructures and resources for their own needs and establish a "government" of their own within various regions and populations in the state. This process may be described as a kind of "privatization" of the state or, in certain cases, as criminalization. In this type of situation, the state ceases to exist, and society reverts to a status of pre-state chaos.

Another central sociological characteristic of a failing state is the brutality and intensity of violence within the society. To quote Arnold Gehlen:

The immediate effect is that the persons concerned become profoundly insecure. The moral and spiritual centers are disoriented because, there too, the certainty of self-evident has foundered. Thus, penetrating to the very core of their being, insecurity forces people to improvise, compelling them to make decisions *contre coeur* or to plunge blindfolded into the realms of uncertainty, perhaps seeking at any price fundamentals to cling to and give them a sense of purpose. In practice, moreover, insecurity is manifested in the form of fear, defiance or volatility. The effect is to place a heavy burden of control and decision-making on those layers of the personality where life should be lived problem-free amidst the self-evident and the given if people are to be capable of dealing with more demanding situations. In other words, displacement that people suffer due to the shattering of their institutions is expressed as primitivization.¹⁵

From a legal point of view it is possible to claim that a failing state is an entity defined as a “state” but in practical terms lacks the ability to function as a state entity. A central component of this phenomenon is the lack of a functionary capable of signing agreements with external factors or of actually implementing them.

The examination of failing states indicates a similarity in their historical development:

- Colonial occupation destroyed the traditional social and political structures but failed to incorporate an effective structural and political alternative according to the Western model
- The Cold War inspired the superpowers to support and reinforce corrupt and ineffective regimes because of considerations related to loyalty within the inter-bloc struggle. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, many of these regimes crumbled, leaving political and social chaos in their wake
- Modernization processes encouraged geopolitical and social mobility but were not balanced by the building processes of the nation and the nation-state

Although today the number of failing states is relatively low, the “Arab Spring” has created more failing states, and there is a fear that this is not simply a marginal phenomenon but rather a pathological trend of a changing environment and international system.

Ungovernable Regions (UGRs)¹⁶

The term “ungovernable region” is an amorphous term that generally refers to a region where there is no established government enforcing law and order, or if a government exists, it substantially differs from the governmental and administrative structure customary in the international system (from the Western point of view). In contrast to the term “failing state,” which relates to a state entity, the UGR may exist within a state where an effective government prevails in most of its territory, with the exception of a region or regions that are uncontrollable.

In recent years, “remote” or undeveloped areas with a weak and ineffective central government have become a focal point for the West and the international system. Until the twentieth century, these areas, called UGRs, had only aroused minimal interest in the international system. But today the combination of UGRs and the development of the media and modern technologies has turned these regions into major threats against the West and the international system because they

have become a haven for international terror and criminal elements and a source that undermines the stability in the vicinity of their own boundaries and overseas.

These regions can be characterized as follows:

- The lack of a central power capable of enforcing law and order throughout the country or at least in a significant part of its area
- A backward economic and technological infrastructure
- The lack of an effective administrative system
- External powerbrokers acting within the state directly or through internal proxies¹⁷
- Internal power brokers (proxies) involved in ongoing conflicts
- Complex reciprocal links between the exogenic (external) and endogenic (internal) power brokers, decreasing the possibility of forming an integrative and stable government¹⁸
- Involvement by the state or the UGR in conflicts with some of the neighboring countries

As stated earlier, the UGR constitutes a confrontation arena for internal and external actors. The internal actors can be classified in several main categories:

- Violent power brokers fighting each other for control of the territory, the population, and the resources
- Terror organizations exploiting the UGR's area for the construction of an infrastructure and terror activity outside of their territory
- Terror organizations mainly using the territory and resources for activities in external markets
- Ethnic, political, religious, tribal, and other groups struggling for the distribution of the political power and resources in the UGR

These actors maintain a reciprocal relationship based on the interests of the various sides while forming coalitions and alliances that struggle against each other. They create external threats against both their immediate and distant environments in matters related to international crime, drugs, and terror.

The terms "failing state" and "ungovernable region" both refer to situations in which the governmental structure ceases to function in the entire state or part of it. The term "failing state" usually refers to a complete deterioration of the state and its institutions, while the term "ungovernable region" refers to a region within the state territory in which the central government has lost control but no new state substitute has been formed and a chaotic state prevails. Thus, it is possible

to state that the UGR constitutes part of the disintegration process of the nation-state. There are historical examples of UGRs that did not spread and the parallel existence of the nation-state functioning in other areas remained feasible, but in most cases the creation of the UGR constitutes an expression of a disintegration process that causes the ultimate deterioration of the country into the chaotic status of a failing state.

This study focuses on Somalia, which in various stages of its history (after receiving independence) has had the status of a failing and failed/collapsed state. Somalia is the most salient example of a failed state since the ousting of Ziad Barre in 1991.

How to Prevent the Decline of Nation-states

State failure has so far been a rare phenomenon, but there is nothing that indicates that cases of state failure will diminish over time. Failed states do not disappear; they keep failing, often worsen over time, and often infect their neighbors and region. Instead of dealing with the aftermath of state failure, it would be better to focus on prevention and capacity building in the field of state building rather than waiting and acting only once states have already failed.¹⁹

The terms “collapsed” and “failed” states designate the consequences of a process of decay at the nation-state level. To fail a state is not that easy. Crossing from weakness into failure takes will as well as neglect. Thus, weak nation-states need not tip into failure. At several stages, preventive or avoidance measures could arrest the downward movement, but once non-state actors have a cause and a following, and access to arms, halting the desperate spiral of failure is difficult. By that time, leaders and states engaged in self-destruction usually possess too little credibility and too few resources to restore trust and claw back from the brink of chaos. Many leaders hardly recognize or care about the depths of their national despair. Instead, they focus on the rents and advantages that are still to be had as the state succumbs and warfare spreads.²⁰

It is much less expensive to stop a weak/fragile state from failing than to reconstruct it after it has failed or collapsed. Western policy is almost exclusively focused on failed states within strategic regions at the expense of weak states on the brink of failure.

A failure prevention strategy should focus on three elements that represent the core challenges for rebuilding a functioning state and strengthening society. These are security, welfare, and representation.

They are closely interconnected, in some cases reinforcing and in others hindering one another.²¹

Timely security support can help keep a state from losing control of its borders and prevent the rise of non-state actors. The value of security comprises the protection of physical existence against internal and external threats. In its internal dimension, it borders on the domain of rule in which opportunities for exercising freedom and for political participation are allocated among individuals. These secure the preservation of the physical existence of the individual and serve its advancement [respectively].²²

Financial shocks can cause a state to fail. Rapid intervention to alleviate this economic situation can help a weak state survive failure. An increase in welfare reduces conflicts externally and supplies the necessary resources to provide security within the state.

Repression is often a sign of impending collapse. A system of rewards and punishment that leads a state to less repression can help to prevent state failure. While there may be nuanced disagreement as to whether representation is only adequately fulfilled in liberal democracies or other political systems, the real nexus lies in how individual rights, civil rights, citizenship laws, and minority rights are guaranteed within a state. Promoting democracy can thus be an effective strategy of conflict prevention.²³

Recovery of Failed States

Failed states can recover. A common feature of failed states is that the energy of their populations is consumed by the struggle for survival rather than engaged industriously in recovery. Emergency interventions—peacekeeping and humanitarian relief—may assist in survival, but not durable recovery. Traditional antipoverty, development, and security-assistance programs, while helpful, are often insufficient to break the cycle that has trapped the population. Leading states (e.g., the United States and its European allies) and international organizations (e.g., the World Bank and the United Nations) are having trouble rescuing failed states, not for lack of concern, which is growing, but because their efforts are too fragmented.²⁴

Current efforts to address the diverse range of nation-building needs and priorities in fragile- and failed-state contexts have been frustrated by a lack of coordination, tensions between short- and long-term priorities, and funding mechanisms that place significant restrictions on the budget allocation, distribution, and reporting mechanisms for

development funds.²⁵ Such disunity of effort in assisting failed states may suboptimize resource allocation, hinder coordination, and cause important demands to be neglected.²⁶

Given that failed states suffer from a cycle of violence, economic breakdown, and unfit government, helping them achieve lasting recovery requires an integrated program of security, economic reconstruction, and government reform. On this there is general agreement. In practice, however, integrating policies, actions, and resource decisions across the divide between security and development is difficult for any government. Doing so is both more critical and harder in failed states, where competition for resources is fierce, institutions are frail, and politics can be deadly.²⁷

Recognizing that every failed state calls for a different, tailored treatment, the RAND Corporation suggests a framework that integrates policies designed to strengthen security, reconstruct the economy, and rebuild the government. To this end, it:

- Reframes the traditional sector-by-sector approach to one more conducive to integration by diagnosing the cycle of insecurity, economic collapse, and unfit government and placing the population at the center of this cycle
- Disaggregates the failed-state cycle into specific critical challenges to recovery
- Prescribes responses to these critical challenges
- Identifies conditions and strategies for lasting recovery²⁸

To help address the need for unified strategies and high-level attention, the RAND Corporation recommended that the failed-state problem, as well as the most severe cases, be placed and kept for as long as necessary on the agenda of the Group of Eight (G8), plus China (at least). This “G9” should, of course, work with major international institutions, especially the World Bank, the UN, the EU, and NATO. In addition to locking-in commitments of the leading states to confront this problem, a “G9 mechanism” could oversee efforts to close the gap between security and development, both internationally and among agencies at home.²⁹

Lisa Chauvet and Paul Collier of Oxford University have proposed an economic definition of a failing state: “a low-income country with very weak economic policies, institutions and governance.”³⁰ Although failing states arouse concern, there is a degree of pessimism as to what can be done about them. The high costs and controversy surrounding

US military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan raise doubts as to the future viability of military solutions. Recent political literature flirts with the revival of international trusteeship or colonialism.

Aid tends to be dismissed as being not up to the task, or even as part of the problem. In part, this reflects current thinking that aid is most effective where policies and institutions are already reasonable, while past attempts to improve policies through donor conditionality are judged to have failed. Consistent with these priors, there is some evidence that windfall external finance prior to reform, whether from additional rents on resource exports or aid, significantly retards reform. However, more targeted forms of aid can be effective in promoting policy turnarounds. Technical assistance significantly and substantially promotes reform, and, subject to the problem of fungibility, aid for the expansion of secondary education also promotes reform.³¹

Looking only at war-torn states, Collier and Anke Hoeffler, also of Oxford, found that three types of intervention were highly cost-effective, even before one considers the value of saving lives:³²

- Restricting the sales of commodities that fuel war. Extractable minerals often provide both the means to fight and an incentive to do so: rebels in Sierra Leone, for example, dug diamonds to pay for arms and fought to seize power so they could grab all the mines. A global embargo on "conflict diamonds" has reduced the flow of cash to similar rebel groups, thereby probably foreshortening a war or two at minimal cost
- Offering generous aid to war-flattened countries, once they have stabilized a bit, so that they can rebuild their buildings and institutions. Collier and Hoeffler estimate that increasing aid to postconflict countries by the equivalent of 2 percent of GDP per year for five years, starting half a decade after the war ends, would cost US\$13 billion but yield US\$31.5 billion in benefits
- Sending peacekeepers to stabilize the failed state. Collier and Hoeffler calculated that US\$4.8 billion of peacekeeping yields nearly US\$400 billion in benefits, making peacekeepers the most cost-effective solution. But this figure should be treated with caution, as it is extrapolated from one successful example

Fixing failed states is a job for the people who live in them. Outsiders can topple despots or crush rebels, and sometimes should. They can also offer cash and advice to help locals rebuild shattered institutions.³³ The new agenda advises against independently funding efforts to support the emerging state. Instead, harmonized, country-level development

strategies should be introduced in which foreign countries, NGOs, and local civil society are considered in collaboration with broader state-building needs. A coherent state- and society-building strategy would be structural in content, medium term in length, and cut across all fields of development.

Somalia as a “Failed State”

Somalia is consistently described as a “failed state.” In 2012, it was branded the most failed state in the Fund for Peace Failed State Index (FSI) for a fifth consecutive year (achieving an even lower score than in 2011) because of perceived “lawlessness, ineffective government, terrorism, insurgency, crime, abysmal development, and [piracy].”³⁴ But 2012 was a year of change for Somalia. After the deterioration of 2011, the country rebounded slightly on the FSI.

In September 2012, al-Shabaab was forced to withdraw from its main strongholds, most notably Kismayo, after an impressive effort undertaken by African Union troops to dislodge the group. Despite this victory, there continued to be large numbers of suicide attacks in Mogadishu carried out by members of the group. The famine that had claimed an estimated 260,000 lives in 2011 finally ended, although over two million people still remained food insecure. There were signs that commerce was recovering, albeit mainly localized in Mogadishu. Pirate attacks, an international scourge over the previous five years, had finally begun to fall, from 233 reported attacks in 2011 to seventy in 2012, largely due to innovative regional and international efforts. And following a UN-brokered peace process, the first formal Parliament in twenty years had been sworn in and presidential elections had then followed, with the charismatic Hassan Sheikh Mohamud declared the winner.

Despite these notable improvements, Somalia is still considered one of the most dangerous places on the planet and certainly one of the least stable. As with any country in Somalia’s position, it will be important for the international community to be realistic with its expectations. Yes, Somalia is number one for the sixth year in a row, but for a country facing the pressures and challenges that Somalia has since 1991, the road to recovery is inevitably a long one. However, the changes seen in 2012 have engendered a cautious optimism that perhaps, for the first time in FSI history, the country may find itself out of the top spot in coming years.³⁵

Islam and the Rest of the World: The Conflict between Radical Islam and Western Cultures³⁶

Samuel Huntington claims that the source of the conflicts in the world at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century is not ideological or economic, but first and foremost cultural. Huntington claims that up until the end of the Cold War the modern world was under the dominance of the Western culture, and most of the significant clashes took place in the framework of this culture, or as he terms it "Western civil wars." With the end of the Cold War, the international political system liberated itself of Western dominance, and the center of gravity shifted to reciprocal ties and conflicts between the West and non-Western cultures and among non-Western cultures themselves. From this stage onward, the peoples and countries associated with Western civilizations ceased to be influenced upshots and victims of Western colonialism, and they became active and dominant partners in the propulsion and formation of history.

During the Cold War, it was acceptable to categorize the world according to the political systems and the technological and economic development of the countries (developed countries, undeveloped countries, first-world, second-world, third-world, etc.). Huntington believes that today the countries must be classified in terms of civilizations or cultures, while describing civilization as follows: "A civilization is the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from others."³⁷

Civilization is defined via objective components such as language, history, religion, customs, and institutions, as well as subjective components such as self-definition or identification of the individual and the group; thus, it is possible to state that the civilization with which the individual identifies is the one that, for him, constitutes the widest and deepest level of solidarity.

Huntington counts eight central civilizations in the modern world: Western, Slav, Chinese-Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Latino-American, Islamic, and African. According to Huntington's classification, Somalia belongs to both the African and Islamic cultures, but the Islamic culture is the more relevant and dominant regarding Somalia.

Huntington says that "most major scholars of civilization except Braudel do not recognize a distinct African civilization. The north of the African continent and its east coast belong to Islamic civilization."

Historically, Ethiopia constituted a civilization of its own. Elsewhere, European imperialism and settlements brought elements of Western civilization.

“In South Africa, Dutch, French, and then English settlers created a multifragmented European culture. Most significantly, European imperialism brought Christianity to most of the continent south of the Sahara. Throughout Africa, tribal identities are pervasive and intense, but Africans are also increasingly developing a sense of African identity. Conceivably, sub-Saharan Africa could cohere into a distinct civilization, with South Africa possibly being its core state.”³⁸

Huntington argues that the Islamic civilization is the most militant among the various civilizations in our era and that it is involved in an inherent conflict with Western culture as well as other cultures. He also points out that the conflict's historic roots started from the period of the Crusades, through the Ottoman Empire and Western colonialism, and up to the liberation wars of Muslim states. A quick glance at the map of conflicts worldwide provides convincing support for Huntington's claims, as from Africa to the islands of the Pacific Ocean, Islam is involved in violent conflicts at contact or friction points with other civilizations (known as “fault-line wars”). Despite the fact that political reality appears to bear out Huntington's general concept, it is still advisable to criticize and qualify some of his arguments.

Huntington takes a comprehensive and sweeping approach when presenting all of the Muslim states as an Islamic cultural bloc pitting itself against Western and other cultures. But a closer examination of the regimes in the majority of Muslim countries indicates that most of them are secular regimes or administrations with pragmatic and moderate Islamic orientation. These countries are not involved in conflict with the West. On the contrary, they have adopted the “bandwagon” approach and have joined the “modernization convoy” by adopting Western technologies, values, and lifestyles. Huntington does not differentiate between this central trend in the Muslim world and fundamentalist Islamic trends. These movements have admittedly adopted the battle cry of the struggle against Western civilization, but they still constitute a minority in the Muslim world, albeit a militant one.

Since 2011 (Arab Spring), the Muslim world has been involved in a profound and harsh internal cultural conflict vis-à-vis the nature and direction of Muslim society. The results of this internal struggle currently dictate and will subsequently dictate the nature of the

connections between Islamic culture and Western as well as other cultures. Regimes in many Muslim states have not only adopted the patterns of Western culture, but also rely on military, political, and economic aid from the West to sustain their existence.

The radical Islamic trends exist and operate in varying degrees of intensity and violence in all Muslim states as well as in some other countries identified with different cultures (China, the Philippines, Balkans, India, and more) in which they act to achieve independence for Muslim minorities. The objective of these entities is to establish religious Islamic states in Muslim countries while replacing secular regimes and to achieve independence for Muslim communities in countries where they constitute a minority for the purpose of establishing new Islamic states. Thus, radical Islam is involved in struggles against foreign cultures on four levels:

- The replacement of secular regimes with Islamic regimes in Muslim countries
- The struggle of Muslim minorities to achieve independence and establish independent Islamic states
- The struggle against ethnic and cultural minorities demanding autonomy or independence from Muslim countries
- The struggle against alien foreign cultures, mainly against Western culture, at the fault lines and contact points with Islamic culture

This reality is consistent with the basic concepts of Islam, which regards the world as divided between the area of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and the area of war (*dar al-Harb*). The aim of Islam is to bring the "true faith" to all of human civilization.

Islamic fundamentalism makes use of a range of means and tools to achieve its objectives, starting from education, propaganda, economic aid, and spiritual welfare, through political dissension, and culminating in terror and war. An analysis of conflict focal points indicates that their efforts are directed primarily toward a revision of the political reality inside the Muslim world, and to a lesser extent against other cultures.

The new geopolitical reality in the post-Cold War era is perceived by radical Islamic circles as an expression of their success, which places Islam at the front of the confrontation vis-à-vis the Western culture headed by the only remaining superpower, the United States.

One of the prominent phenomena characteristic of the previous millennium and the beginning of the current millennium, which saliently reflects Huntington's concept regarding the cultural conflict, is the trend

of the “Afghan alumni” who constitute the vanguard in radical Islam’s confrontation with rival cultures. Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda constitute the most outstanding expression of the “Afghan alumni” and of the cultural and philosophical concept at the root of this phenomenon.

Al-Qaeda and the Failing State

Al-Qaeda, twelve years after the 9/11 attacks, is thriving in the chaos of the Arab awakening (Arab Spring), and weak and failing states are al-Qaeda’s incubators. Al-Qaeda’s headquarters have always been located in weak or failed states: 1991–1996 in Sudan, 1996–2001 in Afghanistan, and 2002–2013 in the border area between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Al-Qaeda strategist Abu Mus’ab al-Suri has stated that areas where chaos reigns, such as Somalia and the tribal regions of Yemen, provide the best opportunity to set up semi-overt training camps. He has also indicated that the use of training camps is the most effective method for jihadist indoctrination.³⁹

Theaters of conflict between Muslim communities and their enemies were considered theaters of jihad, and al-Qaeda was involved directly or indirectly in almost all of the conflicts of this type around the world: Sudan, Somalia, the Maghreb and Sahel countries, the Balkans, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Philippines, and the Middle East (Iraq, Yemen, Sinai, and Syria).

Since 2002, al-Qaeda has continued to prosecute local campaigns of subversion and destabilization where failed or failing states have provided new opportunities for the movement to extend its reach and consolidate its presence or to forge close relations with local jihadist organizations. Al-Qaeda’s core leadership in Pakistan does not exercise operational control over attacks in the theaters of jihad—it doesn’t need to. Rather, it provides broad strategic directives. Al-Qaeda also actively continues to provide guidance, assistance, and other help to local affiliates and associated terrorist movements. This support enhances local and regional terrorist attack capabilities and strengthens the resilience of these groups.⁴⁰ Al-Qaeda has thus actively worked behind the scenes in these theaters as a force multiplier of indigenous terrorist capacity both in terms of kinetic as well as essential nonkinetic operations, including information operations, propaganda, and psychological warfare.⁴¹

Al-Qaeda-affiliated groups have flourished in failed states, and they have waged a simultaneous jihadist war. Al-Qaeda’s relationship with

these groups is built on indigenous traditions of radical jihadism. Prior al-Qaeda presence in these areas and past joint efforts facilitated this alliance. These networks have risen in countries ravaged by civil wars and guerilla insurgencies. "Arab Afghans" have played formative roles in al-Shabaab (Somalia), al-Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and have contributed to an internationalization of the jihadist war.⁴²

Al-Qaeda—franchises developed in these countries because of chronic state failure, autocratic governments, and tribal conflicts. These affiliates are strongest in remote areas where central authority is weak and heavily resented. Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and AQAP have also benefited from tribal alliances and criminal activity that give them a secure base of operations.⁴³

Al-Qaeda's franchise operations seek an equitable division of labor: local groups gain by receiving advanced training and skilled fighters, while al-Qaeda enlarges its field of global operations to strike at Western targets. Al-Shabaab, AQIM, and AQAP actions now have the trademarks (IED and suicide bombings) of al-Qaeda Central.⁴⁴

Al-Qaeda has failed to take over and hold significant territories in the theaters of jihad, but it uses chaos to promote violence in neighboring countries.

Since 2011, al-Zawahiri and other al-Qaeda strategists saw opportunity in the Arab world's revolutions. While they were as surprised as everyone else by the rapid changes in Egypt, Libya, Yemen, and elsewhere, they publicly embraced them quickly. When Syria descended into civil war and became a failed state, the jihadist leadership saw a golden opportunity. Syria's location makes it central to Middle East politics. It has always been central to Palestinian affairs, Lebanon's stability, and Jordan's security. Most of al-Qaeda's energy and al-Zawahiri's effort is focused on the crisis inside the Arab and Islamic worlds for now. The new generation of al-Qaeda is more focused on the nearby enemy close to home than the faraway enemy in America and Europe—for now at least. Unfortunately, the ill-starred Arab revolutions are fueling more anger and frustration in the Islamic world and converting more people to jihad.⁴⁵

Somalia: A "Failed State," Organized Crime, and Piracy

During the period of the civil war and the rule of the warlords, Somalia became a haven for all kinds of organized and not-organized crimes. The international community identified three main areas of organized

crime activities that threaten the local, regional and global order and security: the arms trade, the drug trade, and piracy. The location of Somalia and the uncontrolled ports of the lawless state turned Somalia into a significant theater and transit area for arms and drugs trade.

The international community's greatest fear was that arms shipments would flow through Somalia's ports. In the past, the smaller port of Marka, less than 100 kilometers from Mogadishu, had been used for arms imports. The Islamic Courts Union (ICU) had received arms shipments from Eritrea through this port (in the beginning of March 2006, for instance, a dhow carrying ammunition for the Islamic movement arrived from Eritrea).

According to a report by a UN panel of experts on Somalia, the arms market in Somalia is supplied by both external and internal sources. Mogadishu's ports are seen as a good point for transshipments, especially for arms that are allegedly being received from Yemen and Eritrea. The ICU received arms from Eritrea and from private businessmen in Yemen. A UN report outlined the process by which businessmen in Yemen obtain weapons and ammunition from the general population, which are then shipped to Somalia, where the demand and prices are much higher.⁴⁶

Yet to finance their expansion, the ICU, before their fall, planned to profit from the various trades that move through the ports, one of which is the lucrative *qat* trade. In Mogadishu, in 2003, it was estimated that trade in the *qat* plant, whose twigs are chewed as a stimulant, provided significant revenue for the Somali warlords. It was estimated that flights to Mogadishu raised an estimated US\$6,000 per day, or US\$170,000 per month. This revenue went to the warlords.

Most of the *qat* sent to Somalia comes from Kenya and Ethiopia. It grows naturally in Kenya and is exported to Somalia from Nairobi's Wilson airport on a daily basis, landing at small airstrips throughout Somalia. The reason *qat* flows into Somalia is because of its huge domestic demand. Additionally, once Somalia imports the drug, it is often shipped to Gulf States because of Somalia's cultural and religious links to the Middle East as well as the convenience of shipping it there. The ICU has been able to profit from this trade.⁴⁷

Al-Shabaab has also used the port of Kismayo as the main route to receive arms and ammunition from external sources and illegal financial activities. The United Nations estimated that port revenues provided al-Shabaab up to US\$50 million a year, or roughly half of its total funds.

Somalia: Piracy and Terror in the Gulf of Aden

Three-quarters of the world's surface is covered by water, and about 80 percent of the global trade is shipped by sea and laden on 50,000 large and many more small ships. Sixty percent of the world's oil is shipped by approximately 4,000 oil tankers.

The Gulf of Aden is situated at the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, between Somalia and Yemen, and the 2,500-mile waterway is one of the most important trade routes in the world. It is the southern gateway to the Suez Canal that connects Europe and North America to Asia and East Africa. About 1,500 ships, 10 percent of the global shipping traffic, passes through it every month, including 4 percent of the world's daily crude oil supply. The only alternative route, around South Africa's Cape of Good Hope, is thousands of miles longer and much more expensive. The global economy depends on the free and undisturbed flow of goods and energy resources. The main threats to the international maritime trade are terror attacks and piracy.

Piracy in the Gulf of Aden

Somali pirates kidnapped a record number of seafarers in 2010, in cases that left eight sailors dead. Pirates in the region hijacked fifty-three ships and captured 1,181 seafarers, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) said in a report: "More people were taken hostage at sea in 2010 than in any year on record."

The IMB also reported that the number of pirate attacks against ships has risen every year since 2006. There were 445 attacks reported in 2010, up 10 percent from 2009. Some 188 crew members were taken hostage in 2006, 1,050 in 2009, and 1,181 in 2010. Hijackings off the coast of Somalia accounted for 92 percent of all ship seizures in 2010, with forty-nine vessels captured and 1,016 crew members taken hostage. Somali pirates were holding twenty-eight vessels and 638 hostages for ransom as of December 2010. And the Somali pirates have extended their reach, threatening not only the Gulf of Aden and east coast of Somalia but also the southern region of the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab Strait, and the east coast of Oman. This area ranks as the number-one piracy hotspot. The IMB estimates that about 1,000 pirates organized in about twenty-five groups are active in the Gulf of Aden, counting those who help the pirates on the ground.

Despite the risks of being shot, arrested, or becoming lost at sea, the potential rewards of piracy can be surreal in impoverished Somalia. Piracy is the second-largest generator of income in Somalia, yielding

an estimated US\$200 million annually. There is little wonder why the practice has boomed when Somali per-capita income is US\$600 and a minimum of US\$10,000 is available for each perpetrator of a successful operation. Ransoms for large ships in recent years have averaged close to US\$5 million. The largest reported ransom ever paid was US\$11 million for the Greek oil tanker *Irene SL* in 2011.

One sailor, a pirate prisoner for 174 days, said his captors were well-organized in groups of 15–20. Armed with Kalashnikov rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, and scaling ladders, they operate hundreds of miles offshore from two or three larger “mother” ships, from which they launch their attacks in speedboats against unsuspecting victims.

On the seas off Somalia, heavily-armed pirates are overpowering ocean-going fishing and merchant vessels to use as bases for further attacks. They capture the crew and force them to sail to within attacking distance of other unsuspecting vessels. Security experts fear the ransom money the pirates are receiving will allow them to buy better equipment and weapons for larger operations. Another concern focuses on the threat to the world’s energy supply.

The threat that piracy in the Horn of Africa poses to international trade and to freedom of movement is substantial. The pirates gained an estimated US\$50 million dollars in ransom money in 2009. But this sum does not include the losses shipping companies incur for their ships’ inactivity after capture. Increased insurance rates and thousands of dollars in extra fuel consumption costs from ships traversing the gulf at higher-than-normal speeds to avoid pirates are additional financial burdens facing owners.

Just as disturbing is al-Shabaab’s association with the Somali pirates. While al-Shabaab’s original leaders discouraged a connection to the pirates, the new generation appears to be developing a burgeoning relationship with the outlaws. The relationship between al-Shabaab and the pirates is one built out of convenience. In return for allowing pirates to operate out of ports south of the city of Mogadishu, which were controlled by al-Shabaab, the group received a part of the ransom the pirates demanded for hijacked ships. The ransom money helps to fund al-Shabaab’s jihadi cause, most likely in the form of weapons for its terror camps.

International Response to the Threat of Piracy

Armed guards aboard cargo ships and an international naval armada complete with aircraft that carry out onshore raids have put a huge dent in Somali piracy and might even spell the end of the scourge.

Simple practices such as wrapping razor wire around deck railings and the introduction of a designated citadel have increased the difficulty of commandeering the vessels. This has in turn aided international naval operations by stretching the response time for an effective interception, allowing arrests to be made. As a result, the success rate of piracy was halved from 2010 to 2011.

In 2011, Somali pirates netted US\$160 million and cost the world economy some US\$7 billion, according to the American One Earth Future Foundation. But the number of successful pirate attacks has since fallen dramatically. In 2012, Somali pirates seized fourteen vessels, down about 50 percent from the previous year, according to the International Maritime Bureau. Somali pirates still held four large commercial vessels, a number of fishing dhows from countries such as Yemen and Iran, and about 130 hostages as of September 2012.⁴⁸

In February 2012, the Transitional Federal Government in Mogadishu signed a contract with Halliday Finch International to form a "National Coast Guard" capability with "immediate effect." Meanwhile, the semiautonomous region of Puntland also created the Puntland Maritime Police Force (PMPF). However, there has been little evidence that these initiatives have had any success. The training is very basic, and resources are limited in comparison with those available to the pirate groups.

Lieutenant-Commander Jacqueline Sherriff, a spokeswoman for the European Union naval force, said in 2012, "We have witnessed a significant drop in attacks in recent months. The stats speak for themselves." Sherriff mostly attributed the plunge in hijackings to international military efforts—European, American, Chinese, Indian, and Russian—that have improved over time.⁴⁹

In May 2012, as part of Operation Atlanta, after receiving an expanded mandate to allow attacks on inshore camps, the EU naval force destroyed pirate weapons, equipment, and fuel on land. Japanese aircraft flew over the shoreline to relay pirate activity to warships nearby. Merchant ships also increased their communications with patrolling military forces after pirate sightings, Sherriff said. Ships bolstered their own defenses with armed guards, barbed wire, water cannons, and safe rooms.⁵⁰

No vessel with armed guards has ever been hijacked, noted Cyrus Moody of the International Maritime Bureau. A June 2012 report from the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea said armed guards have forced pirates to "abort attacks earlier and at greater ranges from

targeted vessels.” The UN says 1,045 suspected or convicted pirates are being held in twenty-one countries, including the United States, Europe, Yemen, India, Kenya, Seychelles, and Somalia.⁵¹

Despite all the efforts and the decline in pirate attacks, it is too early to declare victory. According to the EU naval force, in 2012, pirates still held seven ships and 177 crew members.

Response of the New Elected Somali President (2013)

In February 2013, Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud granted amnesty to hundreds of young Somali pirates to reduce the threat to shipping in the seas off the Horn of Africa. The amnesty did not apply to bosses running the gangs.⁵²

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said the Somali government should instead focus on freeing hostages and bringing to justice those responsible for hijacking ships, torturing crews, and money laundering. “If the current downturn in attacks is to endure, those who have been involved must face the consequence of their actions,” Alan Cole, regional coordinator for UNODC’s counter-piracy program, told *Reuters*. “The manner in which young men and boys have been sent to sea by organizers who have made huge profits suggests that the piracy leaders have little regard for those they employ and this initiative is likely to be for self-interest.”⁵³

Al-Qaeda and Maritime Jihad

The al-Qaeda maritime attacks in the years 2000–2009 offer a stark picture of al-Qaeda’s growing interest in maritime targets. Abu Mus’ab al-Suri, a senior al-Qaeda ideologist, wrote in his book that:

Most of the world’s commercial and oil economy passes through these marine passages. Furthermore, fleets of ships pass through them, aircraft carriers and missiles of death destined for our children and wife’s [*sic*]. These passages must be closed down, so that these invasive voyages will disappear. This will be done by attacking the American’s ships and those of its allies, by planting mines and sinking the ships, or through threats to perpetrate suicide attacks and acts of piracy against them and by the use of weapons whenever possible.⁵⁴

Al-Qaeda commanders, such as Abdel Rahim al-Nasheri, the mastermind of the attack on the USS *Cole*, and Omar al-Farouq, who was captured in Indonesia on June 5, 2002, confessed that al-Qaeda is planning future attacks against maritime targets. In the area of the Ara-

bian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, al-Qaeda's goal is the removal of Western influence and military presence, and the organization is intensively collecting intelligence about potential targets, such as ships, port facilities, and so on. Al-Qaeda and other global jihad terror organizations are also improving their operational capabilities, such as scuba-diving skills and hijacking ships to turn them into "Trojan horses" loaded with conventional explosives or even a "dirty bomb."

In May 2009, al-Qaeda's central leadership published a message titled "Maritime Terrorism—A Strategic Need." Al-Qaeda said that establishing naval terror cells and controlling the seas around Yemen is a "vital step" in achieving a global caliphate. The Bab al-Mandab Strait and Gulf of Aden were termed "of supreme strategic importance" in al-Qaeda's long-term plan.⁵⁵

In April 2009, the deputy leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Sa'id Ali Jaber al-Khathim al-Shihri (also known as Abu Sufian al-Azdi), released a message calling on Somali jihadists to step up their attacks on "crusader" forces at sea in the Gulf of Aden and on land in neighboring Djibouti, which hosts France's largest military base in Africa: "To our steadfast brethren in Somalia, take caution and prepare yourselves and increase your strikes against the crusaders at sea and in Djibouti."⁵⁶

Al-Shihri had opened his message by addressing the jihadi leaders: Taliban supreme leader Mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden, and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri. He assured them that the warriors (the mujahideen) in the Arabian Peninsula were not letting them down and pledged to open a new front in the region:⁵⁷

We say to you, we are not just sitting there watching you as the crusader countries prepare themselves to eradicate you and wipe out your group. By Allah we shall open against them a major front in the Arabian Peninsula which would, Allah willing, be the key to victory that would purge the crusader campaign and put an end to the ambitions of the crusaders and the Jews in the region.⁵⁸

Al-Shihri warns Somali militants against a conspiracy led by "the crusaders, the Jews and traitor Arab rulers" to put an end to the Muslim extremists' progress in Somalia:

The crusaders, the Jews and the traitorous rulers did not come to the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden except to wage war against you in Somalia and abolish your newly established emirate, and by Allah,

they shall be defeated. They shall bring a curse upon their people. We shall not leave them this time until we get to their own countries with the help of Allah.⁵⁹

In another message, al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for 2009's surge in pirate attacks. Al-Qaeda called its maritime campaign "a new strategy which permits the mujahideen to hijack shipping," since "fighters who aspire to establish the caliphate must control the seas and the waterways."⁶⁰

The goals of the pirates in the Gulf of Aden were almost always the ransom payments or loot; they have not been motivated by Islamic fundamentalism. But in dealing with Muslim Somalis, it is easy to recruit them to contribute to the jihad and to get legitimacy and freedom of operation in return. One of the groups is the al-Qaeda-affiliated Somali al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen that controls a significant part of Somalia and receives ransom money from the pirates. According to *Jane's Magazine*, "the al-Shabaab allow the pirates to operate undisturbed and receive a variety of services in return—smuggling of guns and foreign fighters via the sea, training of Islamic marine forces, and mostly a nice piece of profits."⁶¹

Since the 1990s, al-Qaeda has had links to Islamic extremist groups operating in Somalia (AIAI, Islamic Courts Union, al-Shabaab), but piracy and al-Qaeda's brand of terrorism had largely remained separate. However, in 2009, Western intelligence sources found, for the first time, interactions between pirate groups and Somalia's al-Qaeda-linked groups, and the interactions have been on the rise.⁶²

Notes

1. The Fund for Peace is an independent, nonpartisan, 501 (c) (3) nonprofit research and educational organization that works to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security.
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16. Shaul Shay, *Somalia between Jihad and Restoration* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008), 147–148.
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Summary and Conclusions

Somalia has lacked a stable central government since the country's 1991 civil war. In the years since, it has experienced ongoing clan violence, the rise of armed groups, Islamic radicalization, invasion by outside forces, widespread banditry, piracy, and famine. A UN-backed plan known as the Roadmap for the End of the Transition spelled out priority measures to end the transition by August 20, 2012, and restore stability to the country. After the dissolution of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which was established in 2004, strenuous negotiations between political actors in Somalia took place to adopt a provisional constitution, elect a new parliament, and appoint a new president and prime minister.¹

So for the first time since the collapse of Ziad Barre's government in 1991, a new federal parliament was elected. Because security conditions still did not allow for general elections, 135 traditional elders from various clans and regions convened in Mogadishu to elect 275 members of parliament, including women, by secret ballot. They elected a political outsider, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, as president, on September 10, 2012, a clear break from former president Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a familiar figure in the Somali political scene and former commander of the Islamic Courts Union.

President Mohamud in turn appointed as his prime minister Abdi Farah Shirdon, an economist and businessman, who vowed to fight nepotism and corruption. Shirdon named Fauzia Yusuf Haji Aden as his deputy and the country's new foreign minister—the first time a woman had held such high positions in Somalia. The implementation of the Roadmap for the End of the Transition could be a turning point for the country and a step toward democracy and restoration.

Somalia's outgoing prime minister, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, said, "Somalia voted for change," and the result heralds a new era for Somali politics.² Although the broader Somali population did not take part in

the voting directly, many regional and international bodies believed the elections represented a significant step toward democratic rule.

The United Nations, United States, European Union, and other international partners welcomed the inauguration of the new Federal Parliament of Somalia. “The Somali people have waited twenty years for peace to take root in their country. Now is the time to begin a new chapter in their history,” said the spokesman of the secretary-general of the United Nations.³

Despite the fact that the transition had not run completely smoothly, with accusations of intimidation and corruption arising around the election of parliamentarians, for example, expectations were high within and outside Somalia for what could prove to be a significant turning point for the country.

The Somalia Conference took place at Lancaster House on May 7, 2013, co-hosted by the United Kingdom and Somalia and attended by fifty-four friends and partners of Somalia. The final communiqué of the conference reflects the expectations for the new Somali government and the implementation of the Somali Roadmap:

We met at a pivotal moment for Somalia. Last year Somalia’s eight-year transition ended and Somalia chose a new, more legitimate Parliament, President and Government. Security is improving, as Somali and AMISOM forces, and their Ethiopian allies, recover towns and routes from Al Shabaab. The number of pirate attacks committed off the coast of Somalia has drastically reduced. The famine has receded. The diaspora have begun to return. The economy is starting to revive.

But many challenges remain. Al Shabaab is still a threat to peace and security. The constitution is not complete. Piracy and terrorism remain threats. Millions still live in Internally Displaced Persons and refugee camps. The country lacks developed government structures, schools, hospitals, sanitation and other basic services.⁴

After one year of hard work, President Mohamud still faced many challenges, including security, government structure, and humanitarian crises.

Al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen

Al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, who opposed the roadmap deal, had been fighting for five years to topple the government of Somalia, but under pressure from African Union and government forces, they retreated from the capital of Mogadishu, the port of Kismayo, and other strongholds in the southern part of Somalia.

Al-Shabaab was becoming increasingly subject to factionalism. As al-Shabaab began to sustain losses, a rift among the group's leadership emerged, dividing the leadership into two camps, one with Godane and al-Afghani, considered hard-liners who favored the idea of al-Shabaab expanding beyond the Somali borders, and the other with Sheikh Mukhtar Robow who preferred limiting the group's activities to Somalia.⁵

The year-long internal crisis within al-Shabaab intensified in April 2013, after the group's second-in-command, Ibrahim al-Afghani, sent a letter to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. In the letter titled "An Open Letter to Our Amir Sheikh Ayman al-Zawahiri," al-Afghani paints a bleak picture of al-Shabaab and rebukes its leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane. He said al-Shabaab's current situation is "getting worse and nothing is visible on the horizon," calling on al-Zawahiri to intervene to find solutions to the rifts affecting the militants. As a result of internal divisions, al-Afghani said al-Shabaab had lost most of the land it once controlled as well as the trust and support of the Somali people.

In June 2013, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys was forced to give himself up to government forces, fueling speculation that his life was under threat from the al-Shabaab leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane.⁶ Another example of the internal rift is the assassination of Omar Hammami, commonly known as Abu Mansour al-Amriki, and another foreign fighter, Osama al-Britani, a British citizen of Pakistani origin, in an attack ordered by al-Shabaab's top leaders.⁷ Hammami had had a falling out with top al-Shabaab leaders over the direction of the militia, and for months before his death, he had warned that al-Shabaab's leaders were trying to kill him.⁸

This trend will almost certainly continue, but it may also serve to strengthen the more radical factions within the terrorist group that prefer to focus on regional and global jihad. However, the group has not been defeated, and the fight against al-Shabaab is not over. They still remain a serious threat to international efforts aimed at stabilizing Somalia.

In 2013, terrorist bombings and targeted assassinations continued to plague Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia, among them attacks on the courthouse in Mogadishu (April 2013), a UN compound (June 2013), and the Turkish embassy (July 2013) as well as the Nairobi Westgate mall hostage crisis (September 2013). The mall attack was the most significant strike in Kenya since al-Qaeda bombed the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998.

National Reconciliation

Somalia needs a strong government that is able to reunite the population and overcome the social divisions in Somali society. The current government needs to prioritize reconciliation to rebuild the social contract among the Somali people and to ultimately revive feelings of nationhood. President Mohamud declared in mid-September 2012 that he is open to talks with al-Shabaab, but al-Shabaab has already turned down the offer.

The central government has made some progress in Mogadishu but has little influence outside the city, with much of the country fractured into autonomous regions, including the self-declared independent northern Somaliland, the northeastern Puntland region, and in the south the self-declared leaders of the Jubaland region. A federal system and decentralization of political and economic decision-making processes is therefore seen as necessary to move forward, and Somalia needs to build the state on its regional foundations.

Civil Society and Humanitarian Problems

Progress in Somalia is relative, but steps forward have been taken since the 2011 famine that struck large parts of the south of the country. In 2013, over a million Somalis are refugees in surrounding countries. Another million are displaced inside the country, often in terrible conditions, and more than 2.7 million Somalis are still dependent on aid. Nearly 45 percent of Somalis are malnourished. Unemployment is estimated to be 70 percent for those aged eighteen to thirty, and up to 80 percent of people lack access to clean water and sanitation.

Somalia Oil and Gas Reserves

Somalia is aware of the recent oil and gas discoveries in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Mozambique, and it is determined to join the race for oil and gas production. According to oil industry experts, Somalia has some of the largest prospective resources within East Africa. Somalia hopes to gain revenue from oil and gas currently hidden under Somalia (onshore) and below the Indian Ocean floor (offshore). In the 1980s, there was an “oil and gas exploration rush” to Somalia, driven by the country’s huge oil and gas potential. The rush was led by Conoco-Phillips, Shell (Pecten), Amoco, Eni, Total, and Texaco, who left the country in 1991 in “force majeure” but are waiting to come back when security has improved.⁹

In August 2013, the British Soma Oil & Gas Company signed an agreement with the Somali government to conduct a survey of its territorial waters to assess oil and natural gas reserves. The company was founded in early 2013 with the purpose of exploring the reserve potential in Somalia. The agreement is the first oil and gas deal reached since the country formed the federal government in 2012.¹⁰

The International Community

The prime minister of Somalia, Abdi Farah Shirdon, told *Al Jazeera*:

For its part, the international community at the London Conference will be telling us how it plans to support us in these critical reforms, because the formidable challenges that stand before us cannot be achieved by Somalia alone.

International partners also need to adjust to the progress here. We are a sovereign government and partners need to treat us like one, supporting line ministries directly rather than through third-party NGOs. The old way of doing business undermines the government and limits our capacity.¹¹

The international approach to Somalia requires a thorough reassessment. It has been confined to two priorities—confronting terrorism and piracy—and has caused a wide cross-section of Somalis to view the international effort as a foreign occupation. Terrorism and piracy are symptoms of more fundamental and greater problems: the persistence of conflict and the absence of an authentic and effective state infrastructure.¹²

This is a time when the international community is requested to prioritize the building of a stable political system and establishing state infrastructure. The international community should avoid giving political direction to the Somali government, but remain available to provide training of military and civilian personnel and to finance development projects where it is clear the money is being used wisely and for the intended purpose. It is also the time for the Somali government to step forward and do what good governments are expected to do.¹³

So, will this be the end of military, political, and social chaos in Somalia? The period of transition is over, but it is clear that the work of transformation is just beginning. In four years' time, the Somali government and institutions need to create the conditions to hold a referendum on the provisional constitution and elections under universal suffrage. There are indications that Somalia is moving in the right direction, and

the international community should look to progress existing institutions and organizations. It remains to be seen whether recent attempts, unlike historical ones, will reach fruition.

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