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HORN OF AFRICA BULLETIN

ANALYSES • CONTEXT • CONNECTIONS

Analyses

- **Somalia – the new axis of conflict**
- **Islamic Shari'a in Somalia - challenges and opportunities**
- **The Somali conflict and the regional context**

News and events

Resources

Somalia – the new axis of conflict

The nature of the intractable civil war in Somalia is undergoing a change, adding an ideological, sectarian dynamic to the conflict. For the first time in modern Somalia, Sufi groups under attack are taking up arms and effectively fighting Al-Shabaab with popular support on the rural plains of central Somalia. This new axis of conflict, where Islamist fighters are battling one another along religious lines, has the potential of changing the conflict dynamics in the long run.

Somalis are generally pragmatic and moderate Sufi Muslims. They do not share the strict, Saudi-inspired Wahhabi interpretation of Islam of the hard-line Al-Shabaab group.¹ Historically, loosely organized Sufi groups rarely entered the political arena, with the exception of the anti-colonial wars in the 20th century.² Over the last two decades of civil war, characterized by a lack of central government, Sufi leaders had managed to steer clear of clan and political wars, but this pragmatic and moderate approach came to an end when Al-Shabaab fighters began desecrating their religious shrines in the south of the country late last year.³

An impressive example is Al-Shabaab's policy in the port city of Kismayo. In December 2008, the group targeted Sufi sites, among them ancient graves of clerics and other prominent Sufis – sites Al-Shabaab deemed un-Islamic. As Sufi scholars increasingly felt discriminated against and targeted because of their religious practices, they saw themselves in a religious zero-sum identity conflict and decided to take up arms.

A clear, but limited challenge

Recently, Al-Shabaab fighters were able to launch two particularly prominent attacks in their battle against the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the African Union (AU) troops in Mogadishu. On 7 May, Al-Shabaab fighters attacked the TFG only a few blocks away from Villa Somalia, the presidential palace, thereby showing the apparent weakness of the TFG. On 17 September, Al-Shabaab successfully attacked the main AU military base with two car bombs in the capital, killing 17 peacekeepers.

Until very recently, the main Sufi resistance group, Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ), has been militarily active only in the central Somali region of Galgaduud,

where the major local clans and sub-clans (Habir Gedir, Dir, and Marehan) as well as Sufi sheikhs have put their support behind ASWJ. While having more armed fighters than Al-Shabaab, they are not as well trained, as ASWJ fighters are drawn from the clan militias which generally lack formal military training. Nevertheless, the group was able to defeat Al-Shabaab in two strategically crucial towns connecting southern and northern Somalia. From 1 November until 16 December 2008, ASWJ successfully engaged in fierce fighting with Al-Shabaab in the town of Guraceel. On 25 January, ASWJ openly engaged Al-Shabaab militias in intense fighting, reportedly killing at least 35 people and injuring more than 60 others in Dhusamareeb. Subsequently, ASWJ succeeded in driving Al-Shabaab insurgents out of several towns of the region. In their place, the Sufi movement has established its own incipient local administration, liaising with UN officials and patrolling the locality. Grassroots support and local clan-backing has allowed this new movement to transform rapidly from a civil to a military force.⁴ In addition, ASWJ has openly come out supporting the new president of the TFG, Sheikh Sharif Ahmed.⁵ More recently, ASWJ is reported to be active also outside the Galgaduud region, and have taken over two towns in the Gedo region in accordance with the TFG.⁶

It is, however, important to acknowledge that ASWJ is still a small part in the equation of the fight between the TFG and Al-Shabaab. While the religious opposition to Al-Shabaab and its radical interpretation of Islam is wide and deep in Somalia, it has not been able to organize itself politically or military on a broader level. Furthermore, ASWJ itself lacks a political vision and, thus, finds it difficult to sustain its rule in the areas it controls.

Al-Shabaab - strengths and weaknesses

It appears that the accomplishments of ASWJ imply two realities. First, the severe Wahhabi governing methods of Al-Shabaab, which echo those on view in Pakistan's Swat Valley and includes stoning and amputations, elicit little local support. In fact, the same could be observed of all radical Islamic groups in Somalia since the 1990s.

Al-Shabaab gained their performance legitimacy in setting up Islamic courts and bringing law and order to the areas under their control, giving them strong support in parts of the country. However, popular resistance to the insurgency today is reported more frequently and conducted more openly. For example, on 26 March, hundreds of demonstrators took to the streets in protest against a ban on the sale of the narcotic Khat. In reaction, Al-Shabaab further intensified its strategy of coercion and intimidation of the Somali population by carefully selected assassinations and arrests of clan elders, several of whom have been murdered. In the latest high profile assassination, Omar Hashi Aden, the Minister of National Security, was killed along with 30 other people in a large-scale suicide car bomb in Beletwyne on 19 June, leading to a strong condemnation by a broad cross-section of Somali society.⁷

Second, the wide territorial dominance of the jihadists is perhaps more a function of the lack of any countervailing force than an indicator of any innate strength. In this sense, Al-Shabaab is benefiting particularly from the weakness of the other groups, first and foremost the TFG. As Roland Marchal put it, "Al-Shabaab may not be so powerful militarily speaking, but it is the smartest to keep the warfare in conditions that are suitable for its low membership and its lack of popular support".⁸

In fact, the movement should be weakened considerably since two of its main political pillars have been removed by the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops and the introduction of Sharia law by the new government. Facing a foreign enemy, segmentary lineage societies close their ranks and overcome their internal splits and rivalries to fight a common enemy. No doubt, this coherence falls apart as soon as the common enemy disappears. In part, this dynamic is causing popular support to wane for Al-Shabaab.⁹

Nevertheless, Al-Shabaab is still able to recruit and attract considerable backing in certain areas for various motives. Besides ideological reasons, religious or

nationalistic, the movement is also attractive for economic survival as Al-Shabaab has the means to pay their mainly young fighters. In addition, the movement represents a means of empowerment and certainly provides the ground for sheer power-seeking people to further their political stance.¹⁰

At the same time Al-Shabaab is increasingly becoming aware that they are increasingly alienating the population in areas they administered according to an overtly strict reading of Sharia law. Contrary to the perception of Al-Shabaab as a mere ideology driven movement, it did prove its ability to change its political strategy in a pragmatic way in order to regain ground: Trying to consolidate its rule, Al-Shabaab quite successfully adopted a new approach in the city of Baidoa by building its economic, social and educational infrastructure and holding talks with traditional clan leaders.

Conclusion

The TFG is attempting to take matters into their own hands. On 21 June it signed an agreement with Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a in which it agreed to cooperate in political, security, humanitarian and development areas. At the same time, the TFG appointed a former official of the Hizbul Islam insurgent group, which fought alongside Al-Shabaab, Sheikh Yusuf Mohamed Siad Inda'ade, as state defence minister.¹¹ But this does not constitute a break through in their battle over power with Al-Shabaab.

A closer look at the fighting between Al-Shabaab and Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a shows how fluid clan loyalties can be in Somalia. For now however, none of these attempts and changes in the dynamics of Somalia's civil war have been able to fundamentally change the current stalemate between the TFG and the insurgent groups, prolonging the ongoing war.

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Notes

1. For a short overview about the Al-Shabaab movement see: Paula Christina Roque, 'Somalia: Understanding Al-Shabaab', ISS Situation Report, Institute for Security Studies, 3 June 2009.
2. Roland Marchal, 'Islamic Political Dynamics in the Somali Civil War', in Alex de Waal (ed.) *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, Indiana University Press 2004, pp. 114-145.
3. Mohamed Mohamed, 'Somali rage at grave desecration', BBC 8 June 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8077725.stm>
4. 'Ahlu Sunna Takes Control of Provincial Town', Shabelle Media Network, 29 January 2009; UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia', 9 March 2009.
5. 'Islamist Group Supports President Sharif', Shabelle Media Network, 13 February 2009.
6. 'Islamist Forces Join Government Troops in Bakol Regio', Shabelle Media Network, 27 March 2009; 'Ahlu Sunnah Take Trade Town Along Kenya Border', Garowe Online, 17 August 2009; 'Ahlu Sunnah Capture Second Town in Gedo Region', Garowe Online, 19 August 2009.
7. UN Security Council, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia', 20 July 2009.
8. Email correspondence by the author with Roland Marchal, 30 July 2009.
9. Stephanie McCrummen, 'In a changing Somalia, Islamist forces see support wane', Washington Post, 7 August 2009.
10. Ken Menkhaus, 'Violent Islamic Extremism: Al-Shabaab Recruitment in America', Hearing before the Committee on Homeland Security, US Senate, 11 March 2009.
11. Recent events show that the pragmatic alliance between Al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam is dissolving. See, e.g. 'Somalia's al Shabaab rebels declare war on rivals', Reuters, 30 September 2009.

Islamic Shari'a in Somalia - challenges and opportunities

Somalia is a country that has been categorized as a failed state. Since the end of the authoritarian rule under Siad Barre, the country has been problematic to govern.¹ The establishment of a central national leadership structure is undermined by regional and clan-based politics that define and determine the power-relations despite the negotiations and signing of a peace agreement to establish a united government.² Violence has persisted in the south central Somalia that includes Mogadishu as compared to the autonomous regions in North West and North East namely Somaliland and Puntland respectively.

Efforts to enhance regional balance to moderate the militia groups in south central Somalia have not generated the desired outcome; a Transitional National Government (TNG) established in October 2002 and a subsequent Transitional Federal Government (TFG) remains dysfunctional. The situation is further complicated with the emergence of militant groups some advocating for application of Islamic Law and vow to establish a caliphate not only in Somalia but in the entire world. This call – at least to the extent to which it sought the application of Shari'a within Somalia – was given formal impetus in March 2009 when the cabinet in Somalia endorsed a proposal by President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed to implement Shari'a law throughout the country. Parliament passed legislation to that effect almost immediately thereafter. After almost two decades of protracted conflict, will the application of Shari'a bring peace to this country? Is it possible that the protagonists in the Somali conflict subscribe to the notion that only Shari'a can bring law and order to Somalia? Is TFG's call for the implementation of Shari'a driven by sincerity and the fear of God or is it a strategy to call the bluff of the insurgent groups and disarm them?

This paper is a critique on the proposal to adopt Shari'a in Somalia seeking to explore the challenges and opportunities of religion as an avenue for peace in Somalia. If the adoption of Shari'a is a political strategy - of appealing to religious emotions and thereby legitimizing claims to power - to overcome political opposition and not a sincerely and well thought out steps to peacebuilding, then it presents another avenue for further division and polarization in Somalia. For the purposes of this paper peacebuilding is defined as *"the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict"*.³

Religion and lawlessness

The people of Somalia are perceived to be homogenous; they speak the same language and, profess the same faith - Islam yet even with such a large percentage adherents to the faith, the country has been lawless for a greater part of two decades.⁴ An emerging question in the new development that the Somali community needs to ponder is; in a country where the majority of population is made up of Muslim faithful, does the legalization of Shari'a present an a renewal and impetus for re-dedication to the practice of Islam and Islamic conduct? Was Shari'a absent from within the Somali society simply by its lack of legal recognition?

Muslims are required to relate with each other and conclude the conduct of their affairs in a dignified and truthful manner in which rights and responsibilities to one another, to the larger society and to the creator are foremost in any considerations. This must be so both in private and public conduct. The Shari'a is the path to such conduct. When a person professes the Islamic faith, they are expected to conform their lifestyle to Islamic Shari'a that promotes the concept of peace and justice which has been absent in Somalia. Shari'a is thus the blue print for Muslim culture and adherents of Islamic communities embrace their faith as a way of life; committing to prescribed set of rules, laws, values, criteria, behavioural patterns

and worship practices which are supposed to organize and guide Muslim life individually and collectively.⁵

Efforts to legalize Shari'a in Somalia first surfaced in 2007 in a proposal that was fronted by Islamic Union Court leadership. International uproar objected to enforcement citing that the country risks becoming a haven for terrorist. The proposal is perceived to be a viable option for Somalia as it guarantees government legitimacy and territorial control. Subsequent goings on within the political realm in Somalia have cast the promulgation and potential application of Shari'a as a legal code merely as the bargaining chip guaranteed to confer legitimacy and territorial control to the government. Ironically, it is on the platform for the implementation of Shari'a that armed opposition groups continued to mobilize resistance towards the government and continue to wage war.

The establishment of Shari'a will suffice as a viable option and a vehicle for peace and justice in Somalia only if all sides to the conflict – government and the armed opposition groups embrace it and match their talk with the walk. As long as this remains a mere religious symbol to be seized and brandished for political advantage it can only be a source of further violations and anarchy in the country with the potential of spilling over to the horn of Africa region and even assuming an international, if not global character. Attempts to narrow the gap between the Sheikh Sharif led TFG and the Al-Shabaab in their understanding; interpretation and actual implementation of the Shari'a have inevitably enlisted opinions from local Somali and international Islamic scholars from diverse geographical jurisdictions. A general opinion has emerged critical of Al-Shabaab in their implementation of Shari'a which is seen as deliberately undermining its authentic implementation. Their application has been observed to be full of flaws and has led to tension between different schools of thought and their loose characterization as fundamentalist and liberal groups depending on the form of application that each prefers and supports.

The implementation of Shari'a as understood within the proper teachings of the Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet and as interpreted by pious Islamic scholars, will lead to restoration of the rule of law putting to an end violation of human rights; justice that will ensure equitable distribution of resources; democracy that accords political participation for all individuals and groups to participate in political processes and finally promote relations across clans thus encourage regional cohesion and recognition of a central government and will also deal with the rising international crime of piracy.

Way forward

Islamic Shari'a is not confined religious rituals such as prayers, fasting or legal punishment but extends to encompass social, political and economical matters. Essentially, Islamic Shari'a is about justice to all human beings, the religious practices nonetheless raise the consciousness of the people in its enforcement.⁶ For Muslims, every aspect of human relationship is governed by social values. All values affecting man are based upon the Qur'anic concept that each human being is endowed by God with the highest potential for doing good to himself/herself, society and is therefore capable of achieving the highest level of moral and spiritual development.

The Somalis share the same origin, speak the same language and profess the same faith that reveres the upholding of justice. That should be the threshold for peace, justice and unity in Somalia. Unity among people belonging to the same faith based on Taqwa (piety) and Iman (faith) as the foundation for fostering peace and justice; the unity of brotherhood and sisterhood that is based on the principle that each member of the society is entitled to justice as well as rights and obligations.⁷ Under such a community all members are guaranteed freedom and protection, bound together by a shared belief which constitutes to their nationality. Enforcement of Shari'a in Somalia presents a challenge because of the polarization that has

permeated the society and the political culture that has been generated over many years of conflict. Nonetheless, an authentic application of Shari'a will overcome the challenges faced not only by the citizens of Somalia but also the political elite enhancing national and human security not only in Somalia but in the horn of Africa region. If religion is to suffice as the medium for peace, the enforcement should be safeguarded from clan mechanization. Thus, the citizens of Somalia ought to be enlightened and knowledgeable on Islamic Shari'a or adopt leadership that will recognize local elders and religious leaders; a structure similar to Puntland and Somaliland that will integrate and harmonize traditional culture, religion and any other form of law that they democratically choose otherwise the local ethnic culture will pervade the legal system and adulterate Islamic Shari'a causing further conflict in the society.

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Notes

1. International Crisis Group, "Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State," Africa Report No.147, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=5836>.
2. The World Bank Documents and Reports, "Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics," http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSPContentServer/WDSP/IB/2006/05/02/000160016_20060502164447/Rendered/PDF/360320SO0Conflict0in0Somalia01PUBLIC1.pdf.
3. What is Strategic Peace Building? Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame, <http://kroc.nd.edu/node/313>.
4. Ioan M. Lewis, *Understanding Somalia and Somaliland: Culture, History and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 1 – 26.
5. Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Law of Nations: Shaybani's Siyar* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1966), 7-11.
6. Majid Khadduri, *The Islamic Conception of Justice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 1 – 12.
7. Saleh I. Babear, *New Light of Unity of Mankind*; Muslim Youth, Jan. 2004, vol. XVII, issue 118.

The Somali conflict and the regional context

Somalia is facing the worst humanitarian crisis of the past 18 and half years, with an estimated 3.7 million people in need of aid as security deteriorates. It is a country described as one of the most dangerous places for aid workers in the world and the humanitarian challenges facing its people remain formidable. The humanitarian needs are growing faster than the ability to deal with the drivers of the Somali conflict and its effects. These include natural and other disasters such as drought, food and financial crisis, water scarcity, refugee influx, mass displacement, and population pressure. In parts of Somalia, humanitarian space is shrinking at an alarming rate. In recent months, for example, several aid agencies' offices and warehouses have been robbed and some occupied by armed groups.¹ This paper briefly discusses the current dynamics of the Somali conflict and the regional context.

Actors

There are over nine key actors in today's Somalia: *the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Al-Shabaab, Hisbul Islam, Ahl Sunna Wal Jama'a, the Islamic Courts Union (ICU), 'Somaliland,' 'Puntland,' civil society, and the Somali Diaspora*. The TFG is in control of pockets of Mogadishu, the capital mainly; Villa Somalia, the air and seaports, and K4 which is the main route to the airport. Al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam are in control of much of South-central Somalia. Ahl Sunna Wal Jama'a holds onto pockets in Galgudud and Mudug regions not very significant portions though given the large parts other armed groups hold while remnants of the ICU are scattered throughout government-held areas mainly in parts

of Mogadishu, the capital and in Hiran's Beletweyn district.

Up in the northern parts of the country, there are two regional governments: 'Somaliland' in the northwest and 'Puntland' in the northeast and the two claim secession and autonomy respectively. Civil society organisations and members of the Somali Diaspora cut across the clan and/or regional divide and are found throughout Somalia.

Conflict dynamics

The TFG faces a stiff armed opposition from Al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam, almost on a daily basis at least in Mogadishu. Ahl Sunna Wal Jama'a is just beginning to organise itself with external support, a strategy which may not help them in their long-term political future due to its incompatibility with Somali nationalism, while remnants of the ICU, weakened since the death of the former internal security minister, the late Omar Hashi, are about to be reintegrated into the main government forces.

In the north, 'Somaliland' and 'Puntland' have had their share of the civil war in the past by fighting over Sol and Sanag regions and the district of Buhodle in Togdher. But, the two regions have been equally busy with electoral preparations in 'Somaliland' and dealing with piracy in 'Puntland.'

The weakened Somali civil society and the Somali Diaspora are caught up in the task of peace-building and state-building in an extremely insecure Somali political environment. They are also partly to blame for being partial and partly contributing to fuelling the war either through the more than USD 1 billion they send back to Somalia annually and through political support and patronage to Somali factions and groups.

Regional and international interference, clan politics, political Islam and the different interpretations not only mean a lot in trying to understand the Somali crisis but they also carry more weight in today's Somalia. All actors are weak and some of them have got no long-term strategic plans beyond the current conflict in the country. In the final analysis, many fear the existing power vacuum in Somalia, for example the absence of a functioning central authority, does not provide a conducive environment for lasting peace in the country. As a result, Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, sees almost daily battles between government and insurgent forces.

The issues

The issues at hand in the Somali conflict are varied and many:

Between the TFG and the armed opposition groups (AOGs), there is the issue of Sharia and accusations and counter-accusations between the TFG and the armed insurgents on proxy claims. Whichever the case, none of them seems to be giving in to the other thus leaving no room for dialogue at least for now. There is also an ongoing but slow-paced constitutional-making debate. In addition to the making of an Islamic Sharia-compliant Somali constitution in the next two years preferred and demanded by the Somali people, some people are fighting for federalism in Somalia while others prefer a centralised state system of governance. As a result, each block is building a good case based on their experiences from the past.

For 'Somaliland,' it is not clear what form of political governance they would have preferred to be part and parcel of Somalia in the future. At least, they voiced their happiness and that the current TFG is a Somali group they can talk to: when and how, nobody knows. Delayed elections and the issue of the voters list is major problem in 'Somaliland,' while in 'Puntland,' a new constitution was drafted and endorsed by parliament. The government, led by a Diaspora from Australia, seems to be focused on nation building and the only other issue on their plate, in addition to security, is piracy.

Mass displacement exists and the humanitarian access and space are almost non-existent in Somalia, mainly in the South-central region. In addition to the lack

of field presence by aid agencies on the ground, there is tension regarding the issue of blurred distinctions between humanitarian and political efforts in the country with the NGOs demanding separation between the two and the need to respect the principles governing humanitarian action.

Finally, security concerns raised by regional and international actors remain a problem. It's difficult to address them in such a lawless environment and the strategies employed further complicate the already complex Somali crisis.

The regional context

As part of their own Cold War, Egypt and Ethiopia have historically fought over Somalia basically because of the Nile. For all practical reasons, the two countries prefer and have to some extent promoted decentralisation and centralisation forms of governance in Somalia especially in the past nineteen years but in vain. While Egypt prefers a strong central authority in Mogadishu, Addis opts for a loose federal system of governance. There is a feeling among Somali observers that the options of the two countries are somehow backed by the League of Arab States (LAS) and by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and by the Arab and African worlds respectively.²

In support of the former TFG, Ethiopia did intervene Somalia militarily in late 2006 and since then maintains a significant military presence along its border with Somalia. It also trains anti-Al-Shabaab groups on its soil. As part of this and the implications of the Badme border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the two countries have taken their war and tried to outflank each other on Somali soil by supporting the government and the AOGs respectively. As a result, Asmara has suspended its IGAD membership and both IGAD and the AU proposed UN sanctions on Eritrea.

Challenges

The first key challenge facing the Somali government and other actors is security which, as one of the transitional tasks lying ahead of the new government, should not be their first priority. Reconciliation, access and the delivery of humanitarian aid and the issue of internalisation of the Djibouti process demand more attention in terms of Somali priorities than any other item on the government's agenda.

There is also lack of tangible support for the government. Apart from political statements supporting the government, neither the TFG nor the international community have spelt out their plans and/or priorities. This has to do with the issue of capacity on the government's side and possibly fatigue from the donors' side.

Lack of synergy between the different processes can also be clearly seen. There are various engagements at different levels but no synergy between local processes and other developments at the national level. As the only legitimate government of Somalia, the TFG is yet to submit one single policy document and the aid community is waiting for them in order to avoid imposing their ideas. With the TFG's term coming to an end in two years' time, there is a need to do everything possible to support a conducive environment for possible joint commitments between the government, other Somali actors and the international aid community including the African Union (AU) and IGAD. And finally, the issue of piracy is stealing the much needed international attention and focus from the peace and reconciliation processes.

Conclusions

Somalia is facing the worst humanitarian crisis of its kind. The current government in Mogadishu is not in effective control of a third of Mogadishu, the capital. There are delayed elections and the problem of piracy in the northern parts of the country. But, there is still hope. The TFG is haltingly trying to win more and more popular support by engaging the armed opposition, it opened dialogue with 'Puntland,' and it sympathised with 'Somaliland' during the recent electoral crisis when the political

parties differed over the issue. Despite all this, security should not be the focus on any of the three administrations. And although there is conflict ongoing in parts of South-central Somalia, there are pockets that enjoy relative peace and development.

Although Somalia is not in a post-conflict situation, there is a great demand for post-conflict approaches which in turn call for a multi-track engagement. Such an approach would help not only the TFG but also other regional administrations in Somalia. In line with this, there is need for a roadmap which gives a clearer guidance. And for such a roadmap which should be consultative with all stakeholders, the TFG and other Somali actors need to have well-articulated policies, plans and priorities for Somalia. Such government policy should be in line with the transitional charter and other regional constitutions, should help internalise the Djibouti agreement and must be reconciliation-oriented. As part of this, a number of transitional tasks must also be fulfilled including the drafting of a Sharia-compliant constitution.

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Notes

1. See IRIN reports, KENYA-SOMALIA: "There's always an element of risk" in humanitarian work. 19 August 2009.
2. For a comprehensive discussion on the power struggle between Addis and Cairo, see Abdul Mohammed, Ethiopia's Strategic Dilemma in the Horn of Africa, Somali Science Research Council, February 20, 2007; See also Alex de Waal (ed.) Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa, Indiana, 2004.

NEWS AND EVENTS

GENERAL

24 million need food aid

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on 23 September warned that a lack of resources for emergency relief in Ethiopia threatens to cut off food aid delivery to the most vulnerable people. Poor rains in eastern Africa this year has produced crises in the areas of food, nutrition, water and disease among others, leaving some 24 million people in need of aid - up from 17 million last year - across the region, in Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia and parts of Uganda, as well as Ethiopia. OCHA noted that currently food aid distributions planned between September and December face a deficit of some 56,789 metric tons valued at \$37.1 million.

UN News Services

DJIBOUTI

Government calls on Security Council to act to resolve border dispute

Djibouti has called on the Security Council to take steps to resolve the border dispute between the country and Eritrea, warning that if the row is allowed to fester it would set a precedent for other crises around the world. A UN fact-finding mission sent to the region after the dispute flared was welcomed by Djibouti but blocked by Eritrea, which refused to meet with it or with any envoy of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who offered to use his good offices to help resolve the issue. Exercising his right of reply, an Eritrean delegate told the Assembly that his country "doesn't

have territorial ambitions” and it has not occupied land belonging to Djibouti. He also said that Djibouti had presented a one-sided view of the situation.

UN News Services

ERITREA

Fresh appeal for sanctions

Member countries in the east and Horn of Africa bloc in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have once again expressed disappointment at the international community’s failure to take practical action against Eritrea. Mr Kipruto arap Kirwa, the peace and reconciliation facilitator in Somalia, told reporters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia that IGAD had “conclusive evidence” to collaborate claims that Eritrea and al-Qaeda were supporting and financing militant groups in Somalia. Mr Kirwa called on the international community to take immediate and effective action, to go beyond words and act against all spoilers in the region. IGAD and the African Union recently made strong recommendations for sanctions against Eritrea and other entities, “aiding, financing and facilitating resources for the Al-Shabaab and other negative entities”.

Daily Nation on the Web

SOMALIA

Drought crisis worsens, mortality risk grows, UN warns

Drought crisis in Somalia is turning increasingly acute and spreading to regions previously spared, with half the country’s 7 million people in need of food aid, an increasing risk in deaths, and insufficient donor response. “Somalia needs to be seen as a priority case,” UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Mark Bowden told a news briefing in New York on 24 September. Somalia hosts the biggest displaced population globally at the moment, with some 1.5 million displaced living in conditions which are some of the worst for displaced populations in the world. Mr Bowden said the problem was exacerbated because Somalia is essentially a pastoralist trading economy and there have been high cattle death rates.

UN News Services

Kismayo Islamists Reject Uganda’s Plans

Sheikh Hassan Yakub, spokesman for Al Shabaab administrators in Kismayo, told reporters on 23 September that the Ugandan leader’s plan to deploy African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to Kismayo and Baidoa is aimed at “misleading” the international community. He accused the Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni of wanting to ‘gain project funds’ from the international community. Kismayo was seized in August 2008 by a coalition of clan militias and Islamist fighters, including Al Shabaab, Ras Kamboni and Anole. While Ras Kamboni and Anole merged with other factions to form Hizbul Islam in early 2009, Al Shabaab has remained independent and has maintained control in Kismayo.

Garowe Online

SUDAN

Disarmament raises fears of fresh violence in South Sudan

The recent campaign by the Southern Sudan authorities to seize illegal arms has yielded fruit but critics warn that the forcible disarmament could spark further violence. The campaign was launched in the Southern capital – Juba on 9 Septem-

ber. On 13 September, the President of Southern Sudan Salva Kiir said that it was the first step they have taken to collect guns from the people, and they would continue. The government plans to roll out the programme across the semi-autonomous region.

IRIN

RESOURCES

GENERAL

“Integrating Internal Displacement in Peace Processes and Peace Agreements: A Guide for Mediators” (September 2009)

This guide is intended to assist mediators and their teams to better understand the rights, needs and interests of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and to provide them with practical guidance on how best to devise processes that address these interests in a meaningful fashion. It is written by Andrew Solomon.

<http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR33/74.pdf> or http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2009/09_internal_displacement_solomon.aspx

“UN General Assembly Progress Report of the Secretary General on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa [A/64/210]” (August 2009)

The present report addresses the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General’s report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

<http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/showRecord.php?RecordId=30551> or http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/UNGA_A64210_11August2009_SecGenRep_ConflictCauses.pdf

“Preventing violent conflict: assessing progress and meeting challenges” (September 2009)

This report by United States Institute of Peace’s (USIP) Lawrence Woocher examines the current status of conflict prevention as an international norm and the level of political commitment by world powers.

<http://www.usip.org/resources/preventing-violent-conflict>

KENYA

“The Status of implementation of Agenda Items 1-4” (July 2009)

This review by the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) monitoring project, the third so far, covers the months of May and June 2009. Agenda items 1 – 4 are the long term issues that Kenya is meant to deal with so as to address the causes of the post-election violence in 2008.

http://www.dialoguekenya.org/docs/Final_reportSept09.pdf

“What is behind the Mau controversy?” (September 2009)

This report examines some of the issues surrounding the degradation of the Mau complex. Mainly in the Rift Valley Province, the Mau is one of the country’s five major water towers; it forms the upper catchment of the main rivers west of the province.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86340>

UGANDA

“Cross- border trade: fueling conflict or building peace?” (September 2009)

In this exploration by Conciliation Resources’ Graham Carrington examines cross-border trade between Sudan and Uganda and the implications for peacebuilding.

http://www.c-r.org/our-work/uganda/documents/Cross-border_Uganda_Sudan_web_colour_sept09.pdf

“Combating judicial corruption in Uganda” (September 2009)

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/papers/2009/09_uganda_corruption_baldwin/09_uganda_corruption_baldwin.pdf

SOMALIA

“Women Building Peace: Somali Women in Puntland and Somaliland”

(September, 2009)

This article is based on field research conducted by Dini Shukria from 2005 to 2006 in Puntland and Somaliland.

http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/ACCORD_WomenBuildingPeace_Somalia.pdf

SUDAN

“Avoiding total war in Sudan: the urgent need for a different U.S. strategy” (September, 2009)

<http://www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/Avoiding%20War.pdf>

“Skirting the Law: Sudan's Post- CPA arms flows” (September 2009)

The paper provides an analysis of available information regarding the sourcing of small arms and light weapons by non-state armed groups operating in Darfur and Southern Sudan, and in eastern Chad.

http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/files/portal/spotlight/sudan/Sudan_pdf/SWP-18-Sudan-Post-CPA-Arms-Flows.pdf

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Editorial information

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Editorial principles

The Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) is an international newsletter, compiling analyses, news and resources primarily in the Horn of Africa region. The material published in HAB represents a variety of sources and does not necessarily represent the views of the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) or the cooperating partners, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA). Writers and sources are normally referred to, although in exceptional cases, the editors of the HAB may choose not to reveal the real identity of a writer or publish the source.

