

# Somalia

## - When Will the Struggle End?

Ofelia ZAHA

**Abstract.** *Somalia is an African country which hasn't really known peace, stability and prosperity in the last 60 years although in the media the year 1991 is considered to be the starting point of the civil war.*

*First of all, in my paper I will start with a short description of Somalia's situation and organization in the pre colonial era, colonial period, during democracy, communism and in the end civil war.*

*Secondly, once the base is formed I will continue in detail about the events that occurred after 1991. With this occasion I will describe the escalation factors, the triggers that kept the conflict going and the conditions that contribute to peace.*

*Furthermore, the actors will be grouped in primary, secondary, other parties and peace makers. Because every conflict has a struggle for resources at its core I will proceed with exemplifying them for all the actors. Taking into consideration the complexity of this case there will be a focus on the facts regarding the present situation.*

*Finally, after so much information has been reviewed suppositions will be made on the future trends with an invitation to meditate on the course that this conflict will take.*

**Keywords:** *Somalia, Siad Barre, Somaliland, al-Shabab, al-Qaeda.*

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Since 1991, Somalia has gone through civil war, poverty, terrorist attacks, famine, the pirate phenomenon, numerous leadership shifts, and is at present in the position to consider the light at the end of the tunnel to be merely a question. Africa is currently the arena for such turmoil events, but this country manages to become an exception that confirms the rule in conflicts that appearances are deceiving.

A study made in 2006 by Hae S. Kim shows that, in Africa, the most relevant cause of

conflict is ethnical heterogeneity. Also, research made by Creative Associates International sees ethnic group imbalance as a major reason for internal strife. However, if we look at Somalia we can see that they are unlike many African populations in this area. The Somali are part of a single, homogeneous ethnic group, which is Muslim and shares the same language and culture. In order to properly understand the present situation we must go in depth.



It is safe to say that their relationship was not always a peaceful one. Since the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Somali people have had their system organized in the form of Xeer. This practice includes the existence of actors like judges, jurists, detectives, attorneys, witnesses, and police officers to enforce the law. With the rules they established, they managed to settle the conflicts in the past. However, they were known for harsh punishments like payment of blood money for libel, theft, physical harm, rape, and death. As I have mentioned earlier, Somali clans had often clashed over resources such as water, livestock (camels) and grazing long before Somalia became a sovereign country. Also, there was an idea that every pastoral Somali, thus, representing his clan, had a right to take ownership of a slice of this gift from Allah. This sort of behavior is incompatible with running a modern state. The use of force as an acceptable strategy is therefore rooted in Somali culture and one could argue that some features of Somali culture reward criminals who engage in violent activities.

Their religion was Islamic and the practices were taken out of the shari'a moral code. This tradition has played a significant part in Somali society. In theory, it has served as the basis for all national legislation in every Somali constitution. In practice, however, it only applied to common civil cases such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and family matters.

Things changed when the Europeans took over and imposed their own rules. This did not allow their system to evolve and compete with the ones in modern countries. Also, the great powers divided what some would call greater Somalia into five parts. Britain took two, Italy one and France one. The European powers gave the Somali region of Ogaden to Ethiopia's King Menelik to appease him. This is another root cause of the Ogaden War that took place in 1977. The partitioning of Somalia permanently damaged the Somali people. Hadrawi, a great Somali poet, argues persuasively in several poems that most of the malaise in today's Somalia stems from the colonial system. He claims that the colonial powers destroyed Somalia's socio-economic system. In addition, most

of the resources of Somalia's weak and poor government were used to reunify the Somali people. The effect of the partition continues to haunt the Somali people, since, according to this view, two Somali territories remained under the control of Ethiopia and Kenya.

Somalia changed completely after it gained its independence in 1960. First of all, many Somalis moved to urban areas, where the types of resources that are needed and the means used to obtain them changed, and so did the political leaders' interests. The clans began to struggle for power, and, as the system is known to have been corrupted, the only way to obtain it was through unfair means. This change of situation can be considered another root cause, which was displayed in governance and economy, and which is strongly related to the culture on which it was applied.

Nevertheless, as corrupt as it was, the system was a democratic one until 1969, and the people were allowed to express their grievances, so violent activities did not take hold. However, when General Mohamed Siad Barre took over power, things changed. The state followed the socialist model: there was a general obsession with controlling the population and punishing any unfavorable public opinion. Power and resources belonged to the members of his clan and the opposition groups were outlawed.

Another issue is the fact that Somalia's government could not provide employment or a meaningful education. The private sector was under-developed as well. As a result, many young men were in a hopeless situation. Their despair allowed the warlords and elites to obtain their trust and dedication. As they had no interest in helping the people, they proceeded to using the readily available human resources with grievances, without providing any other alternative for the future instead of military combat.

Because the situation was boiling with grievances in the 1970's and the leader Barre was hungry for power, a war with the neighboring country, Ethiopia, broke out and managed to destabilize the situation. This created a flow of arms in the region from the Soviet Union and the US, and managed to prepare the population for battle. The availability of weapons, combined with all the above grievances and disputes, were new causes that resulted in continuous outbreaks between the clans and the country government. When this coup failed, the Siad Barre regime started to use excessive force against the Majerteen clan (the clan to which most of the officers belonged). This event was the beginning of Somalia's civil war.

In 1986, the president was facing health problems and there were talks about who would succeed him. The regime was weakened further in the 1980s as the Cold War drew to a close and Somalia's strategic importance was diminished. The government became increasingly totalitarian and resistance movements, encouraged by Ethiopia, sprang up across the country.

Somalia's large number of unemployed youth also fueled the conflict. In the 1970s, the Somali population was estimated to be about 5 million. Although no credible census

has been taken, Somalia now has an estimated population of about 9-10 million. In the 1980s this increase created a young population with no employment opportunities.

### **Conflict Evolution**

Now that we understand the situation that led to the crisis in 1991 we will describe the path it followed until the present situation.

Since 1991, when the war between Barre's new Supreme Revolutionary Council (instead of SRSP) and the militia groups was won by the Somali National Alliance (SNA), the Abgal and the Habargidir clans that took over. They had never fought throughout their history and in fact belonged to the same clan (Hawiye) and sub-clan (Hiraab). However, when Mogadishu fell to the United Somali Congress (USC) (to which they both belonged) a power struggle broke out. The opposition leaders were Mohamed Farah Aideed (SNA) and Ali Mahdi Mohamed, and their frenzy for resources killed thousands of civilians. Other clans, such as the Isaaq, Ogaden, Hawiye, and Digil and Mirifle also started opposition groups in order to seize power. Although the region was at war, Somaliland managed to declare autonomy followed by Puntland in 1996. The chaos became an international problem, so in 1992 the UN peace forces were sent to restore order and safety in the area. However, this attempt finished in 1995, after the Somali attack on the US Army rangers known as Black Hawk Down. In 1999, Ethiopian forces invaded and captured the regional capital of Garba Harre, which lies 250 miles northwest of Mogadishu, in order to try to suppress fighting among rebel groups.

In 2000 there was a turn of events and Clan leaders and senior figures elected Abdulkassim Salat Hassan president of Somalia, which led to the emergence of the first government in the country since 1991 known as Transitional National Government. This attracted the opposition back up by Ethiopia to announce their intention to form another government. In 2003, their mandate expired and in October 2004 a new transitional parliament inaugurated at ceremony in Kenya with Abdullahi Yusuf as president. The country was hit by a tsunami in the same year, and thus the famine was aggravated, with no success from the UN to provide aid. As the transitional government was opposed by rebel groups, assassination attempts started in 2005.

The warlords started another clash in 2006 when the parliament met in a town called Baidoa. The new opposition was called the Islamic Courts and was a unification of Sharia courts who wanted to take down the Transitional Federal Government. Until the end of 2006, they controlled most of southern Somalia and the vast majority of its population. This insurgent group declared holy war against Ethiopia. The latter won the war side by side with TFG. Furthermore, because of the victory in 2007 President Abdullahi entered Mogadishu for the first time since 2004.

As one extremist group left the arena for a while another one, known from the September 11 attacks, emerged: Al-Qaeda. In the same year, the African Union attempted to calm the

tensions, but the result was an even higher resistance from the warlords who continued fighting against the national government backed up by Ethiopia. Given the complete chaos, the aid that was sent by the World Food Program was taken away by pirates. This phenomenon had been reported since 2005 and was strongly supported by the local coastal communities as they believed this was a protection for their fishing grounds and a way to restore justice. Some Somali businessmen and officials in Puntland were reportedly behind the piracy. The pirates were receiving valuable information about the types of ships, cargo, and timing from Somalis in the Persian Gulf.

In September 2007, another opposition government, consisting of members of the former Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and other Somali elements met and formed in Eritrea. On its hunt for Al-Qaeda members, the US launched a missile strike in 2008 in Dhusamareb region.

In June of the same year, there were some attempts to make peace as TFG and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS), a group dominated by members of the ICU, signed an agreement in Djibouti mediated by the United Nations Special Envoy Ahmedou Ould-Abdullah. The parties agreed to a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces, and the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force. The deal, which provided for Ethiopian troops to leave Somalia within 120 days, was rejected by Islamist leader Hassan Dahir Aweys, who demanded that all foreign troops must leave the country. The piracy problem was becoming a chronic one as they started to hijack ships carrying weapons and other valuable goods, demanding ransom. On October NATO agreed to delegate a naval force to patrol the waters off Somalia to tackle the growing issue.

The regions that were once safe like Somaliland and Puntland were bombed, the targets being the presidential palace, the Ethiopian consulate, UNDP offices, and the offices of the Puntland Intelligence Service. The ones responsible were not found but are suspected to be from Al-Qaeda.

In late December 2008, President Yusuf resigned from office and left for Yemen. In January 2009, the Somali Transitional Parliament elected the leader of the ARS, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmad as president.

The same year, a group known as Al-Shabaab (a radical satellite of the Union of Islamic Courts formed in 2006), which was not active and did not control any territory in Somalia until 2007-2008, became a main actor in the scene. They took control of Baidoa, an important pillar for the TFG, and the southern port city of Kismayo. Also in September Al-Shabaab pledged allegiance to Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. They threatened UN staff and caused the withdrawal of the UN's World Food Program (WFP) from their regions.

In 2011, 275 of the 439 pirate attacks reported to the IMB took place in Somalia in the east coast, and the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa.

As a result of the Al-Shabaab rebel clashes Kenya closed the border to Somalia. The famine was gravely aggravated by the drought in 2011 and aid agencies warned that millions faced starvation. Because of this situation the tensions with Al-Shabaab loosened as they partially lifted the ban on foreign aid agencies and pulled out of Mogadishu.

After the disturbances made by the rebels in Kenya, the country sent troops to Somalia. They managed to take control over Baidoa together with the TFG, and on February 2012, Al-Shabaab announced its merger with Al-Qaeda. The tables started to turn again, as the African Union and Somali government forces captured Afgoye town south of Mogadishu, thereby cutting al-Shabaab territory in half. They also captured Kismayo, the second largest port city.

A highpoint was the establishment of the formal parliament in Mogadishu in a highly secured area of the city, in August 2012. A new president was elected, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, and attempts to kill him were already ongoing on the second day after his election. Several other attacks were attempted a few months later.

Now, the piracy phenomenon is decreasing, but there is still a continuous struggle in the country. In 2013, a French intelligence officer was held hostage and killed by Al-Shabaab. Suicide bombing protests are a common activity that has spread over the years. The Shabaab remain a potent threat, still controlling rural areas as well as carrying out guerrilla attacks in areas apparently under government control.

There are discussions in the UN to lift the arms embargo but the opinions regarding this vary greatly. Those who oppose getting rid of the arms embargo say Somalia's security sector still includes elements close to warlords and militants. However, those who are in favor want to strengthen the poorly equipped and ill-disciplined military to help them fight against Al-Shabaab and restore peace.

### **Understanding the Escalation Factors**

In order to fully understand the patterns of the conflict we must now revise the details of the events, look at the context, and take into consideration the triggers which kept the war going.

First of all, the change from pastoral state to colony and then to independent state again in 1960 created an unstable situation. In October 15, 1969 the assassination of President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke by his bodyguards while paying a visit to the northern town of Las Anod, led to a military coup d'état on October 21, 1969 (the day after his funeral), in which the Somali Army seized power without encountering armed opposition. The event was spearheaded by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre, who at the time commanded the army.

His reign continued to fuel the grievances and Ogaden War with Ethiopia was another trigger which led to three internal movements of the clans who started seizing power.

The first was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), established in 1978 by Abdullahi Yusuf. This mainly Majerten clan movement engaged the regime in periodic skirmishes in the northeast of the country and was met with harsh repression.

The second major armed conflict was the war between the Somali military and the Somali National Movement (SNM) for control over Northwest Somalia.

The third armed conflict before 1991 pitted embattled government forces against a growing number of clan-based liberation movements in 1989 and 1990. The strongest of these movements included the United Somali Congress, USC (Hawiye clan), the Somali Patriotic Movement (Ogadeni clan), and the Somali Salvation Democratic Movement (Majerten clan). These three movements managed to throw the country into a multi-front war that continued in 1991–92. After the civil war started, the religious factor reappeared, as a number of new shari'a courts began to spring up in many different cities and towns across the country. These new shari'a courts serve three functions, namely, to pass rulings in both criminal and civil cases, to organize a militia capable of arresting criminals, and to keep convicted prisoners incarcerated. This return of religion would further cause a lack of control in the security sector as extremist groups were bound to appear.

The famine that resulted after the war caused the US to intervene and try to help the starving country by protecting food shipments from the warlords, and thus triggered another conflict. This operation was known as the *Black Hawk Down* and switched from a salvation initiative to a battle.

Another issue is the harassment and detention of journalists that occurred across the country, both by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and under the Islamic Courts Union. Somaliland has banned political demonstrations, and Puntland has outlawed opposition parties. Checkpoints around Somalia are manned by militia, who have at times extorted or killed civilians attempting to travel across the country. The right to privacy was also restricted. Without a civil administration, ownership of weapons mushroomed, especially assault rifles, as did the possession of light weapons such as rocket launchers, antiaircraft guns, mortars and other explosives. Violence and discrimination against women, including genital mutilation, became common. The rape of women by militia and bandits is still a problem, and there are no laws against spousal rape.

In 1997, Ethiopia contributed to destabilizing the wanted peace, as it was accused of blocking the Cairo Accord that had been signed by 28 Somali warlords and factions. It exerted pressure on the Somali Salvation Alliance (SSA, the Sodere Group of 15 factions) and forced it to opt out of the accord it had signed with the Somali National Alliance (SNA, which included the other 13 factions). Ethiopia was further responsible

for undermining the Transitional National Government (TNG) that emerged out of the Arta Conference in Djibouti in 2000, as it accused it of being an Islamic front, which led to it being denied recognition by the USA.

Moreover, the Ethiopian government started to openly send land mines, ammunition and weapons to groups that were opposing the TNG in Mogadishu, Lower Jubba, Bay and Bakool, Gedo and Hiran. Ethiopia also strengthened the Puntland regional state.

Because in October 2000, Abdiqasim Salad Hassan and Ali Khalif Galaydh entered Mogadishu as the newly appointed president and prime minister, respectively, of the provisional Transitional National Government, the other warlords, backed by Ethiopia, created a coalition opposing the TNG, the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council in Mogadishu.

Again in 2002, because of the September 11 attacks, the situation changed as the United States froze funds of a major bank in Somalia, because it was suspected to have Al-Qaeda links.

Another escalation can be observed in 2006 when the transitional government met for the first time since 2004 in the town of Baidoa. There was a military confrontation in which the Al-Shabaab militia laid siege to the headquarters of the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG). In parallel, a conflict began in mid-February, 2006, when Somali warlords formed the ARPCT (Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism) to challenge the ICU's emerging influence. It had been alleged that the United States was funding the ARPCT due to concerns that the ICU had ties to Al-Qaeda. The ICU militia won control of Mogadishu and ARPCT forces left the city. Scores of people were killed and hundreds were injured during fierce fighting.

In November of the same year, the Monitoring Group reported suspicions that the governments of Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Syria had all been involved in the supply of arms to Somali armed groups. In 2007, Eritrea, a non-Muslim country, also sent about 2,500 soldiers to Somalia in support of the Islamists, who named themselves the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts. This proliferation of ammunition contributed to maintaining a violent climate accentuated by the military support that secondary actors and third parties gave to the belligerent groups.

The year 2009 marked another important moment in the battle. As the TFG President Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed arrived in Mogadishu as a president for the first time. This caused Al-Shabaab and other radical Islamists to attack the new TFG president hours later. They accused the new President of accepting the secular transitional government. However, in this period suicide attacks had become a new aspect to the Somali Civil War: on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007 a truck bomb exploded outside the home of the Somali interim prime minister, Ali Mohamed Ghedi; on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, Al-Shabaab carried out a suicide car bomb attack against an African Union military base in Mogadishu, and on



December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, an Al-Shabaab militant dressed as a woman entered a medical school graduation ceremony and blew himself up killing three ministers of the Government.

In the years that followed, there were several kidnappings that added fuel to the conflict, the suicide attacks continued and aid was withdrawn due to the threats of Al-Shabaab. The neighboring countries that provided help were attacked, as for example the twin blasts which hit Ugandan capital Kampala, killing 74 people watching the World Cup football final on TV. In 2010, the Prime Minister Sharmarke resigned.

As famine was declared in 2012, a change in strategy was triggered as Al-Shabaab partially lifted the ban it had imposed on foreign aid agencies in areas under its control. Also, it pulled out of all its positions in Mogadishu. The Islamist group describes the move as a "change of military tactics".

Because in 2011 suspected Al-Shabaab militants raided Kenyan coastal resorts, killing one foreigner and kidnapping two, the Kenyan troops entered Somalia to attack rebels they accused of being behind several kidnappings of foreigners on Kenyan soil.

To get further help and to induce fear, in 2012, Al-Shabaab announced its merger with Al-Qaeda.

The last event that changed the political situation was the Mogadishu election of September 2012, when academic and civic activist Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was elected president in the first such vote on Somali soil since 1967. This was received with hostility by the opposing parties, as the following day a suicide bomber killed four security officers at President Mohamud's hotel in the capital.

## **Getting to Know the Actors**

### *Primary*

After losing the Ogaden War with Ethiopia in 1978, the liberation movements rose in the country with the purpose to overthrow Siad Barre, whom they held accountable. The first of these movements was the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), established in 1978 by Abdullahi Yusuf. The second major armed conflict was the war between the Somali military and the Somali National Movement (SNM) formed by some members of the Isaaq clan. This led to the proclamation of the self-declared state of Somaliland in 1991.

The third armed conflict before 1991 pitted embattled government forces against a growing number of clan-based liberation movements in 1989 and 1990. The strongest of these movements included the United Somali Congress, USC (Hawiye clan), the Somali Patriotic Movement (Ogadeni clan), and the Somali Salvation Democratic Movement (Majerten clan). This multifront war was a preview of the predatory looting and banditry that characterized the warfare in 1991–92.

Until 1991, we can say that the main opposing parties were Barre's new Supreme Revolutionary Council (instead of SRSP), the militia groups like the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), United Somali Congress (USC), Somali National Movement (SNM) and the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), together with the non-violent political oppositions of the Somali Democratic Movement (SDM), the Somali Democratic Alliance (SDA) and the Somali Manifesto Group (SMG).

In 1991, the war was won and the Somali National Alliance (SNA) proceeded with taking down the president. With this turn of events, the Abgal and the Habargidir clans took over. They had never fought throughout their history and in fact belong to the same clan (Hawiye) and sub-clan (Hiraab). However, when Mogadishu fell to the United Somali Congress (USC) (to which they both belonged) a power struggle broke out. The opposition leaders were Mohamed Farah Aideed (SNA) and Ali Mahdi Mohamed and their thirst for resources killed thousands of civilians. Other clans, such as the Isaaq, Ogaden, Hawiye and Digil and Mirifle also started opposition groups in order to seize power. Before the struggle they had fought together, but as soon as the primary objective was achieved every clan started pursuing their own goal.

In the year 2000, the situation changed as Clan leaders and main characters meeting in Djibouti elect Abdulkassim Salat Hassan president of Somalia and prime minister, Ali Khalif Gelayadh, who announced his government, the first in the country since 1991. This created different opposing forces, and in 2001, Somali warlords, backed by Ethiopia, announced their intention to form a national government within six months, in direct opposition to the country's Transitional National Government (TNG). This government was called Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council.

In 2006, a new actor entered the arena, the Islamic Courts Union with Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as its head. This group was a unification of Sharia courts who wanted to take down the Transitional Federal Government. Until the end of 2006, they controlled most of southern Somalia and the vast majority of its population.

In 2007, because the Islamic Court Union was defeated, it splintered into several different factions. This changed the actors involved, as some more radical elements emerged, including the Al-Shabaab (in Arabic language the youth) militant group. They regrouped to continue their insurgency against the TFG.

In February 2009 sprang the conflict between, on the one hand, the forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, and on the other, various militant Islamist and factions. The violence displaced thousands of people in the southern part of the country. The conflict also saw sectarian violence between the moderate Sufis ASWJ, and the Islamists in Al-Shabaab.

In 2012, Al-Shabaab was formally recognized as the Somalia-based cell of the militant Islamist group Al-Qaeda.

### *Secondary*

One of the main secondary actors, who is not an actual party of the conflict but has a high degree of interest and influence, was, during the entire conflict, Ethiopia. Its meddling has given shelter and arms to all spoilers (groups and individuals). It has undermined the two most important peace accords (Cairo Accord 1997, and Arta Agreement 2000) and has manipulated the Somali peace process in Kenya and the transitional government that was formed. Ethiopia has frequently sent weapons over the border and at times has occupied several towns in southern Somalia. In other words, Ethiopia, a powerful and well-positioned state, is a hostile neighbor that aims to maintain a weak and divided Somalia. Whatever its motives, Ethiopia is an important actor in blocking peace-building efforts in Somalia. Since the beginning of the civil war, Ethiopia has been playing with Somali factions: supporting one, destroying it, and then supporting it again. This process of balancing factions has become very obvious over the past ten years.

Another secondary actor, due to its proximity, is Radio Halgan. During the civil war, between 1980 and 1991, the insurgent groups, apart from issuing antigovernment statements, started broadcasting from the former Radio Kulmis station, now known as Radio Halgan (struggle).

As Somaliland gained its independence in 1991, it can be considered a primary actor that became a secondary one, as for the most part, it was not directly affected by the conflict. The same thing can be said about the neighboring region Puntland, which has remained relatively stable since 1998.

In 2000, Kenya became an active secondary part in the conflict, as the new government spent its first year operating out of Kenya because Somalia remained too violent and unstable to enter, and eventually settled in the provincial town of Baidoa. In 2011, Kenya entered Somalia to curb Al-Shabaab Islamist militants.

### *Other parties*

Because of the extent of the conflict, a lot of regional and global players got involved. In the Cold War period, we can consider the Soviet Union to be a third party as it supplied the nation with military equipment and so did the US. After the civil war continued in 1991, the United Nations' Security Council Resolution 794 was unanimously passed on December 3, 1992, which approved a coalition of United Nations peacekeepers led by the United States. The Unified Task Force (UNITAF) was assigned with assuring security, until humanitarian efforts aimed at stabilizing the situation were transferred to the UN. Landing in 1993, the UN peacekeeping coalition started the two-year United Nations Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), primarily in the south to provide humanitarian relief. Because of the opposition shown by the local clan warlords, Pakistan and Malaysia intervened to help US suppress the new leaders.

Since 2005, another phenomenon emerged because of the conflict. Many international organizations, including the International Maritime Organization and the World Food Program, have expressed concern over the rise in acts of piracy. Some reports have suggested that, in the absence of an effective national coast guard following the outbreak of the civil war and the subsequent disintegration of the Armed Forces, local fishermen formed organized groups in order to protect their waters.

After the UIC was established in 2006, the African Union peacekeepers intervened and air support by the United States managed to drive out the rival ICU and consolidate its rule. Also, the Arab League was involved to promote peace.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the UN Security Council voted to authorize an 8,000 strong peacekeeping mission built from the forces of members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). IGAD's 7 members at the time were Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda. The makeup of IGAD, whose members supported both sides, was expected to make an actual mission difficult. The resolution also eased an 1992 arms embargo against the Somali government. In November 2006, the Monitoring Group reported suspicions that the governments of Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Syria had all been involved in the supply of arms to Somali armed groups. All countries denied it. In reports from 2008, these accusations were not mentioned again. In 2007, Eritrea a non-Muslim country, also sent about 2,500 soldiers to Somalia in support of the Islamists, who named themselves the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts.

Also there are three more actors that are known to be supporting either UIC, ARS (Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia) or Al-Shabaab. They are Egypt, Iran and Yemen.

In 2007, the African Union Mission in Somalia AMISOM was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council. It managed to gather support from Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Burundi, Tanzania, E.U., Ghana and Djibouti. The equipment is said to have been facilitated by the United States and France.

Although the Arab League suspended Somalia's membership, it has proven to be worried about the conflict and has made several calls to action for other nations to stop the atrocities.

On February 2012, from an interview taken with the British prime minister of Africa we can see the UK's wish to get involved, as Mr. Bellingham said: "The UK has been inspired to act partly by the terrible suffering of the Somali people and partly by the problems that affect us directly. We were profoundly moved by the humanitarian crisis in Somalia caused by the drought." (Hiiraan Online, 2012). The UK responded generously, providing £57m (\$90m) to Somalia alone. This was on top of existing plans to spend £69m a year in Somalia until 2015 in development assistance.

However, among the forces that encouraged further escalation there are some humanitarian actors who just want to bring aid to the innocent people. The most important are: Red Cross, Medecins sans Frontieres, CARE, CARITAS, OXFAM and Save the Children. In 2008 there were reportedly 52 such NGO's that either helped or supported the help. A list can be found at this link <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/press/pressreleases/statement-by-52-ngos-working-in-somalia-on-rapidly-deteriorating-humanitarian-crisis>

### *Peace makers*

From the beginning of the struggle, there have been several attempts to bring aid to the suffering and thus promote peace in the region. However, if we look at these events chronologically, we can see that it took quite a long time for the actors to realize what they were doing wrong and to change their strategy.

The first attempt was initiated by the United Nations in 1992, who tried to provide aid, but was a complete failure as the troops were shot at, aid ships attacked and prevented from docking, cargo aircraft were fired upon and aid agencies, public and private, were subject to threats, robbery and extortion. Meanwhile, hundreds, if not thousands of poverty stricken refugees were starving to death every day. The second major intervention known as UNOSOM II was an even worse failure as it ended in the famous Battle of Mogadishu.

In 2005, the Intergovernmental Authority for Development known as IGAD proposed a Peace Support Mission to Somalia involving 10,000 troops. Due to many factors, IGASOM did not materialize in 2006 and was replaced by AMISOM, which is a mission supported by the African Union and authorized by the UN in 2007. It maintained its activities up to the present. Its main duties are to support transitional governmental structures, implement a national security plan, train the Somali security forces, and assist in creating a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian aid.

However, before this in September 2006 in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum there was an attempt made by the Transitional government and the Union of Islamic Courts to make peace, but unfortunately it was not implemented. In 2006, the International Somalia Contact Group was established by the UN with the purpose to support peace and reconciliation. It was a leader in the Roadmap to end the transition, which was created on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Another organization that started to be more active since 2008, when it opened permanent headquarters in the Somali capital Mogadishu, is the Arab League. The League, however, has remained a minor player in Somalia, and its basic role has been the provision of funding for the negotiation process.

## **Balance of Resources and Power**

The two parties that are continuing to clash have different power levels due to their resources. Before 2008, there was not enough support from the international community and the TFG due to a lack of funding and human resources, and the arms embargo had difficulties in establishing a national security force. The president from back then, Yusuf, was obliged to deploy thousands of troops from Puntland to Mogadishu to sustain the battle against insurgent elements in the southern part of the country. Financial support for this effort was provided by the autonomous region's government. This left little revenue for Puntland's own security forces and civil service employees, leaving the territory vulnerable to piracy and terrorist attacks. After 2008, the TFG was assisted with money, aid, and human combat resources from actors from the international community described previously.

Al-Shabaab on the other hand is said to have been provided with weapons and financial support by Eritrea which has weapons from Belarus, Bulgaria, and France. A reporter from the Voice of America stated that "no one doubts that Eritrea has throughout the last four years been supportive of Al-Shabaab, sending in weapons, sending in trainers and also training hundreds of Al-Shabaab fighters in some of its military camps" (Voice of America, 2011). A Somalia report website suggests that both sides use weapons from Russia and that aid organizations and AMISON soldiers who are left with tons of weapons and no food sell them to survive the harsh conditions. These statements were confirmed by the UN, which estimates that one third of the US arms end up in the hands of Al-Shabaab.

In 2009, the US gave \$2 million to the TFG to buy weapons locally without concern about where they might come from and admitted that it had supplied \$135 million weapons, armored vehicles, logistical support, supplies and training for AMISON. In 2010, the government requested Ethiopia to help with arming.

At present, the AMISON is still the major provider of help to the new government. On the March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013 the Chairperson of the African Union Commission welcomed a UN Security Council Resolution extending AMISOM's deployment in Somalia for another year. She stated that: "the African Union remains committed to this mission and will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Somalia as they work towards rebuilding their country and its institutions" (Africa Press Organization, 2012). Another source of resources is the partial one-year lift of the embargo decided by the U.N. Security Council in March 2013, allowing the government in Mogadishu to buy light weapons to strengthen its security forces.

The representatives of each side do not communicate directly but only through official speeches made by leaders. For example in 2012 Al-Shabaab used their more moderate leader Hassan Dahir Aweys to deliver the message that they have no intention in stopping

the war and are not concerned by the election of the new government. Because the opposition is a recognized terrorist group we cannot talk about negotiation, mediation or arbitration and the relationship will continue to be a hostile one as neither of the parties actually engage in discussion to debate upon the issues and find a solution.

While the TFG communicates to the people mostly by radio, television, and press, Al-Shabaab uses various media in order to spread their propaganda. Besides traditional radio, the internet is the most heavily utilized. Because it is especially popular with today's youth, organizations such as Al-Shabaab are using online forums and chat rooms in order to recruit young followers to their cause. Al-Shabaab's official website, which has since been taken down, featured posts, videos and official statements in English, Arabic and Somali, as well as online classrooms to educate followers. On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Al-Shabaab also reportedly began using the Twitter social media network. The move is believed to be an attempt by the group to counteract tweets by allied officials as well as a way to interact with the press.

According to the National Counter Terrorism Calendar Al-Shabaab is not centralized or monolithic in its agenda or goals. Its rank-and-file members come from disparate clans, and the group is susceptible to clan politics, internal divisions, and shifting alliances. Most of its fighters are predominantly interested in the nationalistic battle against the TFG and not supportive of global jihad. Given the issues that caused the conflict in the first place, we cannot expect them to change over time. The main battle is for the scarce resources of the country, which the oppositions consider to be obtained only through power. Al-Shabaab seeks to exploit the vulnerabilities by manipulating clan networks in order to hold on to power. However, the new government is stating that its main goal is to restore peace in order to help the country evolve in a civilized manner by seizing the opportunities that have been provided by the international community.

### **Present Situation**

In 2012, after the new president took over, Al-Shabaab started to lose ground because of the Kenyan forces that started to help tackle the problem. A lot of territories are in government hands now and the UN is even considering lifting the embargo. However, stable peace is still not foreseen as the rebel group is still striking with chaotic bomb attacks and the citizens cannot consider themselves safe. As other extremist groups, it can only be defeated with patience and consistent action. The good news is that the conflict seems to have passed its high point and is slowly proceeding from a crisis to an unstable peace. There are numerous plans for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country, which the population together with external support are looking forward to implementing.

In the political field, Somalia has had 14 peace processes over 21 years, which have failed to provide anything close to safety. At present, the country finally managed to choose



a president who has been active in the civil service field. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has worked in several organizations like: Life and Peace Institute, Oxford University, Center for Refugee Studies, International Peace Building Alliance (Interpeace), Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG), UNICEF Somalia and many others. He was the founding member of Peace and Development Party (PDP) in Somalia, the first political party established in Mogadishu. Given the several assassination attempts on him, the Al-Shabaab failed and the people in the country have been chanting new slogans like: "Somalia has been liberated! The new president is here." (IHT Global Opinion, 2012). The issues that need to be confronted immediately are combating organized crime and piracy as a key link in offering security, creating a system that responds quickly to crises, collaborating with international organizations to improve the delivery of aid, and the development of rehabilitation programs. Also putting an end to the Al-Shabaab attacks is crucial as they continue to demolish what is being created.

An operational plan made by the UK Government stated that in the social field the effects of the conflict are reaching 1.36 million people who are internally displaced. Years of conflict, drought and flooding have caused a prolonged humanitarian crisis and last year Somalia was badly affected by the first famine of the twenty first century. Twenty three million people are estimated to be in need of emergency support.

The victims can be split in two, namely the Somali citizens and the international military casualties. The first, we can consider if we take into consideration the reports made by UNICEF, women and children suffer disproportionately. They have been living in the harshest of conditions for over two decades because consecutive years of droughts and conflict have resulted in repeated crop failure, depletion of livestock, rising food prices, deteriorating purchasing power, eroded coping mechanisms and a perpetual state of emergency. One in 10 Somali children die before their first birthday and one in 12 women die from pregnancy related causes. Somalia has some of the largest numbers of unimmunized children in the world and is thus a reservoir of vaccine-preventable diseases such as polio and measles. More than 2.3 million people, almost a third of the population are still in need of aid. A woman has a 1 in 12 chance of dying during her reproductive years According to the U.N. Girls and women face heinous rights' violations: Gender-Based Violence (GBV), early marriage for girls as young as nine, Female Genital Mutilation, rape, etc.

If we take into consideration the other variable, we can report that from 1991 up till the present there have been more than 500,000 casualties consisting of Somali citizens, soldiers from assisting countries like US, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Burundi, Tanzania, E.U., Ghana and Djibouti, Pakistan, Malaysia, and victims from the aid organizations.

In the economic sector, according to a UN report, the unemployment rate for youths in Somalia is one of the highest in the world at 67% among all 14 to 29-year-olds, 61%



among men, and 74% among women. The Somalia Human Development Report 2012, issued by the UN Development Program considers 82% of Somalis to be poor, with 73% living on less than \$2 a day. It also said that 40% of youths are actively looking for work, while 21% are neither working nor in school with unemployment becoming among the biggest threats facing the Somali society. However, the country has potential to develop its economy in services, notably telecoms, and for growth in fisheries and agriculture.

### **Future Suppositions**

The conflict has shifted towards unstable peace in the last 2 years, as new territories have been rescued from the insurgent groups, aid troops have managed to reach those in need and the number of open fire incidents have been reduced.

The apparently positive change in the security situation of Southern Somalia, the transparent election of the president, speaker and cabinet, and the increasingly serious and sustained level of international engagement in Somalia are contributing to a change in the environment and a need to explore new approaches and options which may better reconcile the political interests and perspectives of the people and communities. The challenges which remain are finding new methods of increasing security and defense mechanisms against terrorists, a detailing of the future options and government perspectives, dialog for integration between Somalia and Somaliland and flexible ways of accommodating new free regions with the national context.

The Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) from the UN has drafted a new plan for 2013-2015 which has the purpose to:

- “1. Ensure equal and integrated life-saving assistance to malnourished children and people living in humanitarian emergency and crisis to reduce mortality and destitution.
2. Contribute to improving the quality, reliability, responsiveness, and accessibility of basic services, and promote predictable safety-net programming, thereby meeting the humanitarian needs of vulnerable people and households, and strengthening their resilience to shocks.
3. Invest in household and community resilience through increased access to durable solutions that address livelihood vulnerability, including displacement and climate change – and result in a return to stable and sustainable livelihoods.
4. Strengthen the capacity and coordination of NGOs, affected communities, and local, regional, and national-level authorities to prevent and mitigate risks and implement effective emergency preparedness and response.”

There are many scenarios that can be developed, however, reality will manage to shock us either way. The information presented has been collected from internet articles and

documents written by international organizations. However, we should never fully trust anything without further investigation. It would be advisable to read articles written by the citizens in Somalia to get a better insight on the issue. As so many countries are involved, it would be unwise to consider they don't have hidden agendas. A famous psychiatrist from Somaliland named Dr Abdishakur Sheikh Ali Jowhar, whose death was mysterious and sudden, considered that this is a dark hour for Somalia as the tables could turn and the ones that provide help for the liberation could turn out to be the real enemies. Ethiopia and other African countries have always wanted these territories and given the fact that the country is now weak their demands could be easily accomplished.

If we look deeper into the causes, we can see that the problems have not disappeared. The resources are still scarce, power still conditions access to them, there are still extremist groups and followers who are against the US and consider it guilty for intervening. The Somali president asked for financial international support especially from UK in terms of business investments. He supports the fact that with proper focus on the rich land, marine resources and cheap labor force, a win-win situation can emerge from such a deal. As a result, Prime Minister David Cameron promised to spend £35 million on security and government services as well as £145 million on preventing and coping with future famines. US also promised an extra \$40 million, and the EU committed to an extra 44 million euros. Other nations and organizations also pledged extra resources. Britain wants to initiate a program to train and equip an army of 25,000, double the number of policemen, roll out a modern coastguard, create a system of courts and tax collection as well as establish government ministries. This would seem normal, given the fact that it was one of the countries that contributed to destabilizing Somalia from the very beginning.

A positive future seems possible so far, but only if the situation is kept under control by outside forces long enough for the government to become strong and support itself, there could be a salvation for the people. Because the process is dependent on the goodwill of outside forces, we can also expect them to conspire to drain the country once again of its individuality and take over. We can predict a long struggle to educate the population and diminish religious extremism. Every conflict is different and we cannot, for instance, associate this one to Serbia's comeback and presume that it will be the same here. There is a certainty that the only way the future can become stable is through the elimination of the scarce resource problem which can continue to haunt the country endlessly.

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