

**THE SOMALI INSURGENCY**  
**THE GROWING THREAT OF TERROR'S RESURGENCE**

Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy Capstone Project

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## Executive Summary

Al-Shabaab's current fortunes appear bleak. It has been pushed from all of its major strongholds by a robust international effort, and its violent Salafism has alienated many Somalis. Some of its funding streams have dried up, and it has just undergone a bloody internal purge that saw several of its most prominent and respected leaders killed or fleeing for their lives.

But any declaration of victory over al-Shabaab is premature; in fact, the most difficult phase of the struggle against the group has only just begun. The battle has evolved into an insurgency, a contest for the Somali people's loyalty; to win it, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), along with the Somali Security Forces, must push Shabaab far enough back to provide the Somali Federal Government (SFG) enough time and space to prove to the Somali people that it is a reliable guarantor of security and hope for a better future. Success will require a coherent and unified counterinsurgency campaign overseen by an SFG highly committed to decentralization and executed by security forces competent in counterinsurgency.

Counterinsurgency and its companion task, state-building, are extraordinarily difficult in any context, but in Somalia there are cultural and historical realities that make the coalition's<sup>1</sup> job truly daunting. It is a badly divided country with little practical commitment from its people for a unified country. Many of the Somali clans are traditionally warrior tribes with a history of resisting foreign intervention, and little history of accepting government rule. Ethiopia, a part of the coalition, is Somalia's ancient enemy, and Kenya has its own fraught relationship with the country. Five of the six national armies currently inside Somalia hail from Christian countries, and Somalia is overwhelmingly Muslim. It is a country awash in weapons.

These and other challenges might be surmountable, but the coalition's response has been fractured, ineffective, and even counterproductive at times. It does not appear to have a robust counterinsurgency strategy. Kenya has involved itself in tribal politics in Lower Juba, and appears to be picking favorites in a country infamous for its violent and oftentimes inscrutable clan dynamics. Members of the coalition have also at times refused to heed the SFG's orders, and appear intent on pursuing their own national interests instead. The SFG has scuffled through its first year, receiving tepid reviews at best, and there is no indication of a groundswell of support for it building.

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<sup>1</sup> The "coalition" as used throughout this report refers to all the anti-Shabaab forces currently in Somalia, meaning Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Djibouti, Somali national security forces, and allied militias.

To win the people's loyalty or at least acquiescence, al-Shabaab only needs to prove that the SFG is unable to deliver on its promises, a task it has set to with gusto. It has reverted to a guerrilla strategy, a familiar role for a group that thrived by waging an anti-Ethiopian insurgency in the mid-2000s. Its refusal to engage AMISOM in conventional combat has preserved its core fighting capabilities, and it routinely harasses coalition forces, as well as ordinary Somalis, with improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombings, and assassinations; it retains control of large swathes of the country. Its most radical and ruthless leader has just cleared the decks of all opposition, and now stands as the undisputed ruler of the group's still-formidable capabilities. The group remains a potent threat capable of snatching away the prize that will determine the ultimate victor in this conflict.

If Shabaab starts to win the loyalty battle, a broad-based insurgency will begin boiling and the coalition will be unable to contain it. Al-Shabaab or a splinter group will be well positioned to take power, buttressed by a growing Salafist ideology that can claim to be the only ideology left to try. Or warlords backed by militias could scramble for the spoils, sending the country spiraling back into the violent cycle from which it is trying to pull itself now.

Any of these scenarios would have serious consequences. A radical Islamic group in control of parts of the country may have international aspirations; at the very least, such a group is a threat to again provide shelter for Muslim terrorists with international agendas. And if the country descends into widespread instability and weak or failed nation status because of battling warlords, international terrorists will be tempted to consider Somalia an attractive spot in which to shelter.

Somaliland, a bastion of calm in the north of the country, gained peace in part because its people were so tired of war. That was nearly 20 years ago, and in the meantime southern Somalia has seen some of the worst and most prolonged fighting on earth. Somalis have no doubt been exhausted by the carnage for many years now, and are ready to give anyone who can bring them peace a chance. They are similarly tired of the depredations of al-Shabaab and the affronts they suffered at the group's hands. They are so far willing to give the coalition a chance, despite all of its flaws.

But it is not an open-ended forbearance. The SFG has to prove its worth in one of the most complex and divided countries on earth while battling a determined insurgency. It is on trial, given a chance to make its case to Somalis that it is their best chance to attain peace and prosperity, and the coalition's disunified and at time ill-disciplined approach has thus far narrowed that window of opportunity. It is a wickedly difficult task, and unless the coalition quickly does better, the halting progress that has been made in

the last two years will vanish and al-Shabaab will again reassert itself over most of Somalia.

## A Brief History

Somalia is markedly different from other sub-Saharan African countries. Given its proximity to the Middle East, its long coast that invites trade and exploration, and its people's dedication to Islam, the country identifies far more strongly with Arabs than with their African neighbors. In fact, Somalis' affinity is so strong for Arab culture and history that many claim to be able to trace their ancestors back to the Prophet Mohamed's companions—or, less ambitiously, to itinerant Sheikhs or saints who traveled to Somalia and married local women. While most Somalis likely believe, correctly, that such an esteemed lineage is apocryphal, it is still an important founding myth for the Somali people, and indicative of their wish to be associated with Arab culture.<sup>2</sup>

Arab traders in the ninth century founded many of the major coastal towns of modern-day Somalia, such as Mogadishu, Marka, and Brava, as trading cities, dealing in gold, leather, ivory, and slaves.<sup>3</sup> Given their antiquity, information on the political arrangements of these cities is sparse, but what little is known speaks of Islamic centers dedicated to trade and ruled by diverse councils of elders. Baraawe was led by a “confederation of elders” from twelve different lineages that included leaders of Persian-Arab descent as well as Somali elders,<sup>4</sup> while Mogadishu in the 16<sup>th</sup> century was ruled by a federation boasting 39 lineages from 4 different groups.<sup>5</sup> In fact, there is evidence that a number of the city-states in the 13<sup>th</sup> century formed a confederation under the authority of a ruling dynasty based out of Mogadishu,<sup>6</sup> and that the city-states' influence, while primarily oriented towards the sea,<sup>7</sup> likely extended at least lightly into the Somali nomadic areas.<sup>8</sup>

While these city-states were impressively diverse and apparently well ruled, they were not very centralized, as evidenced by the fact that the councils did not levy taxes (a

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, Herbert S. “The Origins of the Galla and Somali.” *The Journal of African History* 17, no. 1 (1966): 27–46, pp. 35-36. See also Harper, Mary. *Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State*. African Arguments. London; New York, NY: Zed Books; Distributed in the USA exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 45-46.

<sup>3</sup> Nelson, Harold D., ed. *Somalia: a Country Study*. Third. Foreign Area Studies. Washington, D.C.: American University, 1982, pp. 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Luling, Virginia. *Somali Sultanate: The Geledi City-State over 150 Years*. Rutgers--The State University: Transaction Publishers, 2002, p. 183.

<sup>5</sup> Kassim, Mohamed M. “Islam and Swahili Culture on the Banadir Coast.” *Northeast African Studies* 2, no. 3. New Series (1995): 21–37, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Nelson, 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> Prunier, Gerard. “Somaliland, a Forgotten Country.” Translated by Lorna Dale. *Le Monde Diplomatique-English Edition*, October 1997. <http://mondediplo.com/1997/10/somali>.

<sup>8</sup> Lewis, I. M. *A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*. London and New York: Longman Group Limited, 1965, p. 20.

forbearance that one author credits with contributing to the peace of the cities<sup>9</sup>) and that they never controlled the hinterlands.<sup>10</sup> In fact, they bore more resemblance to the voluntary, loose federations of the Swahili coastal city-states, such as Lamu and Malindi,<sup>11</sup> than to what in modern times could properly be called a centralized government. Furthermore, these cities were not strictly Somali undertakings; as noted earlier, Arabs established these towns, and the ruling councils had a strong Arab presence. And while there was significant cooperation between the Arabs and Somalis, there were also clashes between these city-states and interior Somalis, to the point that Somali harassment of their trade routes was one of the reasons for the city-states along the Benadir coast's decline. The gulf between the city-states and the majority of Somalis is evidenced by the epithet the Arabs used to refer to northern Somalis, and which served as the origin of the name for the current Somali town, Berbera: "beriberi," or "barbarians."<sup>12</sup>

Somalis are largely nomadic people, and they steadily expanded the areas under their control west and south from the Horn of Africa; after 900 years of such expansion, they eventually ran into British-controlled Kenya, effectively stopping their expansion at the Tana River, which serves as the southern border of Somali habitation today.<sup>13</sup>

## **Colonization**

By this time the European colonial project was in full swing, and the Italians, intent on getting their own slice of Africa, began to obtain concessions for parts of modern-day Somalia beginning in 1888; by 1925, they controlled all of southern Somalia.<sup>14</sup> Initially, the Italians did not show much interest in governing their new colony, but when they eventually did, they took to it with vigor. Described as "ambitious and even aggressive,"<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Kassim, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Prunier.

<sup>11</sup> Luling, 183.

<sup>12</sup> Nelson, 6.

<sup>13</sup> The direction of Somali expansion is controversial among anthropologists. Some believe that Somalis primarily moved north and east from their area of origin in the Ethiopian highlands. See Lewis, Herbert S., for a look at the controversy as well as an argument in favor of Somalis expanding north and east. See also Harper (2012), 46-47, who recounts the case for Somali expansion south and west.

<sup>14</sup> "Somalia - Imperial Partition." *U.S. Library of Congress Country Studies*. Accessed May 13, 2013. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/9.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Fox, Mary-Jane. "Political Culture in Somalia: Tracing Paths to Peace and Conflict." Dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2000, pp. 91, 101.

Italian colonization came to include big plans for the “modernization” of the colony.<sup>16</sup> Beginning in 1905, a series of regulations defined the colonial administration’s powers so broadly that it was characterized as “an authoritarian regime that would have been tolerated in few European countries of that time.”<sup>17</sup> This intense administration of the colony did not diminish under the fascist Italian government that tried to stir up local support for a vision of “La Grande Somalia.”<sup>18</sup> It was only in 1950, after having lost the colony in World War II and then denied its return by the U.N. General Assembly in favor of a limited trusteeship over it,<sup>19</sup> that Italy appeared to finally give up on her colonizing project.

Britain established a presence in northern Somalia in the area that is today Somaliland. The British administered the area “with a light, sympathetic touch,”<sup>20</sup> as they viewed their colony in the Horn of Africa primarily as a supply base for their colony in Aden, considered critical for the defense of India.<sup>21</sup> The British initially signed a series of trade treaties with local Somali elders, culminating in “protection” treaties that many of the elders were pleased to sign as they viewed them as guarantees against infringements by other clans. This phenomenon was so widespread that it gave rise to a proverb: “He who is weak has found the European as his protector.”<sup>22</sup>

While the British had little desire to be heavily involved in Somalia, a famous rebellion ensured that it would have to commit extra resources and attention to the colony. Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan, the “Mad Mullah,” launched his anti-British insurgency in the late 1800s and sustained it for 20 years, while also managing to find the time to compose a range of blood-curdling poems.<sup>23</sup> The Mullah was able to attract a

<sup>16</sup> Walls, Michael. “The Emergence of a Somali State: Building Peace from Civil War in Somaliland.” *African Affairs* 108, no. 432 (May 9, 2009): 371–389. doi:10.1093/afraf/adp019, p. 374.

<sup>17</sup> Hess, Robert L. *Italian Colonialism in Somalia*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 102.

<sup>18</sup> Besteman, Catherine. “Violent Politics and the Politics of Violence: The Dissolution of the Somali Nation-State.” *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 3 (August 1996): 579–596, p. 593, citing Cassanelli, Lee V., “Explaining Ethnic Conflict in Somalia. Paper presented to the Workshop on High Conflict/Low Conflict: Six Case Studies of Ethnic Conflict.” Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, June 28-29, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Hess, 191.

<sup>20</sup> Lewis, I. M. *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 1994, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> “Somalia.” *Library of Congress Country Studies*, July 27, 2010. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+so0005\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+so0005)).

<sup>22</sup> Lewis, I. M. (1994), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Bartholet, Jeffrey. “It’s a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World.” *Newsweek and The Daily Beast*, September 30, 2009. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2009/09/30/it-s-a-mad-mad-mad-mad-world.html>.



following from a variety of clans, and is “credited with founding the first nationalist Somali movement that explicitly sought to unite Somalis on a non-clan basis.”<sup>24</sup> The British never did capture or kill him, despite their very best efforts that included using their air force for the first time in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>25</sup>

The Mullah’s campaign inspired in Somalis the idea of a “Greater Somalia,” a state that would encompass all the land inhabited by ethnic Somalis. Today, Somalis remain divided into five different areas ruled by different countries:<sup>26</sup> the Northern Frontier District in the northeastern part of modern-day Kenya, site of the *Shifita War* in the early 1960s that broke out after the newly-independent Kenyan government refused to allow the district to join Somalia;<sup>27</sup> the Ogaden, located in the eastern part of Ethiopia, conquered by the Ethiopians starting in 1887, who were eventually given permanent control of the area by the British in 1948; the “French Somali Coast,” colonized by France and which now comprises modern-day Djibouti after it gained independence in 1977; British Somaliland, now the autonomous enclave of Somaliland that broke away from southern Somalia on May 18, 1991; and *Somalia Italiana*, the southern part of the country colonized by the Italians and which gained independence on July 1, 1960.<sup>28</sup>

Somalis still make irredentist claims on the three areas outside of Somalia’s borders,<sup>29</sup> as most prominently symbolized by the five points of the star on the Somali flag—each point represents one of the five Somali regions mentioned above.<sup>30</sup> And various radical groups, including al-Shabaab, have tried to leverage Somalis’ nationalism on this question into support:<sup>31</sup> in 2006, Hizbul Islam’s leader, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, claimed that he and his fighter would “leave no stone unturned” to bring the Somali regions of Kenya and Ethiopia back under the control of Somalia,<sup>32</sup> while as recently as late May 2013 al-Shabaab was tweeting about the “soon-to-be-abolished colonial Kenyan-Somalia border.”<sup>33</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Besteman, 588.

<sup>25</sup> Harper (2012), 48.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>27</sup> Ringquist, Major John. “Bandit or Patriot: The Kenyan Shifita War 1963-1968.” *Baltic Security and Defence Review* 13, no. 1 (2011): 100–121, p. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Harper (2012), 49-51.

<sup>29</sup> Moller, Bjorn. *The Somali Conflict: The Role of External Actors*. Danish Institute for International Studies, 2009, pp. 9, 23.

<sup>30</sup> “Somalia” (May 13, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Harper (2012), 33.

<sup>32</sup> Roggio, Bill. “Hizbul Islam Joins Shabaab in Somalia.” *The Long War Journal*, December 19, 2010. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/12/hizbul\\_islam\\_joins\\_s.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/12/hizbul_islam_joins_s.php).

<sup>33</sup> (@HSMPress1). “Dhamajale base in the Muslim regions of Northeastern Kenya is situated 35km inside the soon-to-be-abolished colonial Kenyan-Somalia border.” 26 May 2013, 3:53 a.m. Tweet.

## **Democracy, dictatorship, disintegration**

While the Mullah did not live to see it, both British Somaliland and *Somalia Italiana* eventually gained independence, and joined together on July 1, 1960, to form the independent nation of Somalia.<sup>34</sup> During its brief life, this “top-down democracy”<sup>35</sup> struggled to harmonize the strong political differences within Somalia that led to an eruption of political parties—by the time of its last multi-party elections in March 1969, Somalia had more political parties per capita than any other democratic country apart from Israel. The proliferation of parties did not lead, however, to any concomitant increase in the government’s ability to deliver services or govern effectively—it remained unable to do either well.<sup>36</sup> Instead, the country was beset by an “inexperienced and inefficient bureaucracy, which became increasingly corrupt with the passage of time.” Worse, in their fierce competition for electoral support, the parties made appeals along regional and clan lines, which served to exacerbate the already-existing fissures within the society.<sup>37</sup>

The democratic government of Somalia came to an abrupt end with a coup launched on October 21, 1969. Major General Mohamed Siad Barre took control of the government,<sup>38</sup> inaugurating a ruinous rule that led to the terrible state of Somalia familiar to most current observers of the country. Barre’s tenure was marked by violent repression and human rights abuses,<sup>39</sup> and set the stage for the tragedy of the last 20 years.

Given the fragmentation of the country, it is perhaps understandable that one of Barre’s central goals was to create a national Somali identity; however, his motivations likely were not for the betterment of the country, but rather to aid him in undercutting any potential clan-based opposition. He outlawed any discussion of tribe, launched literacy campaigns, and established Somali as the official language. However, it was all a failure as many Somalis believed (correctly) that Barre was favoring his clan, the Darod, and

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<sup>34</sup> “Somalia” (July 27, 2010).

<sup>35</sup> Fox, 11.

<sup>36</sup> Ahmed, Ismail I. “The Heritage of War and State Collapse in Somalia and Somaliland: Local-level Effects, External Interventions and Reconstruction.” *Third World Quarterly* 20, no. 1 (1999): 113–127, p. 116.

<sup>37</sup> Nelson, 3. Note: Others have a better opinion of the post-independence democracy. Mary Harper describes it as a “lively parliamentary democracy” and quotes the political scientist Ali Mazrui as writing that Somalia was “close to being the most open society in post-colonial Africa.” Harper (2012), 53-54.

<sup>38</sup> “Somalia.” (July 27, 2010).

<sup>39</sup> Besteman, 581-582.

specifically three sub-clans, the Ogaden, Marehan, and Dulbahante, with plum government positions and access to the levers of power. Furthermore, some of his initiatives, such as his establishment of Somali as the official language, actually deepened a sense of tribalism as it embittered several clans that did not speak Somali as their first language.<sup>40</sup>

The results of all of this were predictable. Clan-aligned rebel militias began to sprout up throughout the country in the 1980s, including the United Somali Congress (USC), which was largely Hawiye and based in south-central Somalia; the Somali National Movement (SNM), an Isaq group based in the north; the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM) which was Darod, of the Ogaden sub-clan; and the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), also Darod but drawn from the Marehan sub-clan, that operated in the north-east.<sup>41</sup>

The fighting during the rebellion was terribly brutal and extraordinarily complex. One report on the actions of Barre's troops in the North found that they "appear[ed] to have engaged in a widespread, systematic and extremely violent assault on the unarmed civilian Issak population of northern Somalia;" the same report found that the government also armed refugees to fight the SNM and attack Isaq civilians. The SNM responded by systematically targeting camps in the North, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties.<sup>42</sup> By 1991,

Somaliland was in ruins. Its capital, Hargeisa, was three-quarters destroyed. Towns and villages were sown with mines that [brought] two or three victims a week to Hargeisa's rundown general hospital. Soviet-American rivalry had turned the country into a vast arms dump littered with ammunition stores and unexploded ordnance. Siad Barre had set clan against clan.<sup>43</sup>

Armed groups proliferated, including several that fought in support of Barre's government, while others turned on each other even in the midst of fighting their common enemy.<sup>44</sup> It was chaos, and Barre could not hold on.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 586-588, 590.

<sup>41</sup> "Somalia. Things Fall Apart." *United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services*, January 1, 1993. [http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&category=&publisher=USCIS&type=&coi=SOM&rid=&docid=3ae6a607b&skip=0#\\_ftn43](http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&category=&publisher=USCIS&type=&coi=SOM&rid=&docid=3ae6a607b&skip=0#_ftn43), and Harper (2012), 55-56.

<sup>42</sup> Gersony, Robert. *Why Somalis Flee: Synthesis of Accounts of Conflict Experience in Northern Somalia by Somali Refugees, Displaced Persons and Others*. Bureau for Refugee Programs Department of State, August 1989, pp. 60-63.

<sup>43</sup> Flint, Julie. "Somaliland: Struggling to Survive." *Africa Report* 39, no. 1 (1994): 36-50, p. 36.

<sup>44</sup> "Somalia. Things Fall Apart."

The peace that many hoped would come with Barre's flight on January 26, 1991, proves elusive to this day. The conflict metastasized further, with clans and sub-clans turning on one another in a scramble for resources and power. Most notoriously, the Hawiye clan that had formed the bulk of the USC that captured Mogadishu from Barre splintered into its Abgal and Habar Gedir sub-clan factions, who then commenced a vicious struggle for control of the presidency. Mohamed Farah Aideed, who would later become the U.S.'s preeminent enemy in Somalia, led the Habar Gedir faction.<sup>45</sup>

In April 1992 the United Nations established the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) to monitor the "ceasefire" to which several of the warring factions had agreed, and to protect humanitarian convoys. UNOSOM transitioned to the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), a 24-nation intervention led by the United States that was designed to protect the delivery of humanitarian aid. UNITAF was largely successful as it secured all of the major relief centers, so the U.N. then decided to transition from UNITAF to another peacekeeping operation in March 1993, called UNOSOM II.<sup>46</sup>

However, things were about to unravel in spectacular and bloody fashion. In June 1993, Aideed's forces killed more than 20 Pakistani peacekeepers, putting a very large, American bulls eye on his back. In October 1993, Delta and Ranger Special Operations Forces launched an attack on a building suspected of holding Aideed. The following battle resulted in hundreds of Somali deaths and searing images of American servicemen's corpses being dragged through the streets. The "Black Hawk Down" battle, also known as the "First Battle of Mogadishu," resulted in the United States withdrawing almost all its forces by 1994, with the United Nations following soon after.<sup>47</sup>

The international community had no appetite left for intervening in Somalia after the First Battle of Mogadishu, and instead sponsored a series of peace conferences outside of the country designed to establish a Somali government. These conferences accomplished little more than to waste millions of the international community's dollars as the delegates, safe from the violence of Somalia and eating well at hotels paid for by someone else, were happy to drag the negotiations out for as long as possible. One conference, in fact, lasted for more than two years.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> "United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) - Background (Summary)." *United Nations*.

Accessed May 13, 2013. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unsom1backgr1.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Harper (2012), 60-62.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 64.

Back in Somalia, things did not improve. Warlords continued to struggle for power and wealth, and clans began to carve out enclaves in order to protect themselves; most ominously for the West and Somalia's neighbors, radical Islamic groups began to rise to prominence, and al-Qaeda (AQ) terrorists began to take shelter in the country. In response, the CIA decided to enlist the help of some warlords in the fight against the AQ elements,<sup>49</sup> earning the further anger of a Somali population that hated the warlords for the violence and instability they brought.<sup>50</sup>

### **The roots of al-Shabaab**

There are links between several of these prominent radical organizations and al-Shabaab. Al Ittihad Al Islamiya (AIAI) was formed in 1984 as a nationalist organization dedicated to overthrowing the Barre regime, then later switched its focus to "liberating" the Ogaden region from Ethiopia. It supposedly took part in the First Battle of Mogadishu, as well as attacks in Kenya on Israeli targets. By 1997 AIAI had lost most of its vigor, drained by Ethiopian retaliation for AIAI attacks in the Ogaden, from fighting with the SSDF in Puntland, and from internal squabbling.<sup>51</sup>

Despite its unpopular Wahhabism/Salafism,<sup>52</sup> AIAI managed to derive a measure of support from Somalis because it delivered certain social services, such as opening boarding schools for poor children and providing food to a population struggling to survive a famine. In a pattern that would repeat itself with other militant groups, including al-Shabaab, AIAI also secured some Somalis' tolerance or even support by imposing a measure of security in areas under its control.<sup>53</sup>

AIAI counted among its members several jihadis who pop up throughout the history of radical Islamic groups in Somalia. Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who would later go on to lead Hizbul Islam, which was eventually subsumed by al-Shabaab, was a prominent

<sup>49</sup> Mazzetti, Mark. "Efforts by C.I.A. Fail in Somalia, Officials Charge." *The New York Times*, June 8, 2006. <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/08/world/africa/08intel.html?pagewanted=all>.

<sup>50</sup> Timberg, Craig. "Seven Questions: Somalia's Struggle." *Foreign Policy*, July 26, 2006. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/07/25/seven\\_questions\\_somalias\\_struggle](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2006/07/25/seven_questions_somalias_struggle).

<sup>51</sup> "Al Ittihad Al Islamiya." *Stanford University: Mapping Militant Organizations*. Accessed May 14, 2013. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/99#cite8>.

<sup>52</sup> Wahhabism is a subset of Salafism, so while the two terms are used interchangeably here, there are a few technical differences that distinguish Wahhabists from other Salafists. For a good explanation of the distinctions, see Mandaville, Peter. *Global Political Islam*. London: Routledge, 2005, p. 247.

<sup>53</sup> MJD. "Al-Shabaab Using Geography to Its Advantage." *SomaliaReport*, June 28, 2012. [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3484/Al-Shabaab\\_Using\\_Geography\\_to\\_its\\_Advantage](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3484/Al-Shabaab_Using_Geography_to_its_Advantage).

member of AIAI.<sup>54</sup> So too was Aden Hashi Farah Ayro, who would go on to become one of the founders of al-Shabaab<sup>55</sup>—the same goes for Hassan al-Turki, a prominent leader within the AIAI who would eventually lead a faction of the Ras Kamboni militia that allied with al-Shabaab in 2009.<sup>56</sup>

The Islamic Courts Union (ICU)<sup>57</sup> was the next important player on the Somali scene. In response to the lack of an effective government and the resulting insecurity, alternate forms of authority began to grow in Somalia. Clans and sub-clans, beginning in 2000, set up courts in their own neighborhoods of Mogadishu, and began to deliver a measure of justice to Somalis within their areas of control. There were eventually 11 such courts that merged into the ICU in 2006 and rapidly took control of Mogadishu, and then most of the South.<sup>58</sup>

The ICU was a diverse mixture of Islamists; it contained radical nationalists, such as Aweys, radical internationalists, such as two of Shabaab's founders, Aden Hashi Farah Ayro (formerly of the AIAI) and Ahmed Abdi Aw Muhammad Godane, and more moderate nationalists, such as Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.<sup>59</sup> But Ethiopia was deeply concerned by the irredentist claims made by prominent ICU leaders, (such as Aweys), and, with the support of the United States, invaded to topple the group in 2006.<sup>60</sup>

As will be explored in further detail later in this report, Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia proved to be a far stickier task than it had envisioned. Ethiopia by this time had experience staging incursions with impunity into its neighbor's territory, as it did when it entered to hit AIAI. But this time Ethiopia toppled a fairly popular regime in the ICU, and

<sup>54</sup> Horadam, Nathaniel. "Profile: Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys." *AEI Critical Threats*, August 3, 2012. <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/al-shabaab-leadership/hassan-dahir-aweys-november-14-2011>.

<sup>55</sup> "Shabab." *IHS Jane's: World Insurgency and Terrorism*, May 3, 2013.

<sup>56</sup> "Author Vs Warlord: Jubaland's 'Governor-in-Waiting'." *The East African*, October 30, 2011. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/1264380/-/inij3pkz/-/index.html>. See also "Shabab."

<sup>57</sup> Also sometimes referred to as the Council of Islamic Courts or Union of Islamic Courts. This paper will refer to it as the Islamic Courts Union, or ICU.

<sup>58</sup> "Islamic Courts Union." *Stanford University: Mapping Militant Organizations*. Accessed May 14, 2013. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/107#cite7>.

<sup>59</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. "The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts." *African Affairs* 106, no. 204 (2007): 357–390. doi:10.1093/afraf/adm040, p. 376. See also Ahmed, Majid. "Open Letter to al-Zawahiri Rocks Foundations of al-Shabaab." *Sabahi*, April 12, 2013. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/04/12/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/04/12/feature-01), and Hogendoorn, EJ. "It's Not Too Late to Rescue Somali Islamists from the Jihadis Who Have Hijacked Them." *International Crisis Group*, May 3, 2010. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/op-eds/abdi-hogendoorn-its-not-too-late-to-rescue-somali-islamists-from-the-jihadis-who-have-hijacked-them.aspx>.

ran into the teeth of a broad-based Somali backlash against its presence.<sup>61</sup> It eventually was forced to retreat from the country in 2007, leaving behind a powerful new movement:<sup>62</sup> Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, more commonly known simply as al-Shabaab.

### **Terrorism triumphant**

Al-Shabaab's origins are murky, but it probably began in 2002 and was founded by four Somali men, one of whom (Godane) still leads the organization: Godane (AKA Sheikh Mukhtar Abu Zubayr), Ibrahim Haji Jamaa al-Afghani, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Ali (AKA Abu Mansur), and Ayro (AKA Abu Muhsen al-Ansari). All four were dedicated jihadists who received training in terrorist camps in Afghanistan before returning to Somalia to found al-Shabaab as a Salafist enforcer militia for the ICU. After the ICU fell, Shabaab continued to battle on, drawing fighters to it with a mix of nationalist and religious rhetoric that proved to be extremely effective. It quickly became the most powerful force in Somalia, and cornered the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) inside a few blocks of Mogadishu, protected only by AMISOM troops.<sup>63</sup>

AMISOM was formed in January 2007,<sup>64</sup> with the mandate to protect the newest Transitional Federal Government<sup>65</sup> led by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, former leader of the ICU. The TFG was a terrible government, hobbled by corruption, ineffectiveness, and weak leadership, and did not have the loyalty of the Somali people.<sup>66</sup> A stalemate ensued as al-Shabaab had free rein in most of the South and in Mogadishu, while the TFG and AMISOM grimly hung on in a small enclave in the city.

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<sup>60</sup> Roggio (December 19, 2010). See also Gettleman, Jeffrey. "Ethiopia Hits Somali Targets, Declaring War." *The New York Times*, December 25, 2006.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/25/world/africa/25somalia.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/25/world/africa/25somalia.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

<sup>61</sup> Menkhaus (2007), 357, 371.

<sup>62</sup> "Somalia and the Shabab: It's Not over Yet." *The Economist*, October 6, 2012.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21564258>.

<sup>63</sup> "Shabab."

<sup>64</sup> AMISOM replaced the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development Peace Mission to Somalia (IGASOM), as authorized by a U.N. Security Council Resolution in February 2007. AMISOM is composed of troops from Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti, and most recently, Sierra Leone. ("AMISOM Background." *AMISOM*. Accessed April 14, 2013. <http://amisom-au.org/about/amisom-background/>). Ethiopia also has forces inside of Somalia, but it has refused to join the AMISOM force.

<sup>65</sup> "AMISOM Mandate." *AMISOM*. Accessed May 8, 2013. <http://amisom-au.org/about/amisom-mandate/>.

<sup>66</sup> *Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support*. Africa Report. International Crisis Group, February 21, 2011.

On July 11, 2010, two bombs ripped into crowds that had gathered at a popular restaurant and at a rugby club to watch the World Cup final in Kampala, Uganda. More than 70 people were killed, and al-Shabaab claimed responsibility, saying it was retaliation for Uganda's support of the AMISOM mission. The Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, was enraged and sought a broadened mandate from the United Nations for AMISOM to bolster its force level and to allow vigorous offensive action against al-Shabaab.<sup>67</sup>

### **Stirrings of hope**

The bombings caught the world's attention, and signaled the danger a sophisticated international terrorist operation based out of Somalia could pose to the delicate region. A reinforced AMISOM broke out from its enclave in Mogadishu, and al-Shabaab began to rapidly lose ground. Its fortunes worsened a short time later when Kenya, after several kidnappings inside its borders it blamed on al-Shabaab,<sup>68</sup> launched its own incursion into the South. It seized Kismayo, Shabaab's last stronghold, in October 2012, as Shabaab beat a hasty retreat out of the city. Ethiopia joined the fray as well, entering the central region of Somalia in late 2011,<sup>69</sup> and several local militias that had been fighting al-Shabaab, most prominently Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'ah (ASWJ) and Ras Kamboni, assisted the Ethiopians and AMISOM.<sup>70</sup>

Today, al-Shabaab fighters are believed to be sheltering primarily in a mountainous region in the North and in the heavy forests in the Lower Juba region.<sup>71</sup> There is no telling how badly their capabilities have been degraded, or how many fighters they have lost to battle deaths and defections, but the numbers must be significant. However, the

<sup>67</sup> "Uganda's Museveni Vows Revenge on al-Shabab over Blasts." *BBC News*, July 15, 2010. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-10645370>.

<sup>68</sup> "Al Shabaab Executes Kenyan Hostage, Threaten 5 More." *Daily Nation*, February 15, 2013. <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/-/1066/1694828/-/15dm02h/-/index.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Zimmerman, Katherine. "Al Shabaab After Kismayo." *American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats*, October 3, 2012. <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/zimmerman-al-shabaab-after-kismayo-october-3-2012>.

<sup>70</sup> *Al-Shabaab's Recent Recapture of El Bur, Galgaduud Region*. Native Prospector: East Bridge. Navanti Group, August 15, 2012, p. 1. See also Boswell, Alan, and Abdi Ibrahim. "East Africa Debates What Happens to Southern Somalia If Al Shabab Is Routed." *McClatchy*, August 14, 2012. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/08/14/162259/east-africa-debates-what-happens.html>.

<sup>71</sup> "Shabaab Bolster Northern 'Tora Bora' Base." *News24*, October 23, 2012. <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Shabaab-bolster-northern-Tora-Bora-base-20121023>. See also Boswell and Ibrahim.



group is still well capable of carrying out bloody attacks, as evidenced by the string of car bombings and assassinations it carried out in Mogadishu in April and May 2013.<sup>72</sup>

In August 2012, a new government was installed in place of the discredited TFG. A council of elders, along with a technical selection committee, huddled to pick 225 members of parliament of the 275 that will constitute the full parliament. While the process was undertaken in an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation that this could be a momentous first step on the path to getting Somalia back on its feet, there were also multiple and credible reports of irregularities that marred the process.<sup>73</sup>

The Parliament went on a month later to elect Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the newest president of Somalia, in a move that a leading expert on the country hailed as the victory of moderates and civil society leaders over the corrupt “moneylords” who had dominated the TFG. Described as a “civil society leader, educator, and peace-builder,” Mohamud appears to be a widely-respected and untainted leader,<sup>74</sup> though the scale of the task in front of him is enormous.

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<sup>72</sup> “Somalia Facing Increase in al-Shabaab Violence.” *UPI*, May 7, 2013.  
[http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Special/2013/05/07/Deadly-bombings-hit-drive-to-save-Somalia/UPI-14451367957432/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/05/07/Deadly-bombings-hit-drive-to-save-Somalia/UPI-14451367957432/).

<sup>73</sup> Joselow, Gabe. “Somalia Swears in New Parliament.” *Voice of America*, August 20, 2012.  
<http://www.voanews.com/content/somali-optimistic-about-new-parliament/1491366.html>.

<sup>74</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. “The Somali Spring.” *Foreign Policy*, September 24, 2012.  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/24/the\\_somali\\_spring?page=0,1](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/24/the_somali_spring?page=0,1).

## The Kids Aren't Alright: an Analysis of Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen

### Ideology and structure

Shabaab's leadership subscribes to a Salafist-Jihadist ideology that sees its own belief system as the only true manifestation of Islam, and which demands that Muslims engage in jihad as a holy duty to establish the rule of "pure" Islam beyond the borders of Somalia.<sup>75</sup> As will be seen later, the group's leadership did not all agree on how broad their global ambitions should be, but the Salafist-Jihadist orientation eventually emerged as the dominant strain of Islamic thinking for the group.

The group had an 85-member Executive Council composed of its senior leaders that also doubled as a *Shura* Council, and which was responsible for setting the strategic vision and priorities for Shabaab. That vision then trickled down to local commanders who were in charge of different regions of the country, and operated with a fair level of autonomy. Shabaab's efforts in these regions were largely self-contained as they each had their own security forces and a form of local government that was responsible for administering the area, though the leadership could also coordinate their forces from different regions to concentrate on a particular target.<sup>76</sup>

While the local administrations are likely still in place in Shabaab-controlled areas, the structure surrounding the senior leadership has changed dramatically. As will be explored in greater detail later, Godane remains the Emir, but many of his formerly-trusted lieutenants, including the second-in-command al-Afghani, are now dead or have left the group, and the Executive Council appears to be defunct.<sup>77</sup> It is unclear if Godane plans to reconstitute it, and if so with whom, which only adds to the current, greater-than-normal murkiness surrounding the group's structure and composition.

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<sup>75</sup> "Shabab."

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. See also Shinn, David. "Al Shabaab's Foreign Threat to Somalia." *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 203–215, p. 209, for the number of members in the Executive Council. See also Gartenstein-Ross, Daveed. "The Strategic Challenge of Somalia's Al-Shabaab: Dimensions of Jihad." *The Middle East Quarterly*, Fall 2009. [http://www.meforum.org/2486/somalia-al-shabaab-strategic-challenge?gclid=COvW-rnG96UCFZRe7AodZQ1uoA%3E#\\_ftnref60](http://www.meforum.org/2486/somalia-al-shabaab-strategic-challenge?gclid=COvW-rnG96UCFZRe7AodZQ1uoA%3E#_ftnref60), and "Al-Shabab." *Stanford University: Mapping Militant Organizations*, July 10, 2013. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/61#note56>.

<sup>77</sup> *Second Shabaab Official Publicly Criticizes Leader over Fighter Grievances*. Bethesda, MD: SITE Monitoring Service, April 24, 2013, p. 3.

## Transnational terrorist links

Al-Shabaab enjoys links of varying intensity with other extremist organizations throughout Africa and beyond. The former Commanding General of AFRICOM, General Ham, mentioned in 2012 that there were “clear indications” of “increasing collaboration” between groups such as Boko Haram and al-Shabaab.<sup>78</sup> A high-ranking counterterrorism official at the U.S. State Department testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee that he was “concerned” by reported links among Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, (AQAP), and al-Shabaab,<sup>79</sup> and a 2011 report by the Quilliam Foundation claimed that Shabaab was cooperating with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and a jihadist group in Libya.<sup>80</sup> And, of course, in its most high-profile move to establish links with another terrorist organization, Shabaab formally merged with AQ in February 2012.<sup>81</sup>

The exact nature of all of these links is unclear, but they likely include training, communication, and weapons transfers.<sup>82</sup> And al-Shabaab appears to have the closest relationship with AQAP. The U.S. military captured in April 2011 a man described as a “key link” between al-Shabaab and AQAP,<sup>83</sup> and one news article quotes the director of a Yemen-based think tank as saying that al-Shabaab sent 300 fighters in March 2012 to Yemen to train with AQAP. The fighters often return to Somalia with advanced bomb-making skills, but also at times stay and help AQAP in its battle against the Yemeni government.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Alexander, David. “Fight Against Al Shabaab Instructive Model for Future: U.S. General.” *Reuters*, December 3, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/03/us-usa-defense-africa-idUSBRE8B21GY20121203>.

<sup>79</sup> Benjamin, Daniel. “LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, Aqim, and Other Sources of Instability in Africa.” *U.S. Department of State*, April 25, 2012. <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/rm/2012/188816.htm>.

<sup>80</sup> “Al-Shabab.”

<sup>81</sup> “Al-Shabab ‘Join Ranks’ with al-Qaeda.” *Al Jazeera*, February 10, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/02/201221054649118317.html%3E>.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Finn, Peter. “Somali’s Case a Template for U.S. as It Seeks to Prosecute Terrorism Suspects in Federal Court.” *The Washington Post*, March 30, 2013. [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-30/world/38142631\\_1\\_ahmed-abdulkadir-warsame-obama-administration-fbi-agents/2](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-03-30/world/38142631_1_ahmed-abdulkadir-warsame-obama-administration-fbi-agents/2), p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Coombs, Casey. “African Militants Learn from Al Qaeda in Yemen.” *GlobalPost*, September 10, 2012. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/war/conflict-zones/120907/al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-yemen-somalia-al-shabaab-gulf-aden>.

## **Funding**

### **Domestic**

Al-Shabaab put a great deal of time and energy into raising funds from a wide variety of sources, and was able to extract surprising amounts of money from the people under its control as well as from abroad—in 2011, the United Nations conservatively estimated that al-Shabaab was raking in \$70-\$100 million a year that it then spent on arms, fighter salaries, and operations.<sup>85</sup>

The single greatest source of revenue for Shabaab was derived from the sophisticated and comprehensive taxation regime that included everything from a “consumer tax” on goods purchased in a store to a tax on farmers for every cultivable acre they owned to a “jihad war contribution” that was levied on an as-needed basis. The latter tax could be steep indeed—an al-Shabaab officer said in an interview in 2010 that the group would demand \$10,000-\$20,000 a month in times of war from the large money transfer companies operating in the areas it controlled.<sup>86</sup>

Markets and ports proved to be the biggest cash cows for the group; taxes in the Bakara and Suuq Baad markets generated \$30-\$60 million per year for the group, while the ports the group controlled such as Kismayo, Baraawe, and Marka collectively garnered \$35-\$50 million per year.<sup>87</sup> The group also leveraged its religious credentials to raise money through *zakat*,<sup>88</sup> annual donations Muslims are obliged to give to fulfill their Islamic duties.<sup>89</sup>

Shabaab also had its fingers in the international trade and smuggling industries that originated from the areas the group controlled. The group had links to criminal networks that smuggled a variety of goods into Kenya,<sup>90</sup> but its most lucrative commodity was charcoal; in 2011, a staggering 9-10 million sacks of charcoal were exported from

<sup>85</sup> Bryden, Matt, Carolina Reyes, Jorg Roofhooff, Schbley Ghassan, Babatunde Taiwo, Lynn Fredrikson, Jonah Leff, Aurelien Lorca, and Dinesh Mahtani. *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*. United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, July 18, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>86</sup> Abdul-Ahad, Ghaith. “How Somalia’s Civil War Became New Front in Battle Against al-Qaeda.” *The Guardian*, June 7, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/07/somalia-civil-war-al-qaeda>.

<sup>87</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 27-28.

<sup>88</sup> *Al-Shabaab (AS) in Hagar Part II: Local Perceptions of AS and Post AS Conditions in Hagar*. Native Prospector: East Bridge. Navanti Group, October 3, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>89</sup> Luling, 177.

<sup>90</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 31.

southern Somalia, primarily to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>91</sup> Its sale was then used to finance the purchase of sugar in the Gulf states, most of which was eventually smuggled into Kenya from Somalia to be sold for a hefty profit.<sup>92</sup> All told, the charcoal export-sugar import cycle garnered al-Shabaab more than \$25 million in income in 2011 alone.<sup>93</sup>

But even these highly lucrative practices were not enough for Shabaab, and the group engaged in a variety of other illegal activities to fund their jihad. In a particular embarrassment for the international community, reports emerged in 2010 that al-Shabaab likely benefited from a World Food Program food distribution project in southern Somalia<sup>94</sup>—another report details how al-Shabaab extorted \$10,000 per year from international relief organizations for the right to operate in Shabaab-held territory.<sup>95</sup>

And while the extent of Shabaab's involvement has yet to be established, some groups or individuals who were at least associated with al-Shabaab have been involved in kidnapping foreigners. The group has consistently denied involvement, and most of the hostages eventually ended up in the custody of pirates who negotiated the ransom. However, one news article claims that Shabaab had a specific plan hatched by the group's *Shura* Council to exact revenge on Kenya by snatching foreigners to damage its tourism industry.<sup>96</sup> Roland Marchal claims there is "no doubt" that Shabaab at times held kidnapped hostages, and a first-person account by a Canadian kidnapping victim describes her captors in a way that strongly suggests they were members of al-Shabaab.<sup>97</sup> And finally, given that the hostages often changed hands a number of

<sup>91</sup> Bryden, Matt, Emmanuel Deisser, Aurelien Llorca, Jorg Roofthoof, Ghassan Schbley, Babatunde Taiwo, and Kristele Younes. *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)*. United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, July 13, 2012, pp. 147-148.

<sup>92</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 29.

<sup>93</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)*), 147.

<sup>94</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey, and Neil MacFarquhar. "Food Aid Bypasses Somalia's Needy, U.N. Study Finds." *The New York Times*, March 9, 2010. [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/10/world/africa/10somalia.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/10/world/africa/10somalia.html?_r=0).

<sup>95</sup> Marchal, Roland. *The Rise of a Jihadi Movement in a Country at War: Harakat al-Shabaab Al Mujaheddin in Somalia*. SciencesPo Paris, March 2011. [www.sciencespo.fr/cefi/sites/sciencespo.fr/cefi/files/art\\_RM2.pdf](http://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/sites/sciencespo.fr/cefi/files/art_RM2.pdf), p. 68.

<sup>96</sup> Odowa, Mohamed. "Al-Shabaab/Al-Qaeda Terror Plan Uncovered." *SomaliaReport*, September 18, 2011. <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/1596>.

<sup>97</sup> Amanda Lindhout writes in a fascinating account that her kidnappers "practiced a fundamentalist form of Islam, interpreting the words of the Koran in the most literal way possible. Most of the boys...had gone to insurgent training camps in rural areas. They were part of a loosely organized movement that was fighting their country's own faltering transitional government and Ethiopian

times,<sup>98</sup> it is unlikely that al-Shabaab elements did not take advantage of the chance to make some easy money by handling them at some point in the captivity process.

Probably the most remarked-upon aspect of Somalia's recent history is the piracy that flourished for a number of years off its coast. The pirates' possible links to al-Shabaab has been a source of speculation, but there is enough evidence to show that the group did benefit financially from piracy.<sup>99</sup> The conclusion is unsurprising; Shabaab was deeply concerned with raising money, and so would have been unlikely to ignore the chance to benefit from such a lucrative industry. Furthermore, clan ties may have facilitated the relationship: Shabaab and the pirates recruited heavily from the same sub-clan, the Habar Gedir, and a high-ranking Shabaab officer hails from the same sub-sub-clan as the most powerful pirate leader, Mohamed Afweyne.<sup>100</sup> The al-Shabaab official in question is named Hassan Afrah, and he has been identified in a news report as the head of Shabaab's "relationship with pirates" office;<sup>101</sup> apart from the clan relationship of Afrah and Afweyne, the mere fact that Shabaab has an official position for interacting with pirates suggests there was a sustained relationship there.

One news article quoted a pirate alleging that al-Shabaab actually hijacked vessels,<sup>102</sup> but most of the evidence suggests that Shabaab simply treated pirates as they do all other money-makers in their area: they charged them protection fees or

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troops... Presumably, some portion of any ransom money they got for us would go to support the larger cause." Given that Lindhout was snatched in 2008, during al-Shabaab's ascendancy, the timing would also suggest Shabaab were the culprits, though the description could also apply to other radical groups active at the time, such as the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia. See Lindhout, Amanda, and Sara Corbett. "12 Minutes of Freedom in 460 Days of Captivity." *The New York Times*, August 28, 2013. [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/01/magazine/lindhout-kidnapping-somalia.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/01/magazine/lindhout-kidnapping-somalia.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1&).

<sup>98</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)*), 212-216. See also Marchal (March 2011), 68.

<sup>99</sup> The U.N. first officially confirmed the link in February 2013, though a number of news articles had already reported on the story. See Lough, Richard. "Piracy Ransom Cash Ends up with Somali Militants." *Reuters*, July 6, 2011. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2011/07/06/uk-somalia-piracy-idUKTRE7652AW20110706>, and Childress, Sarah. "Somali Militants Try Piracy to Fund Attacks." *The Wall Street Journal*, September 10, 2010. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703720004575477491009472882.html> for just a few examples. For the U.N. confirmation, see "Somalia : March 2013 Monthly Forecast." *Security Council Report*, February 28, 2013. [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2013-03/somalia\\_5.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2013-03/somalia_5.php).

<sup>100</sup> Marchal (March 2011), 69.

<sup>101</sup> "Al-Qaeda Foreign Operatives Dominate al-Shabaab Executive Council." *Suna Times*, May 5, 2011. <http://www.sunatimes.com/view.php?id=392>.

<sup>102</sup> MJ, and Robert Young Pelton. "Al-Shabaab Fighters on the Run." *SomaliaReport*, July 1, 2012. <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/2472>.

taxes. The fees could range from 5%-10% of the ransoms collected, all the way up to 50% if Shabaab funded the operation.<sup>103</sup>

### ***International***

Al-Shabaab was also adept at raising money from international sources. It had three main external revenue streams: donations from international radicals, state sponsorship, and remittances from the Somali diaspora.<sup>104</sup>

The foreign radicals who readily contributed to the group are concentrated in the Arabian Peninsula and view Shabaab as their ideological brethren;<sup>105</sup> given Saudi donors' support for al-Qaeda throughout the years,<sup>106</sup> it is likely that Saudis are among the most generous of al-Shabaab boosters. International donations are difficult to track, but some of them are probably laundered through the trading networks Shabaab has established domestically and internationally,<sup>107</sup> and add up to "significant" amounts of support. One indicator of how important international donations are is the fact that several of the Shabaab officials who handle money matters are foreign themselves, the better to oversee and encourage the flow of donations from abroad.<sup>108</sup>

Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Syria, Iran, Qatar, and Eritrea have all been accused of providing support at one time or another to al-Shabaab.<sup>109</sup> The TFG accused Qatar of funneling money to Shabaab via Eritrea, and the accusations were convincing enough that the U.S. tried to pressure Qatar to stop.<sup>110</sup> Iran has sent at least weapons and

<sup>103</sup> Mendez, Gil. "Al-Shabab: An Examination of Somali Piracy and Its Links to Terrorism." *Central Asia Online*, April 16, 2009.

[http://centralasiaonline.com/en\\_GB/articles/caii/features/2009/04/16/feature-03](http://centralasiaonline.com/en_GB/articles/caii/features/2009/04/16/feature-03).

<sup>104</sup> Viikko, Valter. *Al-Shabaab: From External Support to Internal Extraction*. Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, March 2011, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>106</sup> Roth, John, Douglas Greenburg, and Serena Wille. *Monograph on Terrorist Financing: Staff Report to the Commission*. National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, accessed July 6, 2013, p. 20.

<sup>107</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 27.

<sup>108</sup> Rashid, Abdi. *Somalia's Divided Islamists*. Policy Briefing. Nairobi/Brussels: International Crisis Group, May 18, 2010, p. 8, footnote 45. See also Viikko, 7.

<sup>109</sup> Masters, Jonathan. "Al-Shabab." *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 23, 2013. <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabab/p18650#p7>.

<sup>110</sup> Lynch, Colum. "Qatar's Support for Islamists Muddles Its Reputation as Neutral Broker in Mideast." *The Washington Post*, November 28, 2012. [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-11-28/world/35512031\\_1\\_sheik-hamad-bin-khalifa-qatari-embassy-qatari-officials/2](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-11-28/world/35512031_1_sheik-hamad-bin-khalifa-qatari-embassy-qatari-officials/2).

I.E.D. components to the group,<sup>111</sup> and Eritrea has a long and well-documented record of support for Shabaab.<sup>112</sup>

The support from Eritrea has decreased significantly, likely because of Shabaab's losses on the battlefield, points of contention between the group and its patron, and "increased international scrutiny."<sup>113</sup> The latter consisted in part of sanctions the U.S. Treasury Department slapped on three Eritrean officials, Bitewelde Habte Negash, Taeme Abraham Goitom, and Yemane Ghebreab (all also known by a variety of aliases),<sup>114</sup> as well as U.N. sanctions against Eritrea for its "continued support to armed opposition groups, including Al-Shabaab," in violation of three different Security Council resolutions.<sup>115</sup> Here again there is no way of knowing for certain how much money al-Shabaab was receiving from Eritrea, but U.N. estimates have put the number at \$40,000-\$50,000 per month in 2009.<sup>116</sup>

As with the other streams of revenue, the numbers around how much support al-Shabaab received from remittances are murky at best. But in 2013 a report estimated that up to \$1.3 billion a year flows into the country from the diaspora,<sup>117</sup> so if the group received even a small percentage of that, it would be substantial.

Much of this money is sent through a global network of money transfer companies.<sup>118</sup> These money transfer organizations, or MTOs, are one of the few means available to people living abroad to remit money to countries that lack traditional banking systems. MTOs, along with even more informal money transfer networks known as *hawalas*, also happen to be a useful way for terrorists to move funds about—the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda have both made extensive and well-documented use of MTOs.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Charbonneau, Louis. "Somalia Islamists Receive Arms from Iran-linked Groups: U.N. Monitors." *Al Arabiya News*, February 11, 2013. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/02/11/265631.html>. See also Sanders, Angelia, and Samuel Lau. *Al Qaeda and the African Arc of Instability*. Civil-Military Fusion Centre, December 2012, p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> Viikko, 6.

<sup>113</sup> Sanders and Lau, 8.

<sup>114</sup> "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List." *U.S. Department of the Treasury*. Accessed June 24, 2013. <http://www.treasury.gov/ofac/downloads/ctrylst.txt>.

<sup>115</sup> "Security Council, by Vote of 13 in Favour, Adopts Resolution Reinforcing Sanctions Regime Against Eritrea 'Calibrated' to Halt All Activities Destabilizing Region." *United Nations Security Council*, December 5, 2011. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10471.doc.htm>.

<sup>116</sup> Viikko, 7.

<sup>117</sup> Orozco, Manuel, and Julia Yansura. *Keeping the Lifeline Open: Remittances and Markets in Somalia*. Oxfam America, Adeso, Inter-American Dialogue, July 31, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>118</sup> The Oxfam, et al., report cited directly above states that 73% of all remittances made to Somalia are via MTOs, rather than the more informal *hawalas*. *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>119</sup> Schmitt, Eric. *Counterstrike: the untold story of America's secret campaign against al Qaeda*. New York: Times Books, 2011, p. 184, and Roth and et al., 25.



MTOs and *hawalas* are sometimes conflated, but in fact there are technical differences, though both are utilized by terrorist organizations. The primary attraction of *hawalas* for terrorists is the fact that the money is transferred between two trusted individuals who do not exchange any sort of promissory documents. The remitter simply pays the *hawaldar* the amount to be remitted, less a transaction fee, who then calls a *hawaldar* on the receiving end to find the recipient and disburse the amount. The two *hawaldar* can then settle up at a later date in a variety of ways, such as by cancelling preexisting debts or physically transferring money or other resources.<sup>120</sup> Since it does not need a legal infrastructure to protect the transactions, the system can still operate well in the sorts of poorly-governed places terrorists frequent. It also means that it is very difficult to track payments, as little to no documentation is created or maintained around the transfers.<sup>121</sup>

MTOs are similar in the sense that the value of the transfer does not move between the remitting and disbursing agents at the time of the transaction, as it does with traditional wire transfers, but there is a major difference between MTOs and *hawalas* in how they settle up. MTOs settle up the debits or credits with its various agents by transferring funds through traditional banking channels, while *hawalas*, as already mentioned, use much more informal means.<sup>122</sup>

Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government shut down two of the largest MTOs with a presence in the United States, al-Barakaat and al-Taqwa, charging that they “raise, manage, invest, and distribute funds for al-Qaeda; provide terrorist supporters with Internet service and secure telephone communications; and arrange for the shipment of weapons.” The United States further accused the founder of al-Barakaat, Shaykh Ahmed Nur Jimale, of using al-Barakaat offices around the world, including 60 in Somalia, to “transmit funds, intelligence and instructions to terrorist cells.”<sup>123</sup>

Some have questioned to what extent al-Barakaat really was used as a conduit for terrorism financing; the *New York Times* has since reported that there is little evidence that the company had links to terrorist funding,<sup>124</sup> and an FBI investigation concluded

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<sup>120</sup> Roth and et al., 67-68.

<sup>121</sup> Vilko, 10.

<sup>122</sup> Roth and et al., 68.

<sup>123</sup> “Terrorist Financial Network Fact Sheet.” *The White House*, November 7, 2001. <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/11/20011107-6.html>.

<sup>124</sup> Golden, Tim. “5 Months After Sanctions Against Somali Company, Scant Proof of Qaeda Tie.” *The New York Times*, April 13, 2002. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/04/13/world/nation-challenged->

that the Bureau “could not substantiate any links between al-Barakaat and terrorism.”<sup>125</sup> In 2009 and 2010, several al-Barakaat entities were removed from the U.S.’s sanctions list.<sup>126</sup>

However, the U.S. Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) “hotly disputed” the FBI’s findings, charging that the Bureau had failed to consider what OFAC believed to be key pieces of evidence.<sup>127</sup> And Shaykh Jimale was identified by the United Nations as a key financier of al-Shabaab involved in the lucrative charcoal export/sugar import trade that also enables Shabaab to launder donations coming in from overseas.<sup>128</sup> To believe that a major financial supporter of the group would not use his companies to assist Shabaab requires some faith.<sup>129</sup>

Whatever the truth of al-Barakaat’s involvement in terrorist financing, money did flow to al-Shabaab through other MTOs. A Minneapolis man was convicted in early 2012 of sending \$21,000 to al-Shabaab, and two Minnesota women were convicted in October 2011 of sending 12 different money transfers to the group.<sup>130</sup> Four men in San Diego were convicted of attempting to send funds to the group via MTOs, though they were unsuccessful.<sup>131</sup>

And multiple U.N. reports have documented al-Shabaab’s use of remittance companies: at the end of 2012, the group solicited a total of approximately \$100,000 on

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money-5-months-after-sanctions-against-somali-company-scant.html?scp=2&sq=Al-Barakaat&st=cse.

<sup>125</sup> Roth and et al., 84.

<sup>126</sup> *Executive Order 13224-Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism*. U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control, November 3, 2009 and September 1, 2010, pp. 15, 18.

<sup>127</sup> Roth and et al., 84.

<sup>128</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 30, 184.

<sup>129</sup> In a recent development, however, the SFG stated that an independent investigation had determined that there was “not enough evidence” to continue U.N. sanctions against Jimale. So his involvement with al-Shabaab is murky at best, but it is perhaps telling that the government’s announcement did not proclaim Jimale’s innocence, either. Adan, Ahmed. “SOMALIA: Somali Government Condemns Swedish Politicians Attack and Exonerates Businessman Ahmed Jim’ale.” *Raxanreeb.com*, August 22, 2013. <http://www.raxanreeb.com/2013/08/somalia-somali-government-condemns-swedish-politicians-attack-and-exonerates-businessman-ahmed-jimale/>.

<sup>130</sup> Patrick, Robert. “Minneapolis Man Admits Financial Crime in St. Louis.” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, January 10, 2012. [http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/minneapolis-man-admits-financial-crime-in-st-louis/article\\_12cc4e0a-3bbe-11e1-945b-0019bb30f31a.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/minneapolis-man-admits-financial-crime-in-st-louis/article_12cc4e0a-3bbe-11e1-945b-0019bb30f31a.html). See also “Two Minnesota Women Convicted of Providing Material Support to Al Shabaab.” *The Federal Bureau of Investigation*, October 20, 2011. <http://www.fbi.gov/minneapolis/press-releases/2011/two-minnesota-women-convicted-of-providing-material-support-to-al-shabaab>.

<sup>131</sup> Moran, Greg. “4 Men Convicted in Somali Terror Case.” *UTSanDiego.com*, February 22, 2013. <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2013/Feb/22/san-diego-somali-guilty-terror-al-shabaab/?#article-copy>.

4 separate occasions for a mass assassination campaign in Mogadishu. The group used, among others, a company called Dahabshiil to remit the money from different countries.<sup>132</sup> And it has on a number of occasions used *hawalas* to receive general donations from a variety of sources.<sup>133</sup>

## **Recruitment**

### ***Domestic***

Al-Shabaab would probably like to think all of its recruits joined because they believed in the group's message, but in reality domestic Somali recruits joined for a host of different reasons, many of which were the result of pragmatic calculation rather than ideological commitment. One author writes, "In many cases people switch sides due to convenience in Somalia. Experts have noted that in Somalia, Islamists have historically been flexible and have switched sides several times—which points to the lack of an ideological core in many Somalis who join al-Shabab."<sup>134</sup>

Doing so is entirely in keeping with habits of Somali culture that have been documented for years. "Pragmatic to the extreme,"<sup>135</sup> Somalis have a long history of adopting and discarding allegiances as it suited their interests<sup>136</sup>—perhaps the only non-

<sup>132</sup> Chopra, Jarat, Jeanine Lee Brudenell, Emmanuel Deisser, Aurelien Llorca, Dinesh Mahtani, Jorg Roofthoof, Babatunde Taiwo, and Kristele Younes. *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia*. United Nations Security Council, July 12, 2013, p. 58. A Somali website, the Sunatimes, has accused Dahabshiil, one of the largest Somali MTOs, of links to al-Shabaab (Dahabshiil has since taken the website to court over those claims). "Analysis: Barclays to Cut Somalia's Remittance 'lifeline'." *IRIN*, July 9, 2013. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/98358/analysis-barclays-to-cut-somalia-s-remittance-lifeline>.

<sup>133</sup> Bryden, Matt, Gregory Beals, Arnaud Laloum, Charles Lengalenga, Jorg Roofthoof, and Jarat Chopra. *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008)*. United Nations Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, March 10, 2010, pp. 24, 30.

<sup>134</sup> Hassan, Muhsin. "Understanding Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Case of al-Shabab and Somali Youth." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, August 23, 2012. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/understanding-drivers-of-violent-extremism-the-case-of-al-shabab-and-somali-youth>.

<sup>135</sup> Reno, William. "Rethinking Counterinsurgency in Somalia." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, April 29, 2013. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/rethinking-counterinsurgency-in-somalia>.

<sup>136</sup> Lewis, Ioan. "Somalia Has a Role Model for Success on Its Doorstep." *The Guardian*, August 26, 2010. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/aug/26/somalia-somaliland-extremists>. Consider also Ahmed Gran, the powerful anti-Abyssinian leader from the Adal Sultanate, who was able to rally an unprecedented number of northern Somali tribes to his banner. However, the remarkable coalition fell apart almost immediately after his death. See Lewis (*A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*), p. 26, and Mukhtar, Mohamed Haji. *Historical Dictionary of Somalia*. New Edition. African Historical Dictionary Series 87. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003, p. 33. Read also Angus Hamilton's (perhaps overly-cynical) account of many Somalis' self-interested support of Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan, the "Mad Mullah," in Hamilton, Angus. *Somaliland*. London: Hutchinson and Company, 1911, pp. 50-52,

negotiable loyalty Somalis have is to their *diya*-paying group and to Islam, though they are prone to ignore the tenets of *shariah* that are “inapplicable to a clan society.”<sup>137</sup>

Consider the case of Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, the leader of Ras Kamboni. Now allied with the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), Madobe was once a high-value terrorist target for the United States, and barely survived a U.S. Special Forces attack in 2007 that left him wounded. He was captured and spent time in an Ethiopian prison before undergoing an opportune change of heart; he was returned to Somalia where he took up leadership of Ras Kamboni again, this time to fight his former ally, al-Shabaab.<sup>138</sup>

Or think of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed who was a prominent member of the ICU that collapsed after an attack by the U.S.-supported Ethiopians.<sup>139</sup> Ahmed then partnered with Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys to form the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS), though the two eventually had a falling out.<sup>140</sup> Aweys’s name can now be found on page three of a U.S. Treasury Department report listing Specially Designated Terrorists,<sup>141</sup> while Ahmed went on to become the president of the TFG and was hailed by then-Secretary of State Clinton as a U.S. partner in the fight against terrorism.<sup>142</sup>

Madobe’s evolution from an important target for American Special Forces to trusted partner of AMISOM, and Ahmed’s own impressive transition from a leader of a group overthrown with U.S. support to U.S. partner meeting with the Secretary of State, perfectly illustrates the phenomenon of Somali pragmatism. These two men deftly bartered their loyalties for greater advantage for themselves and their clan, a time-honored Somali tradition. As will be seen, some recruits did the very same thing when making the decision about joining al-Shabaab.

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and Robert Hess’s writings on the varying receptions given Italian colonialists by different Somali tribes shrewdly calculating whether accommodation or resistance was most in their interests: Hess, 87, 93, 126.

<sup>137</sup> Lewis, I. M. *The Modern History of Somaliland: From Nation to State*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1965, p. 11. See also Lewis, I. M. *Saints and Somalis: Popular Islam in a Clan-Based Society*. 1st Red Sea Press ed. Lawrenceville, N.J: Red Sea Press, 1998, p. 26.

<sup>138</sup> McConnell, Tristan. “Somalia Gears up for Final Offensive Against Al Shabaab.” *GlobalPost*, September 21, 2012. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/somalia/120920/al-shabaab-kismayo-offensive>.

<sup>139</sup> “Somalia and Ethiopia: Might Things Get Better for Once?” *The Economist*, January 7, 2012. <http://www.economist.com/node/21542457>.

<sup>140</sup> Horadam (“Profile: Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys”).

<sup>141</sup> *Terrorism: What You Need to Know About U.S. Sanctions*. U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control, September 23, 2001, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> “Remarks With Somali Transitional Federal Government President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.” *U.S. Department of State*, August 6, 2009. <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/08/126956.htm>.

Fighting for al-Shabaab paid well, and in a country as impoverished and with as few opportunities as Somalia, some Somalis decided it was worth joining for the paycheck—fighters could earn between \$50-\$150 a month, depending on what their roles were.<sup>143</sup> As one defector explained, “I needed employment and a source of income, as I am above 20 years old and married with children. My living situation was good when I was in AS.”<sup>144</sup>

Shabaab effectively leveraged the fear it inspired to bolster recruiting as well; while its brutality alienated many Somalis, it also brought some into the fold who chose to join rather than run the risk of becoming one of the group’s victims. Several defectors have mentioned that Shabaab would often harass and even execute people on any pretext for the purpose of scaring others into joining the group.<sup>145</sup> And entire clans threw their support behind al-Shabaab rather than risk falling prey to rival clans already allied with Shabaab. This resulted in “hundreds” of Somalis joining al-Shabaab’s ranks who otherwise would have seen their clan kin and property be put at risk.<sup>146</sup>

Some fighters joined al-Shabaab because they believed it would enable them to exact revenge on someone who had harmed them or their family. In some cases the grievance revolved around a clan issue; at least one al-Shabaab defector claimed to have joined the group to take revenge on the killer of a family member, and Shabaab was able to win the sympathy of some clans eager to take revenge on other clans for past abuses.<sup>147</sup> Other times the grievance was a result of anger over poor behavior from the TFG and AMISOM;<sup>148</sup> in these cases it was natural for Somalis to join al-Shabaab as it was the most active and visible enemy of those who had wronged them.

The greatest boon to al-Shabaab’s recruitment efforts was undoubtedly Ethiopia’s 2006 invasion of Somalia. The invasion toppled a fairly popular government in the form of the Islamic Courts Union;<sup>149</sup> worse, it was carried out by Ethiopia, Somalia’s ancient

<sup>143</sup> Hassan. The most recent U.N. Monitoring Group report, however, puts the monthly wages as high as \$500 for some fighters. Maclean, William. “Shabaab Finances Face Squeeze After Kenya Attack.” *Reuters*, September 26, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/09/26/us-kenya-attack-shabaab-funding-idUSBRE98P05Z20130926>.

<sup>144</sup> *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*. Native Prospector: East Bridge. Navanti Group, August 17, 2012, p. 3.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>146</sup> “Al-Shabaab Splits Becoming Evident.” *SomaliaReport*, July 13, 2012.

[http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3513/Al-Shabaab\\_Splits\\_Becoming\\_Evident](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3513/Al-Shabaab_Splits_Becoming_Evident).

<sup>147</sup> *Life After Al-Shabaab*. Al-Shabaab Defector Series. Navanti Group, September 19, 2012, p. 5. See also Marchal (March 2011), 5-6.

<sup>148</sup> Hassan.

<sup>149</sup> Barnes, Cedric, and Harun Hassan. “The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu’s Islamic Courts.” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (April 2007): 151–160. doi:0.1080/17531050701452382, p. 151.

enemy. Three Somali-Americans on trial in Minnesota for joining al-Shabaab felt “compelled” to help expel the Ethiopian “invaders;”<sup>150</sup> other Somalis felt “driven” to fight the Ethiopians because of a “strong sense of nationalism.”<sup>151</sup> Ken Menkhaus, in testimony before a Senate committee, testified that “the Ethiopian occupation inadvertently fueled a dramatic rise in radicalism and violent extremism in the country and among the diaspora.”<sup>152</sup> Al-Shabaab positioned itself perfectly to take advantage of the nationalist anger that erupted within the broader Somali community as it painted itself as the best defender of the country against the incursion.<sup>153</sup> Somalis flocked to al-Shabaab’s banner; the appeal was so strong that it served as a major recruiting tool for nearly five years.<sup>154</sup>

There was also a tempting prestige associated with joining al-Shabaab. “Walking the city with a gun as a member of al-Shabab ensured everybody feared and respected you. Girls also liked you,” said one defector.<sup>155</sup> In a country beset with as many problems and as few opportunities as Somalia, this is a powerful inducement for young men with few other means of becoming “somebody.” One author expands on this point: “For disaffected and jobless young people in search of avenues for influence in society, self-affirmation and recognition by their peers, joining an extremist group or criminal organization can be an attractive and empowering option.”<sup>156</sup>

And it wasn’t only young men who could climb the social ladder by joining Shabaab; membership in the group also constituted an opportunity for entire clans to gain a level of prestige they otherwise would never have had. Minority or otherwise despised tribes comprised a major portion of al-Shabaab’s foot soldiers, as these second-class citizens hoped their membership would move them up in Somalia’s social hierarchy.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Temple-Raston, Dina. “Minnesota Trial Offers Window On Jihadi Pipeline.” *NPR*, October 10, 2012. <http://www.npr.org/2012/10/10/162663573/court-minn-man-recruited-somalis-for-terrorism>.

<sup>151</sup> *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, 1-2.

<sup>152</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. *Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America*. Washington, D.C., 2009. [www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/031109menkhaus](http://www.hsgac.senate.gov/download/031109menkhaus), 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ostebo, Terje. *Islamic Militancy in Africa*. Africa Security Brief. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, November 2012, p. 6.

<sup>154</sup> Aynte, Abdi. “Al-Shabaab and Post-transition Somalia.” *African Arguments*, September 3, 2012. <http://africanarguments.org/2012/09/03/al-shabaab-and-post-transition-somalia-by-abdi-aynte/>.

<sup>155</sup> Hassan.

<sup>156</sup> Warner, J.R. “Vulnerable, Volatile Youth May Threaten Somalia’s Fragile Stability; Radicalization Felt Across Africa.” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, October 24, 2012. <http://africacenter.org/2012/10/vulnerable-volatile-youth-may-threaten-somalia%E2%80%99s-fragile-stability/>.

<sup>157</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens, Alexander, and Hussein Solomon. “Factors Responsible for Al-Shabab’s Losses in Somalia.” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, September 26, 2012.

And finally, while many Somalis likely joined the group for pragmatic reasons as already discussed, al-Shabaab was able to attract some recruits by making the same ideological appeal it made to members of the diaspora community. Salafism is particularly well-suited to exploit the alienation and frustration that people feel, and some young Somalis were easy prey. Salafists “frame...alienation in religious terms, in which Islam is presented as the all encompassing, powerful, and only solution. Both local circumstances and global events are presented as evidence of a world threatening Islam and contradicting the will of God.” Young men convinced of the truth of Salafism were able to indulge in a sense of moral superiority as they believed they were part of a select group who understood “true” Islam, and were thus part of an exclusive contingent bound for heaven while everyone else was not.<sup>158</sup>

Shabaab’s efforts in these areas were bolstered by the fact that Salafism, which places a very strong emphasis on jihad, has been gaining ground in Somalia, likely fueled by money flowing out of the Gulf states that has allowed Salafist clerics to set up *madrassas* throughout Somalia. Al-Shabaab has had success in recruiting fighters, particularly young men, by appealing to their obligation to wage violent jihad, a task made easier by many of these young men’s exposure to Salafist ideas.<sup>159</sup>

It is necessary to pause here and explore the issue of Salafism more broadly, particularly the ideology’s possible link to violence. Several of the sources cited above, including one that quotes Shabaab defectors, suggest that Salafist ideology facilitates the radicalization of Muslims. Unsurprisingly, this is a controversial position and experts come down on both sides of the debate. After studying the issue, the position of this paper is that Muslims who adhere to certain strains of Salafism are indeed more likely to commit violence in the name of Islam than ordinary Muslims. This assessment’s implications for Somalia, outlined above and in other sections of the report, is that the inroads Salafism has made into the population make it easier for al-Shabaab to recruit using radical religious appeals.

Not all Salafists are violent or interested in establishing an Islamic state—many even believe it is forbidden for Muslims to engage in politics. But all Salafists generally

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<http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/factors-responsible-for-al-shababs-losses-in-somalia>. See also *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, pp. 2, 8.

<sup>158</sup> Ostebo, 6. See also Gude, Hubert, Souad Mekhennet, and Christoph Scheuermann. “Salafist Muslims in Germany Are Looking to Attract More Followers.” *Spiegel Online*, April 24, 2012. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/salafist-muslims-in-germany-are-looking-to-attract-more-followers-a-829173.html>, for reference to how Salafists view themselves “the elite of their religion.”

<sup>159</sup> *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, pp. 1-2, 5.

believe in a very strict interpretation of the Quran and Hadith, and reject any Islamic revelation after the time of the Prophet. There is also a small sub-set of Salafists known as “Salafist-Jihadists” who are fanatically dedicated to the cause of violent jihad against anyone who does not believe precisely as they do—these Salafist-Jihadists are sometimes also known as “*takfiris*,” after the doctrine of *takfir*, or excommunication. *Takfir* is the convoluted religious rationale Salafist-Jihadists use to justify killing fellow Muslims, which is forbidden by the Quran—since their brand of Salafism is the only true form of Islam, the reasoning goes, any Muslim who adheres to a different interpretation is not a true Muslim but *takfir*, and therefore a legitimate target.<sup>160</sup>

As alluded to above, it is probable that adherents only of certain strains of Salafism are more inclined to be persuaded by calls to violent jihad of the type al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab espouse. But it appears that those violent strains are being propagated in Somalia. As was mentioned earlier, Shabaab had a very sophisticated and successful recruitment program that included ideological training, particularly of children, in *madrassas* and mosques, picking up where previous radical Muslim groups such as AIAI left off.<sup>161</sup>

Furthermore, the growth of Salafism in Somalia, including the violent variety, fits a pattern that has seen Salafist-Jihadists make gains within the broader Muslim world. Eminent Islamic scholar Gilles Kepel has commented on the phenomenon in Europe,<sup>162</sup> and the International Crisis Group and others have written about their spread in northern Africa, particularly in Tunisia.<sup>163</sup> And in 2010, Germany’s domestic intelligence service

<sup>160</sup> Wahhabism, born in, and aggressively exported from, Saudi Arabia, fits in here as well. The relationship among these various sects is as follows: Wahhabism is a sub-sect of Salafism, as is Jihadist-Salafism, while Salafism is a sub-sect of Sunni Islam. For background on Salafist-Jihadists/*takfiris* and Wahhabists, see Kepel, Gilles. *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Translated by Anthony F. Roberts. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 219-221, Mandaville, 246-249, Abou El Fadl, Khaled. *The Great Theft: Wrestling Islam from the Extremists*. New York, NY: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007, pp. 72-74, and Wright, Lawrence. *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*. New York: Vintage Books, 2007, pp. 141-144.

<sup>161</sup> MJD. “Al-Shabaab’s Child Soldiers.” *SomaliaReport*, July 5, 2012. <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3324>, and Milas, Seifulaziz. “After Kismayo: What Next for Al-Shabaab and Somalia?” *African Arguments*, October 10, 2012. <http://africanarguments.org/2012/10/10/after-kismayo-what-next-for-al-shabaab-and-somalia-%E2%80%93-by-seifulaziz-milas/>.

<sup>162</sup> Livesey, Bruce. “The Salafist Movement: Al Qaeda’s New Front.” *PBS | FRONTLINE*, January 25, 2005. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/front/special/sala.html>.

<sup>163</sup> “Tunisia: Violence and the Salafi Challenge.” *International Crisis Group*, February 13, 2013. <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/tunisia/137-tunisia-violence-and-the-salafi-challenge.aspx>. See also Khalaf, Roula. “Salafi Threat to Tunisia Needs Handling.” *Financial Times*, December 3, 2012. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/3e1579ca-3d47-11e2-9e13-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2UskxQhJG>, and Beaumont, Peter, and Patrick Kingsley.



concluded that Salafism was the “fastest growing Islamic movement in the world”<sup>164</sup>—again, only a minority of Salafists is violent, but the trend so far has been that the growth of Salafism in general brings with it a growth of the Salafist-Jihadists.

And there is, unfortunately, precedent for a historically Sufi society, such as Somalia’s, to swing into the Salafist camp. As discussed above, upheaval of the type brought by war, poverty, and disease often enhances the appeal of the Salafist message; Kashmir, for many hundreds of years Sufi, rapidly transformed into a largely Salafist society after the pressures of protracted conflict took their toll. Salafi-Jihadists are now strongly represented among the Kashmiri Salafists, and violence between them and the remaining Sufis has been flaring for years.<sup>165</sup>

So to sum up: only a minority of Salafists are dedicated to jihad, though they wield far more influence than their numbers would suggest, and their ranks have been swelling over the preceding years. In keeping with the trend, adherence to Salafist ideology has been growing in Somalia, particularly among the youth, mirroring a pattern that has played out in other parts of the Islamic world. And while there is no way of knowing the proportions for sure, Somali testimony and other evidence from the country suggest that a significant portion of the Salafism being spread in Somalia is of the jihadist variety. This growing Salafist-Jihadist community provided a natural pool from which Shabaab was able to successfully recruit using religious appeals; if the trend continues, Shabaab or another radical Muslim terrorist organization will have a larger and larger constituency pre-disposed to accept the group’s violent propaganda.

But not all recruitment into al-Shabaab was voluntary. The group kidnapped large numbers of Somalis and forced them to fight. Reports emerged from Kismayo that the group forced “most” of the men in the city to take up arms and “train for guerrilla warfare” as it faced an imminent KDF invasion.<sup>166</sup> In the town of Hagar, Shabaab levied a tax of

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“Violent Tide of Salafism Threatens the Arab Spring.” *The Guardian*, February 9, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/09/violent-salafists-threaten-arab-spring-democracies>, and Gude, et al.

<sup>164</sup> “Uproar in Germany over Salafi Drive to Hand Out Millions of Qurans.” *Al Arabiya News*, April 12, 2012. <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/04/12/207289.html>.

<sup>165</sup> Mir, Tariq. “Kashmir: From Sufi to Salafi.” *Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting*, November 5, 2012. <http://pulitzercenter.org/projects/kashmir-sufi-resurgence-salafi-islam-belief-conflict-rising-salafism-muslim-islam>.

<sup>166</sup> Hussein, Adnan. “Somali Army Sets Its Sights on Kismayo.” *Sabahi*, July 23, 2012. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/07/23/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/07/23/feature-01).

one camel and one fighter on every household, leading to mass flight by residents, particularly young ones, from the town.<sup>167</sup>

Most heinously, Shabaab kidnapped a significant number of children and forced them to fight. Reports claim that Shabaab started forcibly recruiting child soldiers practically since the group's inception, and may have recruited as many as 2,000 in a single year.<sup>168</sup> The practice appears to have become widespread by 2009, and saw a spike in 2010 that "shows no signs of reducing."<sup>169</sup> Hizbul Islam was reportedly so impressed with the success of al-Shabaab's recruiting efforts among children that it too became involved, at one point reportedly fielding 30 recruiters whose only job was to recruit under-age fighters.<sup>170</sup>

When Shabaab needed fighters, they would snatch children from just about anywhere: schools, mosques, playgrounds, and even family homes, occasionally using other children to identify likely candidates for kidnapping.<sup>171</sup> The content of one news article suggests that Shabaab lured children to the schools they had set up and then imprisoned them there—the article reports that children as young as seven were found chained to their beds in a Shabaab school, and were being trained to be suicide bombers.<sup>172</sup>

What is particularly worrying about this practice is that it accelerated when al-Shabaab was suffering heavy losses on the battlefield and became desperate to replenish its ranks.<sup>173</sup> Al-Shabaab does not have access to the same number of children

<sup>167</sup> *Al-Shabaab (AS) in Hagar Part II: Local Perceptions of AS and Post AS Conditions in Hagar*, 4.

<sup>168</sup> Essa, Azad. "Where Are the Men of Dadaab?" *Al Jazeera English*, July 21, 2011. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/07/2011720161814857291.html>. For the number of children recruited, see *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*. United Nations General Assembly Security Council, April 23, 2011, p. 30.

<sup>169</sup> Bader, Laetitia, Zama Coursen-Neff, Tirana Hassan, and Human Rights Watch (Organization). *No Place for Children: Child Recruitment, Forced Marriage, and Attacks on Schools in Somalia*. New York, N.Y.: Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 20. For a quick overview of child recruitment in Somalia, see "Somalia." *United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, April 26, 2012. <http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/countries/somalia/>.

<sup>170</sup> *The Recruitment and Use of Children by Armed Forces or Armed Groups in the Somali Conflict: Situation Overview*. United Nations Children's Fund, November 2009, pp. 8-10.

<sup>171</sup> Bader and et al., 20-21.

<sup>172</sup> Hills, Suzannah. "Al Qaeda's Brutal New Weapons: Children Kidnapped and Kept in Chains to Be Taught How to Become Suicide Bombers." *Mail Online*, August 12, 2012. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2187374/Al-Qaedas-brutal-new-weapons-Children-kidnapped-kept-chains-taught-suicide-bombers.html>. For another description of young children being trained as suicide bombers, see Bader and et al., 33-36.

<sup>173</sup> Ori, Konye Obaji. "Taking Somalia from Al-Shabab." *The Africa Report*, July 12, 2012. <http://www.theafricareport.com/East-Horn-Africa/taking-somalia-from-al-shabab.html>. See also *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, 3.

it used to because of its territorial losses, but it is likely the group will continue and even redouble its child recruitment efforts to compensate for its recent attrition.

### **Regional**

Given the regional and international reach of the organization, it is unsurprising that it is able to recruit from a wide range of countries. Shabaab made a particularly strong push in the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi, Kenya, that is dominated by ethnic Somalis, to the point that the area was once described as “an incubator of jihad.”<sup>174</sup> The organization utilized extremist teachings, literature, videos,<sup>175</sup> and a network of radical Muslim centers, such as such as the Abubakar as-Saddique mosque, the Al-Hidaya mosque, Beit-ul-Mal Madrassa, and the Masjid-ul-Axmar, to spread its message and to bring recruits into the fold.<sup>176</sup>

Shabaab had a very similar operation in Dadaab refugee camp in the northeastern region of Kenya. The camp is near the Somali border and is now more than 20 years old and houses upwards of 500,000 refugees, more than 5 times the intended capacity.<sup>177</sup> While the exact extent and nature of Shabaab’s efforts in Dadaab are unknown, it is clear that they existed, as documented in a Human Rights Watch report,<sup>178</sup> and that they were effective; Shabaab sympathizers and operatives within the camps have been behind a series of violent attacks against international aid workers as well as refugees who speak out against the group.<sup>179</sup> And another report found that not just Dadaab but other Kenyan camps housing Somali refugees were also “fertile recruitment grounds” for Shabaab.<sup>180</sup>

Refugees trying to make their way to the camps in Kenya were also attractive recruitment targets for Shabaab. There is a noticeable lack of men at Dadaab camp,

<sup>174</sup> Raghavan, Sudarsan. “In Kenya’s Capital, Somali Immigrant Neighborhood Is Incubator for Jihad.” *The Washington Post*, August 22, 2010. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/21/AR2010082102682\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/08/21/AR2010082102682_2.html).

<sup>175</sup> Sipus, Mitchell. “Support for al-Shabaab Through the Diaspora.” *Forced Migration Review* no. 37 (March 2011): 29.

<sup>176</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008)*), 25.

<sup>177</sup> Garvelink, William J., and Farha Tahir. “The Dadaab Refugee Complex: A Powder Keg and It’s Giving Off Sparks.” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, March 1, 2012. <http://csis.org/publication/dadaab-refugee-complex-powder-keg-and-its-giving-sparks>.

<sup>178</sup> “Kenya: Stop Recruitment of Somalis in Refugee Camps.” *Human Rights Watch*, October 22, 2009. <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/10/22/kenya-stop-recruitment-somalis-refugee-camps>.

<sup>179</sup> Garvelink and Tahir.

<sup>180</sup> Burns, Avery. “Feeling the Pinch: Kenya, Al-Shabaab, and East Africa’s Refugee Crisis.” *Refuge* 27, no. 1 (n.d.): 5–15, p. 9.

and while there are a number of reasons males might not be able to make the trip, part of the explanation is that some are intercepted by Shabaab (or other armed forces) in the midst of their flight from Somalia—in 2011, Amnesty International documented Shabaab checkpoints along the border with Kenya that detained young men trying to flee. It is likely they were then forcibly recruited into the group.<sup>181</sup>

Al-Shabaab's regional recruitment has evolved over the last several years and now draws heavily from non-ethnic Somalis, as evidenced by its decision to release propaganda videos in English, Swahili, and Arabic.<sup>182</sup> Central to its efforts is its alliance with a number of extremist Muslim organizations based in Kenya, most notably al-Hijra. Al-Hijra (previously known as the Muslim Youth Centre, and before that as Pumwani Muslim Youth) engaged in the “radicalization and recruitment of principally Swahili speaking Africans for carrying out violent militant activity in Somalia,” according to a U.N. sanctions report.<sup>183</sup> Some of al-Hijra's leaders have been linked to the July 2010 Kampala bombings,<sup>184</sup> and three of their Kenya-based clerics, Hassan Mahat Omar, Aboud Rogo Mohammed, and Abubaker Shariff Ahmed, fundraise and recruit for the group, preach violent jihad in mosques and online, urge the killing of AMISOM troops and Americans, and call for the general rejection of any peaceful settlement to the fighting in Somalia. All three are prominent leaders of al-Hijra, and center their efforts in Nairobi, Mombasa, and Lamu.<sup>185</sup>

Al-Hijra does not restrict itself to recruiting in Kenya alone, but also has a branch based in Tanga, Tanzania, known as the Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre (AMYC). The AMYC has likewise been accused by the United Nations of engaging in “radicalization, recruitment and fund raising on behalf of Al-Shabaab,” and received financial support from the Saudi-based al-Haramayn Foundation. The AMYC has made financial donations to a network of Tanzanian mosques, thereby building influence with them and steering them towards a radical jihadist orientation. It likewise runs a network of *madrassas*, orphanages, secondary schools, and technical colleges, all of which

<sup>181</sup> Essa.

<sup>182</sup> Gatsiounis, Ioannis. “After Al-Shabaab » Current Trends in Islamist Ideology.” *Hudson Institute*, December 27, 2012. <http://www.currenttrends.org/research/detail/after-al-shabaab>.

<sup>183</sup> “Security Council Committee on Somalia and Eritrea Adds Aboud Rogo Mohammed to List of Individuals and Entities.” *United Nations Security Council*, July 25, 2012. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sc10728.doc.htm>.

<sup>184</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 24.

<sup>185</sup> *List of Individuals and Entities Subject to the Measures Imposed by Paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 of Security Council Resolution 1844 (2008)*. United Nations Security Council, April 12, 2010. [www.un.org/sc/committees/751/pdf/1844\\_cons\\_list.pdf](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/751/pdf/1844_cons_list.pdf), pp. 9, 12-13.

espouse a radical Muslim worldview and support of al-Shabaab. It is unclear how effective the AMYC is in its efforts, but it was sufficiently robust to recruit and send at least some Tanzanians to Somalia to fight, as well as to provide their families with a monthly stipend.<sup>186</sup>

All of Shabaab's recruitment efforts in the region have taken place in a context of growing conservatism among Muslim in the region.<sup>187</sup> This does not mean that these newly-conservative Muslims are going to resort to violence, but it does mean their worldviews now have more in common with radical groups such as al-Shabaab than they did previously.

### ***International***

Fighters from countries that are notorious for producing international jihadists, such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Yemen, and Iraq, have been an important part of al-Shabaab for years now. The group made a concerted effort to attract these sorts of terrorists early on in its existence; a Shabaab spokesman explicitly said so in 2008, noting:

We seek to empower the *shari'a* of Allah and commit His faith to His worshippers, in perfect conformity between the global jihad and the jihad in Somalia. However, [we] lack the precious element of the foreign fighters. There are an insufficient number of non-Somali brothers.<sup>188</sup>

Shabaab found a use for foreign fighters of all levels of experience and skill, but the group was particularly interested in recruiting "professional jihadis" for several reasons. First, such fighters are often highly-skilled and experienced, and could impart valuable training to Shabaab foot soldiers. And second, they are normally true believers in global jihad who could help steer the group in that direction, as leaders such as Godane and al-Afghani clearly wished.

An analysis of the professional jihadis' role in the organization suggests they accomplished both goals. David Shinn writes that a majority (43 of 85) of Shabaab's

<sup>186</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)*), 177-181.

<sup>187</sup> Gatsiounis.

<sup>188</sup> Harnisch, Chris, and Katherine Zimmerman. "Al Shabaab Effectively Recruits Americans." *American Enterprise Institute*, August 10, 2010. <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/subsaharan-africa/al-shabaab-effectively-recruits-americans/>.

Executive Council was foreign,<sup>189</sup> while Abdi Rashid, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, noted in 2010 that the group moved to a “more centralised command structure...with foreign jihadis taking exclusive and direct tactical and operational command.” The Executive Council also fancied itself as the keepers of the true faith, and drove Shabaab’s “drift to the far extreme” and closer to AQ.<sup>190</sup>

They also dramatically improved the group’s proficiency with terrorist tools of the trade. The international jihadis dominated the group’s training system; the director of training, Abu Musa Mombasa, was a Pakistani,<sup>191</sup> while the Kenyan leader of AQ in East Africa, Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, created an effective training program in southern Somalia.<sup>192</sup> Under such tutelage al-Shabaab became proficient at “suicide attacks, remote-controlled roadside bombings, kidnappings and assassinations of TFG officials, journalists, and humanitarian and civil society workers.”<sup>193</sup>

Estimates of the strength of the foreign fighter contingent fighting in Somalia vary widely, and getting at the number of professional jihadis within that group is equally difficult. Despite their outsized influence, the professionals probably numbered only between 200 and 300 at their peak,<sup>194</sup> though former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi once estimated the number of foreign fighters in Somalia at 2,500, which would suggest the number of professionals would be higher as well.<sup>195</sup> Whatever the true number, it is likely far smaller today after Godane’s increasingly hostile treatment of foreign fighters and his recent purge of several high-ranking foreigners from the ranks.

## **Western**

Al-Shabaab did not restrict itself to recruiting just in the region, however; it also reached out to the Western Somali diaspora community, with so much success that its efforts in the United States have been termed “the most effective jihadi pipeline the U.S. has ever known,”<sup>196</sup> which made the U.S. “the primary exporter of Western fighters” to

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<sup>189</sup> Shinn (Spring 2011), 209.

<sup>190</sup> Rashid, 7.

<sup>191</sup> Shinn (Spring 2011), 209.

<sup>192</sup> *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009*. United States Department of State, August 2010, p. 240.

<sup>193</sup> Shinn (Spring 2011), 210.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, 209.

<sup>195</sup> Cawthorne, Andrew. “Ethiopia’s Meles Eyes Long Rest Post-retirement.” *Reuters*, July 8, 2009. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/07/08/ozatp-ethiopia-meles-idAFJ0E5670PC20090708>.

<sup>196</sup> Temple-Raston.

Somalia. Experts estimate that at least 40 Americans have left the United States to join al-Shabaab, and around 15 of them were killed in the fighting.<sup>197</sup>

Other Western countries are also home to significant Somali communities, and have seen some members of those communities travel overseas to fight with al-Shabaab. Somali leaders in the UK fear that as many as 100 young men and women have left there to join al-Shabaab,<sup>198</sup> while at least 20 Somalis have traveled from both Canada and Sweden to wage jihad.<sup>199</sup> An undetermined number of Somali men have also disappeared from the Netherlands, presumably to join al-Shabaab.<sup>200</sup>

All of this is evidence of the breadth and depth of Shabaab's recruitment network. In the U.S. alone, Shabaab recruiters have been active in Minneapolis, Boston, Seattle, Washington, D.C., San Diego, Columbus, and Lewiston, Maine.<sup>201</sup> And while the group utilized mosques and *madrassas* as recruitment centers, they also evolved their tactics to create an ever-more sophisticated recruiting web. As just one example, in Britain they began visiting "khat cafes" where young, sometimes paranoid and disillusioned, Somali men would gather to chew the narcotic.<sup>202</sup>

They also make extensive use of Western-born recruits who speak fluent American or British English. Shabaab's Twitter account is obviously written by native English speakers who adeptly utilize British and American colloquialisms, sometimes to such lengths they are clearly making a point. When discussing a conference on Somalia held in London in May 2013, for instance, several Shabaab tweets in a row flaunted the British provenance of the author by utilizing distinctly British English words, such as "quid," and referencing two English political parties, the "EDL" and the "Tories."<sup>203</sup>

<sup>197</sup> *Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization Within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland*. Washington, D.C.: One Hundred Twelfth Congress U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, July 27, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>198</sup> Shinn, David. "Al-Shabaab Tries To Take Control In Somalia." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, November 2010. <http://www.fpri.org/enotes/201011.shinn.somalia.html>.

<sup>199</sup> *Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization Within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland*, 2. See also *Al-Shabaab's American Recruits*. New York, NY: Anti-Defamation League, February 2012, p. 4.

<sup>200</sup> Cohn, Julie. "Terrorism Havens: Somalia." *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 2010. <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/terrorism-havens-somalia/p9366>.

<sup>201</sup> *Al Shabaab: Recruitment and Radicalization Within the Muslim American Community and the Threat to the Homeland*, 4.

<sup>202</sup> Elbagir, Nima. "Somali Militants Target Addicts in UK's 'Khat Cafes'." *CNN*, February 23, 2012. <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/02/23/world/europe/britain-somalia-diaspora/index.html>.

<sup>203</sup> (@HSMPress1). "Nothing to get excited about though, Just another opportunity to pass the hat around for a few quid! A govt. on the scrounge #Somalia2013." 7 May 2013, 7:45 a.m. Tweet. See also (@HSMPress1). "Everything about the London Conference tends to suggest that the #Tories are just a more benign version of the #EDL #Somalia2013." 7 May 2013, 7:38 a.m. Tweet, and (@HSMPress1). "A conference every so often helps rescue the apostate regime from

The group also makes films that feature American-born jihadis such as Omar Hammami and Anwar al-Awlaki, as well as Somali-Americans who have gone to the country to fight and who make appeals to others to join them,<sup>204</sup> the latest production from al-Katai'b Media, Shabaab's video propaganda arm, features Somali-Americans from Minnesota who were killed fighting for Shabaab.<sup>205</sup> And in another clever innovation, Shabaab produced a series of propaganda videos that featured a man speaking with a London accent and mimicking the tone and style of a Western newscast. The videos are designed to create a facade of objectivity for the group's skewed interpretation of the events on which the propagandist is reporting,<sup>206</sup> the better to give an air of credibility to the narrative they utilize for recruitment.

A study on al-Shabaab's appeal to Westerners gives a good summary of the philosophy the group leverages to appeal to recruits:

Al-Shabaab presents its mission in cosmic terms, invoking a civilisational conflict between the forces of Islam and non-Islam. This is coupled with attempts to develop an 'ummah consciousness' in potential recruits, encouraging them to identify with Muslim causes worldwide. Typically, the suffering of Muslims around the world is juxtaposed with the ease of life in the West. The central tenet of this messaging is that faith necessitates action, and Muslims need to recalibrate their priorities by placing the liberation of Muslim lands ahead of esoteric matters of faith.<sup>207</sup>

Somali diaspora communities in the West oftentimes have higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of education than other immigrant groups,<sup>208</sup> and tend to

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mediocrity but you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear **#Somalia2013**." 7 May 2013, 7:42 a.m. Tweet.

<sup>204</sup> *Al-Shabaab's American Recruits*, 3.

<sup>205</sup> Chapman, Reg. "Terrorists' Twitter Feed Targeting Mpls. Men & Women." *CBS Minnesota*, August 6, 2013. <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2013/08/06/terrorists-twitter-feed-targeting-mpls-men-women/>.

<sup>206</sup> Taylor, Jerome. "British Voice Behind a Call to Arms for Somalia's Islamic Terrorists." *The Independent*, January 3, 2012. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/british-voice-behind-a-call-to-arms-for-somalias-islamic-terrorists-6284216.html>.

<sup>207</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens, Alexander, Shiraz Maher, and James Sheehan. *Lights, Camera, Jihad: Al-Shabaab's Western Media Strategy*. London: International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>208</sup> Ames, Paul. "Dutch Somalis Fear for Their Reputations." *Global Post*, February 6, 2011. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/netherlands/110201/somali-refugees-netherlands-somalia-terror-arrests?page=0,1>.



be quite insular as well. In Britain, the Somali community there lives in “mini Mogadishu” that can breed in Somalis fear and anger at the British police and even the British public.<sup>209</sup> In the Netherlands, the Somali community was upset at the government when, in an effort to promote integration, it began housing asylum seekers in areas scattered throughout the country, rather than allowing them to concentrate in certain towns.<sup>210</sup> And in 2009, Deputy Director of Intelligence Andrew Liepman testified before a Senate Committee that the Somali-American community was more insular than other Muslim-American communities, with higher rates of linguistic isolation as well.<sup>211</sup>

For alienated, adrift Somali youths, it is not hard to see how al-Shabaab’s message of fighting on behalf of a global Islamic cause can inspire them. A desire for a sense of purpose; a longing to feel an accepted part of a homeland with which they have little experience; disillusionment and anger with their host communities; and a “pure” form of Islam that claims to be the answer to all these problems, peddled by persuasive and personable recruiters, can all combine to form a powerful and toxic inducement to join the Somali jihad.

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<sup>209</sup> Elbagir.

<sup>210</sup> Ames, Paul. “Dutch Somalis Fear for Their Reputations.” *Global Post*, February 6, 2011. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/netherlands/110201/somali-refugees-netherlands-somalia-terror-arrests?page=0,1>.

<sup>211</sup> Liepman, Andrew. *Violent Islamist Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America*. Washington, D.C., 2009.

## Reasons for al-Shabaab's Losses

### Self-inflicted wounds

In December 2012, General Carter Ham described al-Shabaab as “largely in a survival mode.”<sup>212</sup> Previously the masters of most of the South, it now finds itself driven from all of its previous major strongholds, its fighters defecting in droves, its sources of revenue damaged, and under constant military pressure from a coalition force that has been adept in battle. It is deeply unpopular in many parts of the country, and some Somalis are cautiously supporting AMISOM and the SFG. The terrorists have retreated to a few safe havens in the North and in the Kismayo region, and are avoiding any major confrontations with the coalition.

It is important to recognize that al-Shabaab's well-deserved misfortunes have just as much to do with its own blunders as with the reinvigorated coalition offensive. The tale of al-Shabaab in Somalia is one of arrogance, brutality, miscalculation, and in-fighting. After riding a wave of anti-Ethiopian nationalism to prominence, it managed to maintain and expand its control by mixing its radical Islamic appeal with nationalism to draw in both foreign and domestic recruits. It tamped down clan tensions within the group (though was never free of them), and won Somalis' support or acquiescence by bringing a measure of harsh peace to its areas of control.

But it also committed a series of blunders that badly damaged its reputation with Somalis. Its three biggest were its widespread use of brutality against Somalis, its embrace of foreign fighters and their Salafism, and the messy in-fighting it waged and which recently reached a fevered pitch. These mistakes, as much as the coalition offensive, have put al-Shabaab in the difficult position in which it currently finds itself. Many Somalis have not been sad to see al-Shabaab go, and will not lift a finger to help them now.

### ***Brutality***

Al-Shabaab would have been well served to consider the example of insurgencies that had failed in the past due to mistreatment of civilians. The Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia in Turkey saw its support decline precipitously in the 1980s when it began to utilize “random, brutal violence” that “created a polarized and hostile”

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<sup>212</sup> Alexander.

local population.<sup>213</sup> There were also examples closer to home to which al-Shabaab could have looked: the Somali rebels during the 1960s *Shifto* War failed in part because they alienated the local population by resorting to kidnapping and assassination, and showed little regard for the impact their actions had on the population.<sup>214</sup> And most recently, the Islamic extremists in northern Mali squandered whatever support they had garnered when they began whipping women for clothing violations and chopping off the limbs of suspected criminals.<sup>215</sup>

Al-Shabaab's own brutality manifested in a variety of destructive ways, beginning with the forced recruitment of children, as has already been discussed. Unsurprisingly, Somalis did not at all like that their children were being kidnapped, sometimes kept in chains, and trained to be suicide bombers.

A particular sore spot among Somalis was al-Shabaab's treatment of women. Women and girls were sometimes kidnapped and gang-raped by al-Shabaab insurgents, and the group forced families to give women to its fighters as "wives." They also instituted widow inheritance, where any fighter could inherit the widow of a fallen comrade without the consent of the woman or her family. Al-Shabaab also banned women from interacting in public with unrelated men, wearing bras,<sup>216</sup> and working,<sup>217</sup> none of which sat well with ordinary Somalis.

Some of al-Shabaab's brutality was related to its Salafism, which calls for a particularly unpleasant type of *shariah* anathema to most Somalis. Ioan Lewis, the venerable Somali scholar, has described al-Shabaab's beliefs as "strict and primitive,"<sup>218</sup> while a news article reports that Shabaab imposed an "austere form of conservative Islamic rule" that inspired hatred for the group among Mogadishu residents.<sup>219</sup> The group

<sup>213</sup> Global Terrorism Index: Capturing the Impact of Terrorism for the Last Decade. Insitute for Economics & Peace, 2012, p. 41.

<sup>214</sup> Ringquist, 118.

<sup>215</sup> Callimachi, Rukmini. "In Timbuktu, al-Qaeda Left Behind a Manifesto." Yahoo! News, February 15, 2013. <http://news.yahoo.com/timbuktu-al-qaeda-left-behind-manifesto-173454257.html>.

<sup>216</sup> Bilala, Anne-Yolande. "Women and Al-Shabab: Between False Empowerment and Terror." Diplomatic Courier, August 13, 2012. <http://www.diplomaticcourier.com/news/regions/africa/1069-women-and-al-shabab-between-%20%20false-empowerment-and-terror>.

<sup>217</sup> *Report 4: Operational Structure and Roles*. Al-Shabaab Defector Series. Navanti Group, August 29, 2012, p. 5.

<sup>218</sup> Lewis, Ioan M. "Somalia: Livelihood and Politics." *Open Democracy*, October 6, 2011. <http://www.opendemocracy.net/ioan-m-lewis/somalia-livelihood-and-politics>.

<sup>219</sup> Guled, Abdi. "Mogadishu Celebrates 1 Year Since al-Shabab's Exit." *AP*, August 6, 2012. <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/mogadishu-celebrates-1-year-al-shababs-exit>.

even went so far as to stone a young girl for “adultery”<sup>220</sup> in an act that had echoes of Taliban-style punishments.

There were other complaints about al-Shabaab. Suicide is taboo to Somalis, so many were shocked at Shabaab’s introduction of suicide bombing,<sup>221</sup> a shock that only deepened as the group began to use children (including an eleven-year-old) to carry out the terrible attacks.<sup>222</sup> Others have complained about the general violence and repression—a port administrator at Kismayo described how “Shabab kill everyone. Kill mothers, kill babies, kill everything.”

And while al-Shabaab was good for business in some respects, such as bringing a measure of security, no matter how brutal, to the places it controlled, the same port administrator also groused about the exorbitant taxes the group levied in the markets and at ports.<sup>223</sup> And he may have a point: a U.N. report has detailed the taxes on charcoal that include a “production tax,” a trucking tax, a checkpoint fee if the trucks are stopped, an “export tax” that varies based on the size of the vessel and the quality of the charcoal, as well as “docking fees.”<sup>224</sup>

### **Foreigners**

Meanwhile, as noted previously, foreign fighters provided significant fighting strength, leadership, and expertise to the group; however, they also were yet another unpopular aspect of al-Shabaab. Somalis have a xenophobic streak, and particularly do not like foreigners who bring brutality and a domineering ideology. More than two years ago Ambassador David Shinn speculated that the foreign fighters in al-Shabaab’s ranks might prove to be the group’s undoing,<sup>225</sup> and it has indeed become a rallying cry for opposition to al-Shabaab. Many Somalis feel a “rising anger” towards the foreign fighters; a commander of the anti-Shabaab ASWJ militia tapped into this sentiment

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<sup>220</sup> Hussein.

<sup>221</sup> Menkhaus (2009), 5.

<sup>222</sup> Bader and et al., 34.

<sup>223</sup> Verini, James. “The Last Stand of Somalia’s Jihad.” *Foreign Policy*, December 17, 2012.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/12/17/the\\_last\\_stand\\_of\\_somalias\\_jihad](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/12/17/the_last_stand_of_somalias_jihad), p. 3.

<sup>224</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1916 (2010)*), 199-200.

<sup>225</sup> Shinn (Spring 2011), 203.

during a speech to rally his troops. “[Al-Shabaab] are destroying our home for the sake of Iraqis? The foreign devil is leading them!”<sup>226</sup>

Al-Shabaab should have known this could happen, particularly as al-Qaeda had already suffered in the past trying to gain acceptance among Somalis. During the 1990s, AQ established a cell in Nairobi and tried to establish links with AIAI that was operating in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and in Somalia. The mission failed as the cell discovered that Somalia was a “difficult, non-permissive environment for foreign operatives.”<sup>227</sup> And during the United States’ presence in Somalia that ended with the infamous “Black Hawk down” episode, AQ sent an unspecified number of fighters to Somalia who were “treated in a bad way” by the locals. The leadership concluded from the experience that the country was not suitable at the time to serve as a sanctuary.<sup>228</sup>

Al-Shabaab, as has already been mentioned, is animated primarily by a Salafist ideology, while most Somalis are Sufis,<sup>229</sup> setting up a clash that badly damaged Shabaab’s standing with many Somalis. Al-Shabaab views many Sufi practices, particularly ancestor worship, as heretical,<sup>230</sup> and as a result desecrated the tombs of several Sufi saints, enraging many Somalis with the sacrilege.<sup>231</sup> Al-Shabaab went even further and reportedly beheaded a well-respected Sufi cleric in July 2012<sup>232</sup>—it is precisely this sort of Salafist crackdown against local forms of Islam that led to the “breaking point” in locals’ support for the radical Muslim organizations in northern Mali,<sup>233</sup> and which turned many Somalis against al-Shabaab. The group’s campaign against Sufism was so extreme that the ASWJ, originally committed to a non-violent agenda but now an important fighting component of the coalition, took up arms to defend their sect against the Salafists.<sup>234</sup>

Of all of al-Shabaab’s miscalculations, restricting aid flows into the famine-affected areas of Somalia in 2011 was one of its most severe. Nothing could have more clearly

<sup>226</sup> Raghavan, Sudarsan. “Foreign Fighters Gain Influence in Somalia’s Islamist al-Shabab Militia.” *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2010. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/07/AR2010060704667\\_2.html?sid=ST2010080504294](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/07/AR2010060704667_2.html?sid=ST2010080504294).

<sup>227</sup> Menkhaus (2009), 6. See also Watts, Clint, Jacob Shapiro, and Vahid Brown. *Al-Qa’ida’s (Mis)Adventures in the Horn of Africa*. Harmony Project. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, July 2, 2007.

<sup>228</sup> Wright, 214, 252.

<sup>229</sup> Lewis (October 6, 2011).

<sup>230</sup> *Al-Shabaab (AS) in Hagar Part II: Local Perceptions of AS and Post AS Conditions in Hagar*, 3.

<sup>231</sup> Lewis (October 6, 2011).

<sup>232</sup> *Al-Shabaab’s Recent Recapture of El Bur, Galgaduud Region*, 3.

<sup>233</sup> Callimachi.

<sup>234</sup> “Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa.” *Jane’s World Insurgency and Terrorism*, April 4, 2013.

shown Somalis how little the group actually cared about Somalis' fate, and it cost them dearly in turns of support. Abdi Rashid believes that Shabaab's response to the famine "enormously weakened" them as Somalis blamed the group for exacerbating the crisis.<sup>235</sup>

And Somalis were right to be outraged. Hundreds of thousands of starving Somalis were forced to flee the drought-stricken areas controlled by al-Shabaab<sup>236</sup> as foodstuffs became more expensive and mortality rates spiked.<sup>237</sup> A recent report commissioned by the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization estimates that there were 258,000 "excess deaths," meaning those above the normal mortality rate, in south-central Somalia between October 2010 and April 2012, 52% of which were children under 5 years-old. And most damningly of all, south-central Somalia was the heart of al-Shabaab controlled territory,<sup>238</sup> and it saw 90% of all famine-related deaths.<sup>239</sup> The extraordinarily callous response to the famine may well have been the proverbial final straw for many Somalis' patience for the group.

### ***Internal schisms***

Al-Shabaab has managed to worsen its already-difficult situation by becoming entangled in squabbling among its leadership that has at times paralyzed the organization and even resulted in killings. It is unclear, however, how its most recent and dramatic round of in-fighting will affect its ability to wage its insurgency.

One of the most rancorous clashes within al-Shabaab is between those leaders who wish to pursue nationalist goals and those more interested in global jihad. This debate is a microcosm of the dilemma Muslim terrorists face all around the world. Global jihadis are drawn to struggles that feature Muslims resisting some sort of aggression, at least according to their interpretation of the conflict. But oftentimes, local Muslims can only be mobilized to wage a defensive jihad, and have little or no interest in the global

<sup>235</sup> Bajoria, Jayshree. "Al-Shabaab and Somalia's Spreading Famine." *Council on Foreign Relations*, August 10, 2011. <http://www.cfr.org/somalia/al-shabaab-somalias-spreading-famine/p25630>.

<sup>236</sup> Chothia, Farouk. "Could Somali Famine Deal a Fatal Blow to al-Shabab?" *BBC News Africa*, August 9, 2011. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14373264>.

<sup>237</sup> *Al-Shabaab (AS) in Hagar Part II: Local Perceptions of AS and Post AS Conditions in Hagar*, 2.

<sup>238</sup> Bajoria.

<sup>239</sup> Checchi, Francesco, and W. Courtland Robinson. *Mortality Among Populations of Southern and Central Somalia Affected by Severe Food Insecurity and Famine During 2010-2012*. Rome, Washington: London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health, May 2, 2013, pp. 8, 10.

jihadis' vision—in fact, the global jihadis' presence can sometimes antagonize local Muslims,<sup>240</sup> as has happened in Somalia.

When the terrorist groups were recently pushed from northern Mali, in their haste to depart they left behind a fascinating letter from Abdelmalek Droukdel, Emir of AQIM, to his men operating in Mali. It is worth quoting as it perfectly illustrates the point about tensions between global and defensive jihadis:

We should also take into consideration not to monopolize the political and military stage. We should not be at the forefront. Better for you to be silent and pretend to be a 'domestic' movement that has its own causes and concerns. There is no reason for you to show that we have an expansionary, jihadi, al-Qaeda or any other sort of project.<sup>241</sup>

Droukdel captured in his letter the strains his globally-oriented men were experiencing in dealing with locally-oriented fighters. It is the very same problem al-Shabaab struggled with for years. In general, the two ideological camps within al-Shabaab break down as follows: two of the four founders, Ahmed Abdi Godane and Ibrahim al-Afghani (since deceased), are interested in global jihad. They share this interest with another prominent al-Shabaab leader, Fuad Mohamed Khalaf (AKA Shongole),<sup>242</sup> a Swedish Somali who acts as the group's financier.<sup>243</sup> A third founder, Sheikh Mukhtar Robow Ali, is a nationalist,<sup>244</sup> along with Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys.<sup>245</sup>

Aweys has publicly attacked the group's leadership for "globalizing the Somali conflict,"<sup>246</sup> and felt so strongly about his complaints that he withdrew Hizbul Islam, the wing of al-Shabaab that he leads, from al-Shabaab.<sup>247</sup> His principled stand should be taken with a grain of salt, however; Aweys is a wily opportunist who was compelled to join al-Shabaab after the group hammered his forces in 2009 and 2010. He also has well-documented links to the al-Qaeda network,<sup>248</sup> so he is not completely offended by

<sup>240</sup> *Global Terrorism Index: Capturing the Impact of Terrorism for the Last Decade*, 42.

<sup>241</sup> Callimachi.

<sup>242</sup> Hogendoorn.

<sup>243</sup> "Al-Shabab: US Puts Bounty on Somali Militants." *BBC News*, June 7, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18353329>.

<sup>244</sup> Hogendoorn.

<sup>245</sup> Ahmed, Majid (April 12, 2013).

<sup>246</sup> Aynte, Abdi. "Somalia: Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys and the Politics of the al-Shabaab Split." *African Arguments*, April 4, 2012. <http://africanarguments.org/2012/04/04/somalia-sheikh-hassan-dahir-aweys-and-the-politics-of-the-al-shabaab-split-by-abdi-aynte/>.

<sup>247</sup> "Kenyan Amisom Soldier Kills Six Somali Civilians." *BBC News Africa*, September 24, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19698348>.

<sup>248</sup> Roggio (December 19, 2010).

international jihad. Aweys may have been looking for any excuse to leave the group anyhow; but whatever his motives, his departure suggests that he believed al-Shabaab was a sinking ship, and that it was not powerful enough to force him to stay. As will be seen, that proved to be a miscalculation.

Another player in all of this is Omar Hammami (AKA Abu Mansour al-Amriki), the American jihadi, prolific Tweeter,<sup>249</sup> and no-doubt proud owner of the number two spot on *Foreign Policy* magazine's list of "Nine Disturbingly Good Jihadi Raps."<sup>250</sup> Hammami is believed to have joined al-Shabaab in 2006, but eventually had a falling out with Godane. He then went into hiding, though not well enough, apparently, as he was wounded in the neck during an assassination attempt in April 2013 launched by elements of al-Shabaab.<sup>251</sup> All indications are that his luck finally ran out later five months later when it was reported that he was killed in an al-Shabaab ambush.<sup>252</sup>

Hammami documented at length the fighting between the global and nationalist factions, as have others.<sup>253</sup> What may have irritated him the most, however, is the tension within the group between its Somali and foreign members. As has already been discussed, foreign fighters occupy places of power within the organization, which does not sit well with everybody. Here again al-Shabaab's challenges reflect a wider problem that international jihadis have:

The perceived legitimacy of the conflicts in the Balkans, Chechnya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Somalia drew foreign actors who did not act in the best interests of the local communities they grafted on to. This often created tensions among the jihadist factions themselves, or between the local populace and the militant actors. As a result, al-Qa'ida rarely succeeded

<sup>249</sup> @abumamerican.

<sup>250</sup> Stuster, J. Dana. "9 Disturbingly Good Jihadi Raps." *Foreign Policy*, April 29, 2013. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/29/9\\_disturbingly\\_good\\_jihadi\\_raps](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/29/9_disturbingly_good_jihadi_raps).

<sup>251</sup> "American Jihadist Omar Hammami in Somalia Tweets He's 'Just Been Shot' by al-Shabab." *CBS News*, April 26, 2013. [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201\\_162-57581575/american-jihadist-omar-hammami-in-somalia-tweets-hes-just-been-shot-by-al-shabab/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57581575/american-jihadist-omar-hammami-in-somalia-tweets-hes-just-been-shot-by-al-shabab/).

<sup>252</sup> Kulish, Nicholas. "American Jihadist Is Believed to Have Been Killed by His Former Allies in Somalia." *The New York Times*, September 12, 2013. [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/13/world/africa/american-jihadist-is-believed-killed-by-ex-allies-in-somalia.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/13/world/africa/american-jihadist-is-believed-killed-by-ex-allies-in-somalia.html?_r=1&).

<sup>253</sup> "American Jihadist Omar Hammami in Somalia Tweets He's 'Just Been Shot' by al-Shabab." See also Mohamed, Mahmoud. "Al-Shabaab Beleaguered with Deep Internal Disputes." *Sabahi*, March 26, 2012. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/03/26/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/03/26/feature-01).



retaining popular support among the populace or reorienting jihadist groups en toto to their tactical and targeting preferences.<sup>254</sup>

This is related to the issue of global jihadis vs. nationalist jihadis, but is not the same. The Somali leadership do not trust some of the foreign fighters, believing them to be “possible spies and agents.”<sup>255</sup> Apparently this distrust extended even to Fazul Abdullah Mohamed, al-Qaeda’s leader in East Africa; it is rumored that the globals, Godane and al-Afghani, partnered with the nationalist Sheikh Robow to have Fazul killed as they feared he was plotting to have them replaced.<sup>256</sup>

This distrust is not confined just to high-ranking foreign jihadis; most non-Somali fighters appear to have been at the very least disliked and treated poorly, and sometimes worse. Members of the *Amniyat* division, fighters loyal to Godane, were tasked with spying on foreign fighters,<sup>257</sup> and Hammami publicly griped about the “torturous training” that Shabaab recruits, particularly foreign ones, had to undergo. He also was displeased by the practice of summarily executing any foreign fighter suspected of being a spy.<sup>258</sup>

Another theory concerning Fazul’s betrayal suggests there might have been jockeying for position by al-Zawahiri adherents after the death of bin Laden. Some analysts have suggested that the killing of Fazul, as well as Bilal al-Barjawi (another AQ leader) and an al-Shabaab official named Sakr, were all orchestrated in order to eliminate bin Laden disciples.<sup>259</sup> Fazul was particularly known as a “bin Laden man,” and Shabaab leaders may have believed his killing would curry favor with Zawahiri.<sup>260</sup> Hammami in the past accused the Shabaab leadership of betraying Fazul, but did not postulate on why they might have done so.<sup>261</sup>

<sup>254</sup> *Global Terrorism Index: Capturing the Impact of Terrorism for the Last Decade*, 43.

<sup>255</sup> Mohamed (March 26, 2012).

<sup>256</sup> “Al-Shabaab Leader Arranged Fazul’s Death.” *SomaliaReport*, June 16, 2011.

[http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/973/Al-Shabaab\\_Leader\\_Arranged\\_Fazuls\\_Death](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/973/Al-Shabaab_Leader_Arranged_Fazuls_Death).

<sup>257</sup> Chopra and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia*), 57-58.

<sup>258</sup> Berger, J.M. “Me Against the World.” *Foreign Policy*, May 25, 2012.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/25/me\\_against\\_the\\_world](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/05/25/me_against_the_world).

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Lahoud, Nelly. “The Merger of Al-Shabab and Qa`idat al-Jihad.” *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, February 16, 2012. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-merger-of-al-shabab-and-qaedat-al-jihad>.

<sup>261</sup> Martell, Peter. “An American Jihadi in Somalia with Few Friends Left.” *Google*, February 8, 2013. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hb8Ob9RyQQuA2BnB6TPAHWPT6sWg?docId=CNG.d55fd70218219b577262e5a7cead9eb5.161>.

There have also been more prosaic concerns over tactics that have led to dissension within al-Shabaab. Defectors have complained about Shabaab's "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."<sup>262</sup> Aweys echoed the theme in one of his broadsides against the Shabaab leadership, criticizing the group's "wanton violence" that too often involved "aimlessly killing" civilians.<sup>263</sup>

And it would not be Somalia if there were not tensions over clan and resources issues. Despite al-Shabaab's best efforts to remain aloof from clan wrangling, it crept into the organization at the highest level. Robow reportedly became enraged at one point as he believed his fellow Rahaweyn were being used as little more than cannon fodder, placed at the front lines while foreign fighters malingered in the back.<sup>264</sup> He also refused to execute a captured TFG parliamentarian who was a fellow clansman, despite calls from other Shabaab leaders to do so. Instead, he allowed the man to go free, angering some of the others so greatly they threatened military action against Robow.<sup>265</sup> And when the Rahaweyn were suffering badly during the famine of 2011, Godane refused to allow aid into Shabaab-controlled areas. Godane is from Somaliland, and his people, the Isaq, were largely untouched by the disaster.<sup>266</sup>

One defector offered this bleak assessment of clan relations within al-Shabaab:

I remember there were many times we waged a war against the TFG and its allies, and when one of us got injured and his clansmen were not near him to support him, the other fighters ran from him, carrying only those whom they knew personally or to whom they were related. That shocked me greatly. I asked myself many times, 'what will happen to me if I get wounded and I am left in the battle field and none of my relatives were in the group with me.' The answer was clear that I would be abandoned and be killed, which is not the end I wanted to see.<sup>267</sup>

Much of the information about the Byzantine struggles within al-Shabaab is difficult to corroborate, and contradictory at times. For instance, one report states that Bilal al-Barjawi, the al-Qaeda leader rumored to have been betrayed by Zawahiri adherents,

<sup>262</sup> "Al-Shabaab Splits Becoming Evident."

<sup>263</sup> Aynte (April 4, 2012).

<sup>264</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens and Solomon.

<sup>265</sup> Bryden and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1853 (2008)*), 27.

<sup>266</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens and Solomon.

<sup>267</sup> "Al-Shabaab Splits Becoming Evident."

was actually killed by an American UAV strike.<sup>268</sup> It is possible that al-Shabaab's leadership did somehow tip off the United States or an ally about al-Barjawi's whereabouts, thus making him vulnerable to a UAV, but it seems unlikely they would go to such lengths. There are also competing explanations for why Fazul was betrayed (if he was); it is possible he was betrayed both because he was a "bin Laden man" and because he was a distrusted foreigner, but no one apart from a handful of al-Shabaab leaders knows for sure.

Yet all these schisms were eclipsed in dramatic fashion in the first half of 2013. In April of that year, al-Afghani released an open letter to Ayman al-Zawahiri. In it, he accused Godane of consolidating control and brooking no opposition to his leadership, even building secret prisons to hold those who questioned him.<sup>269</sup>

Hard on the heels of al-Afghani's public rebuke came another one, this time from al-Zubayr al-Muhajir, a member of the *Shura* Council who was appointed to mediate between Godane and his rivals. Al-Muhajir wrote his own open letter, entitled "Yes, there are Problems," that decried Godane's abuse of foreign fighters—the letter reportedly also mentions the secret prisons al-Afghani was protesting in his own letter.<sup>270</sup> On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Robow, al-Afghani, Aweys, and al-Muhajir signed a *fatwa* forbidding the killing of Hammami,<sup>271</sup> yet another rebuke directed towards Godane.

The letters were a surprise, particularly al-Afghani's as he and Godane were seen as being united in their global vision for al-Shabaab. But the letters proved to be simply a harbinger of the deepening of Shabaab's most serious rift by far, one that would be resolved in a spasm of violence that has left al-Shabaab's future unclear indeed.

After surviving the assassination attempt that left him wounded, Hammami had accused Godane of starting a civil war.<sup>272</sup> While Hammami was sometimes a self-involved blowhard prone to melodrama, it looks now that he was prescient in this case. In mid-June, patchy news reports began trickling out of Somalia claiming that Shabaab

<sup>268</sup> Axe, David. "America's Secret Drone War in Africa." *Wired UK*, August 14, 2012.

<http://www.wired.co.uk/news/archive/2012-08/14/america-drone-war-in-africa/viewall>.

<sup>269</sup> Ahmed, Majid (April 12, 2013).

<sup>270</sup> *Second Shabaab Official Publicly Criticizes Leader over Fighter Grievances*, 4-5. See also "Open Letter to al-Shabaab Leader Reveals: 'Yes, There Are Problems'." *Sabahi*, April 30, 2013. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/04/30/feature-02](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/04/30/feature-02).

<sup>271</sup> Ahmed, Majid. "Al-Amriki and Foreign Fighters in Showdown with al-Shabaab Leader." *Sabahi*, April 30, 2013. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/04/30/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/04/30/feature-01).

<sup>272</sup> "American Jihadist Omar Hammami in Somalia Tweets He's 'Just Been Shot' by al-Shabab."

factions clashed in Hudur<sup>273</sup> and Brava/Barawe, and that al-Afghani had joined the anti-Godane faction led by Aweys, who was also joined by Robow and Hammami.<sup>274</sup> Soon, the reports were confirmed, and after the dust settled, it was clear that Godane had moved swiftly and with extraordinary ruthlessness against his challengers. His men killed Al-Afghani and another Shabaab leader, a man named Abul Hamid Hashi Olhayi. Robow fled to the shelter of his clansmen,<sup>275</sup> and while there are no reports on al-Muhaji's whereabouts, he may well be dead (as is Hammami, though it took Godane an extra month to finish him off). Aweys, ever the survivor, managed to escape the purge, and eventually traveled to Mogadishu where he was arrested, though it appears he may have been trying to defect.<sup>276</sup>

It was a dramatic and potentially game-changing series of events, and the implications for the group are unclear. This obviously has the potential to seriously weaken it; several of its most important leaders are dead, and others have fled or been captured. Hizbul Islam had already split from the group before Godane's coup, but this ensures their services will remain off-limits to him; indeed, depending on what happens with Aweys, they may be willing to fight against Shabaab, as might any militia Robow could raise from among his clansmen.

And this Muslim-on-Muslim violence will further damage Shabaab's reputation with Somalis. As discussed earlier, Islam forbids Muslims from killing fellow Muslims, hence the use by terrorist organizations of the distorted *takfir* ideology. But most Muslims see through the thin *takfir* justification; in fact, al-Qaeda lost significant support in Iraq because so many of its victims were fellow Muslims, to the point that several high-profile AQ ideologues voiced concerns about the animosity the group was inspiring.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>273</sup> "Somalia: Rifts Between Al Shabab Fighters Spreads to Hudur." *AllAfrica*, June 22, 2013. [http://allafrica.com/stories/201306220198.html?aa\\_source=slideout](http://allafrica.com/stories/201306220198.html?aa_source=slideout).

<sup>274</sup> "Somalia: Al Shabaab Dispute Turns Violent, Factions Emerge." *Garoweonline*, June 21, 2013. [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia\\_27/Somalia\\_Al\\_Shabaab\\_dispute\\_turns\\_violent\\_factions\\_emerge.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Somalia_27/Somalia_Al_Shabaab_dispute_turns_violent_factions_emerge.shtml). See also "Somalia's al-Shabab Militants in 'Deadly Feud'." *BBC News*, June 20, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22988404>.

<sup>275</sup> "Al-Shabaab Kill Two of Their Own Chiefs." *Daily Nation*, June 30, 2013. <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/Al-Shabaab-kill-two-of-their-own-chiefs/-/1066/1899520/-/item/0/-/s1bediz/-/index.html>.

<sup>276</sup> "Somali Forces Arrest Islamist Leader in Mogadishu." *The Daily Star*, June 30, 2013. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Jun-30/222047-somali-forces-arrest-islamist-leader-in-mogadishu.ashx#axzz2YqIZ5lfS>.

<sup>277</sup> "Al Qaeda Hurts Muslims Most." *The Washington Times*, January 14, 2010. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/jan/14/al-qaeda-hurts-muslims-most/?page=all>. See also Helfstein, Scott, Nassir Abdullah, and Muhammad al-Obaidi. *Deadly Vanguard: A Study of al-Qa'ida's Violence Against Muslims*. Occasional Paper Series. Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, December 2009.

Godane's brazen assault on co-religionists will only further prove to Somalis that he and the group he leads are not at all good Muslims, despite their rhetoric.<sup>278</sup>

This will also hurt the group's ability to recruit internationally. Given Godane's fixation on global jihad, one would expect that he would have a good rapport with foreign fighters who have traveled to Somalia to help him fight it. Yet he stands credibly accused by three prominent (former) Shabaab leaders of badly mistreating foreign fighters, was publicly at odds with their leader in Somalia, al-Muhaji, and distrusted prominent foreign terrorists so much that he may have conspired to have Fazul, the AQ leader, killed, as discussed earlier. Foreign fighters will be now very hesitant to come join such a man.

Furthermore, Godane could be left with a clan mess on his hands. The Emir is an Isaq from the North, and has no clan base at all in the South (which perhaps partly accounts for his antipathy for clannism within al-Shabaab<sup>279</sup>). He has just purged a Rahaweyn (Robow) and a Hawiye (Aweys) from the ranks; given that the Shabaab *Shura* Council has been defunct for more than a year after Godane removed its emir,<sup>280</sup> Khalaf (Darod) appears to be the only high-profile leader still aligned with Godane who could inspire clan loyalty for Shabaab.

This episode likely cost the group some overseas financial support as well, as some foreign donors will take a dim view of Godane's attacks. Even before this most recent round of blood-letting, the group's brutality had alienated many within the diaspora, leading one Somali analyst to conclude that diaspora donations have "all but dried up."<sup>281</sup> Godane's actions will only tighten the purse strings of any supporters already concerned by the group's brutality.

But Shabaab has been killing Muslims for years, so donors still supporting the group before the purge had already proven they are not deeply concerned by Muslim-on-Muslim violence. And Khalaf, one of the group's money men with foreign contacts,

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<sup>278</sup> Somali Islamic leaders have already issued condemnations: see "Somali Islamic Scholars Denounce al-Shabab in Fatwa." *BBC News*, September 12, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-24057725>, and "Somalia Islamic Group Eulogizes Slain American Jihadist Omar Hammami, Aka Abu Mansoor Al-Amriki." *CBS News*, September 16, 2013. [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202\\_162-57603081/somalia-islamic-group-eulogizes-slain-american-jihadist-omar-hammami-aka-abu-mansoor-al-amriki/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57603081/somalia-islamic-group-eulogizes-slain-american-jihadist-omar-hammami-aka-abu-mansoor-al-amriki/).

<sup>279</sup> Rashid, 11, footnote 63.

<sup>280</sup> *Second Shabaab Official Publicly Criticizes Leader over Fighter Grievances*, 3.

<sup>281</sup> Maclean.

remains. He was previously on the record in opposition to Godane,<sup>282</sup> but apparently underwent some introspection as fellow dissenters were mowed down. He has now acquiesced to the Emir's rule,<sup>283</sup> likely maintaining Shabaab's link to some foreign donors. But despite that, it is still reasonable to conclude that Shabaab lost foreign donations, even if only minimally, rather than gained any as a result of Godane's rampage.

However, these recent events have left Godane, the most radical of all of al-Shabaab's leadership, in firm control of the still-formidable group. It is hard to believe that anyone will question his authority after his bloody display, and his feared *Amniyat* assassins will command even greater respect. There is no one left now to challenge Godane's vision for the group, or to slow his pursuit of the most radical brand of Islamic terrorism.

Al-Shabaab has been divided before, and still managed to survive, and even grow, at certain points. As far back as May 2010, an International Crisis Group article described the group as "deeply fragmented,"<sup>284</sup> and one year ago a news report stated that the group was "on the verge of splintering."<sup>285</sup> Godane's recent purge has probably quelled the possibility of any more splinter groups forming for the time being, as most of his would-be challengers are now dead, in hiding, or in custody. But while there is reason to hope Shabaab's feuding has irreparably damaged the group, it is not wise to allow that hope to become a strategy.

## **International efforts**

### ***The AMISOM offensive***

Carl von Clausewitz in his famous work *On War* declared, "public opinion is ultimately gained by great victories."<sup>286</sup> While he was referring to rallying domestic support for a government's war, his observation could just as easily have applied to the task of winning a population's support in an insurgency. Many people caught in conflict will wait

<sup>282</sup> Horadam, Nathaniel. "Profile: Fuad Mohamed Qalaf (Shongole)." *AEI Critical Threats*, August 3, 2012. <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/al-shabaab-leadership/fuad-mohamed-qalaf-shongole-november-14-2011>.

<sup>283</sup> "After Infighting, al-Shabaab Focuses on Image Repair in Somalia." *Somalia Newsroom*, August 14, 2013. <http://somalianewsroom.com/2013/08/14/after-infighting-al-shabaab-focuses-on-image-repair-in-somalia/>.

<sup>284</sup> Hogendoorn.

<sup>285</sup> Mohamed (March 26, 2012).

<sup>286</sup> Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. Translated by James John Graham. Radford, VA: Wilder Publications, 2008, p. 210.

to see which side is going to win, and then will throw their support behind the victor. It is a perfectly rational and understandable decision.

The coalition's offensive against al-Shabaab, then, deserves much credit for the group's recent troubles. Al-Shabaab's setbacks have signaled to Somalis that the group is in trouble, and that it might be no longer worth supporting or tolerating. One of the clearest manifestations of this dynamic is the large number of defectors abandoning al-Shabaab after its recent territorial losses. One report from inside Somalia stated, "Over the past year, the number of AS defections has increased steadily due largely to AS's continued loss of territory and support amongst Somalis."<sup>287</sup> Numerous defectors have echoed the same theme,<sup>288</sup> revealing not only the importance of the coalition's offensive, but also the pragmatic and non-ideological nature of many of the fighters.

The coalition's capture of al-Shabaab's strongholds has damaged the group's income.<sup>289</sup> No longer able to rely on the same level of taxes from Kismayo's port or Mogadishu's Bakara Market, it has had difficulty in providing the same sort of financial benefits to its fighters that induced many of them to join in the first place,<sup>290</sup> which has led to further defections. Furthermore, al-Shabaab has lost much of the infrastructure it used for transmitting propaganda, such as several of its radio stations,<sup>291</sup> another happy outcome of the coalition's offensive. And while there are no solid numbers on just how many insurgents have been killed in the offensive, they are likely significant.<sup>292</sup>

### ***International counterterrorism activities***

U.S. and other international counterterrorism initiatives deserve some credit for Shabaab's difficulties as well. While the extent of the U.S.'s assistance to the coalition is unclear, the Obama administration has acknowledged that it exists. In a letter to Congress June 15, 2012, the administration wrote:

<sup>287</sup> *AS Defector Series Report 6: Reasons for Defection or Escape*. Native Prospector: East Bridge. Navanti Group, September 6, 2012, p. 2.

<sup>288</sup> "Al-Shabaab Militants Defecting to Somali Side." *The Daily Star*, June 16, 2012. <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Jun-16/177051-al-shabaab-militants-defecting-to-somali-side.ashx#axzz20L6tthFR>, *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, 3, and "Can Somalia's Cheap Peacekeeping Defeat al-Shabab?" *BBC News Africa*, June 11, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18392212>.

<sup>289</sup> Guled, Abdi. "Former Somali Militants Recall Cruelty, Death." *Readingeagle.com*, July 11, 2012. <http://readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=398400#.UYs27YXIM7A>.

<sup>290</sup> *AS Defector Series Report 6: Reasons for Defection or Escape*, 2.

<sup>291</sup> *Al-Shabaab Defector Series Report 5: Communications and Media Access*. Native Prospector: East Bridge. Navanti Group, August 29, 2012, p. 5.

<sup>292</sup> Mohamed (March 26, 2012).

In Somalia, the U.S. military has worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qa'ida and al-Qa'ida-associated elements of al-Shabaab. In a limited number of cases, the U.S. military has taken direct action in Somalia against members of al-Qa'ida, including those who are also members of al-Shabaab, who are engaged in efforts to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and our interests.<sup>293</sup>

There is no telling what a “limited number of cases” means, but *Wired UK* has characterized the U.S.’s campaign in Somalia as one of “jet bombing runs, naval gun bombardment, cruise-missile attacks, raids by Special Operations Forces, and assistance to regional armies such as Uganda’s.” *Wired* also speculated on the extent of the U.S.’s UAV use, and estimated that the United States may have as many as 12 Predators and Reapers in the region at any one time, and an “unknown number” of the smaller Ravens<sup>294</sup>—the United States has provided up to eight of these unarmed Ravens to the AMISOM forces to assist in their intelligence gathering efforts.<sup>295</sup> There are also credible reports of the CIA operating a base in Mogadishu.<sup>296</sup>

The U.S. has had some success in targeted killings of high-level AQ and al-Shabaab terrorists in Somalia. Open source reports indicate that the U.S. has successfully targeted the following men:

- Aden Hashi Ayro, one of the founders of al-Shabaab, in an airstrike May 2008<sup>297</sup>
- Sheikh Muhyadin Omar, a senior ICU leader, in the same airstrike that killed Ayro<sup>298</sup>
- Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, leader of AQ cell in East Africa that carried out the bombing of an Israeli hotel on the Kenyan coast in 2002. Nabhan is also

<sup>293</sup> “Presidential Letter--2012 War Powers Resolution 6-Month Report.” *The White House*, June 15, 2012. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/06/15/presidential-letter-2012-war-powers-resolution-6-month-report>.

<sup>294</sup> Axe.

<sup>295</sup> Shinn, David. “US Provides Drones to Kenya.” *The Official Blog of Amb. David H. Shinn*, July 21, 2012. <http://davidshinn.blogspot.com/2012/07/us-provides-drones-to-kenya.html>.

<sup>296</sup> “U.S. Escalates African Counter-terror War.” *UPI*, December 12, 2012. [http://www.upi.com/Top\\_News/Special/2012/12/12/US-escalates-African-counter-terror-war/UPI-63261355339945/](http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/12/12/US-escalates-African-counter-terror-war/UPI-63261355339945/). See also Scahill, Jeremy. “The CIA’s Secret Sites in Somalia.” *The Nation*, July 12, 2011. <http://www.thenation.com/article/161936/cias-secret-sites-somalia#>.

<sup>297</sup> Roggio, Bill. “US Airstrike Kills Leader of Shabaab Movement in Somalia.” *The Long War Journal*, May 1, 2008. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/05/us\\_airstrike\\_kills\\_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/05/us_airstrike_kills_1.php).

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.



believed to have been heavily involved in the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998<sup>299</sup>

- Bilal al-Barjawi, suspected mastermind of the 2010 Kampala bombings<sup>300</sup>
- Abu Talha al Sudani, a senior AQ member, in 2007. However, it is unclear if Sudani was killed by a U.S. airstrike or by the Ethiopians during their invasion of Somalia to topple the ICU.<sup>301</sup>

These are all high-level leaders who were important to either AQ or al-Shabaab, or both, and Somalia is well rid of them. It is difficult to quantify the affect their deaths had on the group, but at least one Somali commentator has said that the loss of Shabaab leaders has led to poor morale among the fighters.<sup>302</sup> And U.S. Representative Tom Cotton, in remarks on al-Qaeda, made a point that applies to Shabaab's leadership as well: "When you have to worry about personal security, you barely have time to plan a meal, much less plan and execute a mass attack."<sup>303</sup>

The same is true of the bounty that the United States announced in June 2012 that offered more than 30 million USD total for information leading to the capture of 7 of al-Shabaab's leaders. Robow, Godane, al-Afghani, and Khalaf are all on the list,<sup>304</sup> and there was a \$5 million bounty each on Hammami and a Wisconsin native, Jihad Serwan Mostafa, currently fighting with Shabaab.<sup>305</sup> But nearly a year into the bounty period none of them have been killed or captured by anyone other than Godane, who likely won't be claiming the reward. But that does not mean the project has been a failure, as it may have led the nine to be distrustful of associates or otherwise hide themselves so thoroughly as to be ineffective.

<sup>299</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey, and Eric Schmitt. "U.S. Kills Top Qaeda Militant in Southern Somalia." *The New York Times*, September 14, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/world/africa/15raid.html?gwh=741E0299A5FA30154EF699D9445BD0A5>.

<sup>300</sup> Axe.

<sup>301</sup> Roggio, Bill. "Senior Al Qaeda Operative Killed in Somalia." *The Long War Journal*, September 1, 2008. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/09/senior\\_al\\_qaeda\\_oper\\_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2008/09/senior_al_qaeda_oper_1.php).

<sup>302</sup> Cadde, Aweys. "ASWJ Vows New Offensive Against Al-Shabaab." *SomaliaReport*, December 7, 2011. [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/1130/ASWJ\\_Vows\\_New\\_Offensive\\_Against\\_Al-Shabaab](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/1130/ASWJ_Vows_New_Offensive_Against_Al-Shabaab).

<sup>303</sup> Cotton, Rep. Tom. "Al Qaeda Today: Remarks to the American Enterprise Institute." presented at the Al Qaeda Today, American Enterprise Institute, September 10, 2013. <http://cotton.house.gov/media-center/speeches/al-qaeda-today>.

<sup>304</sup> "Al-Shabab: US Puts Bounty on Somali Militants."

<sup>305</sup> "US Puts \$10 Mln Bounty on Two Americans' Heads." *RT USA*, March 21, 2013. <http://rt.com/usa/us-puts-10-mln-bounty-on-the-heads-of-two-americans-608/>.

As has already been discussed, there is credible evidence that al-Shabaab had some links to the piracy industry that flourished for years in Somalia. While the relationship has never been proven, there are enough reports to constitute a convincing body of evidence. Furthermore, it is unrealistic to think that al-Shabaab would ignore the potential financial windfall piracy represented; the World Bank calculated in April 2013 that \$315-\$385 million was paid in ransoms since 2005.<sup>306</sup> While Shabaab probably did not commit acts of piracy, it is very likely they taxed or otherwise benefited financially from the industry.

So the fact that Somali piracy has fallen on truly hard times recently likely hurts al-Shabaab as well. There has not been a successful hijacking since May 2012, and hijacking attempts have fallen by at least 75% in the same time span.<sup>307</sup> The piracy game has gotten so grim that one of the most notorious pirate ringleaders, Mohamed Abdi Hassan, nicknamed “Afweyne” (big mouth), announced his retirement in early 2013.<sup>308</sup>

Hassan has probably shrewdly calculated that piracy is becoming a losing game given the increased maritime patrols from different countries, armed guards on the ships, and long prison sentences for captured pirates. He now is likely maneuvering for a respectable position, perhaps as a businessman, as he needs to do something with the millions of dollars he earned as a pirate ringleader. Or he might be looking towards becoming a humble servant of the people—at a recent interview, he came prepared with a letter supposedly nominating him to the position of “Anti-piracy Officer.”<sup>309</sup>

The international community has also heavily sanctioned al-Shabaab members, people and countries that support it, as well as the group as an entity. In March 2008, the U.S. officially designated al-Shabaab a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224, opening the group up to a variety of sanctions;<sup>310</sup> in April 2010, President Obama in E.O.13536 again named al-Shabaab as an entity to be sanctioned, and included several prominent al-Shabaab leaders such as Ahmed Abdi Godane, Hassan Dahir Aweys, and Fuad Mohamed Khalaf, and anyone “engaged in acts that directly or

<sup>306</sup> “Somali Ex-pirates Seek Employment.” *The International News*, May 10, 2013.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-1-176578-Somali-ex-pirates-seek-employment>.

<sup>307</sup> “No Somali Pirate Hijacking in Nearly a Year, Says UN.” *The Guardian*, May 3, 2013.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/may/03/somali-pirate-hijacking>.

<sup>308</sup> “Somali Ex-pirates Seek Employment.”

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> *Executive Order 13224-Blocking Property and Prohibiting Transactions with Persons Who Commit, Threaten to Commit, or Support Terrorism*, 12.

indirectly threaten the peace, security, or stability of Somalia.”<sup>311</sup> A subsequent Executive Order, 13620, revised E.O. 13536 and included anyone involved in the Somali charcoal trade,<sup>312</sup> a major source of Shabaab revenue. The United Nations, for its part, has had sanctions of one kind or another on Somalia since 1992; in August 2012 it formally approved a list of Shabaab members and associates it was subjecting to a “travel ban, assets freeze and targeted arms embargo” pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1844.<sup>313</sup>

As with so many other aspects of Shabaab funding, it is impossible to fully quantify what effect these sanctions had on the organization, particularly as the ones imposed by the U.S. are relatively new. However, it is difficult to believe that the impact has been non-existent, given the formidable power of U.S. sanction regimes. The U.N. sanctions, however, were ripped by the U.N.’s own report as the “limpest form of embargo imaginable” that were routinely and brazenly violated by a variety of countries and individuals trafficking weapons and sending money into the country.<sup>314</sup> Now that the United States has installed a sanctions regime, there is reason to hope it will begin to wear on al-Shabaab and its supporters, though initial reports are not encouraging. Saudi Arabia in October 2012 announced that it would stop importing charcoal from Somalia after previously dragging its feet on complying with the sanctions governing charcoal,<sup>315</sup> but a recent U.N. report claims that the charcoal export industry continues to thrive, and that Saudi Arabia remains a major destination for the illicit product.<sup>316</sup>

Domestic Western CT efforts have contributed to Shabaab’s woes as well. Much of the group’s international recruitment pipeline now appears to have dried up; in Minneapolis, one of the major suppliers of American Shabaab fighters, there have been

<sup>311</sup> “Executive Order 13536: Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in Somalia.” *Federal Register* 75, no. 72 (April 15, 2010): 19869–19872, pp. 19869, 19872. Godane and Aweys had already been listed in E.O. 13224, on November 20, 2008 (p. 3), and November 7, 2001 (p. 14), respectively.

<sup>312</sup> “Executive Order 13620: Taking Additional Steps to Address the National Emergency with Respect to Somalia.” *Federal Register* 77, no. 142 (July 24, 2012): 43483–43485.

<sup>313</sup> *List of Individuals and Entities Subject to the Measures Imposed by Paragraphs 1, 3, and 7 of Security Council Resolution 1844 (2008)*. United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee, August 23, 2012. [www.un.org/sc/committees/751/pdf/1844\\_cons\\_list.pdf](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/751/pdf/1844_cons_list.pdf).

<sup>314</sup> “Special Research Report No. 4: Anatomy of a Sanctions Regime.” *Security Council Report*. Accessed June 25, 2013. <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/special-research-report/lookup-c-gKWLLeMTIsG-b-4504111.php?print=true>.

<sup>315</sup> Wabala, Dominic. “Row over Al Shabaab Charcoal Stockpile.” *The Star*, October 23, 2012. <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-92301/row-over-al-shabaab-charcoal-stockpile>.

<sup>316</sup> Chopra and et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2060 (2012): Somalia*), 38-39.

no public reports of Somalis leaving to fight since 2009.<sup>317</sup> There are a number of possibilities for why this is the case: domestic law enforcement agencies in countries with large Somali populations have been concerned about the problem for years now, and have made a concerted effort to disrupt the pipeline. The group's current difficulties in Somalia may also dampen enthusiasm for joining what could appear to be a lost cause to some, and reports trickling back of how poorly foreign fighters are treated in Somalia likely do not help either. Furthermore, many of the diaspora Somalis were recruited using a mix of nationalist and religious appeals, particularly in response to Ethiopia's invasion of 2006.<sup>318</sup> But since then Ethiopia withdrew until its latest incursion, and al-Shabaab's brutality against fellow Somalis has become better known, badly damaging its claims to be fighting on behalf of its countrymen.

However, the FBI has said that its investigation into Shabaab recruitment in Minnesota is "definitely ongoing." And while it has not been confirmed, a young Somali-American man may have joined Shabaab as late as September 2012, raising fears that al-Shabaab's recruiting may once again be gaining traction.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Forliti, Amy. "Somali al-Shabaab Terror Group Believed to Be Still Recruiting Minnesotans." *TwinCities.com*, September 21, 2012. [http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci\\_21603654/familys-report-suggests-somali-terror-group-continuing-recruit](http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_21603654/familys-report-suggests-somali-terror-group-continuing-recruit).

<sup>318</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens, Shiraz, and Sheehan, 1. See also Hanners, David. "Weakened Somali Terror Group May Step up Recruitment, Fundraising Here, Experts Say." *TwinCities.com*, October 19, 2012. [http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci\\_21812374/weakened-somali-terror-group-may-step-up-recruitment?source=pkg](http://www.twincities.com/localnews/ci_21812374/weakened-somali-terror-group-may-step-up-recruitment?source=pkg).

<sup>319</sup> Forliti.

## Al-Shabaab's Return to Insurgency: Hop Like a Flea

The reversal in al-Shabaab's fortunes in the last two years is dramatic, and the coalition that has been largely responsible for Shabaab's troubles is justly proud of its accomplishments. But the danger is not nearly past. There have been some surprising pronouncements from leaders involved in the effort against al-Shabaab that suggest they may not fully grasp the nature of insurgencies. Some have announced that al-Shabaab is essentially defeated, rhetoric that immediately brings to mind the ill-advised "Mission Accomplished" banner that waved from the bridge of the U.S.S. Lincoln in May 2003, before the Iraqi insurgency that cost the U.S. and Iraq so dearly had fully begun.<sup>320</sup>

In April 2012, an AMISOM commander stated that "all of Mogadishu is now liberated" from al-Shabaab, and predicted that the group would soon be "crushed" throughout Somalia;<sup>321</sup> later that year, Ethiopian Prime Minister Desalegn Hailemariam stated at a U.N. summit that there was "no doubt" that al-Shabaab had been "decisively" harmed,<sup>322</sup> and AMISOM commanders have characterized their new mission after taking Kismayo as a "mop up" campaign that will defeat the insurgency "for good."<sup>323</sup> President Mohamud declared in an interview with Ugandan journalists that al-Shabaab was "defeated," though he did say the group was still carrying out "terrorist attacks and assassinations,"<sup>324</sup> and a Ugandan paper quoted former Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) commander Brig. Paul Lokech as making the very same claim, who further offered that it was because of the UPDF's "ability to win the hearts of the Somali people."<sup>325</sup>

And it is not just regional partners who have indulged in this premature triumphalism. Several Western leaders were at pains to warn against the risk of "protracted guerrilla warfare" in Mali, but few such warnings have been issued for Somalia. In fact, the

<sup>320</sup> Beckerman, Gal. "In Modern Warfare, What Does Victory Mean?" *The Boston Globe*, January 26, 2013. <http://bostonglobe.com/ideas/2013/01/26/modern-warfare-what-does-victory-mean/O7NUJmrxz2sg4IsuZWSGJL/story.html>.

<sup>321</sup> "AU Claims Defeat of al-Shabab in Mogadishu." *Voice of America*, April 29, 2012. <http://www.voanews.com/content/au-claims-defeat-of-al-shabab-in-mogadishu-149465815/370139.html>.

<sup>322</sup> "Prime Minister Hailemariam Speaks at the UN Mini-summit on Somalia (Sep 28, 2012)." *Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, September 28, 2012. <http://www.mfa.gov.et/news/more.php?newsid=1236>.

<sup>323</sup> Verini, 1.

<sup>324</sup> Kato, Joshua. "Al-Shabaab Defeated, Says Somali President." *New Vision*, March 16, 2013. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/640693-al-shabaab-defeated-says-somali-president.html>.

<sup>325</sup> Baguma, Raymond. "UPDF Explains Success in Somalia." *New Vision*, March 9, 2013. <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/640489-updf-explains-success-in-somalia.html>.

Somali intervention has been invoked on different occasions as a model to be emulated in contrast to the Mali intervention that faces the danger of insurgency while, the implication goes, Somalia does not.<sup>326</sup>

Such statements may simply be messaging. But even if they are, it is dangerous for the coalition to oversell its progress, as doing so may raise unrealistic expectations among the public. The coalition would do better to assure Somalis that while Shabaab will not return to power, there will be hard and long fighting ahead to ensure they do not.

More concerning is if those statements do reflect policymakers' true beliefs. Al-Shabaab is not defeated, and the campaign against it has now entered its most dangerous and difficult stage. Just as the fall of Baghdad did not mean the end of the resistance in Iraq,<sup>327</sup> the fall of Kismayo did not mean the end of fighting in Somalia. Counterinsurgency theory, as well as the historic and cultural dynamics of the region, suggests that al-Shabaab, or perhaps a splinter group, has a fighting chance to regain control of the South if the coalition does not wage a disciplined and well-executed counterinsurgency campaign. Al-Shabaab has been badly pressed before and eventually emerged only stronger; it believes it can do the same again, and the coalition arrayed against it must not underestimate the group's resilience.

### **“Do you really think they can continue like that forever?”**

One of Kenya's major goals for its invasion of Somalia was to seize Kismayo. It moved slowly, in part because of the bad weather in which it had chosen to launch its invasion, but also because it was wary of being sucked into vicious urban warfare<sup>328</sup> of the kind that so bedeviled the U.S. in Iraq. When the KDF finally stormed the city it attacked from several directions, sending Special Forces troops leaping from boats

<sup>326</sup> Dominiczak, Peter. “More Than 300 UK Troops Will Be Sent to Africa as General Warns of Guerilla Warfare in Mali.” *The Telegraph*, January 29, 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/mali/9833599/More-than-300-UK-troops-will-be-sent-to-Africa-as-general-warns-of-guerilla-warfare-in-Mali.html>. See also “US Official: Mali Intervention ‘Could Take Years’; US Wants African-led Operation.” *FoxNews.com*, January 28, 2013. <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2013/01/28/us-official-mali-intervention-could-take-years-us-wants-african-led-operation/>, and DeYoung, Karen. “U.S. Recognizes Somalia, Citing Success of a Campaign Against Militants.” *The Washington Post*, January 17, 2013. [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-01-17/world/36410076\\_1\\_somalia-somali-clan-leader-mohamud](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-01-17/world/36410076_1_somalia-somali-clan-leader-mohamud).

<sup>327</sup> Gordon, Michael R., and Bernard E. Trainor. *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 2007, p. 502.

<sup>328</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey. “Kenyan Motives in Somalia Predate Recent Abductions.” *The New York Times*, October 26, 2011. [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/27/world/africa/kenya-planned-somalia-incursion-far-in-advance.html?\\_r=2&](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/27/world/africa/kenya-planned-somalia-incursion-far-in-advance.html?_r=2&), and Verini, 1.

ahead of the main amphibious assault while conventional units accompanied by Somali forces bore down from the interior.<sup>329</sup> The KDF was poised and ready for a scrap, but resistance was faint.

It soon became clear that al-Shabaab had abandoned the city in front of the onslaught, at first glance a surprising decision given that Kismayo was widely regarded as the organization's final stronghold and a major source of its funding.<sup>330</sup> It was the same decision it had made one year earlier in Mogadishu, suddenly withdrawing from a city for which it had battled for years.<sup>331</sup> But both decisions reflect a rational, well-calculated strategic decision by al-Shabaab to avoid a devastating confrontation with a suddenly robust, reinvigorated AMISOM force that possessed far superior conventional military capabilities. After the fall of Kismayo, an al-Shabaab commander said as much: "We got orders from our superiors to withdraw from the city... this is part of broader military tactics we have set for the enemy."<sup>332</sup>

The "broader military tactics" to which the commander was alluding are guerrilla tactics. According to several reports the group has been planning to switch to an insurgency strategy for more than a year,<sup>333</sup> and abandoning fixed positions in Mogadishu and Kismayo was a strategic decision. And it was not just the major cities that al-Shabaab abandoned, but it declined to defend nearly all areas it held in the face of approaching troops.<sup>334</sup>

An al-Shabaab commander, Sheikh Mohamed Ibrahim, articulated the strategy further when speaking of the group's withdrawal from Mogadishu: "Now we are saving

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- <sup>329</sup> Gisesa, Nyambega. "Licensed to Kill: The World of Kenya's Elite Forces." *Sunday Nation*, December 18, 2012. <http://www.nation.co.ke/Features/DN2/The-world-of-Kenyas-elite-forces/-/957860/1645208/-/item/2/-/ndyuqj/-/index.html>, and "Somalia: Al Shabaab Militants Abandon Kismayo After African Union Attack." *GlobalPost*, September 29, 2012. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/somalia/120929/somalia-al-shabaab-militants-abandon-kismayo-after-au-attack>.
- <sup>330</sup> Guled, Abdi. "After Kenyan Attack, Somali Militants Abandon City." *Yahoo! News*, September 29, 2012. <http://news.yahoo.com/kenyan-attack-somali-militants-abandon-city-091910473.html>.
- <sup>331</sup> Pflanz, Mike. "Al-Shabaab Rebels Withdraw from Somali Capital." *The Telegraph*, August 6, 2011. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/8685953/Al-Shabaab-rebels-withdraw-from-Somali-capital.html>.
- <sup>332</sup> "Somalia Islamists Abandon Kismayo Amid AU Attack." *BBC News Africa*, September 29, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19769058>.
- <sup>333</sup> Verini, 4. See also Aynte (September 3, 2012), and Marchal, Roland. "History Repeats Itself in Somalia." *NewStatesman*, August 20, 2012. <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/world-affairs/2012/08/history-repeats-itself-somalia>.
- <sup>334</sup> Pelton, Robert Young. "Liberation of Merka Has Historical Implications." *SomaliaReport*, August 27, 2012. [http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3592/Liberation\\_of\\_Merka\\_Has\\_Historical\\_Implications](http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3592/Liberation_of_Merka_Has_Historical_Implications), and Aynte (September 3, 2012).

money, while the enemy pays more and more to secure land it seized, recruit new soldiers, pay for services. Do you think really they can continue like that forever? Already we are in Mogadishu every night, carrying out attacks.”<sup>335</sup> There is a self-serving element to his statement as no group wants to be seen as weak, which is what a withdrawal from Mogadishu would suggest, but it is also an articulation of classic insurgency strategy. Ibrahim’s words echo Robert Taber’s arresting metaphor for an insurgent:

The guerrilla fights the war of the flea. The flea bites, hops, and bites again, nimbly avoiding the foot that would crush him. He does not seek to kill his enemy at a blow, but to bleed him and feed on him, to plague and bedevil him, to keep him from resting and to destroy his nerve and morale.<sup>336</sup>

Abandoning fixed positions where one can be cornered and crushed has a long history in guerrilla warfare. One of history’s most successful and prolific insurgents, Mao Tse-Tung, was a strong advocate of this strategy: “When our own forces are insufficient, if we give up the cities, we still have hope of regaining them. It is altogether improper to defend cities to the utmost, for this merely leads to sacrificing our own effective strength.”<sup>337</sup> It also has precedent in radical Muslim terrorist organizations. *Hijra*, meaning “migration” or “flight,” refers to the prophet Muhammad’s flight from Mecca to Medina to escape a hostile force, and is used as justification by terrorists for fleeing to ensure survival.<sup>338</sup>

Al-Shabaab has undertaken other shifts in tactical emphasis that reveals its newest strategy. Hit-and-run attacks are one of the hallmarks of guerrilla activity,<sup>339</sup> and al-Shabaab has fully embraced them. A defector from the group described how his fighting duties changed after it lost control of Baidoa, a town in south-central Somalia, and how

<sup>335</sup> Abdinor, Abdiaziz, and Mike Pflanz. “In Somalia, Optimism Rises.” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 18, 2012. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2012/0818/In-Somalia-optimism-rises>.

<sup>336</sup> Taber, Robert. *War of the Flea: The Classic Study of Guerrilla Warfare*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2002, pp. 49-50.

<sup>337</sup> Tse-Tung, Mao. *Basic Tactics*. Translated by Stuart R. Schram. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1966, p. 68.

<sup>338</sup> Atwan, Abdel Bari. “Only Stability Will Keep al-Qaeda Groups Out of Somalia and Libya.” *The Guardian*, October 8, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/oct/08/al-quaida-groups-somalia-libya>.

<sup>339</sup> Boot, Max. *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power*. 1st pbk. ed. New York: Basic Books, 2003, p. 239.



he was expected to then carry out “ ‘hit and run’ style attacks;”<sup>340</sup> the KDF’s advance into Somalia was dogged by IEDs and sniper attacks, and al-Shabaab deployed a number of roadside bombs and suicide bombers with deadly effect.<sup>341</sup>

When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, it was focused on finding Saddam Hussein’s conventional military units, particularly the vaunted Republican Guard, and destroying them. However, the U.S. force received a nasty surprise when it found itself primarily fighting non-uniformed men who were extremely difficult to distinguish from ordinary civilians—in fact, the very first U.S. serviceman killed in that war was at the hands of a fighter dressed in civilian clothing. The Iraqi insurgency that proved far more difficult to suppress than the conventional forces of Saddam melted into the population,<sup>342</sup> another standard insurgency tactic that al-Shabaab has recently employed. In the town of El Bur, for example, an al-Shabaab defector reported that fighters simply began living among the civilians after the town was liberated, the better to help stage ambushes against the liberators.<sup>343</sup> And there are reports that Shabaab fighters are “melting back into their clan militias” which makes it “almost impossible” for AMISOM to identify them.<sup>344</sup>

Assassinating government supporters is another staple of guerrilla warfare that saw wide usage in the insurgent war against the U.S. presence in Iraq, and a recent U.S. military report out of Afghanistan referred to the “robust assassination efforts” of the insurgents there.<sup>345</sup> Al-Shabaab has adopted the same approach, publicly vowing to kill government officials and launching a campaign of “daily” ambushes and assassinations in areas it no longer controls.<sup>346</sup>

<sup>340</sup> *Report 4: Operational Structure and Roles*, 4.

<sup>341</sup> “Somalis Flee as Troops Advance Towards Islamist Bastion.” *Google*, September 18, 2012. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5guGQPbkAR8nGoUa-eq3QwjSpb-qw?docId=CNG.a15f80d65332895b2c4e4b98a68f8426.141>, and “Somali Al-Shabaab Supporters Kill 14 in Double Suicide Attack.” *Daily Nation*, September 21, 2012. <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/africa/Somali+Al+Shabaab+supporters+kill+14+in+double+suicide+attack+/-/1066/1513348/-/9d95i2z/-/index.html>. See also “A.U., Somali Troops Seize Port of Marka from Islamists: A.U.” *Al Arabiya News*, August 27, 2012. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/08/27/234574.html>.

<sup>342</sup> Gordon and Trainor, 219-220, 513.

<sup>343</sup> *Al-Shabaab’s Recent Recapture of El Bur, Galgaduud Region*, 3.

<sup>344</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens and Solomon.

<sup>345</sup> Gordon and Trainor, p. 588. See also Waltz, Michael. “The Valley’s Edge.” *Foreign Policy | The AfPak Channel*, December 4, 2012. [http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/12/04/the\\_valleys\\_edge](http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/12/04/the_valleys_edge), and *Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan* Report to Congress. United States of America Department of Defense, December 2012. [www.defense.gov/news/1230\\_Report\\_final.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/1230_Report_final.pdf), p. 27.

<sup>346</sup> “Kenyan Amisom Soldier Kills Six Somali Civilians,” and “New President, New Laws and Old Enemies.” *Africa Confidential* 53, no. 19 (September 21, 2012), pp. 6–8.

Moreover, the group's selection of targets is telling. Insurgents will often assassinate government supporters in the most public way possible in order to send a warning to anyone who dares defy them.<sup>347</sup> Al-Shabaab has tried to kill the newly sworn-in president of Somalia, and is suspected in the assassinations of a member of parliament, a famous comedian known for poking fun at the group, and so many members of the media that in 2012 Somalia ranked as the second-deadliest place on earth for media workers.<sup>348</sup>

And it is entirely natural for al-Shabaab to adopt an insurgency strategy as they have done so in the past—indeed, the organization was born as an insurgency. Al-Shabaab sprang from the remnants of the ICU that was toppled by an Ethiopian invasion in 2006, and launched a classic guerrilla campaign that included the use of IEDs, suicide bombings, and political assassinations.<sup>349</sup> “Harassed and bruised,” the Ethiopians were eventually compelled to withdraw, just as the UN forces had done in the face of General Aideed's guerrilla campaign in 1993.<sup>350</sup> Given al-Shabaab's and Somalia's success in using insurgent tactics against foreign invasions, the group has every reason to believe it can be successful again.

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<sup>347</sup> Galula, David. *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*. Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006, p. 40.

<sup>348</sup> Mohammed, Lutfi Sheriff, and Robyn Dixon. “New Somali President Survives Double Suicide Bombing.” *Los Angeles Time World*, September 12, 2012. [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world\\_now/2012/09/new-somali-president-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-survives-suicide-bombing.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/09/new-somali-president-hassan-sheikh-mohamud-survives-suicide-bombing.html), and “Member of Somalia's New Parliament Gunned Down in Front of Home.” *CNN*, September 23, 2012. [http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/22/world/africa/somalia-legislator-killed/index.html?hpt=iaf\\_c2](http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/22/world/africa/somalia-legislator-killed/index.html?hpt=iaf_c2), and “Somali Comedian Who Poked Fun at Islamists Shot Dead.” *Google*, October 30, 2012. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5j4yYxoYmvYUP-9mz7JYiCv77TAgA?docId=CNG.6e65ef225b49a9fa0ad834af8d6f49d0.511>.

<sup>349</sup> Menkhaus (2007), 357, 385.

<sup>350</sup> Somalia and the Shabab: It's Not Over Yet.” See also Menkhaus (2007), 385.

## Solution: Counterinsurgency

### Win the people

The fundamental principle of an insurgency is simple: it is a contest for the people. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents are locked in a battle over the ultimate prize of the people's support, or at least their acquiescence. Without it, there can be no victory—insurgents would find themselves with no base from which to recruit, no safe haven from which they could obtain food and shelter, and no source of intelligence. What should be an insurgent's greatest advantage, his ability to easily fade in and out of the population, thereby avoiding a crushing blow from his opponent, would be gone.

The same is true of the counterinsurgent force. Without the cooperation or submission of the people, it will find itself chasing a ghost and unable to bring its superior weapons to bear, harassed on all sides, betrayed and misled, utterly frustrated, and ultimately defeated.

Theorists and practitioners on both sides of the fight have commented on this for generations. Mao Tse-Tung characterized guerrilla warfare thus: "Because guerrilla warfare basically derives from the masses and is supported by them it can neither exist nor flourish if it separates itself from their sympathies and cooperation."<sup>351</sup> General Giap, the brilliant North Vietnamese general, had this to say: "Without the people we have no information...they hide us, protect us, feed us and tend our wounded."<sup>352</sup> Robert Taber writes that without the support of the population an insurgent would merely be a "bandit" who "could not long survive,"<sup>353</sup> and David Kilcullen notes that counterinsurgency is "a competition with the insurgent for the right and the ability to win the hearts, minds, and acquiescence of the population."<sup>354</sup>

So the support of the people is critical, but what induces them to back the insurgents or the government? Al-Shabaab is primarily led by a group of radicalized Salafists, "true believers" in the sort of Islam that demands an extraordinarily harsh *shariah* and which has a global agenda.<sup>355</sup> But many of Shabaab's fighters joined for reasons that had little

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<sup>351</sup> Tse-Tung, Mao. *On Guerrilla Warfare*. Praeger Publications in Russian History and World Communism 99. New York, NY: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1961, p. 44.

<sup>352</sup> Boot, 297.

<sup>353</sup> Taber, 12.

<sup>354</sup> Kilcullen, David. *Counterinsurgency*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 29.

<sup>355</sup> "Somalia." *World Almanac of Islam*, July 14, 2011. <http://almanac.afpc.org/Somalia>. See also (@HSMPress1). "Islam still remains triumphant, dominant & still set for global domination. The Mujahideen are preparing the ground for the imminent Khilafa." 26 March 2013, 3:26 a.m. Tweet.

to do with ideology but were far more pragmatic,<sup>356</sup> so they have no particular loyalty to al-Shabaab, as evidenced by the high rate of defections from the group once its fortunes started to turn. It was only when it was in their interests to fight for al-Shabaab that they did so, otherwise they were very willing to leave for a better offer—some have now been integrated into the Somali National Army (SNA), for instance.<sup>357</sup>

This lesson can be extrapolated out to the population at large. It is impossible to accurately gauge public opinion in Somalia, but it is likely that a large majority are not “true believers”—indeed, many Somalis are Sufis who Shabaab routinely appalled and outraged with their brutal Salafism.<sup>358</sup> Much of the toleration and even support for Shabaab was likely for pragmatic reasons only, the most obvious of which would be a desire to survive al-Shabaab’s reign.

Many of the tribes that were most firmly in al-Shabaab’s camp, and which might still harbor some loyalty to them, are minority tribes against whom the majority “noble” tribes discriminated.<sup>359</sup> Al-Shabaab constituted a better offer for minority tribes, and they very rationally chose it. And the businessmen who supported al-Shabaab in certain areas mostly did so because the relative peace that the group imposed was good for business,<sup>360</sup> not because they all believed in the group’s radical message.

So counterinsurgency in Somalia will be about presenting the better offer, convincing the mass of Somalis who very rationally are concerned about “what’s in it for them” that the government best suits their needs. Everything the coalition does needs to bend towards this imperative, and needs to be specifically designed to convince Somalis that the government is their protector and facilitator of a better life. If the coalition can do so, it will win; if it cannot, it will lose.

Al-Shabaab did not understand, or at least did not care, about this lesson. As has already been examined, it consistently alienated Somalis with, among other things, its brutality, its Salafist excesses, and its utter indifference to Somalis’ suffering in the terrible 2011 famine. In short, most Somalis living under Shabaab came to learn it was not in their best interests to have Shabaab in power, though they often had no choice given how weak or non-existent the Somali government had been for decades. This is

<sup>356</sup> *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, 1-2.

<sup>357</sup> Mohamed, Mahmoud. “Mass Defections Weaken al-Shabaab Morale.” *Sabahi*, September 25, 2012. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/09/25/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/09/25/feature-01).

<sup>358</sup> Lewis (October 6, 2011).

<sup>359</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens and Solomon. See also Lewis (*A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*), 14.

<sup>360</sup> Hassan.

what gives the coalition such an advantage at the moment in this fight—Somalis are looking for a better offer, and the new government might be it.

However, the coalition does not have an unlimited amount of time in which to convince Somalis it is indeed a better option. Al-Shabaab will continue its attacks, seeking to create chaos and disruption at every opportunity, and cause Somalis to doubt the government. So there is an expiration date on Somalis' acceptance of the coalition's presence and their tolerance or support of the new government.

And no matter how unpopular the previous regime, people of any country do not enjoy being occupied by foreign armies. This is a fundamental reality that affects all counterinsurgency campaigns; any foreign "liberator" will eventually come to be seen as an occupier whose presence will arouse resistance. David Kilcullen has written at length on how this dynamic has manifested itself in the global war on terror, describing what he terms the "Accidental Guerrilla" phenomenon. In this scenario, some citizens become guerrillas fighting against the invading force, not because they believe in the ideology of the insurgents, but for nationalist reasons—they just don't like being occupied by foreigners.<sup>361</sup>

In the documentary "Meeting Resistance," several Iraqi insurgents interviewed for the film articulated exactly this process when describing how they became involved in the fight against the U.S.-led coalition. A man who had been imprisoned and tortured for three and a half years by the Baathist regime still took up arms against the Americans:

The next morning I saw the American tanks and the American soldiers passing. I felt a fire in my heart...I began to see just one thing, that we'd become an occupied country. When they occupied Iraq, they subjugated me, subjugated my sister, subjugated my mother, subjugated my honor, my homeland. Every time I saw them, I felt pain. They pissed me off. So I started working.<sup>362</sup>

The counterinsurgents then find themselves fighting people they never had any intention of fighting and who are not their true enemy. The insurgents benefit enormously as they can paint themselves as the defenders of local people against foreign aggression. Even if the locals still reject extremist ideology, they end up forming

<sup>361</sup> Kilcullen, David. *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 38.

<sup>362</sup> Connors, Steve, and Molly Bingham. *Meeting Resistance*. Documentary. Nine Lives Documentary Production, 2006.

a loose alliance with the insurgents against the intervening force.<sup>363</sup> The counterinsurgents are in deep trouble in this scenario, and only a massive expenditure of manpower and wealth deployed in pursuit of a sophisticated and competent counterinsurgency strategy can turn the tide.

We need look no further than the last ten years to see what happens to coalitions whose expiration dates come due and the Accidental Guerrilla phenomenon manifests. Kandahar, Afghanistan, in December 2001 “erupted in joy” after Mullah Omar fled the city, and in the summer of 2003 in Baghdad, Iraq, “most Iraqis there still viewed [Americans] as liberators.”<sup>364</sup> The insurgencies that followed constituted a brutal lesson of which the anti-Shabaab coalition should take note, as the danger of it becoming trapped in the Accidental Guerrilla spiral is very real.

In fact, Ethiopia has experienced this once already, though the backlash was even more immediate and determined than normal. When the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) invaded Somalia in 2006, it overthrew a regime that was fairly popular with Somalis.<sup>365</sup> Ethiopia then found itself violently resisted from the start by a variety of different groups, not just foreign AQ fighters and Somali Islamic extremists.<sup>366</sup>

So if a foreign force invades to topple a popular regime, the nationalist backlash will be almost immediate. But in a case such as Somalia’s, when an unpopular regime is being replaced, how long is the grace period for the foreign force’s involvement? When is the tipping point before which the foreign forces are necessary to protect a weak government struggling to establish legitimacy, but after which the forces serve only to inflame the insurgency?

No one can know for sure as every intervention is unique in time, place, and the actors involved. But what we can do is analyze whether the coalition has been doing the sorts of things that will make the population support or at least tolerate its presence, and resist al-Shabaab’s. If so, the grace period might be sufficient to give the Somali government a chance to establish some level of legitimacy and AMISOM to withdraw peacefully. If not, the scenario will play out in a far different, and decidedly less salubrious, manner.

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<sup>363</sup> Kilcullen (2011), 37-38.

<sup>364</sup> Chayes, Sarah. “Clean up the Afghan Government, and the Taliban Will Fade Away.” *The Washington Post*, December 14, 2008. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/12/AR2008121203290.html?sid=ST2008122500735>. See also Gordon and Trainor, 566.

<sup>365</sup> Barnes and Hassan, 151.

<sup>366</sup> Menkhaus (2007), 385-386.

## **Geography, culture, and history**

A critical first step in this analysis is to understand the relevant parts of Somali geography, culture, and history that will affect the window of opportunity. People are largely products of their culture and history, so the counterinsurgent must be intimately familiar with both to best know how to make a bid for their support. Unfortunately for the coalition, there are a number of factors at play that are going to make its job terribly difficult.

### ***Inhospitable terrain***

Counterinsurgency doctrine has much to say about how inhospitable terrain is appealing to insurgents looking for an area in which to hide and negate their foe's advantages in conventional weaponry. Gebru Tareke, a historian at Yale who has studied the Ethiopian insurgencies, describes the "ideal terrain" for insurgents as an "expansive area of forests, marshes, or mountain ranges and gorges,"<sup>367</sup> another author speaks of "swamps, mountains, and forests" as advantageous to guerrillas,<sup>368</sup> while the USMC *Small Wars Manual* warns that Marines should expect to battle insurgents in "mountainous, wooded terrain."<sup>369</sup>

A number of history's most famous insurgencies have made ample use of forbidding terrain. Since inception the FARC has hidden in the thick jungles of Colombia,<sup>370</sup> and the Malayan Races Liberation Army was so adept at jungle warfare that in response the British began a school that became known as the Jungle Warfare School.<sup>371</sup> The Taliban escaped to the Tora Bora mountains from which it launched its insurgency,<sup>372</sup> the Viet Cong hid so deeply in the jungle it was "virtually impossible" for the U.S. military to hunt them down, and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua survived the U.S.'s best efforts to

<sup>367</sup> Tareke, Gebru. *The Ethiopian Revolution: War in the Horn of Africa*. The Yale Library of Military History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 48.

<sup>368</sup> Sollom, Lt. Col. A. H. "Nowhere Yet Everywhere." In *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941-1961*, edited by Franklin Mark Osanka, 15-24. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, p. 19.

<sup>369</sup> *U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual*. New York, NY: Cosimo Reports, 2010, 6-3.

<sup>370</sup> Dickinson, Elizabeth. "Rumble in the Jungle: The Changing Strategy of FARC." *L'Occidentale*, July 8, 2011. <http://www.loccidentale.it/node/108486>.

<sup>371</sup> Nagl, John A. *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam*. Paperback ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, p. 69.

<sup>372</sup> King, Laura. "Fighting Erupts in Afghanistan's Tora Bora Mountains Between NATO, Insurgent Forces." *Los Angeles Times*, December 30, 2010. <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/dec/30/world/la-fg-afghanistan-tora-bora-20101230>.

eliminate them, in part because they made ample use of a mountain surrounded by jungle terrain.<sup>373</sup>

Unfortunately for the coalition, Somalia is endowed with several heavily forested and mountainous regions that make ideal areas for harboring an insurgent base, and al-Shabaab have already sought them out: the forests in Lower Juba, near Kismayo, and the Galgala Mountains in the North on the border between Puntland and Somaliland. The forests near Kismayo have served as a traditional sanctuary for extremists for nearly 20 years, and have been described as “a vast area of inaccessible jungles” and “remote bush.”<sup>374</sup> These areas have already caused the anti-Shabaab forces problems as the KDF’s advance towards Kismayo was slowed when its mechanized units had trouble navigating the forests while the Shabaab guerrillas used the ample cover to avoid Kenyan air strikes.<sup>375</sup>

Perhaps more concerning is the mountainous Galgala region with its network of caves and training camps. The area is notoriously inaccessible and has explicitly been compared on more than one occasion to Afghanistan’s Tora Bora Mountains.<sup>376</sup> Stratfor recently released a report pointing out that the vegetation is so thick in the mountains, and the weather hot enough during the day, that fighters may be able to evade targeting systems from weapons platforms, including infrared targeting.<sup>377</sup> Its proximity to Yemen has in the past made it an ideal base from which to both send and receive weapons and fighters across the Gulf of Aden; reports of boatloads of al-Shabaab fighters in that area, and of skiffs stuffed with weapons likely meant for al-Shabaab,<sup>378</sup> suggests the group is utilizing this traditional smuggling route.

Worse yet, a militia led by Yasin Kilwe operates in that area and now hosts several hundred al-Shabaab fighters, including senior leaders.<sup>379</sup> The Puntland authorities have

<sup>373</sup> Boot, 297, 240-252.

<sup>374</sup> Aynte (September 3, 2012). See also AFP (September 18, 2012).

<sup>375</sup> Boswell and Ibrahim.

<sup>376</sup> “Shabaab Bolster Northern ‘Tora Bora’ Base.” See also Joselow, Gabe. “Puntland Instability Underscores Somali Militants’ Staying Power.” *Voice of America*, December 8, 2012. <http://www.voanews.com/content/insecurity-in-puntland-underscores-al-shabab-staying-power/1561164.html>. See also “Shabaab Bolster Northern ‘Tora Bora’ Base” and Aynte (September 3, 2012).

<sup>377</sup> “Al Shabaab’s Retreat to the Al Madow Mountains.” *Stratfor Global Intelligence*, n.d.

<sup>378</sup> MJ and Pelton. See also “Somalia: ‘Al-Shabab Weapons Seized in Puntland’.” *BBC News Africa*, October 19, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20003253>.

<sup>379</sup> Somali, Ahmed, Ahmed Abdi, and Mohamed Ahmed. “Militia Seizes Control of Puntland Region.” *SomaliaReport*, November 5, 2011. <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/721>. Shabaab’s Galgala militia was originally headed by Mohamed Said Atam, but he was replaced by Kilwe. Atam is now believed to be operating in the South. See *Al-Shabaab Organizational and*



never been able to subdue Kilwe's group, and it has reportedly even captured parts of the Galgala region while also launching a deadly attack against a military base in Puntland—in February 2012, the militia formally joined al-Shabaab.<sup>380</sup>

## Clans

Perhaps the most famous feature of Somalia is the clan system that still dominates Somali society today. The country has six major clans and “countless subdivisions”—apart from a few small groups located primarily in the South, every Somali belongs to a clan, the lineage of which he can likely recite back 20-30 generations.<sup>381</sup> Clans, in conjunction with a type of political contract known as *her*, serve as the fundamental ordering principle of Somali society. Smaller sub-groups within clans, known as *diya*-paying groups, have first demand on an individual Somali's loyalty.<sup>382</sup>

The clan system has had severe consequences for governments trying to rule Somalia. One of Ioan Lewis's books points to the existence of clans as a primary reason for the Somali state's collapse in the early 1990's and its subsequent failure to revive itself. The book describes the “call of kinship” that resulted in a “centrifugal polity” within Somalia, and which was ultimately “incompatible [with a] centralized nation-state.”<sup>383</sup> J. Peter Pham believes that it is “no surprise” that a centralized government within Somalia has not been able to succeed given the country's clan dynamics, and offers that it may well have been the unique pressures of the Cold War that kept the most centralized regime Somalia has ever experienced, that of Siad Barre, intact for as long as it was.<sup>384</sup>

Long-time Somali scholar Lee Cassanelli has remarked upon “the tendency of Somali nomads to resist any form of political authority imposed from outside the clan,”<sup>385</sup> and

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*Leadership Structure*. Native Prospector: East Bridge. Navanti Group, May 16, 2012, p. 9. See also “Shabaab Bolster Northern ‘Tora Bora’ Base.”

<sup>380</sup> Somali et al. See also “Somalia's al-Shabab Targets Puntland Military.” *BBC News*, December 5, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20614050>, and Pelton, Robert Young, Sucaad Mire, and Mohamed Nuxurkey. “Atom Militia Declares Allegiance to Shabaab.” *SomaliaReport*, February 25, 2012. <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/2915>.

<sup>381</sup> Pham, J Peter. “Peripheral Vision: A Model Solution for Somalia.” *The Rusi Journal* 154, no. 5 (October 2009): 84–90. doi:10.1080/03071840903412036, p. 86. See also Besteman, 584-585, and Farah, Ahmed Y., and Ioan M. Lewis. “Making Peace in Somaliland.” *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 37, no. 146 (1997): 349–377, p. 352.

<sup>382</sup> Lewis (*The Modern History of Somaliland: From Nation to State*), 11.

<sup>383</sup> Lewis, I. M. *A Pastoral Democracy*. New York: Africana Publishing Company for the International African Institute, 1982, p. xii.

<sup>384</sup> Pham, 86.

<sup>385</sup> Cassanelli, Lee V. *The Shaping of Somali Society: Reconstructing the History of a Pastoral People, 1600-1900*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982, p. 98.

another author notes that Somalis are “invariably described as independent in nature.”<sup>386</sup> Yet another author tells of how Somalis still recount with pride the story of a local Majerteen leader, Sultan Hussan, who refused to allow the Imam of Muscat to build a fort on Majerteen land, and returned the valuable gifts the Imam had offered. As the author notes, “It is not so much in the story itself but in the telling of the story, in seeing it as a story worth relaying as a point of pride, which reflects on the Somalis as a people who valued their autonomy.”<sup>387</sup>

This strain of autonomy is directly related to the pastoral existence the majority of Somalis lead—in the late 1980s it was estimated that nearly two-thirds of Somalis earned their living from animal husbandry and related work.<sup>388</sup> In a country frequently subjected to droughts that has only one river that flows year-round,<sup>389</sup> pastoralism is a difficult existence marked by a constant struggle with nature and human competitors for water and grazing areas—in such an environment, pastoralists have little choice but to be highly independent. This has obvious implications for the Somali government’s task of establishing legitimacy and a level of control: the pastoral culture is “essentially anarchic” and does not allow a centralized system to develop.<sup>390</sup>

Trying to fight against an insurgency in the midst of a deeply divided society with narrowly-defined, but fiercely-held, loyalties is going to be staggeringly difficult for the coalition. David Kilcullen has written that “local people in tribal societies will always tend to side with closer against more distant relatives, with local against external actors, and with coreligionists against people of other faiths.”<sup>391</sup> The KDF has already gotten a taste of that reality. Some Shabaab fighters have simply melted back into their clan militias and elders have been unwilling to share information on them,<sup>392</sup> while many families

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<sup>386</sup> Touval, Saadia. *Somali Nationalism: International Politics and the Drive for Unity in the Horn of Africa*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 19.

<sup>387</sup> Fox, 78.

<sup>388</sup> Given the tumult of the last several decades in Somalia, accurate demographic information is extremely challenging to obtain. Anna Simons appeared to question how pastoral the Somali society was even back in 1995, so it is very difficult to know 17 years later. However, as Simons points out (196), many urban dwellers may adhere to an “idealized pastoralist ideology,” and there is no doubt that pastoralism is Somalis’ most dominant cultural legacy, even if not as many practice it as is widely believed. See Simons, Anna. *Networks of Dissolution: Somalia Undone*. Boulder, Colorado: WestviewPress, 1995. See also Laitin, David D., and Said S. Samatar. *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1987, p. 22.

<sup>389</sup> “Somalia” (July 27, 2010).

<sup>390</sup> Prunier. See also Fox, 76.

<sup>391</sup> Kilcullen (2011), 38.

<sup>392</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens and Solomon.

have members in both al-Shabaab and the militias allied with the coalition. KDF troops believe they tip each other off,<sup>393</sup> and they are probably correct.

Not only does the clan system make it more difficult for a government to win Somalis' loyalty, but it makes Somali society highly volatile. One of the very first Europeans to write about the Somalis, Richard Burton, remarked upon the "blood feud[s]" that had existed "for ages" between some of the Somali tribes.<sup>394</sup> Ioan Lewis believes that it is "unrealistic...to expect a complete absence of conflict and raiding in Somali society" given that Somalis are "warlike and their society highly militaristic."<sup>395</sup> The nomadic/pastoral culture of Somalia weighs heavily here again, as "traditionally, nomadic contexts such as the one in Somalia lack an authority that can enforce agreed-upon laws or common-sense requirements."<sup>396</sup>

Related to this is the tradition of taking blood revenge for a killing; at least one al-Shabaab defector claimed to have joined the group to take revenge on the killer of a family member,<sup>397</sup> and Shabaab was able to win the sympathy of some clans eager to take revenge on other clans for past abuses.<sup>398</sup> Yet in Somali society there is the added twist of "collective punishment." Revenge does not have to be taken on the actual killer—simply killing a member of the murderer's clan will suffice.<sup>399</sup>

Even in the midst of the violence associated with the offensive against al-Shabaab, there has been a separate current of clan violence. Clashes in the central region of the country between clans competing for land and water killed 26 people, and IDPs from minority or otherwise despised clans are being abused in IDP camps at the hands of Somalis from other clans.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Verini, 4.

<sup>394</sup> Burton, Richard. *First Footsteps in East Africa*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1966, p. 91.

<sup>395</sup> Farah, Ahmed Yusuf, and I.M. Lewis. *Somalia: The Roots of Reconciliation*. Report for Actionaid, 1993. <http://www.mbali.info/doc102.htm>. See also Lewis, I.M. "Modern Political Movements in Somaliland." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 28, no. 3 (July 1958): 244–261, p. 246.

<sup>396</sup> Elmi, Afyare Abdi. *Understanding the Somalia Conflagration: Identity, Political Islam and Peacebuilding*. London; New York: Oxford: Pluto Press; Pambazuka Press; Distributed in the United States of America exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p. 33.

<sup>397</sup> *Life After Al-Shabaab*, 5.

<sup>398</sup> Marchal (March 2011), 5-6.

<sup>399</sup> Elmi (2010), 33-34.

<sup>400</sup> Scherer, Fabian. "Somalia's Clans and Its Power Vacuum." *Political Analysis South Africa*, December 7, 2012. <http://www.politicalanalysis.co.za/2012/12/07/somalias-clans-and-its-power-vacuum/>. See also *Hostages of the Gatekeepers: Abuses Against Internally Displaced in Mogadishu, Somalia*. Human Rights Watch, March 2013. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2013/03/28/hostages-gatekeepers-0>, pp. 4-5.

It is also impossible to disentangle clan dynamics from the conflict between al-Shabaab and the coalition. Some Somalis say that the fighting between the Galgala militia, now allied with al-Shabaab, and the Puntland authorities was triggered in part because of a clan fight over territory.<sup>401</sup> And al-Shabaab gained some legitimacy from being able to bring a measure of peace among clans under its rule, and by successfully portraying the TFG as a “group of disparate clan chauvinists.”<sup>402</sup> However, it also was unable to avoid becoming entangled with clan issues. One defector said that he had to leave the group because his clan had a falling-out with Shabaab, while Somalis from the town of Hagar viewed al-Shabaab administrators with deep suspicion because they were from a different sub-clan.<sup>403</sup>

Robert Young Pelton argues in a *Foreign Policy* article that “Somaliland, the former British colony, Puntland, Galmudug, and southern Somalia has always been governed and delineated within clan boundaries, rather than foreign-engineered fantasies.”<sup>404</sup> This trend seems to only have grown stronger during the last two decades of chaos,<sup>405</sup> and may have accelerated in the vacuum being left as al-Shabaab is pushed out of various areas. Abdi Rashid is quoted as saying that there now is a “free-for-all contest in which clans are unilaterally carving up the country into unviable clan enclaves and cantons.”<sup>406</sup> The major cities are particular flashpoints: the Hawiye, by virtue of their having wrested control of Mogadishu from Siad Barre, believe they should control the capital and, by extension, the country.<sup>407</sup> And most of Somalia’s major clans have a presence in Kismayo,<sup>408</sup> and a recent history of fighting for control of the city. In 2009, the Marehan helped al-Shabaab oust Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, an Ogaden leader, from the city; Madobe is now back, and the Darod may feel it is their turn to rule this highly diverse city.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Somali et al.

<sup>402</sup> Aynte (September 3, 2012).

<sup>403</sup> Hassan. See also *Al-Shabaab (AS) in Hagar Part II: Local Perceptions of AS and Post AS Conditions in Hagar*, 4.

<sup>404</sup> Pelton, Robert Young. “Hijacked.” *Foreign Policy*, September 20, 2012. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/20/how\\_the\\_un\\_saved\\_the\\_somali\\_pirates?page=0,1](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/09/20/how_the_un_saved_the_somali_pirates?page=0,1), p. 2.

<sup>405</sup> Boswell and Ibrahim.

<sup>406</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey. “As an Enemy Retreats, Clans Carve Up Somalia.” *The New York Times*, September 10, 2011. [www.pulitzer.org/files/2012/international\\_reporting/05clans.pdf](http://www.pulitzer.org/files/2012/international_reporting/05clans.pdf), p. 2.

<sup>407</sup> Menkhaus (2007), 363.

<sup>408</sup> “Somalia and the Shabab: It’s Not over Yet”.

<sup>409</sup> Smith, David. “Somalia Overpowering al-Shabaab but Old Rivalries Pose New Threat.” *The Guardian*, September 28, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/sep/28/somalia-overcoming-al-shabaab-threat>.

Unsurprisingly, the clan issue hovered over the latest selection of members of parliament and the forming of the new government. There is an “unwritten rule” that key government positions must be divided among different clans: if the president is a Hawiye, the prime minister should be a Darod, for instance. The new government appears to have adhered to this rule: President Mohamud is an Abgal, a sub-clan of the Hawiye, Speaker of the Parliament Mohamed Jawari is a Rahaweyn, and Prime Minister Abdi Farah Shirdon is Darod. Furthermore, the so-called “4.5 Formula” is still in effect; it is a “template for distributing jobs in a fixed ratio, stipulating that in each set of appointments, the four major clans get one post each and the minor clans get the equivalent of half of a post.”<sup>410</sup>

It is not a negative development that clan sensitivities are accommodated in the new government; it is unrealistic to expect any Somali government could be free of the issue, and any that was would have little legitimacy in the eyes of Somalis still firmly immersed in the clan culture.

But clans introduce an extraordinarily thorny complication to the state-building project. Somalis will always side with their own clan before they will with any government. The increased levels of violence that clan fighting brings will make it difficult for the coalition to convince Somalis that the government is their best guarantee of stability and a better life. And clans create a tangled social and political landscape that is almost mind-numbing in its complexity. As was mentioned earlier, the Ogaden and Marehan fought for control of Kismayo, but yet are sub-clans of the same Darod clan; similarly, the fighting in Puntland referenced earlier was between sub-sub-clans of the Darod, the Majerteen and Warsengeli.<sup>411</sup>

All of this means that non-Somalis cannot hope to understand the complex and constantly-in-flux alliances within the Somali world. It is a minefield where a single false step can alienate one clan or another, or even turn them into enemies. It is going to be a colossal challenge for AMISOM to avoid being manipulated by wily Somalis whose first loyalty lays elsewhere, and who understand the intricacies of how allegiances in the Somali clan context are assumed and discarded.

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<sup>410</sup> “Hassan Sheikh Keeps It in the Family.” *Africa Confidential* 53, no. 23 (November 16, 2012): 6–7, pp. 6-7. See also “New President, New Laws and Old Enemies,” 6-7.

<sup>411</sup> For a chart depicting the relationships among various clans, see Abbink, J. *The Total Somali Clan Genealogy: a Preliminary Sketch*. Leiden, The Netherlands: African Studies Centre, n.d., p. 5.

## Islam

There is also no getting away from the fact that Somalia is almost exclusively Muslim while AMISOM and the ENDF is composed primarily of Christian troops. Al-Shabaab has already been at pains to paint the AMISOM intervention as an infidel invasion that obligates other Muslims to come to the group's aid. The group's spokesman, Shaykh Ali Mohamud Rage, urged Somalis to "take up arms" in "defending Islam and the country,"<sup>412</sup> while a senior commander spoke of "defending their religion and land from the invaders."<sup>413</sup> And when former Kenyan Prime Minister Raila Odinga sought assistance from Israel, al-Shabaab gleefully trumpeted the visit as proof that Kenya was a Western puppet fighting a war against Islam.<sup>414</sup>

Al-Shabaab's Twitter account has been pinged with the same theme: coalition forces are routinely referred to as "crusaders," "*Kuffar*," and "apostate allies."<sup>415</sup> Shabaab also notoriously posted photos of the body of a French commando killed in a botched hostage rescue attempt; while they posted the photos both to mock the French and boast about having thwarted the attack, there was another reason as well. One of the photos prominently displayed a gold cross the commando had been wearing with the first part of the accompanying caption reading: "A return of the crusades..."<sup>416</sup>

But Islam is not monolithic; far from it, and Somalis are primarily Sufi and reject many of the Salafist beliefs of the al-Shabaab leadership.<sup>417</sup> However, broader Islam still has a strong "obligation to defend by force component" that makes it obligatory for any "good" Muslim to defend other Muslims that have been attacked, particularly by unbelievers.<sup>418</sup> In fact, a political science lecturer at Baghdad University estimated that 85% of the violence directed at the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq was "motivated by religion. Because of

<sup>412</sup> *Somalia—Al-Shabaab Post-Kismaayo Messaging Presents Opportunities, Challenges*. Open Source Center, October 11, 2012, p. 1.

<sup>413</sup> "Shabaab Bolster Northern 'Tora Bora' Base."

<sup>414</sup> Verini, 2.

<sup>415</sup> (@HSMPress1). "At least 15 African crusaders were killed & more than 23 injured in a series of attacks against Kuffar bases in Lower Shabelle last week." 01 April 2013, 10:53 a.m. Tweet. See also (@HSMPress1). "The Muslims pledged to continue waging Jihad against the African crusaders & their apostate allies till the lands is purified of their filth." 28 February 2013, 11:51 a.m. Tweet.

<sup>416</sup> Roggio, Bill. "Shabaab Releases Photos of French Commando Captured in Failed Rescue Mission." *The Long War Journal*, January 14, 2013. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/01/shabaab\\_releases\\_pho.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/01/shabaab_releases_pho.php).

<sup>417</sup> Lewis (October 6, 2011).

<sup>418</sup> Toft, Monica Duffy. "Getting Religion? The Puzzling Case of Islam and Civil War." *International Security* 31, no. 4 (Spring 2007): 97–131, pp. 104-105, 110-111.

the religious upbringing of those young men they perceive every aggressor, every occupier, as an enemy they should fight.”<sup>419</sup>

There is no way of knowing how much resonance among Somalis the idea that Muslims have an obligation to wage jihad against infidel invaders has. But what we do know is that al-Shabaab very successfully appealed to this obligation in the past when rallying support against the Ethiopian invasion in 2006.<sup>420</sup> And as has already been discussed, Shabaab’s task of wooing fighters is made easier by many of these young men’s exposure to Salafist ideas, which has gained a certain amount of ground in Somalia over the years.<sup>421</sup>

The noted Somalia expert Ken Menkhaus has argued that Islam has historically not served as a mobilizer to action for any sustained amount of time in Somalia—it is normally more able to rouse Somalis in diaspora communities that believe themselves to be under threat by the surrounding culture. So Somalis in Kenya and Ethiopia, for instance, are more prone to look to Islam for inspiration than the average Somali inside of Somalia. The exceptional circumstance when Islam, including calls to violence, does gain increased resonance inside Somalia is when a “foreign, non-Muslim threat” enters the country,<sup>422</sup> or in other words, a force precisely like AMISOM and Ethiopia.

Furthermore, there is danger that the Somali population has been growing more radicalized as years of insecurity, corruption, and lack of opportunity have taken their toll. While there is no one path to radicalization, such negative factors drive “resentment and anger, which radical Islamists use in their recruitment program.”<sup>423</sup> For years now Somalia has had a stranglehold on the top spot on *Foreign Policy’s* Failed State Index, which ranks countries on a variety of factors including “delegitimization of the state,” “group grievance,” and “economic decline.”<sup>424</sup> It similarly has been the worst performer in Transparency International’s annual Corruption Perceptions Index for years;<sup>425</sup> more than two decades of such dreariness likely make radical Islamists’ claim to be able to deliver a peaceful and just state attractive indeed.

<sup>419</sup> Connors and Bingham.

<sup>420</sup> Marchal (March 2011), 17.

<sup>421</sup> *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, 1-2, 5.

<sup>422</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. “Political Islam in Somalia.” *Middle East Policy* IX, no. 1 (March 2002): 109–123, pp. 109-110.

<sup>423</sup> Kfir, Isaac. “Islamic Radicalism in East Africa: Is There a Cause for Concern?” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31, no. 9 (2008): 829–855, p. 844.

<sup>424</sup> “The 2012 Failed States Index.” *Foreign Policy*. Accessed April 29, 2013. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed\\_states\\_index\\_2012\\_interactive](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/failed_states_index_2012_interactive).

<sup>425</sup> “2012 Corruption Perceptions Index -- Results.” *Transparency International*. Accessed April 29, 2013. <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/results/>.

Radical Islam's appeal may also be growing in Somalia because of the discrediting of so many other ideologies. Socialism, clannism, liberalism, and militarism have all been tried to some degree in Somalia's history, and none have brought peace, stability, or prosperity.<sup>426</sup> But radical Islam has not been tried as a solution for any length of time, which likely inclines some Somalis to give it a chance. Again, most Somalis reject the extreme views of al-Shabaab, but if they grow tired of the coalition, appeals to their Muslim obligation to resist infidel invaders will become persuasive.

### **Demographic trends**

Al-Shabaab's appeal to young men highlights another problem for the coalition: Somalia has a very young population, with a median age of 17.8.<sup>427</sup> What makes it such a problem is that the unemployment rate in Somalia for young people aged 14-29 is 67%,<sup>428</sup> and multiple reports have drawn links between high youth unemployment and violence, including terrorist violence.<sup>429</sup> In fact, one goes so far as to predict that in the future "the dramatic rise of youth unemployment is likely to constitute the fundamental engine of political violence and terrorism."<sup>430</sup>

The so-called "youth bulge" has already created problems throughout Africa and beyond. Youth are strongly represented in African terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram and AQIM, and constitute the majority of al-Shabaab fighters.<sup>431</sup> Furthermore, 24 of the 29 countries with the highest population growth rates in 2006 were also experiencing "high levels of violence"<sup>432</sup>—Somalia's current birth rate is estimated at 6.2 births per women, and the country's population is estimated to grow more than 500% by 2100.<sup>433</sup> The competition for very limited resources and jobs is only going to get more

<sup>426</sup> Hansen, Stig Jarle. *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005-2012*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, p. 4.

<sup>427</sup> Fergusson, James. "Somalia: A Failed State Is Back from the Dead." *The Independent*, January 13, 2013. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/somalia-a-failed-state-is-back-from-the-dead-8449310.html>.

<sup>428</sup> "Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development." *United Nations Development Programme*, 2012. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/Somalia-human-development-report-2012/>.

<sup>429</sup> Warner, J.R.

<sup>430</sup> *Global Terrorism Index: Capturing the Impact of Terrorism for the Last Decade*, 46.

<sup>431</sup> Ostebo, 5. See also "Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development," xix.

<sup>432</sup> Howard, Roger. "Mali's 2.5 Percent Problem." *Foreign Policy*, January 28, 2013.

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/01/28/mali\\_s\\_population\\_growth\\_problem](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/01/28/mali_s_population_growth_problem), p. 1.

<sup>433</sup> "Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering Youth for Peace and Development," xix. See also *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, Highlights and Advance Tables*. New



intense in Somalia, and the government faces a formidable challenge in keeping Somali youth away from the seductive calls of terrorists promising a radical Islamic solution.

### ***Clan, class, racial, and regional divisions***

It is tempting to consider Somalia essentially a homogenous society given that its people mostly share the same language, religion, culture, and ethnicity, but Somalia is actually a deeply, deeply divided society. Clans, for instance, are highly complex entities that are riven by class and status divisions, generally divided between “commoners” and “nobles.” The latter trace their lineage back to the mythical founders of their clans, while the former’s forebears were either assimilated into a clan or were in some other fashion not “lineally pure.”<sup>434</sup> These class divisions generally can be traced between the pastoralist Northerners (the “nobles” from the *Samale* line) and the agropastoralists (the “commoners” from the *Sab* line<sup>435</sup>) who farm the area between the Shabelle and Juba Rivers.<sup>436</sup> These divisions have historically been a source of tension as the northern “noble” clans indulge in feelings of “proud superiority and contempt” for the Rahaweyn and Digil clans in the South, who for their part engage in “resentment and isolation.”<sup>437</sup>

The 1980s hosted the rise of a new class distinction within Somalia, that of the urban elites. Flush with money and with access to the halls of power, they used land registration laws (backed with a healthy dollop of armed intimidation) to claim large swathes of the rich agricultural land in the South. The rural agriculturalists were helpless to stop the expropriation,<sup>438</sup> and yet another fissure appeared within Somali society.

Related to the class divisions within Somalia are the racial divisions. An exception to the superficial homogeneity of the Somali people, the Bantus are a small minority of ethnically distinct agriculturists who settled along the Juba and Shabelle Rivers and who appear more “African” than the average Somali.<sup>439</sup> They are referred to as *jareer* (“hard, kinky hair”) in the Somali language, and constitute “denigrated minorities [who are]

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York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2011, p. xvi.

<sup>434</sup> Besteman, 583.

<sup>435</sup> As explained in “Somalia” (July 27, 2010), the “Sab” designation is considered offensive by the Sab branch of the Somalis as the Samale often use it as a pejorative. This paper will instead use the clan names of the two clans of the Sab line, “Rahaweyn” and “Digil.”

<sup>436</sup> Lewis (*A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*), 6-7.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>438</sup> Besteman, 585-586.

<sup>439</sup> Luling, 16.

socially inferior.”<sup>440</sup> The Bantus suffered terribly during the post-Barre civil war as they had no way to protect themselves, making them easy prey for rapacious bands on the prowl for plunder.<sup>441</sup> Bantus are so concerned about falling victim that, in the early 1900s, they welcomed the Italian occupation because it “meant additional security and protection” from other Somali tribes.<sup>442</sup>

These class and racial divisions lead directly to regional divisions. The Rahaweyn, Digil, and Bantu clans are clustered in the South along the Juba and Shabelle Rivers, making the South a target of disdain for the pastoralist-dominated North. This has resulted in differing regional interests<sup>443</sup> with real consequences; just before independence and during the years before the 1969 coup, the Hizbia Digil-Mirifle Somali (HDMS) political party that represented the Digil-Mirifle clans, advocated for federalism “with a large measure of regional autonomy” because they feared that centralized rule “would mean discrimination against them and rule by northerners.”<sup>444</sup> And after unifying with southern Somalia in 1961, Somalilanders became “second-class citizens” and “junior partner[s] in the state”; “the overwhelming majority” of the brutality inflicted by Siad Barre’s regime on the North was perpetrated by “Southerners whom the people of Somaliland came to no longer see as co-nationals, but as an alien occupying force.”<sup>445</sup>

### ***Xenophobia and racism***

Given the highly parochial nature of their clan loyalties, it is unsurprising that Somali society has a xenophobic streak. Mary Harper, the BBC World Service’s Africa Editor, has documented some of the creative slurs Somalis employ to describe outsiders, including *gaalo*, which means “nonbelievers” or “infidels.”<sup>446</sup> And Omar Hammami, an American citizen and AQ member, in a letter peevishly commented upon Somalis’ “mistrust of foreigners” and their “nature that prevents outside interference and prohibits

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<sup>440</sup> Besteman, 583-584.

<sup>441</sup> Finnegan, William. “Rain in a Dry Land. Letter From Maine: New in Town.” *PBS*, December 11, 2006. [http://www.pbs.org/pov/raininadryland/special\\_01\\_04.php#.UWXgq4XIM7A](http://www.pbs.org/pov/raininadryland/special_01_04.php#.UWXgq4XIM7A). 3.

<sup>442</sup> Hess, 93.

<sup>443</sup> Besteman, 586.

<sup>444</sup> Luling, 87.

<sup>445</sup> Sweden, Jama. “Somaliland’s Quest for Recognition: A Challenge for the International Community.” In *War Destroys: Peace Nurtures*, edited by Richard Ford, Hussein M. Adam, and Edna Adan Ismail, 169–192. Lawrenceville, NJ: The Red Sea Press, Inc., 2004, p. 173.

<sup>446</sup> Harper (2012), 29.

suggestions from others.”<sup>447</sup> Ioan Lewis simply remarks that Somalis traditionally have “an open contempt for other people.”<sup>448</sup>

This contempt turns to racism at times. Somalis do not consider themselves Africans—Somalis in northeastern Kenya felt this so strongly that they demanded British colonialists classify them as “Asian,” which probably was “less due to seeking benefits of being considered ‘Asian’ and more to their conviction of ethnic superiority.” In fact, Somalis’ distaste for being ruled by “dark-skinned, Bantu people” may have been a major cause of the *Shifita* War in Kenya.<sup>449</sup>

Mary Harper writes that many Somalis see themselves as “somehow apart and often make cruel jokes at the expense of people they describe as ‘Africans,’ ‘blacks,’ or ‘those with broad noses’.”<sup>450</sup> As discussed earlier, “black” Somali people groups such as the Bajuni and Bantu are despised by other Somalis who sometimes refer to the Bantu as *Adoon*, or slave, an inflammatory practice that continues even among some Somali communities in the U.S.<sup>451</sup> So in other words, many Somalis have a certain antipathy for people of the same ethnicity of most of the countries contributing troops to AMISOM.

### ***A legacy of resistance?***

This brings us to Somalis’ history of resisting foreigners. The story is mixed here as in the past Somalis have been happy to strike bargains with foreign powers if they believed it was in their interest to do so, as per the earlier discussion on the pragmatism of Somalis. For instance, in 1896 two Northern sultans, Yusuf Ali and Osman Mahmud, graciously offered to raise a Somali force to assist the Italians in defeating the Somalis’ ancient foe, the Ethiopians.<sup>452</sup> And along the Benadir coast, a number of clans signed treaties with the Royal Italian East African Company that in essence pledged loyalty to the company administration because of the economic benefits it had brought.<sup>453</sup>

But there are also tales still famous today in Somalia of nationalists resisting foreign forces. Somalis still romanticize certain warlords who resisted British colonialism, and view them as “Robin Hood”-type characters who used cunning and violence to get

<sup>447</sup> Boniface, Bosire. “Al-Shabaab Ineffective Due to Mistrust of Foreigners, al-Amriki Says.” *Sabahi*, January 15, 2013.

[http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/01/15/feature-01](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2013/01/15/feature-01).

<sup>448</sup> Lewis, Ioan. *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland*. (London: Hurst and Co., 2008), p. 25.

<sup>449</sup> Ringquist, 100, 103.

<sup>450</sup> Harper (2012), 14.

<sup>451</sup> Finnegan, 4.

<sup>452</sup> Hess, 126.

<sup>453</sup> Cassanelli, 202.

ahead.<sup>454</sup> The most well-known example is one that has already been mentioned, that of the anti-British insurgency leader Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan, the “Mad Mullah.” Hassan served as a model for some violent jihadist groups in Somalia,<sup>455</sup> and his name was invoked during the First Battle of Mogadishu to rally attacks against the American force.<sup>456</sup> He is still known as “the Master” in modern-day Somalia,<sup>457</sup> suggesting that some Somalis could find his example of fighting against foreigners compelling.

### ***An un-neighborly history***

The most concerning aspect of Somalia’s history is the country’s deep antagonism towards Ethiopia and Kenya. Ethiopia is Somalia’s greatest enemy; Somalis and Ethiopians have been fighting with each other since the fifteenth century,<sup>458</sup> with their most recent tussle, known as the Ogaden War, ending in 1978 after the Somali army was driven from Ethiopia.<sup>459</sup> Ethiopia’s 2006 invasion of Somalia sparked riots in Mogadishu, and fighters determined to resist the ENDF streamed into al-Shabaab’s ranks, including some Somali-Americans.<sup>460</sup> President Mohamud recently characterized Somalia’s history with Ethiopia as one of “conflict, a history of hate, a history of violence, a history of animosity.”<sup>461</sup> Though he went on to say that both countries were dedicated to putting that history behind them, 600 years of rancor cannot be easily swept away.

Somalia’s relationship with Kenya is also difficult. The *Shifita* War was fought from 1963-1968 between the newly-independent state of Kenya and ethnic Somalis in the northeastern part of the country who were fighting to join with Greater Somalia. The *shifita* were for several years supported by the Mogadishu government, but after some hard fighting the uprising was eventually quelled.<sup>462</sup> Since the war, however, there have been “numerous instances” of the Kenyan government abusing Somalis in that area:

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<sup>454</sup> Ringquist, 100.

<sup>455</sup> Harper (2012), 75.

<sup>456</sup> Freeman, Colin. “Ahmed Abdi Godane: The New ‘Mad Mullah’ Bent on Jihad.” *The Telegraph*, September 28, 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/10341725/Ahmed-Abdi-Godane-the-new-Mad-Mullah-bent-on-jihad.html>.

<sup>457</sup> Bartholet.

<sup>458</sup> Laitin and Samatar, 11.

<sup>459</sup> Tareke, 186.

<sup>460</sup> Gettleman (December 25, 2006). See also Aynte (April 4, 2012), and Temple-Raston.

<sup>461</sup> “The Future of Governance in Somalia.” Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 17, 2013. <http://csis.org/event/future-governance-somalia>.

<sup>462</sup> Ringquist, 109.

Most notable was the implementation of a shoot-to-kill policy in the North East Region, two massacres in Garissa and Wajir...and a nationwide 'screening' of all ethnic Somali's [sic] residing in Kenya during late 1989 and early 1990. According to Africa Watch these measures led to instances of rape, beatings, stock seizures, detentions, arrests and potentially many thousands of deaths that remain officially unrecognized.<sup>463</sup>

Relations between Kenya and Somalia continue to be "severely strained," especially given Somalia's irredentist claims on northeastern Kenya.<sup>464</sup>

### ***Experience with government***

The new Somali government no doubt understands better than anyone that Somalia does not have a strong history of centralized government. The critical piece around which AMISOM's entire endeavor revolves, a viable and legitimate Somali government, has very little precedent in Somali history. One author writes, "other than the combined effect of the clan system, tenets of Islam, and *xeer*, there was no centralized Somali authority or centralized state on any level previous to the colonial era."<sup>465</sup>

That might be going too far as there have been instances in Somalia's history of government-like structures, but none of them possessed the breadth or depth of control associated with the government of a modern nation-state. In the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, the Adal Sultanate grew to possess large swathes of northern Somalia, but it is unclear how much control over Somalis the Sultanate actually had.<sup>466</sup> From the mid-thirteenth century until the seventeenth century, a confederation of tribes known as the Ajuran Confederation, led by a sub-clan of the Hawiye tribe, the Ajuran, controlled large parts of what is today south-central Somalia.<sup>467</sup> However, the confederation never formed "a cohesive territorial entity," but rather controlled a patchwork of areas in the south-central region.<sup>468</sup>

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<sup>463</sup> Whittaker, Hannah. "Pursuing Pastoralists: The Stigma of *Shifto* During the '*Shifto* War' in Kenya, 1963-1968." *Eras* 10 (November 2008). <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/publications/eras>, p. 17.

<sup>464</sup> Moller (2009), 9, 23.

<sup>465</sup> Fox, 61.

<sup>466</sup> Mukhtar, 44. See also Lewis (*A Modern History of Somalia: Nation and State in the Horn of Africa*), 27.

<sup>467</sup> Luling, 17. See also Mukhtar, 35.

<sup>468</sup> Cassanelli, 102.

The Ajuran dynasty was eventually driven from power in the 1700s by the joint efforts of the Wacdaan (a sub-clan of the Hawiye) and the Geledi. Thereafter these two clans, though divided by differences “in way of life, language, and tradition,” nonetheless “formed a close and lasting alliance.” They were also eventually joined by another clan, the Murusade, and took as clients a *jareer* group farming along the banks of the Shabelle River. This state, now known as the Geledi state, became modern-day Afgoye town, and the same clans still control it today.<sup>469</sup>

The Geledi state is interesting as it was comprised of disparate clans and ethnicities spontaneously allying, and then maintaining that alliance after the exigencies of war faded. The state “possessed a quite elaborate system of government with ranked office holders,” likely inspired by the structure of the coastal Arab city-states, and during the height of its power was able to demand tributes from its allies.<sup>470</sup>

However, the Geledi state cannot be considered the equivalent of a modern nation-state. The ruling sultan “never actually administered his confederation’s constituents; he did not stand at the head of any hierarchy of officials who attended to the day to day affairs of the various clans,”<sup>471</sup> nor was the state ever anything more than a “loose confederation of southern clans.”<sup>472</sup> Furthermore, the Geledi state was held together by “shared economic needs, the threat of a common enemy, and strong leadership;” when that leadership began to appear weak, as when the Geledi leader Sultan Yusuf Muhammad was killed in battle in 1848, clans began to desert the alliance,<sup>473</sup> no doubt feeling their interests were no longer being properly served. The Geledi state eventually fell apart after several ill-advised military campaigns and a cattle plague, and ended up being “torn by internal conflicts.”<sup>474</sup>

During the colonial era, Britain did little to set up in what is now Somaliland the sort of government institutions that marked much of its imperial efforts in other colonies; it saw Somaliland as little more than a convenient spot from which to supply its garrison in Aden,<sup>475</sup> and so ruled with a “light, sympathetic touch.”<sup>476</sup> The British did not, then, even

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<sup>469</sup> Luling, 19.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid, 174, 184. See also Mukhtar, 29.

<sup>471</sup> Luling, 181, citing Cassanelli, Lee V., *The Benaadir Past: Essays in Southern Somali History*, Ph.D. thesis; University of Wisconsin, 1973.

<sup>472</sup> Cassanelli, 187.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid, 188.

<sup>474</sup> Luling, 26.

<sup>475</sup> “Somalia” (July 27, 2010).

<sup>476</sup> Lewis (1994), 5.

try to put a government structure in place that bears any resemblance to the current Somali government.

There is some dispute among scholars over the intrusiveness of the Italian colonization project in the southern part of the country. One author contends that while Italy did extend control into the hinterlands, it utilized a level of indirect rule even more benign than that normally employed by the British.<sup>477</sup> But others write that Italy ruled its colony in a very aggressive manner; this fact, coupled with an anti-slavery law the Italians passed, resulted in a sharp rebellion erupting from the Bimal clan.<sup>478</sup> But whether the Italians' colonization was so light as to be barely noticeable by Somalis, or highly intrusive, neither model bears much resemblance to the structure of the new Somali government.

As mentioned earlier, the democratic government formed after independence in 1960 lasted only 9 years and was characterized by inexperience, inefficiency, and corruption.<sup>479</sup> It was inappropriately centralized and unable to build any cohesion among the different political concerns within the country, leading to an explosion in the number of political parties vying for power.<sup>480</sup> Clannism was rampant; in their fierce competition for electoral support, the parties made appeals along regional and clan lines, which served to exacerbate the already-existing fractures within the society.<sup>481</sup>

The longest lasting, and most centralized, of modern Somali governments was the uninspiring and brutal regime of the dictator Mohamed Siad Barre. He ruled with an iron fist until 1991 when his regime could no longer bear the weight of multiple rebellions and collapsed into a bloody shambles.<sup>482</sup> Since then, Somalia has seen no true governance; a series of weak transitional governments rose and fell seemingly with the seasons, while the ICU held power only briefly.<sup>483</sup> Ostensibly, AMISOM and the rest of the international community are dedicated to helping a sovereign, legitimate national government that controls all the land within its borders take root in Somalia; if this happens, it will be the first time in that country's history it has.

So to sum up: a foreign force composed primarily of black, Christian troops that hail from several countries that are Somalia's traditional enemies have invaded a xenophobic

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<sup>477</sup> Moller, Bjorn. *Religion and Conflict in Africa*. Danish Institute for International Studies, 2006, pg. 69.

<sup>478</sup> Hess, 87, 102. See also Fox, 91, 101.

<sup>479</sup> Nelson, 3.

<sup>480</sup> Fox, 11. See also Ahmed, Ismail I., 116.

<sup>481</sup> Nelson, 3.

<sup>482</sup> Besteman, 91.

<sup>483</sup> Harper (2012), 199. See also Barnes and Hassan, 151.

Muslim country infamous for its violent tribal politics and which has a history of resisting foreign armies, but no history of supporting a government.



## A Counterinsurgency Report Card

### Too many mistakes

The geographical, cultural, and historical realities of Somalia are going to narrow the coalition's window of opportunity, but it still has the fact of al-Shabaab's unpopularity giving it time. And history is not destiny: the coalition can conduct itself in such a way as to make a compelling case to the Somali people that the government is worthy of their loyalty, or at the very least of their tolerance. So how is the coalition doing so far with this task?

The first step to countering a problem is accurately identifying it, and there are indications that coalition forces recognize the group's latest evolution. In January 2013, an AU official working on Somalia issues explicitly described al-Shabaab as waging a guerrilla war, and a *Foreign Policy* article reported that Kenya does not want to risk becoming entangled in a guerrilla war like the one in Mogadishu.<sup>484</sup> And nearly two years before Kenya invaded Somalia, it promised to U.S. officials that "not a single Kenyan boot" would enter Somalia for fear of stirring up Somali resentment at a foreign invasion.<sup>485</sup> Of course, Kenya ultimately did put Kenyan boots on the ground in Somalia, but it seems safe to say the coalition understands the potential for an insurgency.

So if the coalition recognizes al-Shabaab's insurgency, has it responded with a robust counterinsurgency campaign? The answer is a resounding "no," and the problems began at the very beginning.

### Planning: too little, too late

Counterinsurgency campaigns are difficult, complex undertakings fraught with peril for the unprepared or inexperienced; because of this, meticulous planning must be conducted before any military adventures begin. A RAND report spells out just what is required:

<sup>484</sup> "Somali Militant Group Seeking New Territories." *The East African*, January 28, 2013. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Somali-militant-group-seeking-new-territories/-/2558/1677792/-/ghe34x/-/index.html>. See also Verini, 4.

<sup>485</sup> Boswell, Alan. "WikiLeaks: U.S. Warned Kenya Against Invading Somalia." *McClatchy*, November 18, 2011. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/11/18/130739/wikileaks-us-warned-kenya-against.html>.

The lead-up to most nation-building missions affords ample time for detailed planning, which should involve both the civilian and military components of the mission. Among the first issues to be addressed are the mission's objective, the intended scale of commitment, and the institutional arrangements for managing the intervention...Most interventions are launched for some immediate, usually negative purpose, e.g., to halt aggression, civil war, famine, genocide, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This purpose may be achieved quite quickly, but the intervening authorities will then be left with the more difficult, time-consuming, and expensive task of refashioning the society in which they have intervened.<sup>486</sup>

The most recent cautionary tale about the perils of not planning a counterinsurgency campaign is the U.S.'s experience in the Iraq War. Gordon and Trainor's essential book on the invasion of Iraq, *Cobra II*, lays out in painful detail how serious planning for the post-war phase of the intervention was undertaken only several months before the actual invasion, and then was only done with a strong aversion for state-building. Once the insurgency erupted, the military had no comprehensive plan for suppressing it, and the repercussions were dire.<sup>487</sup>

There are a number of indicators that suggest that AMISOM has neither planned nor is executing an effective counterinsurgency strategy. More than a year after Kenya began its incursion, it had "only just begun planning for the peace" and "neither AMISOM nor the KDF appear to have a long-term counterinsurgency strategy."<sup>488</sup>

Nor does it look as though AMISOM has an agreed-upon definition of victory, which suggests it has not done critical long-range planning that would include an exit strategy. In August 2012, Lt. Gen. Andrew Gutti, overall commander of the AMISOM forces, said that AMISOM would pull out once it had trained a Somali army.<sup>489</sup> An official at the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in February 2012 that the offensive would continue until al-Shabaab was "wiped out" or unable to launch any significant military strikes.<sup>490</sup> For its part, Kenya's Defence Ministry Spokesman initially projected Kenya's

<sup>486</sup> *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND National Security Research Division, 2007, p. xix-xx.

<sup>487</sup> Gordon and Trainor, 568-569, 579.

<sup>488</sup> Verini, 4.

<sup>489</sup> Mwenda, Andrew M. "Taking the War Beyond Mogadishu." *The Independent*, August 11, 2012. <http://www.independent.co.ug/cover-story/6251?task=view>.

<sup>490</sup> "Ethiopia Claims Victory on Al Shabab Ahead of Key Somalia Summit." *The Africa Report*, February 22, 2012. <http://www.theafricareport.com/news-analysis/ethiopia-claims-victory-on-al-shabab-ahead-of-key-somalia-summit.html>.

incursion lasting for “three or four weeks;” Kenya has since said the campaign will be long but that it will “see it through.”<sup>491</sup> And another article reports that the taking of Kismayo, accomplished in October 2012, was the military “endgame” of AMISOM’s efforts.<sup>492</sup> Such confusion suggests that either AMISOM does not have a grand strategy, which would obviously imply it does not have a counterinsurgency strategy, or that it is not being forthcoming about it.

If AMISOM did have a coordinated counterinsurgency plan, it should be manifesting itself now that its troops have gained control of large parts of the country. But tellingly, there is only slight evidence of coalition troops employing counterinsurgency tactics now that they have pushed al-Shabaab out of many areas. Then-commander of Ugandan forces in Somalia, Brigadier Paul Lokech, did claim that the UPDF has already been conducting counterinsurgency operations in Mogadishu, and in June 2013 AMISOM switched to an explicit protection-of-civilians strategy.<sup>493</sup>

But as of late 2012, Kenyan soldiers were not running regular patrols into Kismayo and had little presence there at all, instead staying inside their bases on the outskirts of town.<sup>494</sup> Nor were they collecting intelligence from the local Somalis, cordoning villages, conducting house raids, or performing any other tactics of a counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>495</sup> In fact, one news article reports that the United Nations has trained AMISOM forces in “evasion tactics” that consist of “fewer foot patrols in narrow streets and increased patrols in armored personnel carriers.”<sup>496</sup> Such tactics will make it difficult for AMISOM soldiers to forge a connection with the population, a critical component of any counterinsurgency campaign.

It is possible that Kenya is deliberately keeping its profile as low as possible in the Kismayo region in order to avoid the perception of an occupation, which would explain its lack of high-profile counterinsurgency activities. There is merit to that motivation, as it

<sup>491</sup> Kantai, Parselelo. “Somalia, Kenya in 2012: Regional War, National Elections.” *The Africa Report*, December 7, 2011. <http://www.theafricareport.com/2011120750177054/east-horn-africa/somalia-kenya-in-2012-regional-war-national-elections-50177054.html>.

<sup>492</sup> Verini, 1.

<sup>493</sup> Mwenda. See also Williams, Paul D. “The African Union Mission in Somalia and Civilian Protection Challenges.” *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 2, no. 2 (2013): 1–17. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.bz>, p. 3.

<sup>494</sup> Yusuf, Mohammed, and Alan Boswell. “Visit to Kismayo, Somalia, Shows Al Shabab Militants Still Roam Countryside.” *McClatchy*, December 6, 2012. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/12/06/176618/visit-to-kismayo-somalia-shows.html>.

<sup>495</sup> Verini, 4.

<sup>496</sup> Lynch, Colum. “Soldier of Misfortune.” *Foreign Policy*, August 6, 2013. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/08/06/soldier\\_of\\_misfortune\\_david\\_bax\\_somalia\\_united\\_nations?page=0,3](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/08/06/soldier_of_misfortune_david_bax_somalia_united_nations?page=0,3), p. 2.

might forestall the creation of Accidental Guerrillas, but it is a delicate balance to strike. As will be discussed later, security is absolutely critical to establishing the legitimacy of a government and winning the population's support, and the KDF runs the risk of encouraging armed challenges to its control of the area if it does not aggressively pursue counterinsurgency.

There is another, more troubling explanation which we will explore in more detail later. The KDF appears to be implementing its alleged plan to carve out Jubaland, which has entailed allowing its allied militia, Ras Kamboni, to take over security in the area. This report argues that the SFG will have to be very decentralized to have any hope of success, so a Jubaland administration is not necessarily a bad thing. However, the manner in which this administration has been set up, specifically the way in which it has badly undercut the SFG's efforts to build even a minimal amount of credibility in the area, has been damaging.

### **Training: "Shoot and duck"**

Whatever the actions and motivations of the different AMISOM actors, the coalition is not conducting counterinsurgency in a coordinated or planned fashion, which means it is not doing it well. But this is, unfortunately, far from the last mistake the coalition has made.

A foot soldier's role in fighting an insurgency is critical. Soldiers interact most frequently with the population whose support is so important, so soldiers blundering about with no idea of how to properly execute the tasks of counterinsurgency can be very damaging. Counterinsurgent troops need a different skill set from the traditional warrior's, which means that specific training and even a certain mentality is required, a "flair for dealing with civilians."<sup>497</sup> The U.S. Marine Corps believed so strongly in the necessity of training troops specifically for fighting insurgents that its *Small Wars Manual* devotes an entire chapter to the subject.<sup>498</sup>

Without such training, the results can be damaging indeed. The Nigerian army is currently having extreme difficulty suppressing Boko Haram in the northern parts of the country, in part because its soldiers are untrained in counterinsurgency tactics.<sup>499</sup> President George W. Bush's administration focused on building a U.S. force designed for conventional conflict, which left it ill-equipped to go about necessary nation-building

<sup>497</sup> Boot, 299.

<sup>498</sup> *U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual*, Chapter 4.

<sup>499</sup> "A Threat to the Entire Country." *The Economist*, October 29, 2012.

activities in Iraq and Afghanistan, and contributed to the Iraqi population turning against the American presence.<sup>500</sup> And in the war that haunts the U.S. still, Vietnam, part of the blame for the loss has been pinned on the fact that U.S. servicemen were untrained in counterinsurgency tactics.<sup>501</sup>

The bulk of the troops trying to suppress al-Shabaab have no training in the specific skill set necessary to succeed in counterinsurgency. Kenya's elite forces in Somalia, the Rangers and Special Forces, have had some counterinsurgency training from the British and Americans.<sup>502</sup> Yet the rest of Kenya's forces are a different story; one KDF soldier offered the following analysis of fighting insurgents: "In guerrilla warfare you don't need training...You just need to know how to shoot and duck."<sup>503</sup> And one of Kenya's allies in the current fight, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, publicly questioned whether the Kenyan military was prepared for guerrilla fighting.<sup>504</sup>

The counterinsurgent records of the other security forces that make up the coalition are mixed, but none are crack counterinsurgent forces. The ENDF has fought a number of domestic guerrilla movements in the Oromia, Afar, and Ogaden regions,<sup>505</sup> but failed to quell the Shabaab-led insurgency that began in 2006 in Somalia and which resulted in it being driven from the country. The UPDF has experience fighting insurgents in the north of Uganda, yet its actions there have been stained by credible allegations of human rights abuses, and it remains feared and disliked by some Ugandans in the area.<sup>506</sup> And Somalia's national security forces have a whole host of problems, not least that they are largely composed of "groups of untrained young men" used to the power a weapon brings.<sup>507</sup> These are serious issues as deploying troops untrained in counterinsurgency is an ongoing liability for the coalition, and increases the chances for mistakes that will narrow its window of opportunity.

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<sup>500</sup> *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, v. See also Gordon and Trainor, 567.

<sup>501</sup> Boot, 299.

<sup>502</sup> Gisesa (December 18, 2012), 1.

<sup>503</sup> Verini, 4.

<sup>504</sup> Boswell (November 18, 2011).

<sup>505</sup> "World Armies>Ethiopia." *Jane's World Armies*, November 30, 2012.

<sup>506</sup> Hopwood, Julian. *We Can't Be Sure Who Killed Us: Memory and Memorialization in Post-conflict Northern Uganda*. International Center for Transitional Justice, February 2011. <http://ictj.org/publication/we-can%E2%80%99t-be-sure-who-killed-us-memory-and-memorialization-post-conflict-northern-uganda>, pp. 6, 14.

<sup>507</sup> Gatehouse, Gabriel. "Hundreds of Women Raped in Somali Camps for Displaced." *BBC News*, April 10, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-22100946>.

## **Government legitimacy: “legitimacy-deficit”?**

Central to the task of defeating an insurgency is the efficacy of the indigenous government. Prospects for a successful counterinsurgency campaign depend greatly on the “creation of an effective local government that earns the support of the people.”<sup>508</sup> The U.S. Army’s current doctrine on counterinsurgency echoes the thought: “Success requires the government to be accepted as legitimate” by the majority of the people.<sup>509</sup> There is little hope for success if the government is unable to establish legitimacy.

The U.S. has learned this lesson through sad experience in the past. In one of the seminal accounts of what went wrong in Vietnam, Robert Komer fingers the “incapacity of the regimes [the U.S.] backed” as “perhaps the greatest single constraint” to the U.S.’s chances of success in that conflict.<sup>510</sup> General Westmoreland echoed the idea when he said that “none of our efforts had any chance of success in the periods during which the government was weak, divided, and thus ineffective,”<sup>511</sup> while another commentator simply described the South Vietnamese government as a “travesty.”<sup>512</sup> More recently, some knowledgeable Afghanistan watchers believe the venality, corruption, and incompetence of the Karzai government is to blame for the difficulties the International Security Assistance Force faces in that country.<sup>513</sup>

So the international community might take heart, then, when listening to the remarks made by U.N. representative to Somalia, Augustine Mahiga, upon the occasion of new Somali parliamentarians being sworn in to office in August 2012. The ceremony marked the end of the TFG and the beginning of the process of forming a new government, the one currently in power as of this writing. Mahiga declared, “The new MPs, selected after broad-based, grass roots consultations and representing all of Somalia’s clans, have been successfully screened against objective criteria and are now ready to start their important work.”<sup>514</sup> Having a truly representative government, free from corruption and ready to work for the good of the Somali people, is truly an important first step.

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<sup>508</sup> Nagl, 29.

<sup>509</sup> “FM 3-24, MCWP 3-33.5: Counterinsurgency,” December 15, 2006, p. Chapter 1 1-20.

<sup>510</sup> Komer, R.W. *Bureaucracy Does Its Thing: Institutional Constraints on U.S.-GVN Performance in Vietnam*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand, August 1972, p.10.

<sup>511</sup> Westmoreland, General W. C., and Admiral U. S. G. Sharp. *Report on the War in Vietnam (as of 30 June 1968), Section II: Report on Operations in South Vietnam January 1964-June 1968*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1969, p. 71.

<sup>512</sup> Ball, George. *Report of the Office of the Secretary of Defense Vietnam Task Force*, IV.C.7(a), p. 8.

<sup>513</sup> Chayes (December 14, 2008).

<sup>514</sup> “Somalia Swears in Historic New Parliament.” *Aljazeera*, August 23, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2012/08/2012818183718864689.html>.

However, the process of selecting the new MPs has stirred allegations of corruption, nepotism, and clannism. Reports have alleged “political bickering, seat-buying schemes and threats of violence...with unprecedented levels of political interference, corruption and intimidation,”<sup>515</sup> “vote buying and influence peddling,”<sup>516</sup> and “intimidation and corruption.”<sup>517</sup> Perhaps not surprisingly, 14 warlords have reportedly been selected as MPs, and seats were being sold for as much as \$40,000<sup>518</sup> or as little as a few thousand, a scandal that may well have already damaged the new government’s legitimacy.<sup>519</sup>

Discontent swirls about other aspects of the process of forming the government. The U.N.’s September Forecast for Somalia expressed concern that the new government may be associated with its TFG predecessor that was on the business end of a withering report from the International Crisis Group that characterized it as “inept, increasingly corrupt and hobbled by President Sharif’s weak leadership.”<sup>520</sup> Any association by the new government with the previous one can only be negative, yet most of the new MPs are linked with the TFG in some fashion.<sup>521</sup> Nor does it help that the process of selecting the new government is similar to the one that was used to form the TFG, particularly the so-called “4.5 formula” that is supposed to guarantee sufficient representation for all Somali clans.<sup>522</sup>

We have already discussed Somalis’ suspicions of foreigners, so any hint of foreign involvement in the new government has the potential to harm its legitimacy as a true representative of the Somali people. Such was the fate of the transitional governments that preceded the current one: they “lack[ed] popular legitimacy because Somalis tend to see them as foreign creations.”<sup>523</sup> Al-Shabaab made good use of the opportunity and was able to convince swathes of the population that the most recent TFG was a “foreign concoction.”<sup>524</sup>

<sup>515</sup> Muhumuza, Rodney. “UN Official Says Somalia Transition Is Too Slow.” *The Guardian*, August 26, 2012. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/10409213>.

<sup>516</sup> Joselow (August 20, 2012).

<sup>517</sup> Straziuso, Jason. “U.S., U.N. Concerned Over Corrupt Somali Transition.” *The Washington Times*, August 14, 2012. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/aug/14/us-un-concerned-over-corrupt-somali-transition/>.

<sup>518</sup> “New President, New Laws and Old Enemies,” 7.

<sup>519</sup> Marchal (August 20, 2012).

<sup>520</sup> “Somalia: September 2012 Monthly Forecast.” *Security Council Report*, August 31, 2012. [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2012-09/somalia\\_1.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2012-09/somalia_1.php). See also *Somalia: The Transitional Government on Life Support*, i.

<sup>521</sup> “New President, New Laws and Old Enemies,” 7.

<sup>522</sup> Menkhaus (2007), 360-361.

<sup>523</sup> Harper (2012), 199.

<sup>524</sup> Aynte (September 3, 2012).

Some Somalia watchers believe association with external powers has already tainted the new government.<sup>525</sup> And al-Shabaab is desperately trying to make the case: “A spokesman for the Shabab denounced Mr. Saaid as a stooge of foreign powers. ‘The new prime minister is not different from those before him — they were all brought by Westerners,’ [said] Ali Mohamud Rage, the spokesman.”<sup>526</sup> It is unclear how average Somalis feel about the issue, but it will be damaging if they view the new government as a foreign creation.

The new constitution drafted before the selection of the parliamentarians has not escaped criticism either. The document was drafted by a panel of independent experts that did much of their work outside of Somalia until the latter stages of the task. Once the draft was completed, a number of powerful Somali interests, including the President of Puntland and representatives of ASWJ, reworked it; the constitution was edited yet again by a committee according to the wishes of those same powerful interests. All of this editing and re-editing angered many Somalis who felt the independent experts’ work had been hijacked, particularly the work they had done on the question of federalism.<sup>527</sup> One Somali writer offered this bleak assessment:

The process is fundamentally flawed because political expedience, secrecy, exclusion and hastiness mar the mandate and selection of the commission members, the drafting of the document and the adoption of the draft constitution. Therefore, like the previous charter, the current draft-constitution has legitimacy-deficit.<sup>528</sup>

The process for creating a new government and constitution will never be perfect, and there will always be discontent among those who believe they have lost out. This is especially to be expected in a country as fractured as Somalia that has been without a properly functioning government for so long. It is impossible to accurately gauge how deep Somalis’ discontent with the new government goes, and therefore how much

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<sup>525</sup> Marchal (August 20, 2012).

<sup>526</sup> Ibrahim, Mohammed. “Somalian President Picks Businessman Abdi Farah Shirdon Saaid as Prime Minister.” *The New York Times | International Herald Tribune*, October 6, 2012. [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/world/africa/somalian-president-picks-businessman-abdi-farah-shirdon-saaaid-as-prime-minister.html?\\_r=2&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/world/africa/somalian-president-picks-businessman-abdi-farah-shirdon-saaaid-as-prime-minister.html?_r=2&).

<sup>527</sup> “New President, New Laws and Old Enemies,” 6-7.

<sup>528</sup> Elmi, Afyare Abdi. “Revisiting the UN-Controlled Constitution-Making Process for Somalia.” *e-International Relations*, September 2, 2012. <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/09/02/revisiting-the-un-controlled-constitution-making-process-for-somalia/>.



damage to the government's legitimacy has been inflicted, but the variety and specificity of the reports suggests that there is cause to be concerned. The ill-will the process has stirred up in some will not alone derail the government's ability to stand as an authentic and viable alternative to al-Shabaab, but it has likely narrowed the window of opportunity the government has to make its case.

### **Security: "It is hard not to worry"**

The government may have gotten off to a shaky start, but legitimacy can be built. Counterinsurgency theory gives a good idea of where to start for the Somali government, namely establishing security. The "Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building" identifies "public security" as one of two "first-order priorities" for counterinsurgents.<sup>529</sup> Another theorist lays out the reasons why:

If the great mass of the population knows it will be protected by a strong, just government, it has no reason to cooperate with the guerrillas, and the system of intelligence and supply that sustains all guerrilla movements breaks down. Without popular support the mopping up of the hard-core die-hards is fairly easy.<sup>530</sup>

The converse of that is that if citizens feel the government cannot protect them, they are not going to cooperate with it in opposing the insurgents. In Kandahar, Afghans are hesitant to resist the Taliban for fear of retribution as there is no guarantee the government in Kabul can protect them;<sup>531</sup> the counterinsurgency expert Max Boot writes that the "key to winning the [Vietnam] war was to provide security for...villagers, to reassure them that it was safe to side with the government...the most immediate need was to provide villagers with security against the guerrillas."<sup>532</sup>

The coalition has already failed several times to protect Somalis from retribution. The ENDF and an allied militia, the ASWJ, captured El Bur in Central Somalia from al-Shabaab in March 2012, but withdrew several months later. The terrorists moved back in, and a gruesome series of beheadings of suspected coalition sympathizers followed,

<sup>529</sup> *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, xxiii.

<sup>530</sup> Wilkins, Frederick. "Guerrilla Warfare." In *Modern Guerrilla Warfare: Fighting Communist Guerrilla Movements, 1941-1961*, edited by Franklin Mark Osanka. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, p. 14.

<sup>531</sup> Chayes (December 14, 2008), 2.

<sup>532</sup> Boot, 297.

with several of the bodies being publicly displayed as a warning. A Somali commenting on the events stated, “many residents want to support the TFG, but they cannot because the TFG is unable to prevent AS retribution.”<sup>533</sup> And as recently as March 2013, al-Shabaab retook the key town of Hudur after anti-Shabaab forces and residents who feared retribution from the terrorists abandoned it.<sup>534</sup> Whatever the reason for the withdrawal, it was damaging as it suggests to civilians that the anti-Shabaab forces may abandon them at any time, leaving them vulnerable to reprisal attacks. It will now be more difficult to persuade understandably frightened Somalis, particularly from that region, to cooperate with the coalition.

It is not just counterinsurgents who recognize the need to woo the populace by ensuring their safety. When radical Islamic extremists recently took over northern Mali they imposed order on a previously unstable situation, similar to what the Taliban did in Afghanistan, and even created a hotline people could use to report crimes.<sup>535</sup> The ICU brought a level of stability and peace to Mogadishu after years of vicious conflict, and by doing so elicited “broad and even passionate public support” from many Somalis.<sup>536</sup> It is a testament to people’s need for security that al-Shabaab, despite its notorious brutality, gained a good deal of legitimacy for bringing a level of peace to the areas it dominated, something multiple Somali governments had failed to do.<sup>537</sup>

It is hard to overstate the importance of delivering security to the population during counterinsurgency campaigns, as evidenced by how much emphasis al-Shabaab has placed on the security it supposedly provided. After being driven from its strongholds, the group embarked on a propaganda campaign attempting to paint AMISOM as spoilers of the peace Shabaab had worked so hard to bring to the region. The group even offered statistics for the town of Baydhabo, claiming that crime had decreased by 98% in the region under their rule.<sup>538</sup> It also regularly takes to Twitter to make its case, such as this tweet from February 24, 2013: “With the #Kenyan invasion, however,

<sup>533</sup> *Al-Shabaab’s Recent Recapture of El Bur, Galgaduud Region*, 2-4.

<sup>534</sup> “Somali Islamists Retake Key Town.” *News24*, March 17, 2013.

<http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Somali-Islamists-retake-key-town-20130317>.

<sup>535</sup> Callimachi.

<sup>536</sup> Menkhaus (2007), 367.

<sup>537</sup> Aynte (September 3, 2012).

<sup>538</sup> *Somalia--Al-Shabaab Post-Kismaayo Messaging Presents Opportunities, Challenges*, 2.

looting, extortion & bloodshed is now the order of the day where stability, peace & tranquility reigned.”<sup>539</sup>

So far, AMISOM and the SNA have struggled mightily to establish the sort of security necessary to assure a fearful population. Al-Shabaab still controls parts of the country, and as recently as November 2012 they launched well over 100 attacks that resulted in nearly 300 deaths.<sup>540</sup> And as the group has been forced out of various cities and towns, security vacuums have often opened up behind them—a number of NGOs have reported on insecurity increasing in towns freed from al-Shabaab’s grasp, and some Somalis have reported that life was more secure, and therefore better, under al-Shabaab.<sup>541</sup> One journalist reported a “sense of fear” among Somalis he interviewed, and a reluctance to speak about al-Shabaab.<sup>542</sup> AMISOM acknowledged the “gap” that is left behind its advancing forces, and says that it is filling that hole with SNA and other Somali security forces.<sup>543</sup>

But part of the problem lies with the SNA forces. As mentioned earlier, troops fighting a counterinsurgency must not only be trained to do so, but be good troops to begin with. “Success or failure of a guerrilla movement depends...on the tenacity and aptitude of the enemy,”<sup>544</sup> meaning the counterinsurgent troops, and “disgruntled, demoralized, and ill-disciplined troops do not fight tenaciously.”<sup>545</sup> The truth of those words was perfectly demonstrated in Mali when its army crumpled in front of an onslaught by radical Islamists, with *Time* magazine characterizing the troops as “demoralized, rarely paid, sometimes barely fed, and poorly armed.”<sup>546</sup>

<sup>539</sup> (@HSMPress1). “With the #Kenyan invasion, however, looting, extortion & bloodshed is now the order of the day where stability, peace & tranquility reigned.” 24 February 2013, 11:25 a.m. Tweet.

<sup>540</sup> Besancon, Dr. Marie. *Al Shabaab: Diminishing Influence or New Strategies?* Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti: U.S. Africa Command Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, December 2012, p. 1.

<sup>541</sup> “SOMALIA: Next Stop Kismayo.” *IRIN*, August 15, 2012. <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/96110/SOMALIA-Next-stop-Kismayo>. See also “Can Somalia’s Cheap Peacekeeping Defeat al-Shabab?”

<sup>542</sup> Raghavan, Sudarsan. “American Jihadist Struggles Inside Somali Militia.” *The Washington Post*, October 5, 2012. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/american-jihadist-struggles-inside-somali-militia/2012/10/05/8da6d690-0733-11e2-9eea-333857f6a7bd\\_story\\_3.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/american-jihadist-struggles-inside-somali-militia/2012/10/05/8da6d690-0733-11e2-9eea-333857f6a7bd_story_3.html).

<sup>543</sup> Moshiri, Nazanine. “AU Forces Battle to Secure Somalia.” *Aljazeera*, September 7, 2012. <http://www.aljazeera.com/video/africa/2012/09/2012976150325193.html>.

<sup>544</sup> Laqueur, Walter. *Guerrilla: a Historical and Critical Study*. 1st ed. Boston: Little, Brown, 1976, p. 402.

<sup>545</sup> Tareke, 47.

<sup>546</sup> Perry, Alex. “French Troops in Mali: Will the Intervention Stop the Islamists?” *Time World*, January 11, 2013. <http://world.time.com/2013/01/11/the-crisis-in-mali-will-french-intervention-stop-the-islamist-advance/#ixzz2JJ4HdyaN>.

It is alarming, then, when SNA troops fight among themselves, as happened in August 2012.<sup>547</sup> And as far back as November 2012, SNA troops had not been paid for months and were getting “restless;”<sup>548</sup> that restlessness manifested itself in March 2013 when hundreds of them deserted their posts in Baidoa in protest at not receiving their wages.<sup>549</sup> And the SNA’s performance was so poor in Afgoye that AMISOM moved in to replace it, fearing that it was pushing people into the al-Shabaab fold.<sup>550</sup> Add to this the U.N. Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea reporting that al-Shabaab has infiltrated the Somali security forces,<sup>551</sup> and there is reason to be concerned about the SNA and other Somali security forces’ ability to establish security.

There is positive news, however. There has been a noticeable increase in peace in Mogadishu, and the largest market in the city, Bakara, has seen renewed life.<sup>552</sup> Yet what AMISOM and the SNA must do is convince people that the peace is permanent, as every insecure day that passes will bring another small dose of doubt to Somalis about who is best suited to protect them. One of the merchants in Bakara Market benefiting from the new peace summed the situation up perfectly: “Now truly there is opportunity here and I have many new customers...Al Shabab, though, it is a group full of clever tactics. I am concerned they can come back. Already they are killing government officials. It is hard not to worry.”<sup>553</sup>

### **Coalition politics: with friends like these**

The anti-Shabaab coalition that has formed to battle the terrorists is a diverse one, composed of a hodgepodge of local clan militias and national armies. These local militias upon which AMISOM has to rely add a destabilizing dynamic to the already creaky coalition. There are rumors that the ENDF’s and ASWJ’s withdrawal from EI Bur

<sup>547</sup> “Killing of 2 Somali Journalists Widely Condemned.” *Global Times*, August 14, 2012. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/726832.shtml>.

<sup>548</sup> Onyango-Obbo, Charles. “Tussle over Charcoal Stockpile Could Trigger New Somalia War.” *Africa Review*, November 4, 2012. <http://www.africareview.com/Special+Reports/-/979182/1611440/-/x6lk14z/-/index.html>.

<sup>549</sup> “Somali Government Forces Stage Go-slow in Baidoa.” *Sabahi*, March 12, 2013. [http://sabahionline.com/en\\_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2013/03/12/newsbrief-03](http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/newsbriefs/2013/03/12/newsbrief-03).

<sup>550</sup> “As Amisom Targets Kismayo, Al Shabaab Changes Tactics.” *Africa Confidential* 53, no. 19 (September 21, 2012), p. 8.

<sup>551</sup> “Somalia: March 2013 Monthly Forecast.”

<sup>552</sup> Howden, Daniel. “Peace Returns to Mogadishu.” *The Independent*, June 27, 2012. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/peace-returns-to-mogadishu-7888917.html>. See also Abdinor and Pflanz.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*

may have been due to an “unspecified conflict” between the groups,<sup>554</sup> another report warns of the “rising power” of local militias,<sup>555</sup> and fighting over spoils has broken out between supposed allies in some areas.<sup>556</sup> And while local militias are critical to AMISOM’s control of Mogadishu, AMISOM commanders don’t trust them, a justified wariness given that at least one militia allied with AMISOM has since become the personal army of a warlord.<sup>557</sup>

And as was explored earlier, Sheikh Ahmed Madobe, the leader of Ras Kamboni, was once considered a terrorist by the United States and was wounded in a Special Forces attack. Madobe is now the KDF’s fast friend in the Lower Juba region, and is in charge of the region for the time being.<sup>558</sup> No doubt this is precisely the sort of pragmatic arrangement that is necessary to bring a measure of peace to Somalia, yet it also does not inspire confidence in the stability of the coalition.

This has obvious implications for AMISOM regarding its alliances with militias such as the ASWJ and Ras Kamboni. It should not fool itself into believing that these militias can be relied upon in a pinch, or that they have the coalition’s best interests at heart. Their goals align for the time being with the coalition’s, but if that stops being the case, they will do what they believe is best for themselves and for their clan, even if it includes turning on their former allies.

There are squabbles both within AMISOM and with other parts of the international community as well. *The East African* newspaper ran a story that mentioned the rivalry among AMISOM troops from different countries, and contended that an arms race was ongoing between Uganda and Ethiopia.<sup>559</sup> “AMISOM sources” have grouched about Kenya pursuing its own national interests ahead of the AMISOM plan agreed upon at the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which has led to “strains in the alliance.”<sup>560</sup> Uganda, enraged by a U.N. report that alleged it was meddling in the Democratic Republic of Congo, threatened in November 2012 to withdraw entirely from

<sup>554</sup> *Al-Shabaab’s Recent Recapture of El Bur, Galgaduud Region*, 1.

<sup>555</sup> Moshiri.

<sup>556</sup> Gettleman (September 10, 2011), p. 2.

<sup>557</sup> “As Amisom Targets Kismayo, Al Shabaab Changes Tactics,” 8.

<sup>558</sup> “Jubaland Reborn: A Look at Jubba and Somalia Post-Addis Agreement.” *Somalia Newsroom*, September 3, 2013. <http://somalianewsroom.com/2013/09/03/jubaland-reborn-a-look-at-jubba-and-somalia-post-addis-agreement/>.

<sup>559</sup> Gisesa, Nyambega. “Al Shabaab War Gives Region’s Players Opportunity to Show Off Their Air Power.” *The East African*, August 25, 2012. <http://www.theeastafican.co.ke/news/Somalia-campaign-shows-regional-players-enhanced-air-power/-/2558/1487094/-/hf5v7x/-/index.html>.

<sup>560</sup> “As Amisom Targets Kismayo, Al Shabaab Changes Tactics,” 8.

AMISOM.<sup>561</sup> And the ENDF remains in Somalia yet has refused to be re-hatted under AMISOM, preferring instead the autonomy to operate “at will.”<sup>562</sup>

The area with the greatest potential for coalition disunity is the rich prize of Kismayo and its surroundings. There was disagreement between factions within the Kenyan government and military as to which candidate, Dr. Mohammed Abdi Gandi or Madobe, should lead the autonomous enclave of Jubaland, while the Ethiopians supported Madobe.<sup>563</sup> Meanwhile, the Somali government opposes altogether the creation of an autonomous Jubaland,<sup>564</sup> but that has mattered little, especially since Madobe has been in charge since Shabaab’s ouster.

On top of the obvious dangers that come with coalition in-fighting, Kenya’s actions in the Lower Juba region risk plunging it, and by association the entire coalition, into the truly Byzantine and ruthless world of Somali clan politics. An Ogaden, Madobe’s control of Kismayo gives credence to reports emerging from Kismayo that Kenya has focused on propping up the Ogaden clan, rather than focusing on winning all Somalis’ support in this critical region.<sup>565</sup> Some believe this is because the Kenyan military effort has largely been planned by Kenyan-Somalis, most notably Minister of Defence Mohamed Yusuf Haji, with ties to the Ogaden sub-clan.<sup>566</sup>

But the Kismayo region is highly diverse,<sup>567</sup> which means there are a number of tribes in the region that have a minority presence there, such as the Rahaweyn, Bantu, Dir, and Hawiye. These tribes are extremely suspicious of Kenya’s attempts to position the Ogaden as the dominant clan, and may shift their support to al-Shabaab as the group was perceived as being largely even-handed with the area’s patchwork of clans.<sup>568</sup> Furthermore, the Marehan sub-clan sided with al-Shabaab against Ras Kamboni when it was driven from Kismayo in 2009; the Marehan now fear they will face reprisals given the militia’s cozy relationship with Kenya.<sup>569</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> “Uganda to Withdraw Troops from Somalia, Says Mukasa.” *BBC News Africa*, November 2, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20187369>.

<sup>562</sup> “Breaking Ranks in Kismayo.” *Africa Confidential* 53, no. 23 (November 16, 2012), p. 7.

<sup>563</sup> “Author Vs Warlord: Jubaland’s ‘Governor-in-Waiting’.”

<sup>564</sup> “Jubaland in Jeopardy: The Uneasy Path to State-Building in Somalia.” *Crisis Group Blogs*, May 21, 2013. <http://www.crisisgroupblogs.org/africanpeacebuilding/2013/05/21/jubaland-in-jeopardy-the-uneasy-path-to-state-building-in-somalia/>.

<sup>565</sup> “As Amisom Targets Kismayo, Al Shabaab Changes Tactics,” 8.

<sup>566</sup> “Somalia and the Shabab: It’s Not Over Yet.”

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> “As Amisom Targets Kismayo, Al Shabaab Changes Tactics,” 8.

<sup>569</sup> Smith.

This convoluted saga highlights a difficult and fundamental problem that puts the entire project of stabilizing Somalia at extreme risk. As has already been established, the only way to truly defeat al-Shabaab and bring stability to Somalia is to establish a viable, legitimate, and effective (though decentralized) Somali government. Some of the national armies inside Somalia that should be dedicated to helping the government become so appear instead to be pursuing their own countries' interests first. This is unsurprising, but in doing so these countries are badly hurting the government's ability to establish legitimacy.

The so-called Jubaland Initiative is a perfect example of this. It has been rumored in many circles that Kenya is in fact attempting to set up a friendly, autonomous proxy state in the Lower Juba area where all the jockeying for position described above has been going on. Jubaland, from Kenya's perspective, would provide a buffer against al-Shabaab, the better to protect Kenya's people, its tourism industry, and the new port being constructed at Lamu.<sup>570</sup> Kenya hopes Jubaland would stem the flow of Somali refugees into Kenya and provide an area into which refugees currently in the country could be repatriated, thereby removing an unpopular source of instability from within Kenya's borders.<sup>571</sup>

Kenya has denied its intention to form Jubaland, though leaked diplomatic cables show that in talks with the U.S., Kenya had been advocating for precisely that.<sup>572</sup> Kenya's former prime minister, Raila Odinga, later tried to soothe the international community's fears about such plans, but Ethiopia, for one, remains skeptical.<sup>573</sup> Kenya has also recently urged the international community to assist in repatriating Somali refugees from Dadaab back to liberated areas of Somalia,<sup>574</sup> one of the reasons Kenya wanted Jubaland to be formed in the first place.

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<sup>570</sup> Kabukuru, Wanjohi. "Why Kenya Is Fighting In Somalia." *NewAfrican*, April 1, 2012.

<http://www.newafricanmagazine.com/features/politics/why-kenya-is-fighting-in-somalia>.

<sup>571</sup> Flood, Derek Henry. "The Jubaland Initiative: Is Kenya Creating a Buffer State in Southern Somalia?" *The Jamestown Foundation*, April 28, 2011.

[http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=37857](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37857).

<sup>572</sup> Boswell and Ibrahim.

<sup>573</sup> Kantai, Parselelo, and Patrick Smith. "The Dangers of Carving Up Somalia." *The Africa Report*, February 6, 2012. <http://www.theafricareport.com/news-analysis/somalia-the-dangers-of-a-carve-up.html>.

<sup>574</sup> "Kenya: Kibaki Urges UN, Aid Agencies to Move to Somalia." *AllAfrica*, September 25, 2012. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201209250611.html>.

The Somali government, unsurprisingly, has been largely cut out of the negotiations around the issue,<sup>575</sup> and in having much of a say in anything that goes on down there. Kenya allowed charcoal exports from Kismayo to resume over the protests of the government, and even went so far as to refuse to allow a government delegation on a fact-finding mission to leave the Kismayo airport in November 2012.<sup>576</sup> A tentative first step to resolve the issues was taken recently when the SFG and Madobe signed an agreement in Addis Ababa establishing an interim administration, but the agreement essentially punted on most of the most contentious issues.<sup>577</sup> The fundamental disagreements remain, and a confrontation is inevitable barring some extraordinary negotiation and statesmanship from Somalia's leadership.

### **Treatment of civilians: do no harm**

While the need to protect civilians from retribution has already been discussed, it makes good sense that any campaign to woo the support of the population includes treating them well, or at the very least not harming them. The USMC *Small Wars Manual* stresses that "tolerance, sympathy, and kindness" should characterize a Marine's interactions with the local population.<sup>578</sup> And John Nagl writes that only "minimum force" should ever be used when fighting an insurgency, as doing otherwise diminishes people's support for the government.<sup>579</sup>

A quick look at several other insurgencies is enough to highlight the counterproductive effect any brutality, even inadvertent, from counterinsurgent forces can have. When the Dergue regime in Ethiopia was waging its fight against insurgents, its troops at times engaged in "indiscriminate brutality" against civilians that, rather than cowering them, motivated them to further support the rebels.<sup>580</sup> During a security operation in 1998, Nepali police forces engaged in violence so arbitrary and brutal that it

<sup>575</sup> Boswell, Alan. "Kenyan-Somali Forces Launch Assault on Al Qaeda in Somalia." *McClatchy*, September 28, 2012. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2012/09/28/170037/government-forces-launch-assault.html>.

<sup>576</sup> "Breaking Ranks in Kismayo," 7.

<sup>577</sup> "Jubaland Reborn: A Look at Jubba and Somalia Post-Addis Agreement." The text of the agreement can be found here: "AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA AND JUBBA DELEGATION." *Hiiraan Online*, September 16, 2013. [http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2013/Aug/40895/agreement\\_between\\_the\\_federal\\_government\\_of\\_somalia\\_and\\_jubba\\_delegation.aspx#.Uh5CgzFj6JQ.twitter](http://www.hiiraan.com/news4/2013/Aug/40895/agreement_between_the_federal_government_of_somalia_and_jubba_delegation.aspx#.Uh5CgzFj6JQ.twitter).

<sup>578</sup> *U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual*, 1-17.

<sup>579</sup> Nagl, 30.

<sup>580</sup> Tareke, 221.



ended up driving civilians into the ranks of the Maoist insurgents,<sup>581</sup> and Iraqi civilian casualties “hardened the attitudes of many Iraqis against the Americans.”<sup>582</sup> A member of the Iraqi insurgency interviewed by journalists describes precisely this dynamic when he recounted a battle between coalition forces and fighters near a mosque:

Seeing the black smoke, the fumes, the destruction that was inflicted on Abu Hanifeh ignited the passionate aggressions, created a very strong reaction among the citizens—the normal citizens—those who are not Party members. They rushed with the Fedayeen to defend Abu Hanifeh.<sup>583</sup>

In fact, al-Shabaab has already benefited in the past from its foes abusing civilians. A former al-Shabaab fighter described how he yearned for revenge after TFG soldiers behaved like “animals” by harassing Somalis and inappropriately touching women at checkpoints. Other former fighters cited AMISOM’s bombing of towns, a practice that built “intense hatred” towards the international force,<sup>584</sup> while “the corruption and misbehavior of the transitional government was one of the jihadi group’s biggest recruiting tools.”<sup>585</sup>

The unacceptable behavior of TFG forces was unfortunately common and has been widely documented in news articles as well as reports by human rights organizations. After al-Shabaab was driven from Afgoye, complaints emerged that government forces were looting the food aid intended for the residents,<sup>586</sup> and that “widespread robbery” of local merchants by armed men wearing government uniforms broke out soon after.<sup>587</sup> And a 2011 Human Rights Watch report stated that

The population in areas controlled by the Transitional Federal Government and its allies has also been subjected to violations of international human rights and

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<sup>581</sup> Gautam, Shobha, Amrita Banskota, and Rita Manchanda. “Where There Are No Men: Women in the Maoist Insurgency in Nepal.” In *Women, War and Peace in South Asia*, 215–248. New Delhi: Sage Press, 2001.

<sup>582</sup> Gordon and Trainor, 567.

<sup>583</sup> Connors and Bingham.

<sup>584</sup> Hassan.

<sup>585</sup> Menkhaus (September 24, 2012).

<sup>586</sup> “Somalia: Officials - Gov’t Soldiers Loot Food Aid in Southern Somalia.” *AllAfrica*, July 10, 2012. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207101010.html>.

<sup>587</sup> “Somalia: Traders in Afgoye Complain About Widespread Robbery.” *AllAfrica*, July 11, 2012. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201207110596.html>.

humanitarian law. These include arbitrary arrest and detention, restrictions on free speech and assembly, and indiscriminate attacks harming civilians.<sup>588</sup>

It is unclear how much this distaste for the TFG will be transferred to the new government. However, as has already been discussed, a number of parliamentarians also served in the TFG, and of course AMISOM propped up the TFG for years, while TFG soldiers and allied militias that perpetrated abuses are still affiliated with the government. These past abuses are going to hurt the new government on some level.

Too many reports have also emerged documenting abuses against civilians by the post-TFG coalition forces. Human Rights Watch has issued several reports that are cause for serious concern, including its most recent in March 2013 concerning the plight of IDPs in Somalia:

Members of displaced communities in Mogadishu faced serious human rights abuses including rape, beatings, ethnic discrimination, restricted access to food and shelter, restrictions on movement, and reprisals when they dared to protest their mistreatment. The most serious abuses were committed by various militias and security forces, often affiliated with the government.<sup>589</sup>

The BBC documented abuse in IDP camps as well, reporting that 1,700 women were raped in 2012 in the camps, and quoting a UN estimate that 70% of the assaults were perpetrated by “men in uniform.”<sup>590</sup>

Human Rights Watch has also reported on “summary executions and torture” perpetrated by pro-government militias in Beletwayne and Baidoa,<sup>591</sup> and in December 2012 urged Kenyan authorities not to repatriate Somali refugees to liberated areas because of “ongoing fighting and abuses against civilians in areas controlled by Kenyan forces and allied militias.”<sup>592</sup>

Several cases of coalition abuse against civilians were egregious enough to spark an international outcry. One case, in January 2013, is particularly concerning as it suggests

<sup>588</sup> “*You Don’t Know Who to Blame*”: *War Crimes in Somalia*. New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, 2011, p. 2.

<sup>589</sup> *Hostages of the Gatekeepers: Abuses Against Internally Displaced in Mogadishu, Somalia*, 3-4.  
<sup>590</sup> Gatehouse.

<sup>591</sup> “Somalia: Pro-Government Militias Executing Civilians.” *Human Rights Watch*, March 28, 2012.  
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/28/somalia-pro-government-militias-executing-civilians>.

<sup>592</sup> “Kenya: Somalia Unsafe for Refugees to Return.” *Human Rights Watch*, March 30, 2012.  
<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/03/30/kenya-somalia-unsafe-refugees-return>.

the government tried to cover up a crime committed by government security forces and then engaged in reprisals against those who reported the abuse. A woman who reported being raped by members of the Somali security forces was charged along with several others for “insulting a government body,” among other charges.<sup>593</sup> The charges against her were eventually dropped, though the journalist involved in the case remained in jail for months afterwards.<sup>594</sup> And in August 2013 Somali media “widely reported” on the horrific story of a woman who credibly accused AMISOM troops of gang-raping her over the course of several days inside their base—AMISOM is currently investigating the charges.<sup>595</sup>

In April 2013, President Mohamud in a speech to police cadets in Mogadishu admitted for the first time that Somali security forces had engaged in rapes against civilians—he went on to say that security forces who rape and rob Somalis need to be fought the same as al-Shabaab.<sup>596</sup> It was an important and helpful step by the president, and hopefully it will serve as a warning to the Somali security forces that mistreatment of civilians will not be tolerated. Every incident of such abuse badly hurts the coalition’s cause, and will make some Somalis wonder if they might not be better off withholding support from the coalition or even actively assisting al-Shabaab.

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<sup>593</sup> “Somalia: Anger over Woman Charged After Alleging Rape.” *BBC News Africa*, January 30, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21259395>.

<sup>594</sup> “Somali Woman Cleared in ‘False Rape’ Case.” *BBC News Africa*, March 3, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-21647203>.

<sup>595</sup> “African Union Troops Accused of Somalia Gang Rape.” *FoxNews.com*, August 15, 2013. <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/08/15/african-union-troops-accused-somalia-gang-rape/>.

<sup>596</sup> Som, Maalik. “Somalia President Admits Rapes By Security Forces.” *AllAfrica*, April 10, 2013. [http://allafrica.com/stories/201304100672.html?aa\\_source=slideout](http://allafrica.com/stories/201304100672.html?aa_source=slideout).

## Who is Winning?

It would be wonderful to be able to poll Somalis to ascertain how they feel about the coalition's efforts so far, thereby giving us a clue as to how long the coalition has to make its case to the Somali people before they start to resist the coalition. But the only evidence available to us is anecdotal or based on deduction, and it gives us a mixed picture.

The coalition is still ensconced in the window of opportunity provided it by al-Shabaab's unpopularity, as there is not a broad-based insurgency under way at the moment. Violence continues, but that was to be expected.

But there are rumblings that show the coalition's mistakes have been noticed. Kenya's actions in the Kismayo region are a particular sore spot with some Somalis: as early as October 2012, some Somalis were referring to the KDF as "foreign invaders."<sup>597</sup> And a group of Somali MPs threatened to bring forward a motion to kick the KDF out of Kismayo because it allowed charcoal exports to resume in defiance of the government; they were also upset by the KDF's mishandling of the security situation. Some in the Somali government tried to downplay the MPs' reaction by saying that they were simply upset because they saw the KDF incursion as a "foreign occupation."<sup>598</sup> If that is the case, it is even more worrisome than if the MPs had merely been upset about security and charcoal.

A significant number of Somalis believe that Kenya has tampered with Somali politicians in order to reach a favorable agreement on contested sea borders, an issue Kenya would like to clear up so they can pursue hydrocarbon exploration in the area.<sup>599</sup> This rumor likely has particular resonance with Somalis as it touches on an old fear of foreign exploitation that dates back to at least the 1800s, when interriverine clans were suspicious the British were trying to grab their land.<sup>600</sup>

Another sticking point is Kenya's withdrawal schedule. One journalist reported in March 2013 that there was a growing expectation among Somalis that the KDF would be

<sup>597</sup> "Somalia and the Shabab: It's Not Over Yet."

<sup>598</sup> Oluoch, Fred. "Kenya in the Spotlight Over Its Role in Kismayo's Administration." *The East African*, November 17, 2012. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Kenya-in-the-spotlight-over-its-role-in-Kismayu/-/2558/1622532/-/mpm4joz/-/index.html>, p. 1.

<sup>599</sup> "As Amisom Targets Kismayo, Al Shabaab Changes Tactics," 8. See also Verini, 2.

<sup>600</sup> Cassanelli, 203.

leaving “soon.”<sup>601</sup> But Kenya has given no indication that it plans to leave in the near future; in fact, it nearly doubled its force strength inside Somalia since December 2012.<sup>602</sup> This is setting up a serious mismatch between Somali expectations and reality, and could easily spark the Accidental Guerrilla phenomenon when Somalis begin to wonder why Kenyan soldiers are still inside their country.

But there is evidence that at least some Somalis support the coalition for the moment. Locals do occasionally tell coalition forces, or at least journalists traveling with them, of the presence of roadside bombs.<sup>603</sup> And authorities in Puntland claimed to have seized a cache of weapons meant for al-Shabaab after being tipped off by locals,<sup>604</sup> while Kismayo residents alerted coalition troops to the presence of al-Shabaab’s highest-ranking female terrorist who was arrested along with other Shabaab fighters in October 2012.<sup>605</sup>

More tangible evidence of how Somalis feel about the situation inside the country is the story of expatriates, refugees, and IDPs. People vote with their feet, as the saying goes, and if Somalis are returning to the country in large numbers, it is a quite strong vote of confidence in the coalition. If they continue to stay away, or even continue to flee their homes or country, it would be a worrying sign.

The evidence seems to be clear that expatriates are starting to return in unprecedented numbers, though it is primarily to Mogadishu. A BBC article claimed that “thousands” of expatriates are returning to the capital,<sup>606</sup> largely to take advantage of business opportunities that have suddenly opened up. While reliable numbers are hard to come by, cash and investment seems to be accompanying the expatriates back to

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<sup>601</sup> Sali, Ahmed. “Case of Collective Anxiety for Greater Horn of Africa as Kenyans Vote in a Devolved Govt.” *Africa Review*, March 2, 2013. <http://www.africareview.com/Special-Reports/Anxiety-for-Greater-Horn-of-Africa-as-Kenyans-vote/-/979182/1709290/-/kdwbw1/-/index.html>.

<sup>602</sup> In December 2012, Kenya had 2,500 troops inside Somalia. Verini, 1. As of April 2013, they had more than 4,600. “Kenya – KDF.” *AMISOM*. Accessed April 23, 2013. <http://amisom-au.org/kenya-kdf/>.

<sup>603</sup> Yusuf and Boswell.

<sup>604</sup> “Somalia: Puntland Seizes Boatload of Explosives from Yemen.” *Garoweonline*, October 20, 2012. [http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Press\\_Releases\\_32/Somalia\\_Puntland\\_Seizes\\_Boatload\\_of\\_Explosives\\_from\\_Yemen\\_Press\\_Release.shtml](http://www.garoweonline.com/artman2/publish/Press_Releases_32/Somalia_Puntland_Seizes_Boatload_of_Explosives_from_Yemen_Press_Release.shtml).

<sup>605</sup> “Somalia’s Militia Remnants Arrested in Kismayu Military Clean-up.” *Panapress*, October 23, 2012. <http://www.panapress.com/Somalia-s-militia-remnants-arrested-in-Kismayu-military-clean-up--13-848375-0-lang2-index.html>.

<sup>606</sup> Harding, Andrew. “Can Expatriate Somalis Rebuild Their Country?” *BBC News*, August 14, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19254249>.

Somalia,<sup>607</sup> another indicator of people's confidence, however shaky, in Somalia's stability.

The numbers on refugee and IDP returns is mixed, but at best there appears to be a slow trickle of displaced Somalis returning to their home regions, though there also continues to be refugees leaving the country and other Somalis being displaced internally. UNHCR data shows an increase in spontaneous IDP returns every month January to March in 2013, and as of April 2013, more than 14,000 refugees had returned in the first 3 plus months of the year. But the number of returnees is still a very small fraction of the overall displaced population, and some of the repatriation is likely due to Kenya cracking down on refugees inside its borders.<sup>608</sup> So the data on refugee and IDP flows do not support any conclusions on how much optimism average Somalis feel, but watching these numbers for trends in the future could be a clue for how the coalition's project is faring.

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<sup>607</sup> McGroarty, Patrick. "Somali Banking Starts From Ground Up." *The Wall Street Journal*, April 21, 2013. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324763404578433253051605678.html>.

<sup>608</sup> According to UNHCR, as of April 2013 there were just over one million Somali refugees in the HOA region and an estimated 1.1 million Somali IDPs. *Somalia Fact Sheet*. UNHCR, April 2013. <http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/regional.php>. See also Warner, Gregory. "Fighting Stream Of Terrorist Capital, Kenya Cracks Down On Somali Businesses." *NPR*, February 23, 2013. <http://m.npr.org/story/172717056>.

## The Way Forward

Every country involved in Somalia, including those such as the United States that do not have troops on the ground but are furnishing support, can take further steps to assist in the state-building process currently underway. The following suggestions are not at all exhaustive, and skip over some obvious and important tactics of state-building, such as establishing and maintaining security, implementing DDR programs, protecting property rights, and creating a regulatory environment conducive to fostering the creation of businesses. There are any number of excellent books that delve at length into these matters, and many of their suggestions are appropriate for Somalia's situation and should be considered by everyone involved.

Rather than re-tread ground already well covered, the following section encompasses recommendations informed by Somalia's political and cultural context. Some of the recommendations are obvious but especially important or sensitive in Somalia, and some are already being implemented to varying degrees.

And while the recommendations are broken down into categories for the SFG, AMISOM, and the United States, the assumption is that the SFG is ultimately responsible for all of them, and should be the ultimate authority behind them as well as the public face, whenever possible. There is also significant overlap as some of these functions will require every member of the coalition's participation.

### **For the Somali federal government**

#### ***Create a strategy, and quickly***

The indispensable task for the coalition is to agree to a grand strategy, and to abide by it. All of the concerned countries should have a very clear idea of what the desired end state is in Somalia, and be coordinating their actions to reach it. Without a strategy, the coalition's efforts are going to be dissipated as the various components work towards different or even contradictory goals; there is little room for error in Somalia, so this needs to be done properly.

But there are two problems. First, it does not appear that a grand strategy has been agreed to, or at least not one that is in the public domain. The January 2007 communiqué from the African Union that established AMISOM iterated its commitment

to the “unity, sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Somalia;”<sup>609</sup> the current AMISOM mandate is to conduct “Peace Support Operations in Somalia to stabilize the situation in the country in order to create conditions for the conduct of humanitarian activities and an immediate take over by the United Nations.”<sup>610</sup> The UN and AU undertook a “strategic review” in December 2012 that resulted in the “Six Pillars” Plan. The plan includes measures for “Security, Rule of Law, Rebuilding a credible judiciary, Decentralisation and local/regional administrations as well as comprehensive capacity building of Somali Institutions (including the Somali National Army and Police Forces).”<sup>611</sup> These are all excellent first steps, but still do not constitute an overarching strategy.

Second, it is going to be extremely difficult to get all the disparate members of the coalition to abide by any grand strategy, particularly Kenya and Ethiopia. Kenya’s ambitions in Lower Juba seem quite clear, and they are deadly to the Mohamud government. As already discussed, they have given all appearances of trying to carve out an autonomous enclave in Lower Juba and install friendly leaders. This project is going to badly damage the Mohamud government’s legitimacy, and the state-building project more broadly.

Ethiopia is likely inside of Somalia for the same reasons it invaded in 2006, mostly to ensure Somali Islamists don’t try to lend support to the Somali secessionist movement in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia.<sup>612</sup> This is particularly important to the government as the rebels have disrupted the government’s attempts to exploit potential hydrocarbon reserves in the area.<sup>613</sup>

It is hard to gauge whether Ethiopia wants to see a strong Somali government. It would tamp down a source of instability on Ethiopia’s border, and would also allow Somali refugees inside Ethiopia to repatriate. But a strong Somalia could yet again pose a threat to Ethiopia, which no doubt would be worried about it supporting the secessionist movements in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, as happened in the 1960s

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<sup>609</sup> *Communique of the 69th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: African Union Peace and Security Council, January 19, 2007.

<sup>610</sup> “AMISOM Mandate”.

<sup>611</sup> De Clercq, Peter. “What Next for the United Nations in Somalia?” *UN Political Office for Somalia*, December 6, 2012. <http://unposomalia.tumblr.com/post/37319624321/what-next-for-the-united-nations-in-somalia>.

<sup>612</sup> Gettleman, Jeffrey. “Ethiopia Launches Open War in Somalia.” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, December 25, 2006. [http://www.utsandiego.com/uniontrib/20061225/news\\_7n25somalia.html](http://www.utsandiego.com/uniontrib/20061225/news_7n25somalia.html).

<sup>613</sup> Mbogo, Steve. “Ethiopian Rebels Warn Canadians Against Oil Exploration.” *The East African*, March 2, 2013. <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Ethiopian-rebels-warn-Canadians-against-oil-exploration/-/2558/1709364/-/s7hfw2/-/index.html>.



and 1970s.<sup>614</sup> Interestingly enough, even some of Ethiopia's Somali allies are wary on this question: a spokesman for ASWJ accused the Ethiopian government in 2012 of not wanting Somalia to recover and govern itself.<sup>615</sup> The fact that Ethiopia has steadfastly refused to be re-hatted under AMISOM suggests that it is intent on pursuing its own agenda.

It appears that Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, and Sierra Leone mostly have no ulterior motives and are willing to support the formation of a strong, independent Somali government. Both Uganda and Burundi committed troops to AMISOM because of the benefits associated with sending peacekeepers: diplomatic ties with the countries funding the expedition, money, training for its troops, and international prestige—Djibouti and Sierra Leone likely sent troops for the same reasons. Some Ugandans have speculated that President Museveni may see the Somalia expedition as a convenient way to keep his soldiers busy and to distract from problems at home,<sup>616</sup> but even if the rumor is true, it does not appear it would make Uganda uncooperative in the state-building project. Furthermore, Uganda and Burundi have both been in the country for years now, and have made no moves that suggest they are after anything other than a stable Somalia.

These are the national armies, but there are a number of allied militias in the mix as well. There is no reason to believe they will be at all concerned with helping the central government establish legitimacy, but rather will look to their own interests first. The government will need to figure out a way to bring them onboard with the effort. This will likely require the help of the countries that are working most closely with these militias; in the case of Ras Kamboni, that means Kenya, and for ASWJ, Ethiopia.<sup>617</sup>

State-building in Somalia is already going to be intensely difficult; it will be impossible if all the countries do not vigorously pursue a single, cohesive strategy designed to imbue the Somali government with legitimacy. All the countries involved in Somalia must commit to doing so. For those such as Ethiopia and Kenya that may have other priorities, they need to understand that their long-term interests are best served by

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<sup>614</sup> Tareke, 186-187.

<sup>615</sup> MHD. "What Is the ASWJ? Somalia Report Explores the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma Militia." *SomaliaReport*, May 5, 2012. <http://www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/3294>.

<sup>616</sup> Dickinson, Elizabeth. "For Tiny Burundi, Big Returns in Sending Peacekeepers to Somalia." *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 22, 2011. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2011/1222/For-tiny-Burundi-big-returns-in-sending-peacekeepers-to-Somalia>. See also Damon, Dan. "Why Is Uganda Fighting in 'Hellish' Somalia?" *BBC News*, March 15, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-16853499>.

<sup>617</sup> Boswell and Ibrahim. See also *Al-Shabaab's Recent Recapture of El Bur, Galgaduud Region*, 1.

having a peaceful and stable Somalia that does not export instability, and that the current government is the best hope of that happening.

### ***Federalize, federalize***

Those who wrote the new Somali constitution included, wisely, provisions for forming federal states. The constitution states, “Based on a voluntary decision, two or more regions may merge to form a Federal Member State.”<sup>618</sup> As has already been discussed, Somalis are both highly autonomous and deeply distrustful of not just foreigners, but often people from outside their clan or region (and sometimes within). Somalis will view any centralized government with extreme suspicion and suspect it is merely a pretext for another clan or region to seize power and resources. Because of this, the SFG needs to build a “grand consensus on what federalism means and how to achieve it among all the country’s actors.”<sup>619</sup> That will be truly heavy lifting, but as a baseline the SFG should commit to devolving power to the lowest practical level. Doing so will signal the government is interested not in exploitation and dominance, but in fairness and representing all its people.

There is also the thorny question of Somaliland and Puntland in the North. In many ways the question is moot at the moment, as the government does not have the power to compel the enclaves back into the fold, and neither have given any indication they are interested in re-joining the South.<sup>620</sup> Their hesitation is understandable; the only way to deal with the issue is for the government to prove it is worthy of those two regions’ trust, a process that will take many years and a far more stable and prosperous southern Somalia than currently exists.

### ***Combat corruption***

Corruption kills governments, especially ones trying to convince people they should be trusted. Corruption in the Karzai government has badly damaged the counterinsurgency effort in Afghanistan, driving the conflict and empowering the

<sup>618</sup> “Briefing: Somalia, Federalism and Jubaland.” *IRIN*, April 16, 2013.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report/97860/Briefing-Somalia-federalism-and-Jubaland>.

<sup>619</sup> “Jubaland Reborn: A Look at Jubba and Somalia Post-Addis Agreement.”

<sup>620</sup> The Somaliland government recently and explicitly rejected any calls for reunification: “We will not cooperate in attempts to rebuild the former unified state of Somalia, if it purports to include Somaliland.” Yonis, Mohamed Behi. “Why Somaliland Does Not Attend ‘New Deal for Somalia’ Conference.” *EurActiv.com*, September 16, 2013. <http://www.euractiv.com/development-policy/somaliland-attend-new-deal-somal-analysis-530481>.

Taliban,<sup>621</sup> while the Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s received a major boost in their recruitment efforts because of government corruption.<sup>622</sup> One of the major reasons the TFG was unable to garner popular support with Somalis is because it was so thoroughly corrupt; a leaked UN report estimated that a full 70% of all humanitarian aid delivered to Somalia during the TFG's tenure was misappropriated.<sup>623</sup>

For this reason, Somalis are likely very sensitive to any hint of corruption on the new government's part, so it needs to make every effort to be open and transparent about how it uses the money entrusted to it. Fortunately, President Mohamud is generally seen as honest and "decent," and just as importantly, he defeated the entrenched, highly corrupt political interests that had run the TFG.<sup>624</sup> However, there are many holdovers from the TFG, and they appear to be up to their old tricks: a recent U.N. report painted a truly bleak picture of the runaway corruption that gobbles up as much as 80% of the central bank's funds.<sup>625</sup> President Mohamud needs to do everything in his power to ensure that he and his government remain clean, but so far he has been unsuccessful.

### ***Establish the rule of law***

In the 1990s, AIAI was never able to establish its influence widely in southern Somalia as its intrusive Salafism alienated many Somalis. However, it did manage to rule the town of Luuq, in the south-central part of the country, for five years; despite the group's strict *shariah*, it was largely accepted by local Somalis because it brought, "above all, effective rule of law."<sup>626</sup>

The people of Luuq are not alone in their desire to have some form of judicial system that reliably delivers justice. The Maoists in Nepal have had great success recruiting people frustrated by the government's inability to establish the rule of law,<sup>627</sup> and in Afghanistan what local people "most ardently wished for" was dispute resolution.<sup>628</sup> And

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<sup>621</sup> Chayes (December 14, 2008), 2.

<sup>622</sup> Nagl, 20.

<sup>623</sup> Menkhaus (September 24, 2012).

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

<sup>625</sup> Vogt, Heidi. "U.N. Says Corruption Rampant in Somalia." *The Wall Street Journal*, July 17, 2013. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324448104578612053972350748.html>.

<sup>626</sup> Menkhaus, Ken. "Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism." *The Adelphi Papers* 44, no. 364 (2004): 1-92, p. 57.

<sup>627</sup> Gautam, et al., 228.

<sup>628</sup> Kilcullen (2011), 47.

al-Shabaab had some success recruiting on this issue in the past as well, despite how harsh the justice it delivered was.<sup>629</sup>

Somalis' desire for justice must be particularly acute given the last twenty years of chaos that has reigned in the country, where justice was often decided by whomever was more heavily armed. If the Somali government can quickly establish a functioning dispute resolution mechanism, or facilitate the workings of traditional dispute mechanisms in the interim, it will be a major victory that will fulfill an urgent need in Somalia.

***Kill or capture the irredeemables, negotiate with the pragmatists***

In the continuing fight against al-Shabaab, it will be important to distinguish between the “irredeemables”—hardcore ideologues dedicated to violent, global jihad—and those who have joined for more pragmatic reasons as already discussed in this paper. The former cannot be negotiated with, and must be captured or killed—decapitating strikes against the irredeemables, most obviously Godane, would be useful.

The pragmatists, on the other hand, can be negotiated with and likely convinced to switch sides if a compelling enough case can be made. The pitch would have to revolve around the idea that siding with the coalition is ultimately what is best for the individual in question and his clan, that switching sides would guarantee justice, prosperity, and security, especially against depredations from other clans. There is room for ideological appeals as well, such as calls for them to reject the imposed and alien Salafist doctrine, and to resist a group whose agenda is set by foreign fighters who care not at all for ordinary Somalis. But a simple proposition that appeals to Somalis' pragmatic nature is likely to gain the most traction in this situation.

There is an obvious difficulty in determining who is an irredeemable and who is a pragmatist. It is safe to say that nearly all foreign fighters are irredeemables, as they were motivated by ideology to join Shabaab. There is no way of distinguishing among the rank-and-file, but it is worth considering that given how many opportunities for defection have existed recently, most who have remained with the group have a deep ideological commitment to it, as it makes little practical sense to remain. The exception here would be for fighters from areas still under al-Shabaab's rule; they may continue to fight to ensure their own and their family's safety, or because their clan has obligations to provide fighters to the group.

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<sup>629</sup> *Motivations for Joining Al-Shabaab*, 8.

### **Build peace**

The need for reconciliation in Somalia is obvious. The number of grievances that have accrued over the last 20 years must be overwhelming, particularly as the violence and displacement has made it more difficult to utilize traditional dispute mechanisms. Reconciliation in a country as divided, and as with bloody a history as Somalia, may be the most formidable challenge of all.

But Somaliland was the site of very successful reconciliation efforts, despite its own terrible struggles. The national peace charter that resulted from a series of national reconciliation conferences culminating in the 1993 Borama Conference is generally regarded as a success,<sup>630</sup> and Somaliland has been a bastion of relative peace since.

Somaliland's experience is not entirely applicable, however, primarily because there was one dominant tribe, the Isaq, that emerged clearly victorious from the fray. It was the Isaq who then initiated the peace conferences, and refused to take revenge on their defeated enemies.<sup>631</sup> That is not comparable to the situation in southern Somalia at the moment.

However, there is an important lesson that can still be learned from Somaliland, and it applies to a number of other areas of the state-building enterprise. The reconciliation process was conceived and led by Somalis, and was a bottom-up rather than an imposed, top-down undertaking.<sup>632</sup> This is the only way for such initiatives, particularly in a society as resistant to outside influence and authority as Somalia, to be effective; only when it is their own idea, and undertaken on their own initiative, will they be invested in its success.

Furthermore, clan elders who were true representatives of their constituents drove the reconciliation process. These elders utilized "conventional mechanisms of arbitration" to achieve a level of rapprochement with their former enemies.<sup>633</sup> Without the full support and initiative of the most respected members of the community, it is likely the process would have derailed early on.

It is worth asking if the carnage of the last 20 years has damaged traditional political structures beyond all repair, to the point that elders are no longer respected and/or

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<sup>630</sup> Farah and Lewis (1997), 350, 372-374.

<sup>631</sup> Walls, 378. See also Helling, Dominik. "Tillyan Footprints Beyond Europe: War-Making and State-Making in the Case of Somaliland." *St. Antony's International Review* 6, no. 1 (2010): 103–123.

<sup>632</sup> Farah and Lewis (1997), 350.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid*, 350.

important arbiters in southern Somalia. Probably only time will give a final answer, but there were similar concerns for Somaliland at the height of the fighting there,<sup>634</sup> and elders later emerged as critical players in the reconciliation process. And as Professor Mark Duffield points out, violence can often reinforce traditional structures as people cling to them even more strongly as the rest of their world is turned upside-down.<sup>635</sup> So while it is possible traditional dispute mechanisms have lost their efficacy in southern Somalia, it seems more likely they remain important, and the coalition should operate under that assumption.

### ***Reach out to minority groups***

As was established earlier, minority clans constituted the bulk of Shabaab's foot soldiers as there was a general belief, at least initially, that the group treated clans more or less equally. Furthermore, it was a chance for these traditionally powerless clans to gain a measure of strength, and thereby protect themselves from future abuse from the larger clans. These small groups have been badly treated throughout Somalia's history, and their overwhelming priority will be to ensure the safety of their own groups and to avoid falling prey yet again. The fall of al-Shabaab likely represents for them the return of the bad old days, and they will be tempted to continue supporting the group unless they can be convinced the government will protect them and treat them on an equal footing with other clans. If the SFG can do so, al-Shabaab will lose a major source of fighters.

### ***Wage the information war***

Al-Shabaab spends a lot of time and energy trying to get its message out. It utilizes Twitter extensively,<sup>636</sup> once operated four radio stations,<sup>637</sup> financially supports radical imams, and periodically releases propaganda videos that are often produced and distributed in neighboring Kenya.<sup>638</sup> All these efforts resulted in Shabaab running what

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<sup>634</sup> Helling, 112.

<sup>635</sup> Duffield, Mark R. *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. London: New York: Zed Books; Distributed in the USA exclusively by Palgrave, 2001, p. 125.

<sup>636</sup> @HSMPress1.

<sup>637</sup> *Al-Shabaab Defector Series Report 5: Communications and Media Access*, 5.

<sup>638</sup> Sipus, 29.

has been described as “one of the most effective media recruitment programs ever developed by a militant Islamist organization.”<sup>639</sup>

The coalition should not take for granted the population’s distaste for al-Shabaab. It is there, but al-Shabaab propaganda and coalition mis-steps could cut into support for the coalition. The coalition must fight this battle on all fronts, including through information campaigns designed to counter the dangerous perceptions Shabaab is trying to instill in the population. The coalition should be at pains to remind Somalis about why they dislike Shabaab so much by emphasizing al-Shabaab’s:

- Brutality in the areas it ruled. Its version of *shariah* is repugnant to most Somalis, and the group’s refusal to allow famine aid into the areas it controlled was a particularly unpopular decision.
- Foreign fighters. It is possible that there are not many left in the country, but the coalition can make the point that they will likely come back if Shabaab returns to power.
- Leadership’s Salafist ideology. Related to the issue of *shariah*, the coalition should remind Somalis the contempt in which Shabaab holds Sufism. Al-Shabaab destroyed Sufi tombs and shrines, a grievous blow to many Somalis. The narrative should be that Salafism is a foreign, non-Somali interpretation of Islam that outsiders are trying to impose on the Somali people.
- Obvious unconcern for Somalia. Shabaab has pursued an internationalist agenda that has little to do with the nationalist issues about which most Somalis care. It shows that they are not really concerned about Somalia or Somalis, but rather are using them to further their own interests. Shabaab’s foreign adventures have brought down an invasion upon Somalia’s head.
- Corruption and deception of the youth, resulting in many of them being killed. Young children who should have been at home helping their families instead were manipulated by Shabaab who used them as cannon fodder and suicide bombers.

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<sup>639</sup> Helfont, Tally. “The Foreign Fighter Problem: Recent Trends and Case Studies.” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, November 2010. <https://www.fpri.org/articles/2010/11/foreign-fighter-problem-recent-trends-and-case-studies>.

- Harassment, rape, and abuse of Somali women. They forced them into fake marriages with their fighters and then discarded them, and punished them for simply wearing traditional Somali dress.
- Godane's dictatorial, anti-Muslim actions. Godane has ruthlessly consolidated control, attempting to set himself up as a dictator. In his pursuit of power he has killed many fellow Muslims, including his former allies, an activity that is explicitly forbidden in Islam.

There are many other themes the coalition can stress as al-Shabaab made a host of mistakes in its occupation of Somalia. Any message that emphasizes the non-Somali, anti-Sufi nature of the group is likely to have traction.

### ***Get a win in Jubaland***

This paper has already analyzed the danger Kenya's actions in the Kismayo region pose to the state-building effort in Somalia. But the situation also presents the government with a golden opportunity to gain credibility by delicately exerting its authority over Kenya and Madobe while maintaining its commitment to as much decentralization as possible. A number of the clans in the area are so upset with the KDF that they have appealed to Mogadishu to do something.<sup>640</sup> That they bothered to look to the Mohamud government at all is positive. If it can step in and restore some equity to the situation, it will signal not only that its authority is credible, but that it wants, and is able, to help its citizens, no matter their clan.

Of course, this is not at all how the situation has played out so far. A news report has claimed that Ras Kamboni and Kenya are splitting Kismayo's monthly port revenues, leaving the Somali government in the cold.<sup>641</sup> And a government delegation that arrived in Kismayo to try to broker a resolution to the charcoal dispute there was not even allowed out of the airport by the KDF,<sup>642</sup> an enfeebling humiliation for the government that did serious damage to its credibility in the region. As discussed earlier, the most recent Addis Ababa agreement has only delayed the confrontation, and will give more time for Madobe to entrench his leadership of the region.

<sup>640</sup> "Takeover at Kismayo." *Africa Confidential* 53, no. 20 (October 5, 2012), p. 11.

<sup>641</sup> Yusuf, Mohammed. "Bickering Continues Over Who Controls Somali Port City." *Voice of America*, May 28, 2013. <http://m.voanews.com/a/1669896.html>.

<sup>642</sup> "Breaking Ranks in Kismayo," 7.



While this is all bad news for the SFG, there is a silver lining, however dim: the SFG's credibility can only rise in the region after being brought so low. Establishing itself as a credible party that must be included in negotiations, as it did in Addis Ababa, is a minor victory; it unfortunately will also no doubt have the opportunity to position itself in the future as a peace broker that can bring parties in conflict in the region to the table.

### ***Coordinate humanitarian relief***

Mao Tse-Tung once wrote, "A potential revolutionary situation exists in any country where the government consistently fails in its obligation to ensure at least a minimally decent standard of life for the great majority of its citizens."<sup>643</sup> The USMC Small Wars Manual states, "Peace and industry cannot be restored permanently without appropriate provisions for the economic welfare of the people,"<sup>644</sup> while another author writes, "If the bulk of the [guerrilla] band find they can live as decent human beings, do not have to rob to live, and can have land and homes, they will be poor guerrillas from then on."<sup>645</sup>

But creating a "minimally decent standard of life" is a long-term project that entails building infrastructure, rule of law that protects property rights, and a stable and safe environment in which businesses can grow and hire. A government fighting an insurgency has a limited window of opportunity in which to make its case to its people, and cannot wait the many years it takes to accomplish those tasks. So humanitarian relief can play an important role as a stop-gap measure, particularly because it can often be delivered quickly and in a highly visible manner.

But there are very serious dangers associated with humanitarian aid that have been documented in a growing pile of books and reports.<sup>646</sup> The greatest of these for a state-building scenario is the corruption sudden influxes of money and resources can breed.

Somalia unfortunately has a particularly uninspiring track record on this issue. Mary Harper points out, "With their years of experience in receiving foreign aid, many...in Somalia have become experts at exploiting humanitarian groups."<sup>647</sup> An aid worker who operated in Somalia two decades ago commented that he believed the aid being

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<sup>643</sup> Tse-Tung (1961), 8.

<sup>644</sup> Quoted in Boot, 284.

<sup>645</sup> Wilkins, 14.

<sup>646</sup> Just two of the more recent and well-known examples are *Dead Aid*, by Dambisa Moyo, and *The White Man's Burden*, by William Easterly. Both books were written in the late 2000s, but serious critiques of humanitarian aid have been around for far longer; one example is Doescher, William F. "Sending More Than Money." *Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. D & B Reports* 40, no. 4 (August 1992): 10.

<sup>647</sup> Harper (2012), 183.

supplied was “probably killing as many people as it was saving”—Somali soldiers were selling the food on the black market and insurgents were using it as rations.<sup>648</sup> Another aid worker who participated in the flood relief efforts in Somalia in the late 1990s characterized the Somali attitude towards international aid as, “When the UN is in town, everyone is supposed to get rich.”<sup>649</sup> In early 2010, a leaked UN report documented massive corruption affecting the food aid being delivered in Somalia by the World Food Program, including some that was likely funneled to armed groups—the U.S. was so concerned that al-Shabaab was profiting from the food distribution that it halted millions of dollars’ worth of food aid shipments to Somalia in January 2010.<sup>650</sup>

Corruption is not the only concern with massive influxes of aid. As this paper has tried to show, the long-term solution to Somalia’s problems lies with Somalis; foreigners are not going to “fix” the country. Torrents of aid can have a paralyzing affect on its recipients as it can breed dependency and entitlement; as the veteran journalist Steve Coll has written, “The records of weak states suddenly doused with dollars...are not causes for optimism.”<sup>651</sup> Humanitarian aid organizations are already moving in force into Somalia, and their efforts run the risk of attenuating Somalis’ hardy independent streak that is credited by some experts with helping Somaliland get to where it is today.<sup>652</sup>

How can the international community and the government strike the proper balance? International aid organizations need to assiduously track where the money and aid they are delivering ends up, and should try to deliver it directly to the recipient communities, the better to avoid presenting government officials with undue temptation. However, aid organizations need to coordinate their activities with the government, and ensure that the aid deliveries have a Somali government face on them, so the government can receive credit. And obviously, aid programs should be directed towards needs identified by the Somali people, and not simply towards those in which the aid organizations and their donors are interested.

This is going to be highly unpalatable to many aid organizations that fiercely protect their independence and want to avoid the politicization of their activities—in fact, some humanitarian organizations have already pushed back against government attempts to

<sup>648</sup> Badow, Doug. “U.S. Foreign Aid Hinders More Than It Helps.” *Cato Institute*, March 7, 2011. <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/us-foreign-aid-hinders-more-it-helps>.

<sup>649</sup> Burnett, John S. *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread: a Relief Worker’s Tale of Survival*. New York: Bantam Books, 2006, p. 133.

<sup>650</sup> Gettleman and MacFarquhar.

<sup>651</sup> Coll, Steve. “Hard on Obama.” *The New York Review of Books*, July 11, 2013.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/jul/11/vali-nasr-hard-on-obama/?pagination=false>.

<sup>652</sup> Lewis (August 26, 2010). J Peter Pham makes the same point in Pham, 87.

integrate their activities into a unified effort.<sup>653</sup> But these organizations need to decide what Somalia's best long-term hope at the moment is, and who can bring enough stability to preclude the sort of humanitarian disasters that have regularly plagued Somalia over the last several decades. The answer is the current government, and aid organizations should be supporting its efforts.

Though this does constitute taking sides, aid organizations need to be honest with themselves and recognize that they are taking sides no matter what they do. The mere act of delivering food is highly political, particularly when hunger is so frequently used as a weapon by certain governments and groups against civilians. This point was made clearly in a master's thesis entitled "You are all Worth Killing;" the title is taken from a letter written by the Pakistani Taliban threatening the author, an aid worker, because of the humanitarian work he was undertaking. As the author makes clear, traditional concepts of neutrality and impartiality have increasingly "lost salience" for humanitarian organizations as the work they do often helps prop up local governments, which is threatening to the insurgents. The perspective and intent of humanitarian aid organizations is irrelevant—terrorists and insurgents now generally consider them enemies, and treat them as such.<sup>654</sup>

There are ways to coordinate the government and aid organizations' activities with as little embarrassment for the latter as possible. The U.S. military developed in the 1990s a concept known as the Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC), essentially a liaison unit between aid organizations and the military, designed to facilitate communication and requests between the two cultures. Military and aid organization personnel staffed the CMOC, and in some cases it was headquartered miles from the military headquarters to avoid the perception that the aid organizations were doing the military's bidding.<sup>655</sup>

The CMOC concept had implementation problems in the different countries in which it was used, so it is not a perfect solution. But there are now many moving parts to the coalition's project, and they all need to be coordinated and unified to avoid dissipation of efforts. The government could establish units based on the CMOC model that would bring together government officials, AMISOM representatives, and humanitarian aid

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<sup>653</sup> "Somalia: April 2013 Monthly Forecast." *Security Council Report*, March 28, 2013. [http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2013-04/somalia\\_6.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2013-04/somalia_6.php).

<sup>654</sup> Young, Michael. "You Are All Worth Killing": Aid, Salafi Jihad, Counter-insurgency, and the Long War." Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, 2010, p. 1.

<sup>655</sup> Benton, Leslie A., and Glenn T. Ware. *Haiti: A Case Study of the International Response and the Efficacy of Nongovernmental Organizations in the Crisis*. Accessed May 30, 2013. [smallwarsjournal.com/documents/haiticasestudy.pdf](http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/haiticasestudy.pdf).

personnel to plan, coordinate, and execute projects more efficiently. Without it, or a similar initiative, it is likely that aid delivery will be undertaken in an *ad hoc* fashion out of sync with the broader goal of establishing the Somali government's legitimacy.

## **For AMISOM and Ethiopia**

### ***Provide an honest security guarantee***

Security is the *sine qua non* for government legitimacy, without which the state-building and counterinsurgency project will fail. The Somali government is unable to provide the necessary level of security to its people, and so AMISOM's presence is critical. Yet the presence of foreign troops is eventually going to be counterproductive; no one knows how long the grace period is, but this paper has demonstrated that it is probably going to be short.

That is a problem, given that insurgencies are generally long affairs. Oftentimes insurgents will fight simply to protract the conflict further, knowing that continual fighting will leach away the government's resources and erode the population's faith in their rulers. Insurgents need only to hold on, while the government has the much larger challenge of winning outright.<sup>656</sup>

The obvious solution is to train Somali security forces as quickly as possible, then for AMISOM to pull out once that task is accomplished. But Somalia's neighbors can also offer a security guarantee to the Somali government after they pull out. With foreign troops gone from the country, one drain on the government's legitimacy has been removed. But the guarantee will assure the Somali people that al-Shabaab or a similar group will not be able to take power again, thereby increasing the government's legitimacy. Somalia's neighbors have proven that they have the capability to push Shabaab back, so their guarantee will have credibility.

There are several major caveats, however. The security guarantee needs to be an honest one, and not simply a pretext for Somalia's neighbors to meddle inside the country whenever they please. Stringent, specific conditions need to govern the guarantee, and it should only be invoked when the Somali government has explicitly requested intervention.

The guarantors also would have to make an important assessment if the time came to honor a guarantee. Only if the Somali government was making progress and retained

<sup>656</sup> Cohen, Eliot, Lieutenant Colonel Conrad Crane, Lieutenant Colonel Jan Horvath, and Lieutenant Colonel John Nagle. "Principles, Imperatives, and Paradoxes of Counterinsurgency." *Military Review* (April 2006): 49–53, p. 51.

legitimacy would the guarantee be effective. If the government was corrupt and abusive, a security guarantee would drag the guarantors into an open-ended commitment that would breed resentment against them for their role in propping up a despised government. At that point, no amount of intervention would solve the problem—indeed it would only inflame and radicalize the insurgency. In this scenario, neighbors would be foolish to prop up the government, and would be better served instead to facilitate the creation of a new, reformist government that had a chance to win Somalis' loyalty.

### ***Control the borders***

Weak or failing states by definition have a difficult time controlling their territory, and that feebleness extends to securing their borders. Porous boundaries are a boon for insurgents, as they allow guerrillas to shuttle back and forth between external safe havens and their areas of operation within the target country. And allowing insurgents an external sanctuary is disastrous for counterinsurgents. A recent RAND article argued that the Afghan Taliban's ability to safely ensconce itself in sanctuaries in Pakistan is one of the major reasons ISAF has struggled to bring order to Afghanistan,<sup>657</sup> while the Viet Cong enjoyed the safety of Laos and Cambodia for most of the Vietnam War.<sup>658</sup> The Sandinistas in Nicaragua routinely slipped across the 500-mile border with Honduras when badly pressed,<sup>659</sup> and for years Venezuela welcomed FARC fighters from Colombia.<sup>660</sup>

Fortunately, Somalia's neighbors are all heavily invested in defeating al-Shabaab, and so will not give its fighters a welcome. However, Kenya, Ethiopia, or Djibouti might still inadvertently provide a safe haven for Shabaab terrorists because of poor border control: according to a Kenyan intelligence report, terrorists are "pouring" into Kenya, to

<sup>657</sup> Jones, Seth G. "What Went Wrong in Afghanistan? Allowing a Sanctuary in Pakistan." *The RAND Blog*, March 5, 2013. <http://www.rand.org/blog/2013/03/what-went-wrong-in-afghanistan-allowing-a-sanctuary.html>.

<sup>658</sup> Snepp, Frank. "The Vietnam Syndrome." *Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 2013. <http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-snepp-lessons-of-vietnam-20130505,0,5276212.story>

<sup>659</sup> Boot, 247.

<sup>660</sup> Kelemen, Jasmina. "Venezuela-Colombia Ties Remain Strong Despite Chávez's Reported Links to FARC." *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 11, 2011. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2011/0511/Venezuela-Colombia-ties-remain-strong-despite-Chavez-s-reported-links-to-FARC>.

the point that they now control parts of the economy in the Northeast.<sup>661</sup> Eight members of a Shabaab cell slipped into Kenya in September 2012 by posing as refugees,<sup>662</sup> and a number of the terror attacks Kenya suffered recently were perpetrated by Kenyans who traveled back and forth between Somalia and their home country.<sup>663</sup> And Ethiopia has never been able to control the flow of people and weapons between its Ogaden region and Somalia, which has in the past resulted in strong ties between Ethiopian secessionist movements such as the ONLF and al-Shabaab.<sup>664</sup>

As explored earlier, Shabaab seems to have chosen Puntland as their primary sanctuary, but the group will seek out other shelters as well. The Ogaden region in Ethiopia, the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi, and northeastern Kenya, including Dadaab refugee camp, are all likely destinations as those areas are dominated by ethnic Somalis, poorly controlled by governments, and have been used in the past by Shabaab.

But controlling borders is not useful only because it keeps fighters from fleeing to safety, but also because it helps keeps fighters, weapons, and insurgent funding out of the country. Yemen is a serious challenge in this respect as it serves as a conduit for weapons and fighters into Somalia, unsurprising given Shabaab's close ties with AQAP.<sup>665</sup> Puntland authorities have seized a number of weapons shipments in skiffs sent from Yemen, and some Somalis have estimated that Yemenis are the most strongly represented nationality among Shabaab's foreign fighters.<sup>666</sup> A U.N. sanctions report lists two men, Fares Mohammed Mana'a and Mohamed Said (Atam), the former leader of the Galgala militia allied with al-Shabaab in Puntland, as traffickers who bring

<sup>661</sup> "Assault Mastermind Said to Be a Kenyan, 50, Associated with ex-Qaeda Leader Fazul." *Daily Nation*, September 28, 2013. <http://mobile.nation.co.ke/News/Assault-mastermind-said-to-be-a-Kenyan/-/1950946/2011528/-/format/xhtml/-/5e9mmm/-/index.html>.

<sup>662</sup> Ombati, Cyrus. "Police Issues Alert on Terror Attacks." *Standard Digital*, September 22, 2012. [http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000066701&story\\_title=Kenya:%20Police%20issues%20alert%20on%20terror%20attacks](http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000066701&story_title=Kenya:%20Police%20issues%20alert%20on%20terror%20attacks).

<sup>663</sup> Nzes, Fredrick. "Terrorist Attacks in Kenya Reveal Domestic Radicalization." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, October 29, 2012. <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/terrorist-attacks-in-kenya-reveal-domestic-radicalization>.

<sup>664</sup> George, William Lloyd. "The Ogaden Problem: Will an Old Insurgency Tip the Balance in East Africa?" *Time*, November 7, 2012. <http://world.time.com/2012/11/07/the-ogaden-problem-will-an-old-insurgency-tip-the-balance-in-east-africa/>.

<sup>665</sup> Coombs.

<sup>666</sup> Bayoumy, Yara. "Somalia's Al Shabaab, Squeezed in South, Move to Puntland." *Reuters*, November 9, 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/09/us-somalia-puntland-shabaab-idUSBRE8A80XP20121109>. See also Quirico, Domenico. "Somalia, When Al-Qaeda Arrives From Everywhere." *Worldcrunch*, October 22, 2012. <http://www.worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/somalia-when-al-qaeda-arrives-from-everywhere/al-shabaab-islamism-terrorism/c1s9903/>.

weapons from Yemen into Somalia.<sup>667</sup> Its Yemeni ties are important to Shabaab, and Puntland's proximity to the country probably contributed to the group's decision to shelter there.

Securing the borders is going to be very difficult, and will require extensive cooperation and coordination between Somalia and her neighbors. A recent conference in Uganda hosted by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies concerning regional security cooperation was a good first step,<sup>668</sup> and there is also a template emerging for this sort of cooperation from several countries struggling with transnational terrorists in the Maghreb region of Africa. Algeria has reduced weapons smuggling and fighter infiltrations on its borders with Libya and Mali by cooperating on joint security plans with those countries, and recently embarked on a similar project with Tunisia. The cooperation includes identifying the border points most frequently used by terrorists and other illicit networks, and forming a joint committee charged with facilitating the rapid sharing of intelligence between the two countries.<sup>669</sup> Coordinated action and information sharing have emerged as the two critical components for combating a transnational threat,<sup>670</sup> and Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti should implement their own version of the joint security plans that are seeing success in West Africa.

### ***Avoid clan politics at all costs***

One of the greatest mistakes AMISOM forces could make would be to involve themselves in clan politics. Clan politics is a blood sport in Somalia, and almost entirely inscrutable to outsiders. These politics are informed by long-standing historical and cultural grievances, which are difficult enough to understand, but also are shifting almost constantly. Trying to play politics within this unbelievably complex world, with a shrewd

<sup>667</sup> *List of Individuals and Entities Subject to the Measures Imposed by Paragraphs 1, 3 and 7 of Security Council Resolution 1844 (2008)* (April 12, 2010), 7-9.

<sup>668</sup> "Regional Cooperation Crucial Against Transnational Threats, Ugandan & U.S. Officials Say at East Africa Workshop." *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, January 30, 2013. <http://africacenter.org/2013/01/regional-cooperation-crucial-against-transnational-threats-ugandan-u-s-officials-say-at-east-africa-workshop/>.

<sup>669</sup> Ramzi, Walid. "Algeria Secures Border with Tunisia, Trapping Terrorists." *Magharebia*, June 12, 2013. [http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/06/12/feature-02](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/06/12/feature-02). Niger and Nigeria also recently signed a similar agreement: "Nigeria Seals Niger, UK Defence Pacts." *StarAfrica.com*, August 15, 2013. <http://en.starafrica.com/news/nigeria-seals-niger-uk-defence-pacts.html>.

<sup>670</sup> Wehrey, Frederic, and Anouar Boukhars. "Simmering Conflicts in the Sahara." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 10, 2013. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/06/10/simmering-conflicts-in-sahara/g9oa>.

people with lifetimes' of experience in navigating it, will only lead to outsiders being badly manipulated and inadvertently making enemies.

On a related note, and has already been explored at length in this report, Somalis are highly pragmatic people prepared to switch allegiances if it gains them an advantage. Furthermore, they are constantly looking for an edge over competitors, and powerful outsiders often present such an opportunity. AMISOM soldiers should understand that when operating in the Somali environment, Somalis, particularly ones with any sort of leadership position or responsibility within their clan, will try to use them to further their own interests—and they generally are very good at it, as they have decades of experience in fleecing international organizations and workers trying to operate on their turf.

### ***Disrupt Shabaab in its safe havens***

In June 2013 AMISOM switched to a “protection-of-civilians” strategy that consists of consolidating its gains and proactively protecting civilians under its control.<sup>671</sup> Protecting civilians is a welcome piece of any counterinsurgency campaign, but AMISOM may also have calculated that pushing further into Shabaab-held territory would leave its troops stretched too thin to effectively hold the areas it has already liberated, opening up a dangerous opportunity for Shabaab.

As has already been noted, the coalition lacks properly trained troops and enough of them to effectively cover the country. AMISOM and the SFG are thus caught on the horns of a nasty dilemma: allowing al-Shabaab to continue unmolested in its safe havens means the group will be able to continue to marshal its strength to fight its enemies, but restarting the offensive will leave AMISOM too thinly stretched in the areas it has already liberated. Furthermore, chasing Shabaab into the heavy forests of Lower Juba, or the mountains of Galgala,<sup>672</sup> will mean AMISOM's conventional military superiority will be largely neutralized and allow Shabaab to fight on a more or less equal footing, a classic guerrilla strategy.

AMISOM needs, then, to find a way to keep the terrorists off-balance but avoid committing troops who are untrained for this sort of combat and who will get chewed up. It should conduct short, sharp strikes by Kenya's elite units, the Rangers and Special

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<sup>671</sup> Williams, 3.

<sup>672</sup> It's unlikely Puntland or Somaliland would allow coalition forces access to the Galgala Mountains, so the question of what the coalition should do about the northern sanctuary is mostly moot for the time being.



Forces, who are trained in asymmetric warfare<sup>673</sup>—UAV strikes could also help, though the daunting terrain may make them less effective. Reliable and accurate intelligence will be critical, so AMISOM should be looking to its Somali counterparts to develop strong sources among the local communities. Meanwhile, the international community should redouble its efforts to train Somali security forces, as bringing in even more foreign troops to address the troop level shortfalls runs the risk of antagonizing Somalis.

### ***Adapt***

Insurgents, at least those who survive for any amount of time, are often adept at learning and then adjusting course. Fighters in the recent Iraq War constantly improved their tactics against U.S. forces—the increase in the sophistication and lethality of the IEDs they deployed throughout the conflict is perhaps the most obvious example of their ability to learn. Today in Syria, a terrorist organization known as al-Nusra has become the most powerful group fighting the Assad regime in the country, largely because they learned important lessons from mistakes they made in Iraq—they now buy off rather than kill tribal leaders, “while keeping their extreme beliefs to themselves.”<sup>674</sup> And the letter mentioned earlier that Abdelmalek Droukdel, Emir of AQIM, sent to his fighters in Mali warned them to keep quiet about their internationalist agenda. Droukdel learned from al-Qaeda’s experiences elsewhere that locals can resent foreigners’ agendas, and so took steps to adjust his group’s tactics.

Al-Shabaab has proven in the past that it is a highly resilient organization willing to learn and adapt. It rose to prominence leading an insurgency, evolved into a more conventional force that held and administered large areas of Somalia (and continues to do so), then had the foresight to accurately gauge AMISOM’s growing strength and responded by making a strategic decision to shift back to fighting a guerrilla war in the areas out of which it had been pushed. Counterinsurgents should assume that al-Shabaab is now in the process of assessing what went wrong and trying to adjust its approach—it made egregious mistakes during its rule, but it has shown its capacity to adapt in order to survive and grow.

Counterinsurgents must be prepared and willing to do their own adapting to meet al-Shabaab’s inevitable adjustments. In his authoritative work on the Marines’ campaign to

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<sup>673</sup> Gisesa (December 18, 2012).

<sup>674</sup> Filkins, Dexter. “The Thin Red Line: Inside the White House Debate over Syria.” *The New Yorker*, May 13, 2013, p. 46.

pacify Anbar Province in Iraq, Richard Shultz, a counterinsurgency expert and professor at the Fletcher School at Tufts University, repeatedly makes the point that the Marines were able to succeed in the shifting, highly complex environment in which they found themselves because they had an institutional commitment to learning and adapting to their enemies.<sup>675</sup> Another author points out that the British were victorious in Malaysia against an insurgency largely because they “successfully adapted to overcome the challenges of a Communist insurgent war and an obsolete doctrine.”<sup>676</sup> Eliot Cohen, et al., is worth quoting here at length:

A COIN force must be a learning organization. Insurgents shift between military and political phases and approaches. In addition, networked insurgents constantly exchange information about enemy vulnerabilities. A skillful counterinsurgent must be able to adapt at least as fast as the opponent. Every unit must be able to make observations, draw lessons, apply them, and assess results. Higher headquarters must develop an effective system to circulate lessons learned throughout the organization. Insurgents shift their areas of operations looking for weak links, so widespread competence is required throughout the counterinsurgent force.<sup>677</sup>

A commitment to adaptation and learning is necessary because the broader context is fluid and likely to change as well. Winston Churchill made this point best when he wrote that “ugly surprises” always have a seat at the table during war.<sup>678</sup> There will be many surprises in the coming years in Somalia, any of which could fundamentally alter the complexion of the conflict. Counterinsurgents must be ready to change as well in order to maintain advantage.

## **For the United States**

### ***Adopt a COIN strategy rather than CT tactics***

There is an important role for the United States to play in helping the coalition in its struggle against al-Shabaab. By all indications the United States thus far has been happy to let Somalia’s neighbors take the lead on the intervention against Shabaab,

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<sup>675</sup> Shultz, Richard H. *The Marines Take Anbar: The Four-year Fight to Defeat Al Qaeda in Iraq*, 2013.

<sup>676</sup> Nagl, 59.

<sup>677</sup> Cohen et al., 51.

<sup>678</sup> Churchill, Winston. *My Early Life: a Roving Commission*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1930, p. 232.

which is exactly the correct decision. Any assistance it offers must remain discreet and fit seamlessly into the larger effort of helping the Somali government attain legitimacy.

The first step for the United States is to decide what strategy it is pursuing in Somalia, which it hopefully has already done. A simple counterterrorism (CT) approach is not the best solution, as what is required is counterinsurgency and state-building: long-term solutions, in other words, rather than stop-gap CT measures. While the latter are valuable tools that can be helpful in the Somali context, they can also be counterproductive if not bent to the purposes of the larger strategy of creating a viable Somali government. UAVs, for instance, are sophisticated, valuable tools effective at accurately taking down high-level targets. But if the strikes are executed in such a way that they breed resentment against the Somali government and foster Somali perceptions that it is being pushed around by the United States, they do more harm than good. UAV strikes, and other CT tools the United States can and should provide, must remain subordinate to the larger strategy.

### ***Herd cats***

This paper has already discussed that there does not appear to be a grand strategy uniting all of the members of the coalition in pursuit of a single goal. If such a strategy has not been formulated even now, the United States needs to push for it to happen, and ensure that it revolves around the necessity of facilitating the creation and sustainment of a legitimate Somali government.

That will be the easy part, and may already have been accomplished. The even more important task will be ensuring the regional alliance remains united and pursues the strategy. This is a far greater challenge: this paper has already documented Kenya's actions in the Lower Juba that badly undercut the Somali government, as well as the ambiguity around Ethiopia's intentions. Both countries are likely pursuing strategies that have been planned for years, and will not easily surrender them.

But the United States has major influence with Kenya and Ethiopia. Both countries have been important allies in that region for decades, and major beneficiaries of American aid money. The United States will need to cajole and persuade them into seeing that the best hope for regional stability is a strong, legitimate Somali government that can ensure violent extremism does not spill again across its borders, entice refugees back to the country, and oversee the country's economic renaissance that will make it a valuable trading partner and driver of regional growth. It is the single most

critical task the United States can perform, as without it the counterinsurgency campaign and state-building project in Somalia will fail.

### ***Hold the Somali government accountable***

In January 2103, the United States granted the Somali government diplomatic recognition for the first time in more than 20 years, paving the way for increased assistance on top of the hundreds of millions of dollars the United States has spent on Somalia in the last 4 years alone.<sup>679</sup> The United Kingdom, the European Union, Turkey, and Japan have all pledged millions of dollars as well, and the IMF stands ready to make loans as soon as Somalia pays off some of its debts.<sup>680</sup> The international community is demonstrating substantial trust in the Mohamud government.

The United States should come to an agreement with other international donors on the best way to ascertain in the coming years whether the government remains worthy of that trust. Such an agreement could include a series of measurable, reasonable benchmarks the government must hit in order to receive more funding and support. If the government begins to falter, the international community must use every tool at its disposal to induce it to switch course, as levels of cronyism, clannism, and corruption beyond what ordinary Somalis are willing to tolerate are the harbingers of approaching defeat for the cause of a stable and functioning Somalia.

If the government is unable to establish legitimacy, international policymakers will need to take a clear-eyed, unsentimental look at their countries' relationship with the Somali government. Just as is true of Somalia's neighbors, the international community cannot afford to get caught in the death spiral of propping up a government that will never be legitimate, support for which only breeds resentment against those countries seen as the patron of a corrupt government and, therefore, a persecutor of the Somali

<sup>679</sup> Watkins, Tom. "After More Than 2 Decades, U.S. Recognizes Somalia." *CNN*, January 17, 2013. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/17/us/somalia-recognition>.

<sup>680</sup> Hutton, Robert. "U.K. Pledges \$280 Million of Aid to Somalia for Arms, Food." *Bloomberg*, May 7, 2013. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-07/u-k-pledges-280-million-of-aid-to-somalia-for-arms-food.html>. See also "EU Pledges 44 Million Euros Aid at Somalia Conference." *Africa Review*, May 7, 2013. <http://www.africareview.com/News/EU-pledges-44-million-euros-aid-at-Somalia-conference/-/979180/1845018/-/aymmib/-/index.html>, and Ozerdem, Alpaslan. "How Turkey Is Emerging as a Development Partner in Africa." *The Guardian*, April 10, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development-professionals-network/2013/apr/10/turkey-development-partner-africa>, and "Japan Renews Commitment to Somalia by Resuming Direct Aid." *Global Post*, May 31, 2013. <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/130531/japan-renews-commitment-somalia-resuming-direct-aid>. See also "IMF Recognizes the Federal Government of Somalia After 22-year Interval." *International Monetary Fund*, April 12, 2013. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2013/pr13119.htm>.

people. The government will inevitably face problems with which the international community should stand ready to assist, as long as the government itself is not the problem. If it is, the international community needs to either facilitate the creation of a new government with the capacity to gain legitimacy, or, if that is impossible, walk away and prepare itself for a CT campaign in Somalia.

As the most visible and powerful member of the new Somali government, much will be required of President Mohamud to ensure the government remains on track. Thus far his personal conduct has been largely encouraging. As was discussed earlier, his victory has been hailed as that of a reformer over the entrenched and corrupt interests that had controlled Somalia for years, and he consistently and correctly identifies the most pressing priorities for Somalia; in recent remarks he said the two biggest priorities for Somalia are “security, security, and security” and “state building.”<sup>681</sup>

However, a recent *Economist* article criticized him for “co-opting” warlords to gain control of Kismayo, and claimed that a U.N. report will soon make the same accusation.<sup>682</sup> But it is a strange claim to make. The government certainly does not have control over Kismayo, as this paper has tried to make clear. And co-opting warlords is not necessarily a bad thing—indeed, one of the chief tasks of the government is to control all the various militias, and bringing rebel groups into a new government is a standard tactic used throughout the world by governments trying to build peace in their countries.

But the article does serve as a valuable reminder that it is too soon for the international community to fully trust Mohamud and his government, and that both will have to be constantly assessed to ensure they remain on the right track. There is a sad history of world leaders whose ascent to power was widely hailed as the beginning of a new, democratic, and peaceful era for their benighted countries, but who soon fell prey to the lure of power. Africa already has had too many rulers who made the transition to authoritarianism, and the trajectories of men such as Isaias Afewerki, Robert Mugabe, and Meles Zenawi should serve as a cautionary tale.

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<sup>681</sup> Migiro, Dickson. “Somalia Bets Big on Port and Airport to Resurrect War-wrecked Economy.” *The East African*, June 19, 2013. <http://www.theeastafican.co.ke/news/Somalia-bets-big-on-port-and-airport-to-resurrect-economy/-/2558/1889202/-/item/1/-/dh031sz/-/index.html>.

<sup>682</sup> “Somalia and Its Shabab: Are the Islamists Truly on the Ropes?” *The Economist*, July 6, 2013. <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21580523-new-and-much-lauded-president-finding-it-hard-bury-old-divisions-are>.

### ***Disrupt international spoiler attempts***

Gebru Tareke writes, “No liberation movement has succeeded without a substantial infusion of assistance from outside...The Eritrean insurgency was partly financed and armed by foreigners,”<sup>683</sup> while the Pakistani army’s support for the Afghan Taliban helped it to “regain a foothold inside the country.”<sup>684</sup> International spoilers can easily be game-changers during insurgencies, and the United States can use its considerable ability to apply pressure and impose sanctions to assure that any countries or individuals tempted to assist al-Shabaab will find the project not at all in their best interests.

This may well have already happened. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates dragged their feet in implementing the charcoal ban the United Nations slapped on Somalia, but in October 2012 finally announced they would honor it. There is no telling if international pressure eventually brought about the change of heart, but it likely that some sort of arm-twisting may have been used to compel Saudi Arabia to give up the supplier of the large majority of its charcoal imports.<sup>685</sup>

However, there are countries that routinely flaunt international bans (the latest example is the infamous support Russia, China, and Iran have lent Bashar al-Assad in Syria that has likely kept him in power<sup>686</sup>), and there are a number of candidates on whom the international community should keep a close eye. Both the TFG and the United Nations have credibly accused Iran of arming al-Shabaab by routing weapons and I.E.D. components through Yemen, which it has turned into a “playing field” for its activities in the region.<sup>687</sup> While much of Eritrea’s funding for al-Shabaab has stopped, a recent news article suggests that the country may be up to its old tricks by supporting a Somali warlord with links to al-Shabaab.<sup>688</sup>

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<sup>683</sup> Tareke, 74.

<sup>684</sup> Chayes, Sarah. “What Vali Nasr Gets Wrong.” *Foreign Policy*, March 12, 2013. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/12/what\\_vali\\_nasr\\_gets\\_wrong\\_obama\\_afghanistan?page=0,2](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/03/12/what_vali_nasr_gets_wrong_obama_afghanistan?page=0,2), p. 3.

<sup>685</sup> For Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E.’s reluctance to stop Somali charcoal imports, and for the percentage breakdown on Saudi imports of Somali charcoal, see Bryden et al. (*Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002 (2011)*), 148, 156. For Saudi Arabia’s purported intent to abide by the ban, see Wabala.

<sup>686</sup> Peel, Michael. “Iran, Russia and China Prop up Assad Economy.” *Financial Times*, June 27, 2013. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/79eca81c-df48-11e2-a9f4-00144feab7de.html#axzz2ZR8qvJY3>.

<sup>687</sup> Charbonneau (February 11, 2013). See also Sanders and Lau, 8.

<sup>688</sup> Charbonneau, Louis. “Exclusive: Eritrea Pays Warlord to Influence Somalia - U.N. Experts.” *Reuters*, July 17, 2013. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/07/17/us-somalia-eritrea-un-idUSBRE96G06U20130717>.

### **Train Somali security forces**

There is a desperate need to train Somali security forces that currently are in dire shape. While there is no hard and fast prescription for the number of troops necessary in an environment such as Somalia, a RAND study found that the average troop level during counterinsurgency campaigns in permissive environments was 2 soldiers per 1,000 residents, while for non-permissive environments it was 13 soldiers per 1,000 residents.<sup>689</sup> Somalia is only a permissive environment in certain places, so as a very conservative estimate, 7 soldiers for every 1,000 residents is necessary. The CIA estimates that the Somali population is currently about 10.2 million people; it is unclear if that number includes Somaliland's 3.5 million people,<sup>690</sup> but we will subtract that from the number as Somaliland generally does a good job of providing its own security. For 6.7 million people, then, the country requires about 47,000 troops.

As of June 2013, AMISOM was at full troop strength with just under 18,000 soldiers in the country.<sup>691</sup> It is difficult to determine how many troops currently serve in the Somali National Army; there are "theoretically" 10,000, though likely the number is far lower.<sup>692</sup> There are also a number of allied militias providing security whose numbers are similarly vague: in early 2010, U.S. intelligence officials estimated Ras Kamboni had between 500 and 1,000 fighters, and in 2012 a Stanford University project estimated that Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama had around 2,000 fighters.<sup>693</sup> Numbers for the various other militias are even more difficult to find.

Whatever the actual force levels at the coalition's disposal, they are likely to be far too few. And in many ways, the numbers are irrelevant as it takes the right kind of forces to be effective in counterinsurgency. Some of these militiamen and SNA troops are adept fighters, simply because of the experience they have had at it, but they are also generally ill-disciplined young men with little to no formal training.<sup>694</sup> Some factions

<sup>689</sup> *The Beginner's Guide to Nation-Building*, 41.

<sup>690</sup> "Somalia." *CIA - The World Factbook*, May 7, 2013. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>. See also "Somaliland." *Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization*, March 25, 2008. <http://www.unpo.org/members/7916>.

<sup>691</sup> Williams, 2.

<sup>692</sup> Backhaus, Anne, and Johannes Korge. "German Soldiers Help Train Somali Soldiers at Camp in Uganda." *Spiegel Online*, October 22, 2012. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/german-soldiers-help-train-somali-soldiers-at-camp-in-uganda-a-861885.html>.

<sup>693</sup> Roggio, Bill. "Shabaab Absorbs Southern Islamist Group, Splits Hizbul Islam." *The Long War Journal*, February 1, 2010. [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/02/shabaab\\_absorbs\\_sout.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/02/shabaab_absorbs_sout.php). See also "Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama." *Stanford University: Mapping Militant Organizations*, July 18, 2012. <http://www.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/109#cite30>.

<sup>694</sup> Gatehouse. See also Backhaus and Korge.

of the Somali Security forces have received training from a variety of international partners—Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and the EU have all spent time trying to whip various SNA and militia forces into shape—but most of the training appears to be for the most basic fundamentals<sup>695</sup> and not the more sophisticated counterinsurgency training that is necessary. International donors are designating funds for police and other security force training,<sup>696</sup> which is positive, but more will be required.

This paper has already explored at length how critical it is to provide security for the population during a counterinsurgency campaign. The coalition will not be able to provide the appropriate level of security without the aid of more, and better-trained, Somali forces supplementing the AMISOM and Ethiopian forces. Furthermore, the problem is only going to worsen as al-Shabaab is pushed from more of its territory, requiring more follow-on forces to secure the areas. AMISOM will soon be stretched too thin, and most security personnel should be Somali anyway, in order to mitigate the appearance of a foreign occupation. U.S. Special Operations Forces are highly adept at training foreign security forces, and this is an area in which their specific skill set would be valuable.

### ***Assist with the MTO issue***

This paper showed earlier that al-Shabaab utilized MTOs to receive funds from overseas. It is worth considering, then, what affect the international community's shutting down of some of the MTOs has had on the group's revenues. As has already been discussed, the Bush administration shut down two major MTOs, al-Barakaat and al-Taqwa, in late 2001.<sup>697</sup> Since then, other Somali financial transfer companies in the United States have shut down as banks, fearful of being implicated in terrorist funding, have closed the companies' accounts,<sup>698</sup> though a "solution" was found that allows

<sup>695</sup> For a look at the EU's training efforts, see Backhaus and Korge, as well as "EU Day Celebrated in Somalia-EUTM Somalia in Mogadishu: A Milestone/The New Era." *European Union*, May 15, 2013. <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eu-somalia-training-mission/news-in-brief?lang=en>. For reference to Ethiopia's training of Somali forces, see "Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama." For Uganda's: Hatcher, Jessica. "Somalia's Young Army Recruits Face Uphill Battle for Credibility." *The Guardian*, April 19, 2013. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/apr/19/somalia-army-uphill-battle-credibility>. For Kenya's: Verini, 2.

<sup>696</sup> Hutton. See also "EU Pledges 44 Million Euros Aid at Somalia Conference."

<sup>697</sup> "Terrorist Financial Network Fact Sheet."

<sup>698</sup> Shah, Allie. "Somalis Face 'a Hopeless Situation'." *StarTribune Minneapolis*, January 9, 2012. <http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/136912723.html?refer=y>.



remittances to continue being sent from Minnesota.<sup>699</sup> Most recently, Barclays in England announced that it would close the account of Dahabshiil, the largest MTO involved in transferring money to Somalia.<sup>700</sup>

But shutting down these businesses may only prove a temporary and minor inconvenience to Shabaab, as it was for other terrorist organizations that utilized them. A U.S. government report found “no evidence that shutting down al-Barakaat hurt al-Qaeda financially,” and AIAI, one of the groups the United States hoped to damage by shutting down al-Barakaat, simply found alternate means of transferring funds.<sup>701</sup> Furthermore, another article has argued that shutting down MTOs will only drive the money transfer business underground,<sup>702</sup> the very same warning that has been issued by some concerned about Barclays closing Dahabshiil’s account.<sup>703</sup> MTO transfers are already very difficult to track, hence their appeal for terrorist and criminal networks, but driving the industry away from established MTOs that are subject to some legal oversight will only make the task of tracking illegal transfers even more difficult.

Open source reporting does not give an idea of how much Shabaab relies on MTO; if shutting it down would be a death-blow to its ability to receive funds from overseas, then the current course is worth pursuing. But if not, policymakers should look to other options; any benefits derived from shutting down the MTOs and thereby inhibiting Shabaab’s ability to receive international financing will be outweighed by the damage done to the 40% of the Somali population who rely on the money they receive via MTOs for their subsistence.<sup>704</sup> Somalis will find alternate means to get money to the country, but if the new arrangement resulted in substantially less money making it to Somalia, it would usher in the sort of hardship that could undermine the new government’s attempt to establish legitimacy. If the U.S. government could assist Barclays in finding a solution similar to the one hammered out in Minnesota, it likely would be a very positive development for Somalia and the state-building enterprise.

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<sup>699</sup> Harper, Mary. “Somalia’s Lifeline Under Threat.” *Mary Harper*, June 24, 2013. <http://mary-harper.blogspot.com/>.

<sup>700</sup> “Barclays Faces Pressure from Somali Cash Transfer Firms.” *BBC News*, June 24, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23030943>.

<sup>701</sup> Roth and et al., 81.

<sup>702</sup> Looney, Robert. “Hawala: The Terrorist’s Informal Financial Mechanism.” *Middle East Policy* X, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 164–167, p. 166.

<sup>703</sup> “Barclays Faces Pressure from Somali Cash Transfer Firms.”

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*

**Keep a low profile**

And finally, anything the United States does in Somalia must be with as light and low-profile footprint as possible. Ambassador William M. Bellamy, writing for the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, notes the counterproductive effect a visible U.S. military presence can have in African countries:

Among the most common mistakes made by U.S. planners is to assume that a robust American military presence is both a reassurance to friendly governments and a deterrent to extremists and potential terrorists. In fact, many friendly African governments regard a large and visible U.S. military presence as a handicap and potential magnet for both domestic political opponents and terrorists in search of high-value targets in an otherwise target-poor environment.<sup>705</sup>

This is particularly true for the United States in Somalia, as the anger over the First Battle of Mogadishu lingers on in that country.<sup>706</sup> The coalition is already going to have enough difficulties refuting the al-Shabaab narrative that AMISOM is a foreign, invading, infidel force; an overt U.S. military presence would only bolster Shabaab's claims, and would draw in more hardcore foreign jihadis eager to bleed Enemy Number One.

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<sup>705</sup> Bellamy, William M. "U.S. Security Engagement in Africa." *Africa Security Brief* 1 (June 2009), pp. 4-5.

<sup>706</sup> "Profile: Somalia's Islamic Courts." *BBC News*, June 6, 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/5051588.stm>.

## Conclusion: Dangerous Times

Somalia might be the most difficult and complex country on earth in which to state-build. Even if the coalition is able to get the counterinsurgency part right, there still remain the deep and difficult problems that have plagued Somalia for decades, long before al-Shabaab rose to prominence. Somalia is fractured along a dizzying number of lines: clan, region, class, race, and perhaps religion if Salafism continues to grow. The country has seen horrific violence for the last 20 years and even before, and is steeped in grievance.

The already-daunting task has been made more difficult by coalition mistakes. The most dangerous one is the still-unfolding situation in Lower Juba. If coalition partners continue to undercut the government's authority in Kismayo, and strike deals with local groups or prop up certain clans and/or militias, Somalis in those areas will understandably align themselves with the local power brokers rather than with a government that has no influence. Furthermore, different factions within the coalition pursuing their own objectives, or working at cross-purposes to one another, makes it impossible to implement a coherent state-building plan.

And while the coalition remains largely intact, it is entering the phase of the conflict with the potential for the most disunity. The coalition has remained united, however imperfectly, because of the clear and immediate threat of al-Shabaab. Now that AMISOM the group has waned in power, the different factions of the coalition will be tempted to turn their energies to pursuing their own interests more vigorously.

The situation is fragile, and sustained instability will cause Somalis to wonder if the government is not the answer. The more it struggles to govern effectively, the more Somalis will be willing to listen to Shabaab's message that it is merely a foreign and apostate puppet, and that AMISOM is an occupying force. Somali cultural norms, as well as the country's history, incline Somalis to be suspicious of the coalition, given the country's long history of rancor with Ethiopia and shorter but still sharp history of conflict with Kenya, its people's xenophobia and extreme autonomy that will bridle against a government's attempt to impose authority, and its fractious clan, regional, and class dynamics.

Somalis have for now largely rejected foreign jihadis because of the jihadis' extreme interpretation of Islam, but Salafism, fueled by radical imams with money from the Gulf, is making gains in the country. Given that so many other ideologies have been tried and

found wanting, Somali society, particularly a frustrated, unemployed, battle-scarred youth, could turn its eyes to Salafism. If the country becomes more accepting of radical Islam, radical Islamic groups, including those with an international agenda, will become more palatable.

The coalition still has a chance, but it is burning through its limited amount of time. Before its window of opportunity closes, the coalition can enjoy the goodwill of Somalis grateful to be rid of al-Shabaab, and the Somali government can use the space to pursue the critical tasks of state-building. After the window closes, the coalition will be vulnerable to attack everywhere, and the pocket of peace it painstakingly carved out over the last two years will collapse and the state-building project will shatter.

The results would be dire. The country would descend back into violence and the sort of failed state model in which terrorist organizations thrive. Al-Shabaab or a similar group could rise to prominence again, bolstered by Somalis' increasing embrace of Salafist principles and disillusionment with other failed ideologies, and provide active shelter and aid to international terrorists. Neighboring countries would be destabilized again by large refugee flows and acts of violence along their borders and beyond. The West would have to assume radical Muslim fighters, particularly any foreign fighters, would be interested in waging global jihad at some point. In this scenario the United States would have few tools at its disposal, and would have to resort to stop-gap counterterrorism measures that could quicken and deepen the radicalization process in Somalia.

The coalition has an unprecedented opportunity to help a country recover from one of the worst, most sustained crises in the world, and help stabilize a fragile region. Somalis are extraordinarily resilient and keen businesspeople; given its strategic position and its people's entrepreneurial spirit, Somalia could become an economic gateway to the Horn of Africa region and a key driver of growth.

But for that to ever happen, the coalition must do better. It is locked in combat with a wily, ruthless, and determined foe that is doing everything it can to derail the state-building process in Somalia. Al-Shabaab's presence, coupled with the cultural and historical realities of the country, makes the coalition's task formidable, and its ill-prepared, at times disjointed, and sometimes counter-productive approach is insufficient. Unless the coalition does better, Somalia will see the return of a triumphant and emboldened terrorist organization and the continued oppression of a suffering people.

## Addendum: The Westgate Mall Attack

Al-Shabaab's horrifying attack on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi occurred after I had written virtually all of the preceding report. Rather than work the attack and its implications into the report, I will address it separately here.

Analysts are still grappling with what the attack tells us about Shabaab, but two contending narratives are emerging. One suggests that the attack shows Shabaab is desperate and lashing out as it has been too badly damaged by the coalition offensive to mount any sort of other attack. Others suggest that the attack instead shows Shabaab is ascendant, that it was never defeated in the first place and that it is far stronger than people had been predicting.

There are elements from both analyses that are correct, though unsurprisingly I fall more strongly into the camp that believes the attack reveals al-Shabaab's strength rather than weakness.

Those who argue Shabaab is grasping at the "tools of the weak" are correct in the sense that al-Shabaab cannot face the coalition in a conventional battle. But that is not because the group has been irreparably degraded in the last several years; it is because Shabaab has *never* been able to face in conventional battle the sort of force AMISOM is currently fielding.

AMISOM was desperately weak throughout much of al-Shabaab's ascendancy; it was only in 2010 that AMISOM was reinforced, allowing it to break out of the box it was in in Mogadishu. Ethiopia and Kenya then entered the fray, bolstering the coalition further, while other members of the international community provided intelligence support, surgical strike capabilities, training, and money. So Shabaab's territorial losses are less a reflection of its weakening and more of the coalition's strengthening.

And Shabaab has launched an awful regional terrorist attack before, on Kampala in 2010. I don't remember anyone arguing at the time that al-Shabaab was desperate and weak for doing so, because it was so clearly not—Shabaab was at its zenith in July 2010. So why would an equally sophisticated, successful, and vicious terror attack now be seen as a sign of weakness?

As this report has tried to show, Shabaab's leadership understood the new dynamics of a strengthened AMISOM probably better than anyone, and concentrated on weathering the storm while not sacrificing its core capabilities. Al-Shabaab has always been a remarkably resilient group, and understands its limitations. It fought a guerrilla

war against Ethiopia, evolved into a somewhat more conventional force that administered large areas of the country, and then reverted back to a guerrilla campaign after AMISOM was reinforced. It is not going to stand and fight a superior force that can crush it, but will instead attack when and where it can, as opportunities arise. The Westgate mall was one such opportunity given that it was in Kenya, hardly defended at all, high-profile, and frequented by a lot of Westerners as well as Kenyans.

Shabaab's core force of around 5,000 fighters remains remarkably intact, and they mostly are hunkered down in safe havens in Lower Juba, the Galgala Mountains, and probably parts of northeastern Kenya. They have avoided a devastating confrontation with a superior force, are bringing in money, and still control significant sections of Somalia. Meanwhile, the coalition offensive has stalled and shows no sign of being able to effectively restart. Al-Shabaab's tactic of withdrawing in front of the coalition as part of its guerrilla strategy has worked very well, in other words.

So the attack does not herald a fundamental shift in the group's approach or ideology or status. The attack was not a tool of the weak, but a tool of the strategic. It is simply business as usual for an extraordinarily ruthless and cunning terrorist group.

A related question is whether the attack signals Shabaab is turning its attention away from the fight in Somalia and towards global jihad. Much of this speculation centers around the fact that Godane, a man absolutely interested in global jihad, now firmly controls the group. Western policymakers are, understandably, particularly concerned given al-Shabaab's proven ability to recruit within their countries, and now fear the group could utilize their Western recruits in a variety of ways to attack their adopted homelands.

I (cautiously) believe that this attack does not indicate that Shabaab is now going to primarily focus on hitting international targets, including the United States. All three of the countries Shabaab has struck with terrorist attacks—Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia (indirectly, when the Ethiopian restaurant was bombed in Kampala)—have forces inside of Somalia right now. The Westgate attack can easily be understood as part of the Somalia struggle.

Shabaab also has not noticeably altered its rhetoric or recruitment propaganda. Al-Shabaab's outreach to Somali-Americans—including its most recent effort, the films featuring three Minnesotans killed fighting for the group—focuses on calling them to Somalia to wage jihad, not on them remaining in place to attack the United States.

There also are practical difficulties in attacking the United States or other Western countries. Al-Shabaab almost certainly lost a lot of the support it used to garner among its diaspora communities, particularly now that its brutality has become common knowledge. It would be hard for a clandestine cell planted by Shabaab to escape detection, either from the Somali community or domestic law enforcement agencies, which have been involved in combating Shabaab's efforts for years now. Given this level of scrutiny, it would be similarly difficult for a fighter to return from Somalia.

The biggest danger posed by the group is its potential ability to inspire so-called "lone wolf" attacks, individuals who have neither been trained by a terrorist organization nor have a formal affiliation, but who seek to emulate the group's attacks. Lone wolves are dangerous because they are so difficult to detect, particularly if they do not attempt to communicate with anyone about their plans. But, given their lack of expertise, they also are generally too inept to inflict wide-spread damage. And again, the group has not put much effort into trying to inspire lone wolf attacks, so it does not appear to be a priority for them at the moment.

This section of the report began with a discussion of how resilient and adaptable al-Shabaab is, so it would be pure foolishness to dismiss out of hand Shabaab's potential interest in re-orienting to the Far Enemy. Al-Qaeda undertook the very same evolution in the 1990s,<sup>707</sup> and there is no doubt that Godane would be thrilled at an opportunity to directly attack a Western country. And as this report has repeatedly warned, AMISOM will eventually be seen as occupiers rather than liberators, which would at least partially resuscitate al-Shabaab's foreign recruitment networks and give the group more options if it wished to attack the West.

None of that has happened yet, and hopefully never will. Even given the Westgate attack, al-Shabaab is still best understood as being interested in the Somalia struggle (which given its irredentist claims in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, necessarily means a regional struggle). But I was concerned to read that during the Westgate massacre the terrorists were specifically seeking Americans, along with Kenyans.<sup>708</sup> And if Shabaab leaders did start issuing calls to diaspora Somalis to wage jihad in the West, it would be

<sup>707</sup> Gerges, Fawaz A. *The far enemy: why Jihad went global*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 295.

<sup>708</sup> Flood, Zoe. "Kenya Mall Attack: Mother Who Negotiated with Terrorist to Spare Children Tells of Ordeal." *The Telegraph*, October 5, 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/kenya/10358285/Kenya-mall-attack-Mother-who-negotiated-with-terrorist-to-spare-children-tells-of-ordeal.html>.

cause for even further concern and could signal a fundamental shift in the group's focus towards the Far Enemy.

Western policymakers responsible for protecting their citizens do not have the luxury of a wait-and-see approach on this issue, and already are stepping up their pressure on the group.<sup>709</sup> As this report has pointed out, there is a larger role for the international community to play, and hopefully the Westgate attack will serve to galvanize further action. But as always in these situations, there is the danger of over-reach, so while the world needs to move against Shabaab with resolve, it is imperative it do so in a well-coordinated and strategic fashion. It is what al-Shabaab has already been doing against its own enemies, with, tragically, success so far.

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<sup>709</sup> Chappell, Bill. "Navy SEAL Team Reportedly Attacks Militants On Somali Coast." *NPR*, October 5, 2013. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/10/05/229586914/navy-seal-team-reportedly-attacks-militants-on-somali-coast>.



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