

# Security Council

## The Question of the Impending Civil War in Somalia



<b>Forum</b>	Security Council
<b>Issue:</b>	The question of the impending civil war in Somalia
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## Introduction

The Somali conflict is said to be one of the most complex and long crises in the world. Currently, the nation is experiencing a combination of armed conflict by militant groups and deteriorating climate shocks. Somalia has been undergoing violent political instability for the past 3 decades resulting in poverty, food insecurity, and population displacement. More than 60% of Somalia's economy remains in the primary sector related to agriculture thereby making the population extremely susceptible to natural disasters. In addition to this, around 70% of the population lives below the poverty line. In 2019, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs projected that at least 5 million Somalis were in need of humanitarian assistance, most of them children.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Civil War

A war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country.

### Al-Shabaab

Islamist militant group based in Somalia whose primary objective is the "*establishment of an Islamist state in the Horn of Africa based on Sharia law and the elimination of secular foreign influence.*".

### African Union Mission in Somalia



Also referred to as AMISOM, it is the leading opposition to Al-Shabaab, including soldiers from armies surrounding African nations that are allied with/support the government of Somalia.

### Arms embargo

Prohibition on the trade of weapons with a particular country.

### Humanitarian assistance

Aid given to those who are victims of violence or disasters to meet their immediate needs such as medical supplies, food, water, and shelter. This is generally short-term assistance until the government offers more long-term and sustainable solutions.

### Political coup

Political uprising wherein power changes hands and involves the removal of government..

## General Overview



Figure 1: zoomed in image of Somalia on the African map



Figure 2: Somalia on the African map



## Historical roots

The Republic of Somalia is the result of European colonization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and once colonial management was established, the citizens of Somalia were divided into 5 colonial units i.e. the French Somaliland (that is, modern day Republic of Djibouti), British Somaliland, Italian Somaliland, Northern Frontier District (which shaped part of Kenya's colony) and the Ogaden region. The Ogaden region was conquered by Menelik II (powerful emperor of Ethiopia at the time) from 1887 to 1895, becoming an integral part of Ethiopian land. The British Somaliland region had later become independent in 1960 and formed the Republic of Somalia after joining the Italian Somaliland region (refer to Figure 3). This colonialism had 4 main negative consequences for Somalia and in important ways, accounted for the conflict that was about to unfold.

As a first, the foreign administration created divisions for the citizens to several sovereign territories. This had an effect on local politics but also the relations of the people of Somalia and its neighbors; namely Ethiopia. In Somalia, this experience led to the creation of a nationalist government that engaged in military buildup where General Mohamed Siad Barre became president after a successful coup. Somalia also adopted a policy which sanctified foreign borders. It was said that this policy caused the country to “*appear more aggressive towards Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia*”. Eventually, Somalia went to war with Ethiopia, known as ‘The Ogaden War’ and was defeated with heavy political consequences as the people of Somalia had started to dislike Barre’s government. This particular policy also impacts the current involvement of neighboring countries (e.g. Ethiopia) in the Somalia conflict, making it essential for any and all peacemaking proposals to address the concerns of Ethiopia as well as recognizing the Ogaden region as a part of Ethiopian territory.

Secondly, the colonial rule had introduced social and political structures that were unfamiliar to religious and clan-based structures of the citizens of Somalia and as the state exercised more control over political power within the country, it caused rivalry and enmity. The colonial system changed the role and nature of clan rivalry in Somalia, giving reason for the position that clannism has in the current conflict in Somalia. Therefore, rather than a communal structure for development of the country, the state has been perceived as (clan) competition by the public.



Thirdly, the people of Somalia had obtained the foreign traditions of the Italians and British and even though these traditions were welcomed in the early years, the difference in political traditions became a cause for concern for the elites from both territories. As the administration of the Italians had more overall control and authority, they recruited the members of local clans, namely the Mudgu and Majertinai regions, to their administration. This type of promotion of clan members from specific regions caused exploitative practices of the colonial and post-colonial states to be enforced. The citizens in the north part of Somalia were subjected to violence and state-instigated repression eventually initiating independence by Somaliland in 1991.

Finally, closely related to the two previously mentioned influences, inequality escalated due to the uneven distribution of products and inaccess to power to clans in Somalia. The state was administered in a way that only a part of the 'select' population can have access to education, jobs in the state, and other modern products. This caused domination of the state by the respective members of the more privileged groups which was essential for the control of state power once the colonial ruler departed. This resulted in inequality stemming from inter-clan distrust and enmity; among the key factors that contributed to the Somali conflict.

### **Societal basis**

The clan is the main social structure in Somalia as it shaped social relations of the public for years and structured the judiciary between different clans. The process of politicizing the clan structure after foreign rule was unsuccessful as it led to immense struggle for power and control. During the time when Barre ruled over Somalia, there was manipulation and entrenchment of clan divisions wherein some groups would dominate the legislation and others were overlooked and were even treated violently. This worsened when Somalia was defeated by Ethiopian forces and Barre's opposition attempted a coup to overthrow the government in 1978. This led to Barre using the clan system to tighten his grip on political power, while sidelining certain (major) clans thereby causing Barre to take violent action against the suspected clans. These problems of unjust administration had consequences in terms of how the Somali public would view the government and the nature of inter-clan relations. On the one hand, the clan system persists to stipulate essential services, security, and protection; however, it is the underlying cause of conflict and division.



The unsettled establishment of the legislative branch by the Somali state, and the heavy militarization of the public, is said to be a social factor that contributed to the modern day Somali crisis. When Barre was in power, his government was the most militarized in Africa as they were supplied with weapons from other African (such as Ethiopia, Libya, and Egypt), and Arab countries (mainly Yemen). These weapons were used to arm the clans and the opposition forces (only in the final years of Barre's regime) were also equipped. As the government worsens in providing physical security to the public, the clans and most Somalis utilized weapons to use as protection. This calls for peacemaking activities and an example of this would be Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). DDR refers to nuanced approaches for *"effectively and successfully disarming and reorienting all those possessing weapons into civilian life, rebuilding democratic security structures and re-establishing public confidence in the rule of law and state guaranteed security"*.

### Al-Shabaab

The lasting effects of the civil war have triggered food shortages and famines, also causing mass inflation in the prices of food. The militant organization 'Al-Shabaab' is largely in control of land in the southern parts of Somalia – comprising most of the country's fertile grounds (refer to Figure 3). This came to their favor in terms of recruitment as they can provide assurance of food, especially during famines, in exchange for joining the group. Foreign aid workers continue to help in relieving famine in the areas that are controlled by Somalia's African Union backed government and the workers are banned from entering/helping within the areas that are controlled by the Al-Shabaab organization. This led to a high number of deaths due to starvation. In addition to this, there have also been various factions that are competing for control of the nation wherein Al-Shabaab is the prominent opponent to peace in Somalia. This group comprises approximately 9,000 members and aims to seize control of the entire nation and bring it under Islamic control. The African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) is the leading *opposition* to Al-Shabaab, composed of approximately 22,000 soldiers from armies surrounding African nations that are allied with/support the government of Somalia.



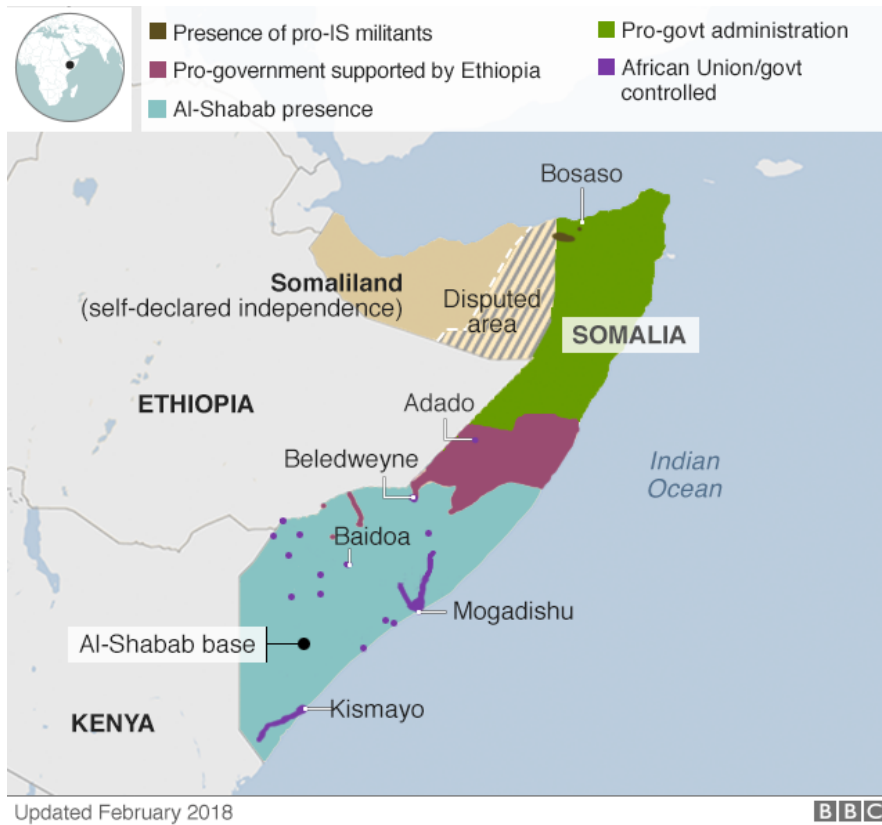


Figure 3: map showcasing the different regions in Somalia

## Major Parties Involved

### The Federal Republic of Somalia

Although the nation made little progress with judicial developments and security, the federal government received praise for its national development plan and economic developments. All major parties to the conflict performed infringements of humanitarian law as Al-Shabaab conducted several attacks on the public and recruited children to their group. Thus there was immense displacement of civilians wherein many are moving to urban areas with the hope of receiving humanitarian assistance. In addition to Al-Shabaab, the citizens of Somalia are struggling with the effects of extreme weather circumstances such as famine and drought, as well as the spread of diseases such as food insecurity, cholera, and measles.



## The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

Ethiopia is currently in conflict with its northern Tigray region, which started in November 2020 and resulted in approximately 350,000 deaths. Somalia is likely to be 'collateral damage' of this particular conflict. However, prior to the Tigray conflict, Ethiopia was allied with Somalia (and Eritrea) under the Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC).

## United States of America

The UNSC Resolution 733 and Resolution 746 brought about the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) in 1992 which was the first mission that aimed to provide humanitarian relief and deliver assistance in Somalia. Later in the same year, the UNSC approved the Unified Task Force (UNITAF) which was ordered to distribute humanitarian aid and peace. Both of these operations are led by the United States. In 1993, the UN troops started an effort to relieve the famine conditions wherein George H. W. Bush (the United States president at the time) decided to send U.S. troops to Somalia on a short-term mission. However, the next president, Bill Clinton, was urged by the UN Secretary General to prolong the mission in hope to reinstate civil governance in Somalia. However currently, the United States aid to Somalia has been falling from \$461 million in 2012 to \$199 million in 2021. This downward trajectory is likely to continue.

## Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
July 1960	The Somali Republic is formed as the British and Italian ruled Somaliland territories unite with Aden Abdullah Osman Daar appointed as president and Abdirashid Ali Shermarke as prime minister.
October 1969	President Shermarke shot dead followed by a military coup led by Major General Mohamed Siad Barre.
July 1977	





The Ogaden War breaks out wherein Barre's government becomes disliked by the public. Somalis become let down with life under military dictatorship thereby leading to the Somali Civil War.

- May 1991** The Barre regime was ousted by a coalition of opposition groups. These are backed by Ethiopia and Libya.
- May 1991** Somaliland, although not recognized by any foreign country, declares independence.
- April 1992** UNOSOM (United Nations Operation in Somalia) is created by the UN Security Council, led by the United States.
- July 1992** Due to a lack of a permanent central authority, Somalia is regarded as a 'failed state'.
- December 1992** UNITAF (Unified Task Force) is created by the UN Security Council, led by the United States.
- December 1992** Approximately 350,000 Somalis die of starvation, disease, or civil war and respective images are broadcasted on American news networks. Therefore, public pressure resulted in U.S. president George Bush to order emergency airlifts of food and supplies to Somalia.
- October 1993** General Mohamed Farah Aidid escalated fighting with armed factions resulting in 19 American troops and 1,000 militia and civilians killed in Mogadishu. This causes lasting disturbance and results in keeping (important) Western forces away from the situation in Somalia.
- March 1995** UNOSOM withdraws from Somalia



- April 1999** The regional capital of Garba Harre (400 kilometers away from Mogadishu) is invaded by Ethiopian forces in order to attempt to suppress the fighting amongst rebel groups.
- April 2000** Hundreds are killed in Somalia due to an outbreak of cholera caused by polluted water.
- September 2001** The UN pulls out their international staff and workers from Somalia due to hazardous conditions and kidnapping cases.
- October 2004** Abdullahi Yusuf is elected as president of the newly inaugurated transitional federal government, becoming the first president of Somalia's interim government.
- December 2006** The UN arms embargo is lifted and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) is authorized and it states that the requirements to the embargo have exceptions i.e. military equipment transfers, and technical training and assistance.
- February 2007** SC Resolution allows for the supply of weapons for the purpose of helping Somalia develop its security institutions.
- November 2008** SC Resolution 1884 amended the arms embargo to target the nations that have violated it or caused the obstruction in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Somalia.
- December 2009** An arms embargo is imposed on Eritrea by the UN, partially in response to Eritrea violations of the arms embargo on Somalia.
- March 2013** SC Resolution 2093 amends the restrictions and procedures related to arms supplies to the Somalian Government but also maintains the embargo to the non-state actors in the country.



- January 2020**                      Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea propose a new regional alliance, referred to as the Horn of Africa Cooperation (HoAC).
- November 2020**                Ethiopian withdraws their troops in Somalia.

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

Please do use either British or American spelling (and be consistent) throughout your Research Report. When listing past UN Resolutions, it is suggested that you make use of bullet points and the specified format below:

- Arms embargo on Somalia, January 1992, (**S/RES/733**)
- Establishment of UN Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I), 24 April 1992, (**S/RES/751**)
- Authorization of the use of force in Somalia (UNITAF), 3 December 1992, (**S/RES/794**)
- Establishment of UN Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II) under Chapter VII, 26 March 1993, (**S/RES/814**)
- Withdrawal of the UN Operation in Somalia II (UNOSOM II), 4 February 1994, (**S/RES/897**)
- Assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights, 26 April 2000, (**E/CN.4/RES/2000/81**)
- Authorization of Intergovernmental Authority on Development Peace Support Mission to Somalia (IGASOM), 6 December 2006, (**S/RES/1725**)
- Authorization of action against piracy in Somalia, 2 June 2008, (**S/RES/1816**)
- The Situation in Somalia – Civilians and Armed Conflict, 31 May 2019, (**S/RES/2472**)

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue



The United Nations continued its humanitarian efforts in Somalia even after the damaging impacts of the overthrowing of Barre. By 1991, the UN was fully engaged in the country. For the next months, the UN temporarily withdrew their troops from Somalia but always maintained the humanitarian activities along with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental organizations (NGO's). The UN was later actively involved with the political aspects of the conflict with the Organization of African Unity (QUA), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and the League of Arab States (LAS).

In 1992, a team of UN officials were led to Somalia for talks regarding a possible end of conflicts as well as relieving the civilians that were caught in the conflict. As the visit took place, many were unanimously in favor of a ceasefire. Due to the success of the visit, just later that month, the SC urged all major parties to cease hostilities and agree on whether all states should create an embargo of arms to Somalia. There was an additional request to increase humanitarian assistance to the population that was affected and the process of seeking a settlement of the conflict had begun. Later that year, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was established and it called on nations around the world for humanitarian assistance to Somalia. On the one hand, UNOSOM was successful in distributing humanitarian assistance and protecting the public however, it was not able to fulfil its purpose to rebuild the government. The Somali population had still continued to suffer and there was also heavy mismanagement and corruption throughout the entire operation.

## Possible Solutions

The United States intervention in Somalia has pinpointed on insurgency and terrorism while also entirely viewing the political violence thereby not attempting to solve the 'big picture' but rather focusing only on the tactics of the conflict. U.S. policymakers also turned to measures for countering terrorism, seeking to halt Al-Shabaab's successes in the past 3 years. This approach, however, overlooks the main bulk of the conflict i.e. a 30 year long civil war which is being fought at different strengths over time. If the U.S. accepts that Al-Shabaab's tactics are an indicator of the more broad-spectrum civil war, it is vital to realize that the main question for security is how to truly end the civil war rather than how to defeat Al-Shabaab. Therefore, the U.S. government is advised to look through this perspective and discuss a resolution ending the civil war driving Al-Shabaab's terrorist tactics. It would also be a good



idea for the U.S. to reduce its levels of assistance to signal that a counter-terrorism campaign will not be sufficient enough to end the conflict. In addition to this, not being able to defeat Al-Shabaab only results in prolonged fighting and continues to assure that terrorist activity will only remain in the conflict.

The combination of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) troops, U.S. drone strikes, and the millions that were invested into the national army of Somalia were able to force out Al-Shabaab from the densely populated areas. However, these forces were not able to defeat Al-Shabaab from the southern and central regions of the country. Due to this, The Trump Administration increased drone strikes however, this has done little in terms of altering a stalemate.

Due to the stalled AMISOM's transition to the Somali government, many major countries are threatening to leave the mission even though they had completed plans to support the transition. A decline in operations has political impacts as the politicians of Kenya have already removed their troops whereas the government of Uganda investigated the operations in Somalia. The Somali army is still a long way from presenting a long term solution and efforts to build the army comes with a list of caution regarding global intervention to mold security institutions. Corruption in Somalia remains a prominent issue in Somalia, causing the United States to cease any military assistance to Somali forces that are non-mentored.

The government of Somalia, as well as the public, should come to a decision on how to settle with the past terrors of Al-Shabaab and a possible end to this conflict will require negotiations that gives Al-Shabaab a future role in governance however

, this approach should not overlook the experience of high-level rebels of Al-Shabaab. For example, a poor precedent was set for any future accommodations with Al-Shabaab when a former spokesman of the group was arrested by the government in 2019.

In conclusion, the decision to work for an outcome to the war in Somalia involves its belligerents including mainly the United States, and Somalia along with some countries along East Africa.



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