The Somalia Conflict

Implications for peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts

INTRODUCTION

It has been 18 years since the eruption of the Somalia conflict following the demise of the government of Siaad Barre. During this period, the conflict fluctuated in terms of its intensity, the nature of actors involved as well as its dimensions and dynamics. Currently, the conflict is raging on between the militarily weak Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces and their supporters on the one hand and al Shaabab and other fundamentalist groups on the other. While the TFG, which was expanded in early 2009 following the peace agreement between TFG and the moderate opposition group the 'Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia' (ARS-Djibouti), enjoys international legitimacy and the support of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), opposition forces particularly al Shaabab reportedly receive support from some countries in the region as well as others in the Middle East.

The TFG with the support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) controls only a small part of the capital Mogadishu. Large parts of south central Somalia, including parts of the capital, are in the hands of al Shaabab and other opposition forces. While in the past, clan politics and rivalry between various warlords fuelled and entrenched the conflict, in recent times the conflict has increasingly taken the shape of a conflict between those that allegedly advance different forms of Islam. Another notable development is also the extension of the conflict from inland areas to the sea off the coast of Somalia. The coastal water of Somalia is now the most pirate-infested sea, posing a serious threat to maritime security and trade.

Various efforts have been made at resolving this highly protracted conflict. So far, there have been 15 internationally led peace processes. Since early 2008, the UN has initiated a new peace process. At the same time, the AU maintains a small peacekeeping force known as AMISOM. One of the achievements of the new UN-led peace process has been the signing of an agreement between the TFG and the ARS-Djibouti, which led to the appointment of a new president and the expansion of the TFG Parliament in late January 2009. Although this aroused the hope for peace in Somalia, the rejection of the peace process and the new government by al Shaabab and opposition forces and the increasing intensity of the fighting are raising fears that the new government may collapse. As the fighting persists, the Somalia conflict continues to test the imagination and good will of those working for its resolution.

This conflict is not a sudden and inexplicable eruption. Rather, it is a result of the interplay of multiple historical, social and political processes that has shaped the political and socio-economic structure of Somalia. To adequately understand the conflict and identify its implications for peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts in Somalia, it is imperative to examine the processes or factors that underlie Somalia's highly complicated and protracted conflict. The aim of this paper is accordingly to make a modest attempt to identify and discuss these processes/factors and the dynamics and nature of the conflict and to identify the ways in which they impact upon initiatives for peacemaking and peacekeeping in Somalia.

The paper draws heavily on secondary sources, including books, journals and reports of various institutions. Nevertheless, primary sources such as decisions of international, continental and sub-regional organizations, press releases and news clips are also employed. Methodologically, the implications of the root causes, nature and dynamics of the conflict for peacemaking and peacekeeping are drawn out and discussed as part of the analysis in the various sections.

ROOT CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

Historical roots

Although they cannot be explained by colonialism alone, most conflicts in Africa trace their origins back to the

colonial history of the countries of the continent. The conflict in Somalia is no exception to this. As Osman observes '[t]he seeds of the current suffering, especially in the Southern part of the country, were planted at the end of the 19th century.'[1]

Like almost all African states, the Somalian state is the creation of European conquest and colonisation of Africa in the late 19th century. Although the people of Somalia inhabited the region that today forms part of the state of Somalia since time immemorial, the state of Somalia as we know it today came into being only after the establishment of European colonial rule.[2] When the European colonial administration was established in the region, the people of Somalia were arbitrarily divided into five distinct colonial units.[3] These units were:

- French Somaliland, which today forms the Republic of Djibouti which borders the Red Sea
- British Somaliland, the territory under British colonial rule which later became independent in June 1960 and joined with Italian Somaliland to form the state of Somalia
- Italian Somaliland, the territory colonised by Italy and became independent in July 1960 to become the Republic of Somalia together with British Somaliland
- The Northern Frontier District, which formed part of Kenya's crown colony
- The Ogaden region, conquered by Menilik of Ethiopia between 1887 and 1895 and which later became an integral part of the Ethiopian territory

British Somaliland, which is now the self-declared independent state of Somaliland, predominantly inhabited by the Issaq clan, became independent in late June 1960. When in early July 1960 Italian Somaliland, which presently covers central and southern Somalia, became independent, the two territories joined to form the Republic of Somalia.

There are certain consequences that this colonial experience had for Somalia. One can identify at least four such consequences that in important ways account for the crisis that unfolded in Somalia. Firstly, the colonial administration established in this region resulted in the division of the people of Somalia into various sovereign territories. This has continued to affect not only the domestic politics of Somalia but also, and most importantly, its relations with its neighbours, particularly Ethiopia. This was expressed in the nationalist aspiration of post-independence Somali leaders for establishing Greater Somalia by bringing together Somali people from all the various territories, including Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya.

Domestically, the colonial experience led to the emergence of a nationalist government engaged in a massive military build-up. At the regional level, Somalia adopted a policy that opposed the 1964 OAU Cairo Declaration that sanctified colonial borders and 'appeared more aggressive towards neighboring Djibouti, but especially towards Kenya and Ethiopia.'[4] In 1977, Somalia went to war with Ethiopia in which it was defeated, a loss with deeper political consequences for Somalia. This expansionist policy of Somalia also lies at the heart of the involvement of neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia in the Somalia conflict. Clearly, it is imperative that peacemaking initiatives in Somalia should adequately address the security concerns that Somali irredentism generally gives rise to in the region. In this regard, it is imperative that the ongoing peace process in Djibouti addresses the legitimate concerns of Ethiopia, including the recognition of Ogaden as a legitimate part of the Ethiopian territory and the ending of Somalian support for rebel groups opposed to the government in Addis Ababa. Indeed, as the record of numerous failed initiatives illustrates, this is one of the tests for the success of almost any peacemaking initiative in Somalia.

Secondly, as in other parts of the continent, colonial rule institutionalised a centralised state system in the image of the European nation-state. This introduced political and social relations/structures unknown to the Somalis' religious and clan-based political tradition and social organisation, and undermined and transformed such indigenous structures. As the state exercised dominant control over political power and economic resources within the whole territory,[5] its institutionalisation as the primary, if not the only, locus of political and economic power set the stage for rivalry and antagonism as various groups vied for control of the state machinery or for political dominance. In the context of Somalia, the traditional social structures, consisting of the clan and sub-clan system, became political instruments in this struggle. In this way the colonial system also changed the role of clans and the nature of inter- and intra-clan rivalry or conflict in Somalia. This also explains the place that 'clanism', as some have come to call it, occupies in the current Somalia conflict. The result has been that the state has been perceived by the public as an object of clan competition – a tool for political and socio-economic aggrandisement – rather than a common framework for the socio-economic and political development of all Somalis irrespective of their clan affiliation. This clearly illustrates that the provision of institutional guarantees for all Somali groups against exclusion and marginalisation should form part of the equation in developing the framework for resolving the protracted conflict in the country.

Thirdly, Somalia inherited the divergent colonial traditions of the British and the Italians. Although this duality was covered in the enthusiasm and rhetoric of

Somali unity in the early years of the formation of the Republic, the difference in colonial administration and hence political traditions became a source of tension for elites from the two territories. This division has been further reinforced by the clan differences of the people in the two territories. The highly intervention-ist and strong-handed administration of the Italians involved the recruitment and elevation of the members of local clans, particularly of the Mudgu and Majertinai regions to colonial administration. This promotion of clan members 'from the "chosen" regions enforced the exploitative and extractive practices of the colonial and the post-colonial states' (Osman, 2007:94).[6] Owing to their exposure to the administration of the colonial state and political mobilisation through the establish-ment of the Somali Youth League, the ruling political elite of post-colonial Somalia has come predominantly from these clans. The people in the north were not only marginalised but they were also subjected to repeated violence and repression by the state. This underlines the secessionist tendencies in and eventually the declara-tion of independence by Somaliland in 1991. While the reality that the de facto existence of an independent functioning state structure in Somaliland itself should be taken into account in efforts for establishing sustainable peace in Somalia, these historical divisions should also inform any comprehensive consideration for resolving the Somali crisis. Despite the problems that the federal structure of the transitional charter is fraught with, the idea of federalism as a basis for reconstituting Somalia should not be abandoned altogether.

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Finally, related to the preceding two factors is the inequality that resulted from the uneven distribution of modern goods and access to political power among members of various clans within the colonially contrived Somali state.[7] The colonial state, particularly under Italian colonial rule, was administered in such a way that members of certain 'chosen' groups or regions would enjoy preferential access to jobs in the colonial admin-istration, education and other modern goods. As hinted at earlier on, during the post-colonial period this led to the domination of the state by members of the groups privileged to access those goods that were instrumental for controlling state power upon the departure of the colonial ruler. As a result, the inequality inherited from colonialism has further been entrenched in post-colonial Somalia. The inter-clan mistrust and hostility this engendered not only constitutes the root of the conflict but is also among the central factors that have continued to fuel the Somali crisis.

This obviously has serious implications both for peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts. For peacemakers, it raises the question of the nature of the government structure best suited to address this challenge. For peace-keepers, it raises the challenge of how they can effectively undertake peacekeeping and peace-building activities without being perceived by the members of the warring factions (whether various clans, regions or religious factions) as being supportive of the enemy group.

The social basis of the conflict

The most important social structure in Somali society is the clan. It is the single most important element that has historically defined the identity and social relations of Somalis for centuries. Most Somalis identify themselves in terms of their lineage or clan. Historically, it was the basis that structured law and order and social activities within and between the various clans.

The politicisation of the clan structure during and after colonial rule led to its deployment in the struggle for control of the enormous political power and eco-nomic resources of the modern centralised state imposed on Somalis by colonial fiat. During the reign of General Siaad Barre, clan divisions were manipulated and further entrenched as some groups dominated Somali politics and others were marginalised and subjected to harsh and even violent treatments.[8] This situation worsened when the opposition to Barre's government escalated following the defeat of the Somalia forces by Ethiopia and the 1978 attempted coup to overthrow the government. While on the one hand Barre's government actively resorted to a systematic use of the clan system of political patronage in order to strengthen its grip on power,[9] on the other hand it marginalised certain clans, including major ones, and took violent actions against those clans that were blamed for the attempted coup and were feared to pose a serious threat to the regime.[10]

These problems of mal-administration had serious consequences not only in terms of the attitude of Somalis towards the central government but also in terms of

the nature of inter-clan relations. As Visman puts it, 'while Siaad Barre's repressive regime (1969-1991) incited widespread distrust of central government, his strategy of divide and rule left a legacy of deep inter-clan hostility and resulted in a number of clan-based insurgencies.'[11]

While the clan system continues to provide indispensible social services, including justice, social security and physical protection, as various political forces resort to it for political ends, it has also become a source of division and conflict.[12] It is also one of the major factors that have continued to sustain the war. Various warring factions continue to use it in the quest for political dominance and monopoly of the state or for preventing the emergence of a strong state run by another clan.[13] As some argue, it is this situation 'that both scholars and policy makers need to address in order to end the Somali internal war and create a viable state'.[14]

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In addition to the above, a social factor that has contributed to the current Somali crisis is the failure of the establishment of the rule of law by the post-colonial Somalian state and the militarisation of society. Barre's government was one of the most militarised governments in Africa.[15] His government was supplied with weapons from both camps in the Cold War as well as from African and Arab countries, including Ethiopia (after the signing of the peace agreement in 1988), Libya, Egypt and Yemen. As is noted above, these weapons were used to arm some of the clans. The opposition forces that emerged in the last years of Barre's reign were also supplied with weapons by countries in the region. With the decline of the role of the government in providing physical security, the most basic of the clasical functions of the state, and in its eventual collapse, the various clans and most Somalis resorted to weapons. This raises important issues for peacekeeping

activities, particularly Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR). It calls for 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.

Political basis of the conflict

Within the political sphere as well, there were various developments that contributed to the eruption of Somalia in 1991. Many of these are in many ways interconnected with the various factors discussed above. Most important among these were the establishment of an authoritarian rule under Siaad Barre, the dependency of Somalia on support from its Cold War allies and the socialist economic policy, the corrupt and patrimonial system of governance, and regional power politics.

Siaad Barre's government came to power using an illegitimate means by overthrowing the government that had been established through election.[16] At independence Somalia adopted a democratic system of government based on parliamentary democracy, although the country lacked the human resources, institutional culture and social basis necessary for the success of such a system.[17] Despite the prevalence of corruption and weak or stagnant economic progress that disillusioned Somalis, political freedoms including freedom of association were allowed, and two parliamentary and presidential elections were held.[18] This early experiment with western-style democracy, which saw the emergence of up to 60 political parties, was however short-lived. It ended when the military coup that overthrew the Somali Youth League government in 1969 led to the establishment of Siaad Barr's government.

Although Barre's advent to power gained the support of the public in its early years owing to the revival of the economy and the policy of national unity,[19] the government soon became despotic and authoritarian.[20] As Osman succinctly summed it up, 'the new regime curtailed freedoms and banned all social and political organizations, exercised heavy-handedness on the opposition and practised extrajudicial detentions and persecutions.'[21] Similarly, Ayittey observed that '[t]orture, mass executions, pillage, and carnage were the regime's signatures.'[22] The gains of the post-independent democratic exercise were reversed and the constitution suspended. Like many African regimes that were clients to either the West or the East camp in the Cold War, Barre's authoritarian regime sustained itself both politically and economically through external military and economic support rather than through internal legitimacy and economic growth.

Indeed, one of the characteristics of Barre's government was its huge reliance on external resources and its failure to build an internal economic basis.[23] The state was for most of its activities dependent on aid from its Cold War allies. What was unfortunate about this dependence on external resources was that the resources were not used to develop the national economy, earning the country the title 'the Graveyard of Aid'.[24] The resources were mostly used to reward supporters of the regime and to expand the security apparatus of the government, particularly the military, as bases of legitimacy and exercising control over the people. As a result, when at the end of the Cold War the sources of such external aid dried up, the state was left without the necessary means to support itself.[25] The addition of other political challenges, particularly the rise of armed movements, made the collapse of Somalia swift and inevitable.

On the economic front, the Barre regime adopted a socialist economic policy. Despite some initial successes, this economic policy stifled existing private initiatives and stagnated economic growth. According to Ayittey, 'Over the period 1965–87 living standards remained stagnant. Even though Somalia received substantial amounts of foreign aid, its gross national product per capita grew at a miserable 0,3 per cent a year'.[26] The nationalisation of land and control of the production and distribution of agricultural produces led to decline in agricultural production. Between 1969 and 1980, grain production declined by 20 per cent. This changed the country from being food self-sufficient into a food-importing country. Accordingly, between 1975 and 1984, Somalia had to import an average of 8,4 per cent of its food consumption.[27]

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Barre's regime also saw the emergence of a corrupt and patrimonial system of governance. Notwithstanding its initial policy of national unity, the regime resorted to clan politics to entrench its grip on power. It promoted members of the Darood clan family within the structures of the state, and elites from this group controlled all

levers of the economy as well. During Barre's reign, the representation of members of his Darood clan in the Cabinet rose from 32 per cent to 50 per cent.[28] The state machinery was used to advance the political and socio-economic position of the members of the ruling clan and alienate others from the political and economic processes of the state.

This patrimonial system of governance exacerbated political and socio-economic inequality and created mistrust and antagonism between members of various clans. This did not diminish the widespread perception in Somalia that the state was a tool for accumulating political and economic power for one's clan. Instead, it further exacerbated it. Ultimately, it significantly contributed to the demise of the Somali state. The implication of this for efforts at reconstituting Somalia is that these efforts should not only attract the support of various political actors as a viable option from which they will benefit but that the efforts should also convince Somalis generally that such a state structure is to serve as a common instrument for the socio-economic and political advancement of all Somalis. The other implication is also that there is a need to nurture and rebuild trust, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among Somalis.

Another and probably equally important factor that precipitated the war and the eventual collapse of Somalia was regional power politics. Thanks mainly to the policy of its post-colonial governments of uniting all Somalis under one government, Somalia's relations with its neighbours, particularly Ethiopia, were not happy. As Lefebvre puts it, 'Siaad's demise and the disintegration of the Somali state were not only consequences of clan politics but are attributable in part to Somalia's irredentist foreign policy, principally that aspect of it aimed at Ethiopia.'[29]

These two countries were involved in supporting rebel groups fighting against each other. Ethiopia provided military support and a base for Somali opposition movements, while Siaad Barre's regime armed and deployed Somali armed groups from the Ogaden region of Ethiopia fighting against Addis Ababa.[30] The most devastating aspect of and one of the most defining moments in this struggle between the two countries was the 1977 War. In an attempt to take Ogaden from Ethiopia forcibly, the Siaad Barre army seized the Ogaden region. Moscow, which was the Cold War ally of Barre, opposed his action and provided assistance to Ethiopia. In the subsequent war, Ethiopian forces reversed the invasion, and the Somalian army, unable to win the support of the US, suffered a huge defeat.[31] This inflicted a big political blow on Barre, leading to the 1978 attempted coup and the subsequent rise of armed opposition groups, which eventually ousted him from power in 1991. This,

however, did not end the security threat, which has given Ethiopia a reason to be actively involved in Somalia's politics. What compounds Ethiopia's involvement in Somali conflict is the rivalry between Ethiopia and Eritrea, two countries that support opposing groups in the Somali conflict and the fight against terrorism giving the conflict further regional dimension. Accordingly, for any peace process to be successful and lasting in Somalia, it is imperative that such a peace process addresses these regional dimensions of the war in Somalia.[32]

> The confluence of various factors, including the inequalities between members of various groups in terms of their access to political power and resources; Barre's authoritarian and patrimonial rule; and the loss of the 1977 War with Ethiopia, led to the emergence of armed clan-based Movements which led to Somalia's descent into violence

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT

The confluence of various factors, including the inequalities between members of various groups in terms of their access to political power and resources; Barre's authoritarian and patrimonial rule; and the loss of the 1977 War with Ethiopia, led to the emergence of armed clan-based Movements. After the 1978 coup attempt, coup plotters who escaped Barre's execution fled to neighbouring Ethiopia and established a Majerteen-based guerrilla movement known as the 'Somali Salvation Democratic Front'. In 1981, another opposition movement known as the 'Somali National Movement' (SNM) was established by Issaq exiles in England, which later became a guerrilla movement operating from Ethiopia. Subsequently, Many other clan-based armed groups that cooperated with the SNM came into being. Among these was the Hawiye-based United Somali Congress (USC).

The course of the fighting by the various movements, particularly the SNM, against Barre's regime changed in 1988. This was a result of the signing of an agreement between Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile-Mariam and Siaad Barre in which they committed themselves to stop supporting each other's oppositions. This prompted the SNM forces operating from Ethiopia to launch an offensive against Barre's government. The brutal response of Barre, including the indiscriminate bombing of Issaq-inhabited territories in the north, further pushed members of the group into supporting the rebel movement. By the end of 1990, various parts of Somalia had fallen into the hands of the various clan-based rebel movements.[33]

The attack of government forces in Mogadishu to wrest power from Barre by the faction of the USC led by General Muhammad Farah Aideed led to fierce fighting. This fighting, in which more than 4 000 people died, forced Barre to flee the country before any particular group or coalition of various forces was able to fill the power vacuum. In the absence of a workable agreement on the question of succession from Barre or on sharing of power, while some movements continued to control the territories they took from Barre's army others fought for controlling the capital and to establish their own government. The fighting between the forces of Aideed and his rival Ali Mahdi Muhammad for controlling Mogadishu claimed the lives of over 14 000 people, caused huge damage to the establishments of the city and left Mogadishu divided into two. Amid this confusion, Somaliland declared itself to be an independent state under an SNM government. In the process, Somalia descended into a state of anarchy and fighting, involving continuously multiplying numbers of clan-based warlords and militias as well as Islamist fighters, which has to this date continued to hamper the re-establishment of a normal functioning state structure.

THE CURRENT STATE AND DYNAMICS OF THE CONFLICT

Following the controversial intervention of Ethiopia to oust the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) forces, the military wing of the UIC known as 'al Shaabab', meaning 'the youth', opened a successful insurgent attack, leading to one of the bloodiest conflicts witnessed in Somalia since the 1990s. After two years of such fighting that bogged down the Ethiopian army, the Islamist insurgents regained control of most parts of south central Somalia, including parts of the capital, Mogadishu. The al Shaabab forces, leading this insurgency, currently enjoy the military upper hand in most parts of south central Somalia, including Mogadishu.

The internal infighting between various factions of the TFG has further weakened the TFG and its

legitimacy. The feud between the former president and the prime minister reached a crisis level bringing the TFG to the brink of collapse in August 2008. Despite the mediation efforts by Ethiopia, this continued to undermine the TFG and the negotiations in Djibouti. After huge pressure from various actors, the president, Abdulahi Yusuf, resigned from his post in late December 2008. As Yusuf was the major obstacle in the negotiations between TFG and ARS-Djibouti, his resignation created a new opportunity to move the Djibouti process forward. Many of the matters with respect to which the TFG and ARS-Djibouti concluded an agreement, and highly opposed by Yusuf, have thereafter been implemented. Indeed, in late January 2009, the Somalia Transitional Parliament was expanded to include 200 ARS-Djibouti members, and in a surprising turn of events the former leader of the UIC, Shiek Sharif, was elected as president of Somalia's unity government. Despite this positive development, militarily, the Somali government remains weak. It lost most parts of Somalia to the Islamic insurgents. After losing Baidowa to al Shaabab forces, its presence in Somalia, supported by AMISOM forces, is now reduced to parts of Mogadishu, and even here it is under constant attack from opposition forces determined to overthrow it.

The withdrawal of Ethiopian forces brought both negative and positive dynamics to the current situation in Somalia

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The conflict during the past two years has also brought about a serious humanitarian crisis. According to UN sources, the Somalian situation has become the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. It was reported that more than 10 000 people have lost their lives over the course of the past two years. The number of Somalis who are in need of emergency food aid is about 3,2 million, constituting more than 40 per cent of Somalia's population.[34] Hundreds of thousands of Somalis have crossed to neighbouring countries, particularly Kenya and Djibouti, and live in highly populated refugee camps. Many more others have been internally displaced. The available space for humanitarian activities is increasingly narrowing as more and more humanitarian workers are being killed or taken hostage. This recent conflict has also seen the perpetration of serious human rights abuses and the violation of norms of international humanitarian law.[35]

Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia in December 2006, although successful in dislodging the UIC forces, did not lead to the stabilisation of Somalia and the consolidation of the TFG. It unleashed an 'Iraq-style' insurgency and widespread anti-Ethiopian sentiment among Somalis. Although Ethiopia's original plan was to withdraw its forces once some degree of stability had been achieved and international forces had been deployed, with the deteriorating security situation hindering the consolidation of the TFG and the international community failing to deploy the required type and level of peacekeeping force, Ethiopian forces extended their intervention for more than two years. In the process, not only was Ethiopia forced to bear a huge financial burden for maintaining its forces but it endured increasing casualties to its forces. Most importantly, Ethiopia's continued military presence radicalised many Somalis, pushing many of them into supporting the insurgency. Eventually, it was realised that the continuing presence of the Ethiopian forces was costly for Ethiopia and unhelpful for negotiating peace in Somalia. It came as no surprise that one of the terms of the Djibouti agreement was the withdrawal of Ethiopian forces followed by the deployment of a UN force.[36] As the UN failed to mandate such a force and the armed resistance bolstering, Ethiopia announced in December 2008 its decision to withdraw its forces without condition. The process of Ethiopian withdrawal, which started towards the end of December was said to have been completed on 13 January 2009 when Ethiopia handed over security duties to the joint TFG and ARS-Djibouti forces, although the last Ethiopian soldiers left Somalia's territory only on 26 January 2009.

The withdrawal of Ethiopian forces brought both negative and positive dynamics to the current situation in Somalia. It raised fears that it might create a power vacuum, which might lead to Somalia's takeover by radical forces and the collapse of both the AMISOM and the on-going UN-led Djibouti peace process. Indeed, following Ethiopia's announcement, contributing countries to AMISOM expressed their concern and called the AU to reinforce AMISOM. The AU and the parties to the Djibouti process, the TFG and ARS-Djibouti, allegedly requested Ethiopia to extend its presence in Somalia.

On the positive side, Ethiopia's withdrawal initially created further opportunities for moving the Djibouti process forward and stabilising Somalia. Since much of Somalia's support for the armed resistance spearheaded by al Shaabab was inspired by the anti-Ethiopian sentiment that Ethiopian intervention inflamed in Somalia, with the withdrawal of Ethiopia many expected that it was unlikely that al Shaabab would continue as a cohesive force if it continued to refuse negotiation and pursues the military option. 'The announced withdrawal (of Ethiopia),' observes a Crisis Group International

report, 'provides a window of opportunity for the political process. It will at least loosen the glue that has held the factions together, so that infighting is likely to increase and an outright military victory to become more difficult.'[37]

This early expectation that al Shaabab forces will come to the negotiating table is not, however, without its challenges. Al Shaabab is listed as a terrorist group by the US and this may hinder negotiating with al Shaabab. There is also the challenge of how to prevent hardliners within al Shaabab from using the current humanitarian and security situation to recruit individuals willing to lay down their lives for pursuing extremist agendas. Indeed, as events in subsequent months showed, the early expectation was not realized as the al Shaabab rejected the new administration and heightened its fighting against the TFG and the AMISOM.

> Many Somalis consider the Djibouti process as the only option that carries some hope for the political future of the country, albeit there are uncertainties and serious challenges which may lead this process to the fate of other previous initiatives

Since January 2007, before the warring factions ceased hostilities, the AU mandated the deployment of a peacekeeping force to Somalia that would pave the way for the withdrawal of Ethiopia and support the consolidation of the TFG. The mandate of this peacekeeping force, AMISOM, envisaged that, when fully deployed, the peacekeeping force would have a capacity of an 8 000-strong force. The first contingent of AMISOM forces involving 1 500 Ugandan troops arrived in Somalia only in March 2007. The strength of AMISOM reached its current 3 400 troops following the deployment of a second battalion by Burundi in October 2007. With less than half of its mandated strength, AMISOM was unable to implement many of the tasks assigned to it. As the situation further deteriorates, the role and position of AMISOM have been further complicated. Thanks to its controversial mandate, the protection that it offers to the TFG establishments has created the perception that

AMISOM is not an independent mission. This coupled with its weak military capability, both in terms of size and equipment, has exposed it to increasing attacks, dragging it into the conflict. The Ethiopian withdrawal created a further security problem for AMISOM as factions of al Shaabab forces declared their intention to focus their attacks on AMISOM forces.[38] Indeed, since Ethiopia's withdrawal in mid-January, AMISOM has been the target of four attacks, including a road-side bomb, within a matter of less than a week.[39]

Ethiopian withdrawal also increased calls for the deployment of a strong UN peacekeeping force to Somalia. The US has been at the forefront of those countries pushing the UN to mandate such a force. Others include countries such as South Africa and China. This has led the UN Security Council (UNSC) to express its plan for mandating the deployment of a UN force. In the resolution that the UNSC unanimously adopted on 16 January 2008, it '[e]xpresses its intent to establish a United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Somalia, as a follow-on force to AMISOM, subject to a further decision of the Security Council by 1 June 2009.'[40] As the security situation remains highly volatile with increased fighting, no decision for deploying a UN mission has been made and much of the focus is for supporting and strengthening the fledgling AMISOM forces.

In May 2008, long after the deployment of AMISOM, the UN launched a peace process in neighbouring Djibouti. This brought the TFG and opposing Islamic groups to the negotiation table with the aim of both ending the fighting and creating a more inclusive government.[41] After the first round of talks, the parties concluded a cessation of hostilities agreement on 9 June 2008, which was officially signed on 19 August 2008. Since that time, there have been three rounds of talks that have culminated in the signing of a power-sharing deal between the TFG and ARS-Djibouti, which envisages a government of national unity with a parliament expanded to 550 members from the existing 275. Many Somalis consider the Djibouti process as the only option that carries some hope for the political future of the country, albeit there are uncertainties and serious challenges which may lead this process to the fate of other previous initiatives.

THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

State collapse

Moving on to the nature of the conflict, one identifies that the Somalia conflict exhibits certain salient characteristics. One of the features of this conflict is the collapse of the state. The ouster of Barre in 1991 occasioned the falling apart of all the remaining structures of authority

of the Somalian state. The resultant political vacuum not only precipitated the breakdown of law and order but also highlighted the breakdown of social coherence and harmony among members of the various communities composing Somalia. As the state no longer provided security and basic necessities to its nationals, people resorted to their group membership (in this instance to their clans and sub-clans) for their security and other subsistence needs. Unlike other conflicts such as in Sudan, in the case of Somalia there is no government to speak of and deal with. The conflict rather take place within the civil society involving multiplicity of actors usually organized along clan lines.

> The desperate state of weapon proliferation at present continues to fuel the conflict and will in the future pose a serious challenge not only to implementing DDR and security sector reform but also to other peacebuilding efforts in general

Militarization

The collapse of the state and the retreat of individuals to their clans and sub-clans for security led to the militarisation of civil society. With no central authority to enforce law and order, various sectors of the civil society, including clans, sub-clans, and businesses, armed themselves to ensure their security and enforce their own rules. This led to the disappearance of any institutional culture, if there had been any at all, regarding the respect of rule of law and human rights. It also created the conditions for a weapons market in the country. The absence of border controls, with the collapse of the state, further aggravated the situation as arm dealers freely moved cheap weapons into and out of the country. The result has been the desperate state of weapon proliferation, which at present continues to fuel the conflict and will in the future pose a serious challenge not only to implementing DDR and security sector reform but also to other peace-building efforts in general.

As the UN's intervention in the 1990s shows, these conditions pose formidable challenges both in terms of peacemaking and peacekeeping. As all faction leaders are armed, it is imperative that negotiators are able to secure the support of all the significant factions. Similarly, any initiative for the deployment of peacekeepers needs (for its success) to be implemented at least without any significant opposition from Somali actors and at best with their full support. Once deployed and depending on the mandate, peacekeepers will also face the challenge of being drawn into the conflict as they seek to enforce peace agreements and protect their mandates. Indeed, the major challenge that AMISOM currently faces is how it can avoid the perception by al Shaabab and other Somali actors that it is giving protection to the government, which in their eyes is an enemy establishment.

There is a much more serious challenge that the militarisation of society and breakdown of respect for the rule of law pose for any peacekeeping process. The prolonged absence of any institutional culture of respect for the rule of law and human rights means that there has to be a sustained and long-term programme of establishing the rule of law and security institutions that are adequately informed and supported by the traditional or local legal and judicial processes. As more and more Somalis have over the years turned to weapons and correspondingly lost confidence in the ability of the rule of law to protect them, peacekeeping initiatives should have huge package for awareness creation, for cultivating a human rights' culture and for building the confidence of Somalis in the rule of law as the foundation for their individual and collective security and development.

Clan orientation and multiplicity of parties to the conflict

Another characteristic of the Somali conflict has been the violent struggle between members of various groups, which vie for control of the state or domination in the scramble for available resources. As shown above, the ensuing armed conflicts have been 'inter-clan in nature, pitting large lineage groups against one another'.[42] In this regard, the most important inter-clan conflict is the one between the Darod and the Hawiye, whose ambition to become dominant made Somalian politics 'Zero Sum'. This conflict is not, however, limited to the clans. It also has an intra-clan dimension, involving different sub-clans, such as the conflict between Mohamed Farah Aideed and Ali Mahdi.

Over the years, however, a multiplicity of actors emerged as parties of the conflict. These include the notorious warlords, criminal gangs, business interests, clan leaders, religious courts, local militias and civil society. Many of these actors have been multiplying and engaged in shifting patterns of alliances and fighting that

have crippled every aspect of Somali society. They are also internally divided and fragmented as they espouse conflicting and fluctuating ideologies and interests. The multiplicity of actors and their fragmentation makes it difficult for the international community to pursue initiatives that are satisfying to all. This obviously calls for designing not only comprehensive peace processes but also issue specific approaches. It also necessitates a focus on ordinary Somalis and civil society actors as basis for achieving peace.

Lack of identifiable political objectives

These different actors pursue not only differing but also often contradictory and changing political, economic, cultural, religious, national and international ideologies and objectives. The Somalia conflict is not therefore a contest over political differences. It is not just about controlling political power. There are those with no interest in controlling political power but maintaining the status quo as the only sure way of protecting their economic interests. Clearly, there is a need to distinguish between those actors that articulate and pursue genuine political objectives including controlling state power from those driven by pure economic considerations or those that pursue extremist agenda.

> The rise and prevalence of piracy revealed how the failure of the international community to do enough to resolve one of the most protracted and long drawn-out conflicts in the world creates multiple threats to international peace and security

The emergence of war economies

It is clear from the above that another dimension of the current conflict in Somalia is therefore the proliferation of criminality. This started when the conflict degenerated into predatory looting, banditry, and the occupation of valuable real estate by conquering clan militias.[43] Young gunmen employed by warlords and business people fought principally to secure war booty and for control of business opportunities and valuable real estate, which become important sources of income in the unregulated war economy of Somalia. They established roadblocks to extort money as well as other economic resources from ordinary Somalis and businesses and divert the distribution of food aid. Using easily accessible weapons not only as a commodity but also for enforcing their will, these criminal militias perpetrated various kinds of violence against the civilian population, including murder, robbery, rape and kidnapping.

During the course of the past two years, this has transformed and expanded its reach to the coastal waters of Somalia. This time around the victims are not mainly Somalis. The main targets are rather the vessels passing through the Gulf of Aden. Piracy has now become a major source of concern for maritime security affecting all vessels passing through that region.[44] This can also be gathered from the level and nature of response of members of the international community including the EU and the UNSC.[45] Yet, the rise and prevalence of piracy revealed how the failure of the international community to do enough to resolve one of the most protracted and long drawn-out conflicts in the world creates multiple threats to international peace and security. It also highlighted the need and urgency of taking all the necessary steps for ending this conflict, which is the root cause of the piracy. International action should not be limited to trying to contain piracy, which is only the overt symptom of the crisis in Somalia.[46]

Rise of religious fundamentalism

Religion is currently giving the conflict a new dimension. This is in particular as a result of the ascendance of the ICU to a position of dominance in Somalian politics and the military dominance and territorial control the al Shaabab gained over the course of the past months. Some elements of the ICU and more specifically, al Shaabab, claim to seek to establish an Islamist Somalian state that will strictly enforce Sharia laws. Given the level of dislocation that resulted from the fighting during the past two years and the level of youth unemployment, with the continuing insecurity in Somalia there is a danger that hardliner Islamists may continue to radicalise more and more Somalis. This obviously creates a greater danger to the region and opens space for international terrorist groups to establish a strong foothold in Somalia. There is therefore an added factor for concerned external actors to engage in Somalia fully and to do everything possible to bring lasting peace.

The foregoing brief exposition of the nature of the Somalia conflict clearly shows that the conflict in Somalia is very dynamic and complicated. The ever-changing nature of belligerent forces, the regionalization

and internationalization of the conflict, and the involvement of competing external actors further compounds this complex conflict. These obviously have serious implications both for peacemaking and peacekeeping in that country.

It is imperative that the impact of all these various features of the conflict are taken into account in designing peace processes and peacekeeping as responses of the international community to resolve the conflict and restore peace and security. The nature of the conflict in Somalia is such that peace processes involving political settlement among factional leaders are highly inadequate. There is a need for transformative approaches including nation-building, control of movement of arms, grass root reconciliation and the deconstruction of divisive clan relations and discourses, and economic transformation and the reconfiguration of war economies. There is thus wide room for the Djibouti process to be improved not only in terms of the Somali actors involved in the peace process but also in terms of the issues that should be addressed.[47] Similarly, the complexity of the conflict call for well manned, well resourced and well equipped peace operations with robust and multidimensional peace-building mandate. One can clearly see that the current AU mission in Somalia, although it established an important international presence in the country, lacks the qualities that a peacekeeping operation should possess.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ACTORS

The TFG

Following the collapse of the Barre regime, 13 Somalia National Reconciliation Conferences (SNRC) were internationally sponsored and hosted in a bid to resolve the Somalia crisis. The 14th Reconciliation Conference held in Eldoret Kenya established the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in 2004, following two years of negotiation led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a sub-regional body made up of the larger Horn of African Countries.[48] The TFG as constituted by the Transitional Federal Charter of 2004 and further expanded under the Djibouti agreement is composed of a Parliament of 550 members (Article 29 Transitional Federal Charter), the President (Article 39) and the Executive consisting of the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers (Article 46).

The parliament of the TFG composed of representatives of various clans, major warring factions and members of the failed Transitional National Government established under the Arta Agreement in Djibouti in 2000 was inaugurated in August 2004. In October of that year, the parliament elected Abdillahi Yusuf, a former colonel of the Barre regime, leader of one of the

rebel groups that fought against Barre's regime, one of Somalia's warlords and the leader of Puntland as TFG president. Ali Mohammed Ghedi, who was appointed prime minister by the president, established the government consisting of the council of ministers as a 91-member body. In early 2009, the TFG was reconstituted with the expansion of the Parliament to 550 to include ARS-Djibouti members and the appointment of the former leader of UIC Shiek Sharif as President.

Like its predecessors, within Somalia it has more opponents than supporters. Its opponents include members of the TNG who felt marginalised with the installation of the TFG and, most importantly, the Hawiye clan leaders and warlords that saw the TFG as a Darood-dominated entity disposed towards oppressing and dominating the Hawiye. This fear was aggravated by the failure of the TFG and particularly the former president to allocate key posts for leaders with sufficient support from the Hawiye clan. It was observed in this regard that 'Yusuf's choice of Ali Mohamed Geedi as prime minister, a veterinarian with no political experience or visible constituency within his Hawiye clan, was read by many as an attempt to sideline the Hawiye'.[49] This underscores both the limits of the TFG as a genuinely representative and inclusive government and the continuing role of clan membership in Somalia's conflict. As more recent developments have nevertheless shown, the conflict follows the division that emerged within the ICU and is currently being fought more under the cover of religion than clan between hardliners opposing the TFG and the TFG and moderates that support it.

The other weakness of the TFG is its dependence on the support of external powers, more specifically Ethiopia, a country that many Somalis consider as a longstanding enemy of Somalia. This is attributable to the view that the Eldoret peace process that gave birth to the original TFG was directed and manipulated by Ethiopia which saw the leadership of the TNG as a threat to its national security.[50] According to a report of the International Crisis Group, 'the driving force behind formation of the TFG was an Ethiopian-backed coalition, the Somali Restoration and Reconciliation Council (SRRC), of which Yusuf was a senior figure.'[51] There have been many Somalis who do not have confidence in the TFG and some have gone as far as treating it as a puppet of external actors, particularly Ethiopia and the US.

Even after its expansion in early 2009, the TFG continues to rely for its survival on external support. It maintains its tenuous presence in Somalia for anything but the presence of AMISOM, which has proved to be the life-line of TFG.

Probably the weakest point of the TFG has been its lack of presence in Somalia. It has rather been a government

in exile. Both the peace process that led to the formation and final establishment of the government took place outside of Somalia. The TFG relocated to Somalia only in June 2005. But conditions in Mogadishu were too dangerous to allow the government to establish its presence in the capital. This was not only due to continued insecurity of the capital but also because Mogadishu was controlled by warlords opposed to the ex-president. Hence a decision was made to establish the seat of government in Jawhar. The town of Baidoa, where the TFG Parliament held its first session on Somalian soil in February 2006, became the seat of the parliament until it was dislodged by al Shaabab fighters early in 2009.

Even after its relocation to Somalia, the TFG exercised no control over most parts of Somalia and its presence was limited to the two towns only. The TFG controls virtually no territory in Somalia and has made virtually no progress even after its expansion both in the establishment of government structures and in extending its authority at the local level. Even in the town of Baidoa, it was a guest, while a variety of local leaders, including strongman Habsade, exercising variable control entirely independent of, and sometimes in direct conflict with it.'[52] This also reveals that the TFG lacks the necessary institutional capacity to allow it to exercise its authority in the country. It has 'almost no functional civil service. Cabinet ministers have no ministers to oversee, and no budget.'[53] The TFG also lacks adequate control over its various security forces – the national police, the army, the Mogadishu city police, and the national security service – that are supposedly under its authority.

> Despite many of its positive differences from the TFG under Abdulahi Yusuf in terms of internal and external support, the current national unity government of President Shiek Sharif nonetheless suffers from many of the problems that bedevilled the TFG

These various weaknesses of the TFG were further compounded by the power struggles within the TFG itself, particularly between the ex-president Yusuf and his Prime Minister.

In late January 2009, the expanded Somali Parliament elected Shiek Sharif of the ARS-Djibouti as president of Somalia's unity government. Despite many of its positive differences from the TFG in terms of internal and external support, the current national unity government of President Shiek Sharif nonetheless suffers from many of the problems that bedevilled the TFG. It is still opposed by the al Shaababa, the strongest military forces that enjoy control over most parts of Somalia including parts of Mogadishu. It also has to face the opposition from Puntland on account of the perception that the Darood are not sufficiently represented in his government. Despite the support he enjoys within the new parliament, the parliament is susceptible to divisions. Most importantly, it faces a more formidable challenge of defending its survival from the seemingly determined military offensive of al Shaabab for ousting it.

The strongest side of the TFG compared to other previous governments may lie not in the extent of its legitimacy and support within Somalia or in the cohesion within its structures. It has none of these qualities. Its strength rather lies in its recognition by the international community as the legitimate government of Somalia and in the support that it enjoys from influential actors such as Ethiopia and the US. Despite its multiple weaknesses, the UNSC and the AU continue to affirm that the TFG is the only route to peace and security in Somalia.

The TFG appeared to have gain additional, albeit limited, strength with the expansion of its composition to include various new actors, most particularly the faction of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) that is party to the Djibouti Agreement of June 2008. In the latest round of talks held in Djibouti from 22 November, the two parties concluded a power-sharing deal. According to this new deal, 200 seats will go to the ARS and 75 to civil society, including women, the business community and the Diaspora.[54] This new agreement prolonged the life span of the TFG by extending its term, which was due to end in January 2009, for a further two-year period. Although early expectations that the expansion of the TFG and the election of new president would increase the legitimacy of the TFG and improve the security situation were not met, the newly expanded TFG under the leadership of Shiek Sharif has a better chance than its predecessor. But in terms of peacekeeping and taking the peace process further, the existence of the TFG particularly in a new more inclusive and cohesive form is critical as it offers the international community an established and more legitimate structure to deal with, notwithstanding its imperfections. Given the prevailing circumstances however, a lot should change before for the new TFG is to consolidate and the security situation to improve.

The ICU/ARS/al Shaabab

For over 15 years, warlords, their militias and clan leaders were the dominant actors in Somalia's political landscape, which was characterised by lawlessness, fighting, criminality and anarchy. This was until 2006. This year saw the emergence of a new force in Somalia known as the 'Islamic Courts Union' (ICU) as a strong actor to be reckoned with.

The ICU had a very simple beginning. It was originally conceived as a response of civil society including business to the lawlessness that engulfed south central Somalia following the collapse of the state in 1991. As Gerrie Swart explained '[t]hese were essentially local initiatives intended to provide a degree of law and order in an anarchic situation'.[55] The Sharia Courts started as judicial bodies to deal with crimes, and 'evolved to provide education, health care and public services'.[56] Until 2006, their political significance was largely limited.

What transformed the ICU and its military wing al Shaabab into their current political posture in Somalia were various developments in the country in 2006. The first was the high degree of strength and autonomy that the courts have come to assume from their clans.[57] Externally, this provoked fear that it would lead to the emergence of a Taliban-like regime in Somalia. The most important of such developments that brought the courts into prominence was the establishment of a US-backed alliance of clan militia leaders who sought to capture suspected al Qaeda operatives who were believed to be enjoying a safe haven in Mogadishu protected by Somalian hard-line Islamists.[58] This group was also meant to counter the notable influence that the courts were gaining within Somalia. The attempt of this US-sponsored alliance of warlords in Mogadishu, known as the 'Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism' (ARPCT), to suppress Islamists precipitated a clash with local Islamists and the courts. In this conflict, the clan militias of the ARPCT were decisively defeated within some months leading to the ICU assuming control over Mogadishu and most of South-central Somalia since June 2006 until their expulsion by Ethiopian forces.

During the seven-month period that they were in control of Mogadishu and other parts of South-central Somalia, they were credited by many for bringing some degree of security and order and for having brought south-central Somalia under one authority. These achievements earned them reasonably widespread popular support among war-weary residents of Mogadishu and other parts of south-central Somalia.

The ICU was not, however, just an Islamic movement alone. It had a strong clan foundation particularly among the Hawiye. As a report of the International Crisis Group puts it, '[t]hough first and foremost an Islamist movement, the Islamic Courts are also a manifestation of Hawiye clan interests and resistance.'[59] Moreover, the ICU was not a cohesive force. Instead, it was a loose coalition of various forces that espoused divergent political, religious and economic orientations and interests.[60] They included 'progressives who embraced democratic values; opportunists who used the court's power for personal advancement; socially conservative *salafis* whose agenda is focused on public morality … ; those who want an Islamic state but do not advocate violence; and jihadists'.[61]

Key figures in the ICU leadership included hard-line Islamic nationalists and conservative *salafis*. These included people who have had alleged links to al Qaeda and had a history of leading the terrorist group that was active in Somalia in the 1990s, *Al-Ittihad al-Islamiyya*. The serious flaw of the UIC has indeed been the dominance of such hard line elements within its leadership, and its fall from power was in important ways also attributable to this.

Emboldened by the military success of the ICU, these elements of the ICU leadership became vocal and started to make radical pronouncements and to enforce strict Islamic rules concerning public morality. These hardliner leaders, represented by Hassan Dahir Aweys (a US-designated terrorist, leader of the terrorist group known as as 'Al-Ittihad al-Islamiyya' and a veteran of the 1977 Ogaden war against Ethiopia) declared a Jihad on Ethiopia. They established close links with and supported rebel groups opposed to the Ethiopian government and, most importantly, made irredentist claims against the Somali region of Ethiopia, calling for a greater Somalia. With all these pronouncements, as well as by establishing a closer alliance with Ethiopia's arch enemy Eritrea, 'which,' according to Menkhaus, 'was eager to use the ICU to wage a proxy war', Aweys and his hardliner associates 'did everything they could to provoke a war with Ethiopia, and, in late December 2006, they got their wish'.[62]

They also took measures to enforce conservative Islam. As Bourbaki explains, '[h]ardline elements of the UIC have made major impingements on civil liberties, public expressions and entertainment already… They have shut down groups watching soccer matches. They have shut down theatres showing supposedly "pornographic" movies.'[63] They also banned the popular stimulant in many parts of the Horn of Africa called Khat. Together with their refusal to co-operate with US authorities to surrender al Qaeda operatives and suspected terrorists, all of these actions led the US to accuse the ICU of having the tendency to establish a Taliban-like state.

Although the ICU lost the control they established over most parts of south-central Somalia and Mogadishu

following the Ethiopian offensive in December 2006, they were not totally crushed. They reconstituted themselves as the ARS using Eritrea as their base until they split into two in mid-2008 following the relocation of the group led by Shiek Sharif to Djibouti to participate in the Djibouti peace process. The ARS-Eritrea has very close links with the major insurgent movement, called al Shaabab which was the hard line Islamic military wing of the ICU, that achieved particular political prominence in the aftermath of Ethiopia's successful military victory over the ICU.

> If the Djibouti peace process is also to succeed, it is imperative that ICU elements (the ARS-Eritrea) not involved in this peace process and al Shaabab are convinced to take part in it. President Shiek Sharif should put emphasis on winning the support of these Somali actors more through diplomacy and negotiation rather than through military means

As the above brief exposition of the success and rise of the ICU and the Djibouti process clearly attest, for the government to achieve legitimacy and for the peace process to succeed, they should not continue to focus merely on the increasingly weakening and hated warlords. They should embrace other sectors of Somali society and should build on the strategies used by the ICU for encouraging and providing financial and material support for local actors to provide services that Somalis have been deprived of for so long. It is also imperative that the TFG is transformed into a truly national and inclusive government that offers genuine representation for various clans, particularly the Hawiye. Otherwise the 'TFG will face continued resistance from the bulk of the Hawiye, denying it access to the greater Mogadishu area and parts of central Somalia'.[64] If the Djibouti peace process is also to succeed, it is imperative

that ICU elements (the ARS-Eritrea) not involved in this peace process and al Shaabab are convinced to take part in it. President Shiek Sharif should put emphasis on winning the support of these Somali actors more through diplomacy and negotiation rather than through military means. His government should not leave any rock unturned in trying to convince all Somali factions willing to renounce violence and extremism to be part of the peace process. In this regard, the failure of Shiek Sharif's government in its early days to initiate much expected national dialogue reaching out to various Somali actors is regrettable and raises doubts if its is going to be any different from the government of ex-President Abdulahi Yusuf.

External actors

A further complicating factor that those involved in peacemaking and peacekeeping have to wrestle with is the multiple external dimensions of, and external actors involved in, the conflict. This is an equally important dimension of the Somali conflict that has received inadequate attention but is increasingly playing an important part in the ongoing conflict. The external dimension of the conflict and the involvement of external actors is attributable to at least three factors. The first one, to which I have made reference above, is the security concern that the conflict in Somalia raises for some of Somalia's neighbours, particularly Ethiopia. The second is the power struggle for dominance in the Horn of Africa between various countries. Thirdly, there is the war against terrorism.

Ethiopia and Somalia have a longstanding history of conflict, among other things, over the Ogaden territory of Ethiopia.[65] The two countries fought a bitter war in 1977 in which Somalia was defeated. The relationship between the two countries has been very problematic. It is believed that Somalia hosted and supported rebellion movements fighting governments in Addis Ababa. This was, in particular, concerned with the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and Western Somalia Liberation Front (WSLF), the two rebel movements that have been active in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Moreover, Ethiopia blamed the bombing attacks that took place in Addis Ababa in the 1990s on *al ithad al Islamia*, a terrorist organisation that was active in Somalia of which Awyes was a leader. Ethiopia suffered various terrorist attacks and undertook repeated military operations into Somalian territories to clamp down on rebel groups operating from the Somalian border. Authorities in Addis Ababa also feared that its regional rival powers and enemies, including Egypt and Eritrea, may use the existing situation in Somalia to mobilise Somali actors willing to destabilise Ethiopia.

In the context of the rise of the ICU, these security concerns have been aggravated. The ICU had allegedly established close links with the two rebel movements that have been waging an armed struggle for the secession of Ogaden from Ethiopia. It was also reported that the courts provided support to these organisations and to Ethiopia's major rebel armed group, the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). In the course of Ethiopia's advance to remove the ICU from Somalia, the two organisations claimed on many occasions that the forces of the ONLF and WSLF 'claimed to have acted against Ethiopian troops en route to Somalia in order to demonstrate solidarity with the Courts.'[66] The support that the ICU exhibited for the OLF was more disturbing for the authorities in Addis. It is generally considered that the OLF may use any support to undertake attacks that may seriously destabilise the country.

> The challenge for the Djibouti process is how to strike the right balance between the need for achieving peace in Somalia and addressing Ethiopia's security concerns to the satisfaction of the government in Addis

As noted above, in response to the declaration of a Jihad by the Eritrean-supported ICU and the request by the TFG to protect it from being dislodged by the ICU forces, Ethiopia sent its troops into Somalia and drove the ICU forces from all the territories they were controlling. The military success of the Ethiopian forces however did not lead to the expected stabilisation of the TFG nor did it totally incapacitate all elements of the ICU and, by implication, it did not fully address the threat this posed to Ethiopia. It was rather followed by the rise of an insurgent movement led by what used to be the military wing of the ICU called al Shaabab that launched an insurgency war against Ethiopian and TFG forces. This resulted in bloody fighting on a scale not seen in Somalia since the 1990s. Failing to contain the attacks by al Shaabab on its forces, and the anti-Ethiopian sentiments it galvanized among Somalis, and frustrated by the infightings within the TFG and the failure of the international community to support it, Ethiopia decided to withdraw from Somalia within the framework of the Djibouti process.

Although this brought hope for a negotiated settlement, the Al Shaabab declared that they will continue with their military attacks against all foreign forces present in the country. Al Shaabab is in control of most parts of Somalia and seems determined and capable of taking control of the whole of Somalia militarily. As a result, it is not disposed to allowing AMISOM's presence to be used to bring it into negotiating a political deal with the dysfunctional but internationally-recognised TFG and allied forces. This also sends a message to the AU and the international community that their initiatives for expanding AMISOM and/or for establishing a UN mission to replace AMISOM, is not welcomed. Delivering on its promise, al Shaabab has opened its attack on AMISOM. If al Shaabab is not going to be convinced to allow the continued presence of AMISOM and to participate in the Djibouti peace process, it is unlikely that AMISOM will be spared from the guerrilla attacks that frustrated the Ethiopian forces until their eventual withdrawal during late 2008 and January 2009 and it may inflict huge damage. As the military option has once again proved to be unworkable, the AU and members of the international community, particularly those with influence on al Shaabab, should do everything so that al Shaabab will not only stop targeting AMISOM, but will also come to the negotiating table. This should further be supported by boosting AMISOM, not only by reducing it to its mandated size but also by equipping it with the required logistics and resources.

Apart from this, as already noted, the Ethiopian withdrawal created a positive dynamic for the Djibouti peace process. Indeed, it should be noted that Ethiopian withdrawal forms part of the implementation of this process. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of its forces from Somalia, Ethiopia will continue to be an interested party in the Somali conflict, whose interest and contribution should be accommodated in the Djibouti peace process. Nonetheless, its involvement in the peace process, necessary as it is, may not always have a positive impact on the efforts for achieving peace in Somalia. The challenge for the Djibouti process is how to strike the right balance between the need for achieving peace in Somalia and addressing Ethiopia's security concerns to the satisfaction of the government in Addis.

The US has a much narrower concern underlying its involvement in the Somalian conflict. This relates to its war on terror. The US government has listed al Shaabab as a terrorist organisation. It believes that there are al Qaeda elements that were given protection by Islamists in Somalia. The US also expressed concern over the aspiration of hard line Islamists to establish an Islamic state that will enforce strict Sharia laws. It fears that this might lead to the rise of a Taliban-like regime in Somalia.[67] The policy of the US has therefore focused on alienating

and delegitimising al Shaabab and not involving it in the ongoing peace initiatives. This narrow focus on terrorism does not often converge with the political process and indeed has the effect of undermining the latter.[68]

With the replacement of the much-resented administration of President Bush by the new Obama administration, things might change for the better.[69] It is hoped that the US policy on the war on terror will be pursued without endangering, if not always in harmony with, the overall requirement for establishing peace and security in Somalia, which is a prerequisite for addressing all other issues, including the threat of terrorism and piracy in Somalia. This entails that the US provides support for the Djibouti peace process and for the unity government of President Shiek Sharif. As the support that the US expressed to extend to the unity government, while congratulating the newly elected president, indicates,[70] the approach of the US can be said to be changing course in this direction. A more substantive measure in this direction would be if the US reconsiders the listing of al Shaabab as a terrorist organisation. Given that the fight against terrorism continues to occupy an important part in Obama's foreign policy, the support of the US for the peace process will depend upon the commitment of the unity government to contain extremism and that of al Shaabab to renounce violence and co-operate with efforts to apprehend suspected terrorist actors.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, it is clear that if the Djibouti process is to move forward and address comprehensively all aspects of the conflict in Somalia, there is a need for a continued and more robust and positive international engagement in Somalia from all international actors, including the UN, the EU, and the Arab League. Given the opposition that the Djibouti process and the government attracted from al Shaabab forces, the view that 'the international community can (and should) demonstrate a higher level of determination than ex-belligerents'[71] is particularly pertinent here. It encourages and impresses upon all Somalis the need for supporting and participating in the efforts for establishing lasting peace in their country and the region. Moreover, without such a level of international engagement that harnesses and widens the support of members of the international community, the optimism regarding the Djibouti process and the unity government cannot be sustained and the prospect for resolving the conflict might also, once again, be lost.

While emphasis should be put on achieving ceasefire and bringing al Shaabab to the peace process and consolidating the role and impact of the international force present in the country, it is also imperative that efforts are directed both to alleviate the suffering of millions of Somalis and to pursue a multipronged approach for addressing the different dimensions of the conflict. In this regard, alongside the work for a comprehensive settlement and for state-building initiatives, an equal amount of work should be done in terms of encouraging new and consolidating existing local initiatives for providing basic goods and services. The role that traditional institutions, including clan membership and religion play should also be appreciated and appropriately harnessed. In terms of arresting the ongoing fighting, one observes that external involvement is probably the single most complicating factor. This dimension requires as much, if not more, work than the internal dimensions of the conflict.

The ongoing efforts for peacemaking and peacekeeping are generally informed by the current realities and dynamics of the conflict. The imperative of establishing peace in Somalia further requires that the root causes and contributing factors are made to have a bearing on efforts for making peace and undertaking peace operations in Somalia. This paper has argued and shown that a consideration of all aspects of the Somalian conflict and a comprehensive as well as disaggregated or issue specific analysis of the implications of all and each for peace processes and peacekeeping efforts is critical for responding to the Somali crisis effectively and wholistically.

Based on the discussions in the preceding sections, the following are recommended

With respect to peacemaking:

- The Djibouti process should be expanded to involve Somali actors that are not currently party to the peace process. This in particular refers to the militarily powerful group al Shaabab as well as other opposition groups. In this regard, not only should the new government of President Sharif call for and welcome negotiations with al Shaabab, but the special representative of the Secretary General of the UN, leading the Djibouti peace process, should also approach moderate al Shaabab leaders to participate in the peace process. This requires convincing and utilizing religious leaders, clan elders as well as countries with influence on al Shaabab leadership
- The US government should reconsider its general listing of al Shaabab as a terrorist organisation
- Since negotiation is the only way of resolving the Somali conflict, al Shaabab forces should also agree to participate in the peace process. They should also renounce violence and human rights abuses, cease hostilities against the unity government and AMISOM, and abandon extremism
- The peace process should not only deal with the current crisis in south central Somalia but should also address comprehensively the situation in other parts of Somalia as well. In this regard, it is important

that it brings into the equation the future status and relations of the relatively stable and autonomous parts of Somalia: the self-declared state of Somaliland and Puntland

- In addition to the focus on reconciling or political settlement among factional leaders attention should also be directed at institution-building and the establishment of a national government, as part of the Djibouti peace efforts. There should also be processes to address fundamental issues of peace-building that deal with the inequalities among various sections of Somalis, the reconstruction of structures for the provision of basic goods and services, reconciliation processes addressing the long years of mistrust and antagonism among various clans, accountability for human rights abuses, and the breakdown of law and order and issues relating to livelihood and economic transformaiton

- In order to guarantee the support of neighbouring countries, the Djibouti peace process should address the security concerns of these countries as well. In this regard, the rejection of extremism and terror-ism as well as the recognition and affirmation of Ethiopia's sovereignty over Ogaden should form part of the Djibouti agreement together with international guarantees

- In order to contain the insecurity of south central Somalia and establish the presence of the national unity government of President Sharif and the in-ternational community, including the UN, the new government should reach out to key actors in the region. These include businesses, clan leaders and religious bodies. The new government should also, with the support of the international community, establish conditions for the provision of humanitarian aid for affected communities and for basic necessities and services. President Sharif's administration should collaborate with and support local actors that can provide essential and necessary services

- The international community should not only continue to engage in Somalia but ensure that its engagement is more robust and co-ordinated. The special representative of the UN Secretary General should work through and with the support of all states and international organisations with special interests, expertise and influence. The UNSC should also continue to be seized of the Somalic conflict and ensure that external actors refrain from impeding the peace process, even if they do not support it

With respect to peacekeeping:

- The nature of the conflict in Somalia requires a robust peacekeeping force. Currently, the size and military capability of AMISOM is immensely inadequate to implement its mandate. It is also inadequate to support the peace process and deter armed actors from spoiling or impeding such a process

- There are two courses of action for the international community to redress this situation. The first is to speed up the deployment of additional AU forces to Somalia to reach their mandated size. Second, together with the above, the UN should make the necessary arrangements for replacing AMISOM with a well- equipped, financed and adequately manned UN mission in Somalia. It will be hypocritical for the international community to continue maintaining a strong naval force to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia while failing to contribute towards such a mission

- In tandem with both of the above courses of action, the mandate of such an operation should not be limited to supporting the peace process by providing protection to dysfunctional national institutions. It should include the responsibility and the capacity to respond to the security and humanitarian needs of civilians affected by the conflict and the draought affecting the region. The operation must also have a strong human rights and rule of law components, both to investigate and report past and present violations of human rights and humanitarian law and to design and implement security sector reform and develop ways of redressing the culture of impunity and the breakdown of law and order. In this regard, it is important the contribution of traditional judicial processes and mechanisms of reconciliation and maintainance of law and order should be appropriately identified and harnessed

- Within the framework of the above, much attention should be paid to putting in place a regime that will be able to induce various militias to give up their arms, that facilitates the rebuilding of basic infrastructures and that supports the establishment of democratic and accountable public security, through, amongst other things, legislative and institutional development, recruitment, training and mentoring of local security agencies

- It is also important that the mission establishes a good relationship with local population, particularly reli-gious leaders, clan elders and other civil society actors. This it should do without compromising its mandate

NOTES

1   This is the time when the European colonial administrations of Britain, Italy and France were established in Somalia following the notorious Berlin Conference of 1984–85 at which European colonial powers arbitrarily partitioned Africa into

colonial units. Abdulahi A. Osman, The Somali Conflict and the Role of Inequality, Tribalism and Clanism, in Abdulahi A. Osman and Issaka K. Souare (eds) *Somalia at the Crossroads: Challenges and Perspectives on Reconstituting a Failed State,* London: Adonis & Abbey Publishers Ltd, 2007, 92.

2   Bayne states that '[p]rior to colonization, the Somali did not share a single political entity. Social organization was based on nomadic pastoralism with a decentralized democracy based on the complex relationships between clans, sub-clans and families.' S Bayne The European Union's Political and Development Response to Somalia, *ECDPM Discussion Paper* 25, Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management, 2001, 9.

3   See details in Wikipedia [online] available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia.

4   Sadiki Koko, Whose Responsibility To Protect? Reflections on the dynamics of an 'abandoned disorder' in Somalia, *African Security Review*, 16 (3) (2007) 6.

5   In the African context, as many scholars argue, this led to the emergence of a patrimonial system. As Osman explains, under this system the state occupies a central role, from which it commands the largest portion of all economic activities in the country. Osman, The Somali conflict and the role of inequality, tribalism and clanism, note 1 above, 95. This is also attributed to the fact that the private sector had insignificant contribution in the economies of African countries.

6   Osman, as above, 94. For more also see Sylvia Pankhurast, *Ex-Italian Somaliland* (London: Wattas & Co, 1951).

7   For more details on this see Osman, as above, 91–101.

8   See World Bank, *Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and dynamics*, 2005, 15–16.

9   According to Prunier, the clans that President Barre relied upon were the three clans of the Darod: the Marehan, the Ogadeen and the Dolbahante. The patronage system on the basis of which members of these clans assumed the top ranks of Somali society was thus nicknamed 'MOD' (short for Marehan-Ogadeen-Dolbahante). Gerard Prunier, *Somalia: Civil War, intervention and withdrawal 1990–1995,* Writenet Country Papers, July 1995, available at http://www.unhcr.ch/refworld/country/writenet/wrisom.htm.

10   See Prunier, as above; Abdurahman M. Abdulahi (Baadiyow), Perspectives on the state collapse in Somalia, in Abdulahi A. Osman & Issaka K. Souare (eds) *Somalia at Crossroads: Challenges and Perspectives on Reconstituting a Failed State*, 2007, 40, 44. The politically significant clans, including the Majerteen, the Isaaq and the Hawiye, were as a result alienated although there were some token Issaq and Hawiye in some positions. Following the establishment of an Issaq-based armed movement dedicated to fight for the overthrow of Barre's regime, Barre not only armed the Dolbahante and Gaddebursi clans against the Isaaq but also made the Isaaq a military target in its counter-military offensive. Places such as Hargesa were shelled with heavy artillery and bombarded day and night, leading to huge civilian casualties and refugee flow to neighbouring countries. For more on this see Robert Gersony, Why Somalis Flee (Washington D.C.: US Department of State, Bureau of Refugees Program, 1989) and Africa Watch A Government at War with Its Own People (London, 1990).

11   E Visman *Cooperation with politically fragile countries: Lessons from EU support to Somalia,* ECDPM Working Paper 66 Maastricht: European Centre for Development Policy Management, 1998, 3.

12   For details see I M Lewis, *Blood and Bone: The Call of Kinship in Somali Society*, Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1994.

13   Osman, The Somali conflict and the role of inequality, tribalism and clanism, note 1 above, 108.

14   Ibid.

15   Ibid, 103–106.

16   Before 1969, Somalia had two elected governments. The first was presided over by Aden Abdullah Osman and lasted until 1967. The second was the government of Abdirashid Ali Shermark, who took power defeating President Osman in the 1967 election. See Omar A. Eno Somalia's Recovery and reformation: Transcending the rhetoric of clan politics, in Abdulahi A. Osman and Issaka K. Souare (eds), *Somalia at Crossroads: Challenges and Perspectives on a Failed State*, 2007, 131, 133.

17   Prunier *Somalia: Civil war, intervention and withdrawal*; I M Lewis, *A modern history of Somalia: Nation and state in the Horn of Africa*, London: Longman, 1980.

18   In the 1969 elections, more than 60 sub-clan-based parties participated. Surprisingly, this did not lead to the emergence of a coalition government. Instead, the ruling Somali Youth League party won the majority of seats, largely on the basis of vote rigging. Lewis, as above, 204.

19   The government adopted a programme of road building that was designed to link the various parts of the country. It also introduced the written Somali language in 1970, and clan-based identification was disallowed.

20   Afyare Abdi Elmi and Abdulahi Barise, The Somali Conflict: Root causes, obstacles, and peace-building strategies, *African Security Review*, 15(1) (2006), 34–35.

21   Osman, The Somali conflict and the role of inequality, tribalism and clanism, note 1 above, 44.

22   George B. N. Ayitteh, The Somali crisis: Time for an African solution, Cato Policy Analysis 25 [online] available at http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa-250.html.

23   Ibid.

24   Ibid.

25   Menkhaus, one of the leading scholars on Somalia, similarly states 'the Somalia state was funded almost entirely by Cold War driven foreign aid, leading to a bloated and artificial structure which collapsed soon after that aid was frozen in the late 1980s'. Quoted in Osman, as above, 50.

26   Ayittey, *The Somali crisis: Time for an African Solution*, note 23.

27   Somalia Country Profile, The Economist Intelligence Unit.

28   Osman, The Somali conflict and the role of inequality, note 1 above, 98–99.

29   Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, The US Military Intervention in Somalia: A Hidden Agenda?, *Middle East Policy* 2(1) (1993), 44–62, at 47.

30   The groups Somalia was supporting were Ogaden National Liberation Front and Western Somalia Liberation Front.

31 Some 25 000 Somalis died and 700 000 left their country to become refugees. The Quaker Council for European Affairs, Mainstreaming Conflict Prevention, a study of EU action in ACP countries; Case Study – Somalia, October 2008, 8. www.quaker.org/qcea.

32 CGI, *Somalia: To move beyond the failed state,* Africa Report No. 147, 23 December 2008, 25–26.

33 See Richard Cornwell, *Somalia: Fourteenth Time Lucky?,* ISS Occasional Paper 87, April 2004; Prunier, Somalia: Civil War, intervention and withdrawal.

34 See *Somalia: Political Progress, Humanitarian Stalemate,* Refugees International Field Report, April 2009.

35 See Human Rights Watch 'So much to fear' War Crimes and the devastation of Somalia, 2008.

36 See Article 7 of the Agreement between the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) signed on 9 June 2008 in Djibouti.

37 CGI Report 147, 29.

38 'Al Shabab vows to attack bases of African Union Peacekeepers in Mogadishu' *People's Daily Online* of 15 January 2009 available at http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90855/6574571. html accessed on 16 January 2009.

39 These attacks occurred on 16, 17 January and 18 January 2009. In the 17 January attack two AMISOM soldiers were killed and on 18 January the attack against AMISOM led to the death of two civilians. See AP report: 2 Killed During attack on AU force in Somalia accessed from http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090118/ap_on_re_af/af_somalia_1 on 19 January 2009; Garowe Online report: Al Shaabab insurgents attack AU Peacekeepers accessed from http://allafrica.com/stories/200901191134.html on 20 January 2009.

40 UNSC Res. 1863 (2009).

41 For the background and stages of the Djibouti Peace Process see ICG Report 147 23–25.

42 Menkhaus 2004:29.

43 World Bank, Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and dynamics, 11.

44 See Roger Middleton, Piracy in Somalia – Threatening global trade, feeding local wars, Chatham House Briefing Paper, October 2008.

45 The EU has deployed a NATO naval task force in the region. Various countries, including India, Russia and China, have also sent their warships to the region. The UN Security Council adopted a resolution authorising deployment off the coast and use of 'all necessary means' to fight piracy, including air and land strikes during 'hot pursuit'. See, for example, UN SC Res. 1851 S/RES/1851 (2008), 16 December 2008.

46 ICG Report 147, 22. See Rubrick Biegon, Somali piracy and the international response FPIF Commentary 29 January 2009 available at http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/5827 accessed on 16 February 2009.

47 See Solomon A. Dersso 'Somalia; The Djibouti peace process has a better chance of success' ISS Today 29 January 2009 available at <http://www.issafrica.org/index.php?link_id=5&slink_id=7229&link_type=12&slink_type=12&tmpl_id=3>.

48 See Cornwell, Fourteenth Time Lucky?

49 International Crisis Group (ICG), Can the Somali Crisis be Contained? Africa Report No. 116, 10 August 2006, 3.

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52 Ibid, 9.

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62 Menkhaus, Somalia: A country in peril, note 60 above.

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

As the most protracted conflict on the continent, the Somali conflict continues not only to pose an increasing threat to the people of Somalia and the region at large but also to defy various attempts at its resolution. This paper analyses how the root causes, changing dynamics and nature of the Somali conflict impact upon ongoing efforts of the international community for peacemaking and peacekeeping. It identifies both the challenges that these attributes pose for peacemaking and peacekeeping and the approaches for addressing them. The paper also argues for a comprehensive approach to dealing with the various dimensions of the conflict, both internal and external, and underscores the need for a coordinated, sustained and robust international engagement.

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