

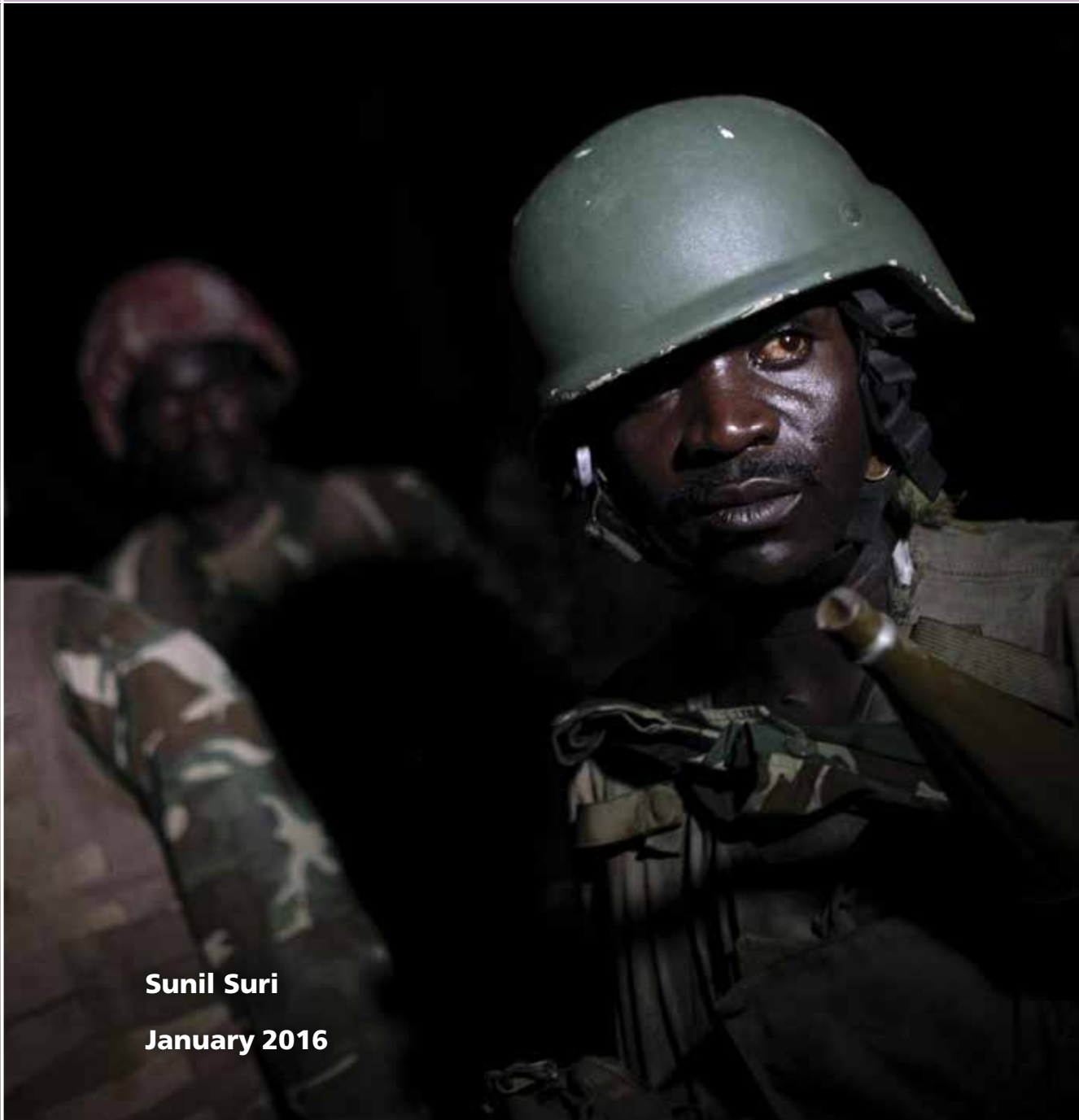


SAFERWORLD

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

“Barbed wire on our heads”

Lessons from counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding in Somalia



Sunil Suri

January 2016

"Barbed wire on our heads"

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and statebuilding in Somalia**

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List of key abbreviations

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia	JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
ARS	Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia	KDF	Kenya Defence Forces
ASWJ	Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma	NIS	National Intelligence Service
AU	African Union	NSS	National Security Strategy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency	ODA	Official development assistance
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy	PSG	Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal
CSSF	Conflict, Stability and Security Fund	SNA	Somali National Army
CTPF	Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund	SRRC	Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council
CVE	Countering violent extremism	SRSRG	Special Representative to the (United Nations) Secretary-General
DFID	Department for International Development	TCC	Troop contributing countries
DoD	Department of Defense	TFG	Transitional Federal Government
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force	TNG	Transitional National Government
EU	European Union	UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
FGS	Federal Government of Somalia	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organisation	UNSOM	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia
ICU	Islamic Courts Union	UNSC	United Nations Security Council
IGA	Interim Galmudug Administration	UN SEMG	United Nations Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
IJA	Interim Juba Administration	US	United States of America
ISWA	Interim South West Administration		

Bibliography

A full bibliography for this report is available at www.saferworld.org.uk/resources

Executive summary

THIS REPORT LOOKS AT counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding approaches and efforts in the southern and central areas of Somalia since 2001, focusing on how these approaches have been used by three key international actors, the US, UK and EU. Assessing the impact of their engagement on Somali conflict dynamics from a peacebuilding perspective, it argues that counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding efforts have had significant negative impacts, and based on this identifies lessons and recommendations for the future.

Twenty years of external engagement

“In any other environment, we wouldn’t be able to get away with this counter-terror approach. We can get away with it because there is a narrative about al-Shabaab – that it’s this hydra. And so we wake up every morning and put barbed wire on our heads.”

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) official¹

The image of Somalia as the ultimate ‘failed state’ has often come at the expense of a more accurate and complex picture of peace and conflict in the country. What was an all-out civil war against the Siad Barre regime in the late 1980s has evolved into a series of conflicts involving multiple national and international actors. By the second half of the 1990s, despite efforts to broker peace and occasional peacekeeping operations, Somalia had largely fallen off the radar. In the early 2000s, the authority of the Transitional National Government (TNG) was contested both within Somalia and by some regional states. But international efforts to find national-level solutions to Somalia’s challenges have intensified since 2007, with one narrative dominating discussions about Somalia’s conflicts and chances for peace: the fight against terrorism.

Aspects of this narrative began to emerge in the immediate aftermath of the events of 11 September 2001 with fears that Somalia was providing an operational base for al-Qaeda. Given the international emphasis on the ‘Global War on Terrorism’, the term ‘terrorist’ began to act as a ‘vital currency of power’ in Somalia.² It was wielded against political and armed opponents by various actors.

As the international community’s focus shifted back to Somalia, the country was experiencing renewed armed conflict between the TNG and groups opposed to it, including those supported by international actors such as Ethiopia and the US. After the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) deposed the widely resented Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to claim Mogadishu and large areas of southern and

¹ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 9 November 2014.

² Elliot A, Holzer G (2009), ‘The invention of ‘terrorism’ in Somalia: paradigms and policy in US foreign relations’, *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16 (2), p 218.

central Somalia in 2006, they enjoyed some popularity in Somalia for restoring a degree of order due to their ruthlessness and ability – in part – to bridge clan divides.³

The ICU's emergence led to concerns that Somalia might evolve into a safe haven for Islamic extremists – a perspective that many felt was stoked by Ethiopia in support of its own national security interests.⁴ It was then that the narrative about the need to fight terrorism came to dominate international policy discourse on Somalia, as the above quote from the AMISOM official illustrates.

Eventually these fears of terrorism were used to justify the US-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in 2006. In late 2006, Ethiopian troops intervened and the ICU quickly collapsed. The military intervention contributed to the radicalisation of a number of Somalis and set the scene for al-Shabaab, hitherto one faction of the ICU, to emerge as a significant militant force opposed to Ethiopia's presence.

Intense conflict ensued, marked by widespread human rights and humanitarian law violations. Al-Shabaab captured much of southern and central Somalia, and AMISOM was deployed to the country in 2007.

Key drivers of conflict

Somalia's conflict has been conceptualised as a fight between the government and al-Shabaab. However, it is better understood as a series of conflicts driven by multiple drivers at national and local levels, including:

- A legacy of **poor governance, marginalisation and exclusion** that has left many fearful of the state – a fear that has been reinforced rather than alleviated by rushed statebuilding efforts.
- **Corruption** on a grand scale by various Somali authorities, which has fed concerns about ongoing efforts to enhance the capacity of the Somali state, and fuelled competition between actors to control resources.
- The almost total **impunity** in the country, for criminal activities such as corruption as well as human rights violations and abuses.
- The **politicisation of clan identity**, whereby clan identity has been used to capture political power and control over resources.
- **Competition for resources** including humanitarian aid, water and land.

There has been much attention to the role of religious ideology in driving conflict in Somalia. However, religious ideology should not be viewed in isolation, particularly as it feeds off other drivers. Indeed, membership in armed opposition groups in Somalia is often as much an articulation of political and economic marginalisation as it is a statement of religious ideology. Subsequent international engagement has not always reflected this.

International engagement

The US, UK and EU's rationale for engaging in Somalia has been heavily focused on reducing the threat of terrorism. Since 2007, they have provided significant funds to AMISOM and regional actors aimed at militarily defeating al-Shabaab. These resources have been provided despite questions about the objectives of regional actors and evidence that their actions have undermined efforts to build peace in Somalia – whether through their direct military interventions, alleged involvement in Somalia's

³ See BBC (2006), 'Profile: Somalia's Islamic Courts', 6 June (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/5051588.stm>); Barnes C, Hassan H, *The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu's Islamic Courts*, (Chatham House, April 2007), p 4.

⁴ Hoehne M V (2010), *Counter-terrorism in Somalia: How external interference helped to produce militant Islamism*, (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), p 19.

war economy⁵ or support to sub-national actors as a counterweight to the influence of the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).

Looking beyond regional actors, the US has been the most militarily active in Somalia, carrying out military operations and strikes to kill or capture suspected al-Qaeda operatives and al-Shabaab leaders. For their part, the EU and the UK have focused their military efforts on operations against piracy, which has threatened shipping lanes off the Horn of Africa that are vital to the world economy.

The US, UK and EU have all been prominent backers of the stabilisation and state building agendas in Somalia – the latter of which is enshrined in the Somali Compact – and have been particularly active in political processes to form interim regional administrations and the creation of a federal system.

These approaches have wrested much territory from al-Shabaab control, particularly since the establishment of the FGS in 2012. However, these territorial gains remain both relative and fragile, and have both caused harm and created risks for longer-term stability – including conflict between sub-national administrations and continued marginalisation and exclusion. With the mandate of the FGS coming to an end in 2016, the US, UK and EU have the opportunity to reflect upon the lessons of over twenty years of involvement and adjust their policies in the country.

Learning lessons

Considering the legacy of US, UK and EU involvement in Somalia, several conclusions are evident.

First, international actors have **failed to underpin their military assertiveness with a coherent long-term peace strategy**. One of the main challenges posed by militarised approaches in Somalia is that despite international processes to set common objectives such as the New Deal, there is a lack of unity over what international actors are seeking to accomplish above and beyond the military defeat of al-Shabaab. The consensus on al-Shabaab belies the reality amongst international actors who have a range of competing security-related objectives that frequently work at cross-purposes, undermining efforts to build long-term sustainable peace in Somalia. The lack of alignment between the overt objectives of international actors is exacerbated by a lack of transparency and clarity over other objectives.

The focus on militarily defeating al-Shabaab has proved to be unhelpful, as it has locked international actors into a militarised approach to resolving the Somali conflict, leaving no avenues through which Somali and international actors can engage with al-Shabaab in an effort to de-escalate the conflict. The focus on al-Shabaab has also simultaneously decreased attention on other conflict drivers. Consequently, policy formation has frequently ignored the security needs of Somali people – as demonstrated by the remittances crisis – thereby sowing the seeds of future tension and conflict.

The use of militarised approaches in Somalia has had profound negative consequences for Somali civilians. Military actions have sometimes created security vacuums: while AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA) have successfully recovered territory from al-Shabaab, territorial gains have been undermined by the failure to implement a long-term political strategy aimed at addressing governance deficits and establishing a sustainable peace in these areas. Such gaps have allowed other forms of conflict to re-emerge and have made civilians vulnerable to renewed al-Shabaab attacks.

Accompanying efforts to recover territory from al-Shabaab, international actors (in particular the US) have carried out airstrikes and targeted killings. The successful targeting of al-Shabaab's leadership has not heralded the end of the group nor

⁵ Journalists for Justice (2015), 'Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia', November, p 2.

diminished its capacity to carry out high-profile attacks. Instead, such operations have resulted in civilian casualties and strengthened the resolve of al-Shabaab's leadership, suggesting that the outcome of such efforts has been detrimental to efforts to resolve the conflict.

Significantly, international actors such as the US, UK and the EU have legitimised the role of regional actors in the Somali conflict despite evidence highlighting how the use of military force by regional actors has caused harm to the Somali population and continued unabated in the absence of meaningful accountability mechanisms for any wrongdoing. Indeed, Human Rights Watch reports on Somalia covering the period from 2009 through to 2015 all documented numerous examples of how AMISOM, regional forces and their proxy forces have been responsible for indiscriminate attacks and serious abuses against Somali civilians.⁶ Notably, both the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and Kenyan Defence Forces (KDF) are active in Somalia as members of AMISOM – and independently of it – despite the 2008 Djibouti Peace Agreement requesting that the UN deploy an international stabilisation force comprised of “countries that are friends of Somalia” – excluding neighbouring countries.⁷ Ultimately, until the focus of policy is the wellbeing of Somalia's population, outside efforts will fail to create the conditions under which long-term stability can emerge.

Second, **the global counter-terrorism agenda has reinforced a range of counter-productive behaviours by national, regional and Western actors in Somalia**, which have worked against many of their stated objectives and undermined efforts to build lasting peace. By presenting themselves as the alternative to al-Shabaab, successive Somali governments have been able to secure considerable military and security resources, despite extensive corruption and the diversion of weapons and other supplies. While al-Shabaab represents a considerable security threat to the FGS and sub-national administrations, long-term stability will be directly undermined as long as these counterproductive behaviours are overlooked.

Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda have also been able to leverage their role in the Somali conflict. In 2012, for example, Uganda's Prime Minister threatened to withdraw Uganda from “all regional peace efforts” including AMISOM in response to a leaked UNSC report that accused the Ugandan government of providing support to armed rebel groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).⁸ Subsequently, the President of the UNSC issued a statement clarifying that the leaked report did not necessarily reflect the views of the UN and praised Uganda's “significant role in the maintenance of peace and security in several countries, particularly in Somalia”.⁹

Al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya and Uganda have also led to heavy-handed security responses, which risk fuelling the very discontent that enables al-Shabaab to pursue an international agenda. In the wake of al-Shabaab's attack on Garissa University in April 2015, for example, the Kenyan Deputy President, William Ruto, said “the way America changed after 9/11 is the way Kenya will change after Garissa” and declared that “we must secure this country at whatever cost”.¹⁰ This pressure to ‘secure’ Kenya has

6 Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2009’: “Ethiopian bombardments regularly fall on civilian homes and public spaces, sometimes killing entire families” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2009/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2010’: “all parties are implicated in war crimes or other serious human rights abuses.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2010/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2011’: “Throughout 2010, with all parties conducting indiscriminate attacks causing high civilian casualties.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2011/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2012’: “Indiscriminate attacks were committed by all parties to the conflict during a series of military offensives led by the TFG, with the support of AMISOM and ASWJ, in late 2010 and between February and May 2011.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2012/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2013’: “the forces arrayed against it – a combination of Somali government security forces, troops with the AMISOM, Ethiopian government forces, and allied militias – committed abuses, including indiscriminate attacks harming civilians and arbitrary arrests and detentions.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2014’: “African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ethiopian government troops, and allied militias – have also committed abuses.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2015’: “Somali government security forces, African Union (AU) troops, and allied militias were responsible for indiscriminate attacks, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests and detention.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/somalia>.

7 AMISOM, *Somali Peace Process*, (<http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/somali-peace-process/>).

8 Pflanz M (2012), ‘Uganda says it will pull out of Somalia in UN row’, *The Telegraph*, 2 November.

9 Imaka I (2012), ‘United Nations distances itself from Congo report’, *Daily Monitor*, 4 November.

10 Institute of Security Studies (2015), ‘The future of the world's largest refugee camp’, 24 August.

repeatedly manifested itself in heavy-handed militarised responses as evidenced by a September 2015 report entitled “The Error of Fighting Terror with Terror”, in which Kenya’s National Commission on Human Rights detailed how Kenyan security agencies have continued “to conduct abusive operations against individuals and groups suspected to be associated with terror attacks in various parts of the country”, documenting “over one hundred and twenty cases of egregious human rights violations that include twenty-five extrajudicial killings and eighty-one enforced disappearances”.¹¹

The global counter-terrorism agenda has also had particularly negative consequences for the distribution of humanitarian assistance in the country. 4.9 million Somalis remain in humanitarian need,¹² but international actors have undermined the neutrality of humanitarian agencies. Aid has increasingly been politicised – domestic legislation has been used to restrict the ability of agencies to deliver in areas controlled by al-Shabaab or other groups designated as ‘terrorists’ by international actors. At the time of the 2011 famine, low levels of pooled funds and restrictions on agencies from operating in al-Shabaab areas – some of the most acutely affected by the famine and humanitarian crisis – were used as a tactic to undermine the group. 258,000 people died during this famine.¹³ The counter-terrorism narrative has often served to harm ordinary Somalis more than it has diminished the capacity of al-Shabaab.

Yet there is evidence that humanitarian assistance has been diverted to strengthen armed actors. In March 2010, for example, a leaked United Nations Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group (UN SEMG) report alleged that up to half of Somali food aid was being diverted to a handful of Somali contractors who had in effect formed a “cartel”, with some of their profits from reselling the food being channelled “directly to armed opposition groups”.¹⁴ Such developments present a dilemma for international actors who need to ensure that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need, but at the same time mitigate against the risks of aid being diverted and fuelling conflict, which are very real.

Third, international actors have too often **ignored or even exacerbated the key drivers of conflict** in Somalia. The focus on terrorism – and the blanket labelling of al-Shabaab as ‘terrorist’ has simplified Somalia’s conflict, and obscured the complex reasons why individuals or groups choose to affiliate with or join the group. With a focus on a narrow set of priorities, international actors have paid insufficient attention to the country’s other most significant problems and the actors and behaviours that have created them.

International actors have focused in particular on establishing a monopoly of violence, providing large amounts of security assistance both to AMISOM and the SNA, despite widely voiced concerns about the lack of functioning oversight structures, which matters especially in the Somali context where clan loyalty is stronger than loyalty to institutions. Beyond the military-first approach, statebuilding and stabilisation efforts have been procedural and top-down – supporting the establishment of institutions (particularly Somali security actors and interim administrations) that disregard the concerns of many Somali citizens.

Fourth, **pressure to complete political processes has resulted in tensions and conflict**. International actors are heavily invested in Vision 2016 and the New Deal, which are founded upon the vision of a federal Somalia. However, externally driven approaches predicated on the reinforcement of the FGS have ignored the reality that it has often been the process of re-establishing the national government’s authority that has

¹¹ KNCHR (2015), ‘The Error of Fighting Terror with Terror’, September, p 6.

¹² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2015), ‘2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview: Somalia’, November.

¹³ Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia (2013), ‘Study suggests 258,000 Somalis died due to severe food insecurity and famine; half of deaths were children under 5’, 2 May (www.fsnau.org/in-focus/technical-release-study-suggests-258000-somalis-died-due-severe-food-insecurity-and-famine-).

¹⁴ Gettleman J, MacFarquhar N (2010), ‘Somalia Food Aid Bypasses Needy, U.N. Study Says’, *The New York Times*, 9 March.

worsened instability and armed conflict, rather than the lack of a central government per se.

Since 2012, this narrative has also been replicated at the sub-national level with outbreaks of localised conflict and tensions linked to the formation of interim administrations. Most recently this has led to several rounds of violence in Galkayo between the Puntland administration and the Interim Galmudug Administration (IGA). Similar violence has been seen in Guri'el, Baido and Kismayo over the establishment of all three current interim administrations in southern and central Somalia. In all these cases, the external drive to establish authorities has fuelled instability. Processes of political accommodation or negotiation have been insufficient to address a legacy of violence and mistrust among many communities.

Fifth, international strategies for Somalia are often developed with limited Somali input, with the exception of elite actors based in Mogadishu, and certain members of the diaspora. However, bargaining with elites for the sake of counter-terrorism and stabilisation often means sanctioning behaviour that works against the promotion of peace in Somalia. This can incentivise the use of violence to secure a place at the top table. Neglect of inclusion limits the prospects for a fairer, more responsive Somali state to emerge.

Sixth, repeated external interventions have fuelled a war economy in Somalia, creating a situation whereby a range of actors have strong incentives to remain involved in the conflict – and arguably to ensure its continuation – due to the considerable economic opportunities on offer. Several regional actors have financially benefited from participating in AMISOM. Kenya, in particular, has been linked to the illegal trade in charcoal.¹⁵ More recently, a report alleged that the KDF, along with the Interim Juba Administration and al-Shabaab were profiting from facilitating and taxing the Somali sugar trade that is worth between \$200 and \$400 million annually.¹⁶ Despite Western diplomats protesting such behaviour to the Kenyan government, they have been unable to make progress because Western forces need access to military facilities in Kismayo and other facilities in Kenya, underlining how Western actors have felt obliged to make counterproductive trade-offs to tolerate a war economy in Somalia to advance their security agenda.¹⁷ And despite international efforts to reform public financial management systems, the UN SEMG has accused the FGS of diverting 70–80 per cent of the funds it has received to advance “partisan agendas that constitute threats to peace and security”.¹⁸ Indeed, corruption in Somalia is not just a waste of resources: it is a grave threat to sustainable peace in Somalia.

Towards a peace strategy

Somalia is at a critical juncture. While there are reasons to be optimistic about the country's future, new approaches will be needed if Somalia is to move closer to lasting peace and stability. This will require ongoing support from international actors. In particular, they should:

1. Ensure that peace is the overall objective of engagement.

- Rather than focusing on establishing a monopoly of violence, support efforts to resolve conflict through dialogue with as many actors as possible.
- Adopt domestic policies that reinforce peace, not conflict.
- Improve communication amongst the international community on Somalia.

¹⁵ *Op cit* Journalists for Justice (2015), p 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p 2.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p 3.

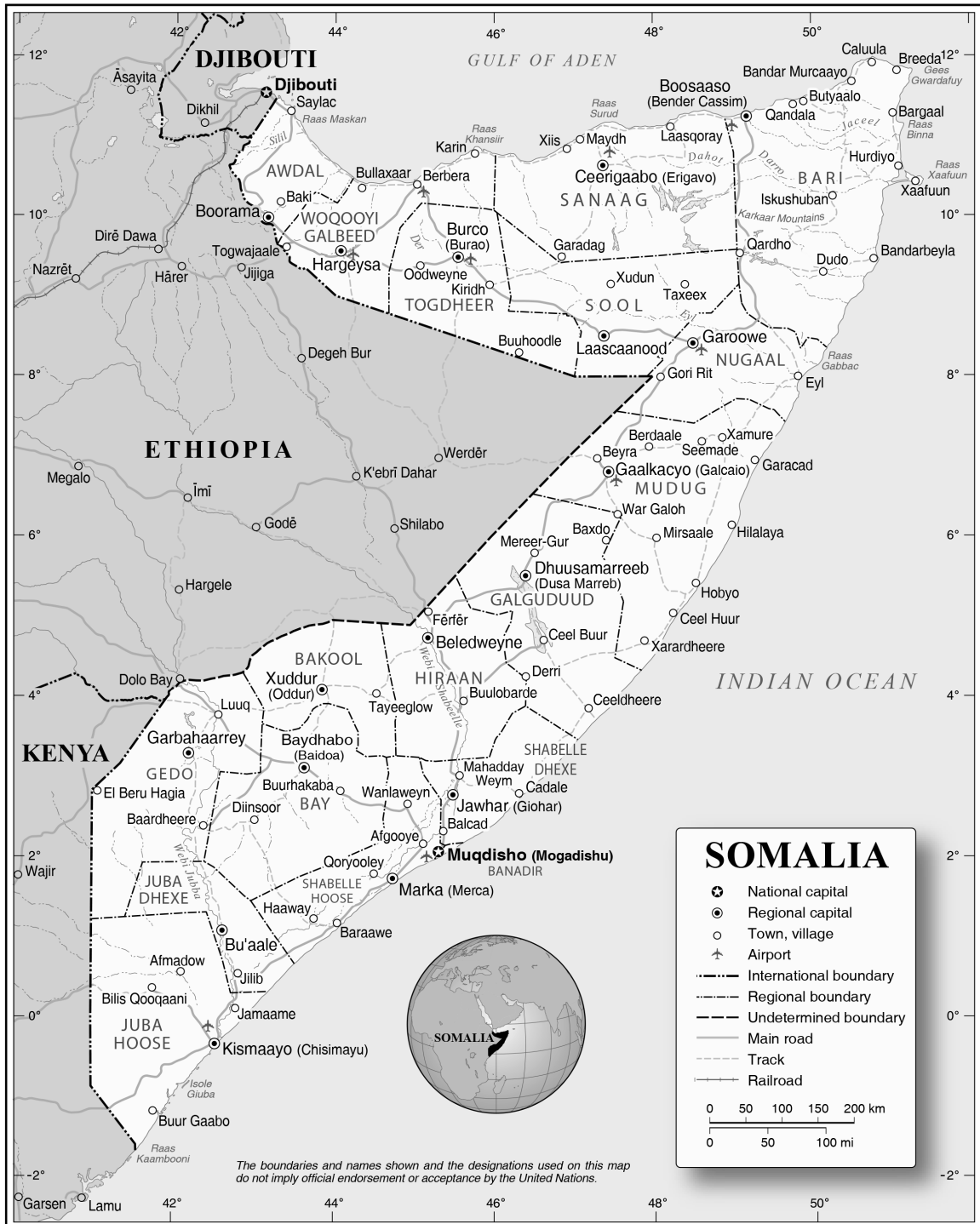
¹⁸ United Nations (2014), 'Letter dated 10 October 2014 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council', 13 October, p 9.

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- 2. Ensure that military force is used sparingly – reinforcing people’s security first, with accountability for its use.**
 - Cease engagement outside of the AU/UN authorisation – and ensure that when force is used, people’s security is prioritised.
 - Acknowledge and investigate wrongdoing on the part of international actors.

 - 3. Develop a coherent understanding of the drivers of conflict and ensure that external engagement does not exacerbate these.**
 - Support collective efforts to discuss, understand and address the drivers of conflicts.
 - Support efforts to document people’s experiences of conflict.
 - Acknowledge and respond to the role that clan conflict plays in recruitment by armed opposition groups.

 - 4. Look beyond externally imposed templates and timelines to find inclusive Somali owned and led solutions.**
 - Avoid initiatives that rely on procedural, top-down statebuilding and instead support experimentation and creativity by Somali actors to find paths towards stability.
 - Adopt longer-term strategies for engagement in Somalia.

 - 5. Promote inclusivity in processes, as well as public accountability and participation.**
 - Emphasise consensus-building processes as much as outcomes.
 - Facilitate service delivery and promote accountability and transparency of state institutions.
 - Support civil society to engage constructively with government authorities and international actors.
 - Support efforts to build political constituencies which are not based on clan.



Introduction

THE IMAGE OF SOMALIA as the ultimate ‘failed state’ has often come at the expense of a more accurate and complex picture of peace and conflict in the country. What initially began as an all-out civil war against the Siad Barre government has evolved over the past 25 years into a series of conflicts and increasingly frequent international efforts to find national-level solutions to Somalia’s problems.

This report looks specifically at counter-terrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding approaches and efforts in southern and central areas of Somalia since 2001, particularly focusing on how these approaches have been used by three key international actors: the US, UK and EU. These three were chosen because they are among the most important international actors involved in what Saferworld describes as a ‘mainstream’ approach to counter-terrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding in conflict-affected contexts.¹⁹ How these approaches are understood and applied to the Somali context is set out below.

Section one maps the engagement of the US, UK and EU (as well as briefly considering the role of regional actors Ethiopia and Kenya), including their direct and indirect military support, humanitarian and development assistance and support for stabilisation and statebuilding initiatives. Section two examines the impacts of these various types of engagement upon the peace and security context in Somalia. Section three suggests a number of alternative approaches that could guide engagement in the country. This includes an emphasis on:

- Peace and limitations on the use of force;
- Creative, Somali owned and led solutions;
- An end to externally imposed templates and deadlines;
- The promotion of inclusivity and public accountability; and
- The pursuit of civilian legal and judicial responses to Somalia’s problems.

Many of these are already in use by international actors in the country but require further prioritisation and effort. Finally, the annexes include a brief discussion of how counter-terrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding approaches are defined in the Somali context, an overview of the trajectory of the Somali conflict since 1991 and analysis of the major drivers of conflict in Somalia, which are as follows:

¹⁹ For details of this ‘mainstream’ approach, please see Keen D, Attree L (2015), *Dilemmas of counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding*, (Saferworld, January).

- Poor governance.
- Corruption.
- Impunity.
- Clan identity.
- Militarised society and the multiplicity of armed actors.
- Economic drivers of conflict (i.e. charcoal, extractive industry, humanitarian aid, remittances and the economic vulnerability of young people).
- Religious ideology.
- External factors.

The subsequent analysis of the approaches of international actors takes into consideration their interaction with and impact on these drivers of conflict.

The report builds on the Saferworld discussion paper, *Dilemmas of counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding*²⁰ and is accompanied by two other reports on Yemen and Afghanistan. It intends to stimulate debate on the lessons learnt from applying these approaches in Somalia and the alternatives that could be considered in similar contexts.

1

Approaches of major international actors

THIS SECTION FOCUSES on the approaches of three key international actors in Somalia – the US, UK and EU – mapping different aspects of their engagement, as well as the interests and motives that underpin their actions. However, before turning to the approaches of these particular actors, we look briefly at the role of two regional actors in Somalia – Kenya and Ethiopia – particularly as they have a critical role in influencing, directing, implementing and supporting the actions of the US, UK and EU.

1.1 Regional actors

Both Ethiopia and Kenya have exerted considerable influence in the Somali conflict, including through their military interventions in 2006 and 2011 respectively. Their influence has been reinforced by Western actors such as the US, UK and EU, who view them as critical counter-terrorism partners and have provided substantial resources to enable them to combat terrorism domestically as well as regionally. These partnerships have been forged despite considerable concern that the active involvement of Ethiopia and Kenya in Somalia may in fact be working against longer-term efforts to rebuild the Somali state, and unease about their domestic counter-terrorism approaches.

The problematic influence of regional actors in Somalia was recognised as far back as September 2003, when former Kenyan President, Daniel Arap Moi, asserted that neither Ethiopia nor Kenya could play a constructive role in Somali reconciliation efforts, as they would ultimately be fearful of a stable Somalia able to pursue its “expansionist dreams”.²¹ This challenge was recognised in the 2008 Djibouti Peace Agreement, which requested that the UN deploy an international stabilisation force comprised of “countries that are friends of Somalia” – excluding neighbouring countries.²² However, both the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) and the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) are now part of AMISOM, leading to concerns from Somali actors about AMISOM’s neutrality in the formation of sub-national interim administrations. As a consequence of their involvement, both Ethiopia and Kenya are viewed as legitimate targets for al-Shabaab, which has repeatedly called on them to stop “interfering in Somali regions... otherwise we will attack”.²³

²¹ *East African Standard* (2003), ‘Moi guest speaker at American university’, 19 September (<http://somalitalk.com/2009/may/13/moi2003.html>).

²² AMISOM, *Somali Peace Process*, (<http://amisom-au.org/about-somalia/somali-peace-process/>).

²³ *Somalia Report* (2011), ‘Al-Shabaab Threatens Kenya, Ethiopia’, 5 June (www.somaliareport.com/index.php/post/682/Al-Shabaab_Threatens_Kenya_Ethiopia).

Ethiopia

“If you allow these people to infiltrate Somalia, our multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic country will pay a price... If the Somalis don’t solve their problems, then we will do it for them... We won’t wait forever.”

Ethiopia’s Ambassador to the UN, Abdulmejid Hussein²⁴

Ethiopia’s principal objective for intervening in Somalia has been to prevent the formation of a Somali government that is hostile to it or that might provide a base for groups opposed to the Ethiopian government. Specifically, Ethiopia is concerned about Somali administrations at the national or sub-national level that tolerate or even support activities by the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF). Following the 1998–2000 Ethiopia-Eritrea war, Ethiopia sought to curtail Eritrean efforts to provide support to armed groups in Somalia that are hostile to Ethiopia such as the ICU, which Eritrea strongly backed.

Ethiopia has frequently been willing to take action to ensure its core interests are protected in Somalia. Examples include its military intervention in December 2007, subsequent interventions in 2011, its membership in AMISOM, regular air strikes and other incursions, and the Liyu paramilitary force. However, Ethiopia’s influence has also been manifested through its repeated efforts to shape various Somali peace processes, where it has often sought to work through regional bodies such as the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to achieve its desired outcomes. Ethiopia’s ongoing involvement and presence has been strongly opposed by al-Shabaab and other Somali actors, who complain that Ethiopia desires to keep Somalia in a balkanised state.

Other regional actors have challenged Ethiopia’s role in Somalia. The Ethiopian-led ‘Sodere Process’ in 1996–97, for example, was somewhat side-lined by a reconciliation conference held in Cairo in the same year. Ethiopia strongly backed the TFG and supports the FGS, although concerns have emerged due to Ethiopia’s attempts to exert influence over the formation of interim administrations in areas along its borders.

Ethiopia has been a close ally of the US since 9/11, and has used this relationship to support its core interests. A willing partner in US-led efforts to kill or capture alleged members of al-Qaeda’s East African network in Somalia, the Ethiopian government has used the international focus on counter-terrorism as a frame for its own actions in Somalia. In the run-up to Ethiopia’s removal of the ICU in 2007, for example, the then prime minister of Ethiopia, Meles Zenawi, underlined that “when they [the ICU] control the whole of Somalia it would be very naïve to assume that they will mend their ways, cease to be terrorists”, before noting that they posed a “direct threat” to Somalia, the region and the international community.²⁵ It is clear that the decision to invade was motivated by concerns about resurgent Somalia irredentism, as highlighted by one of the ICU’s leaders, Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, who told *Newsweek* that “the Ogaden [region spanning the Somalia, Ethiopia-Kenya border] is a Somali region and part of Somalia and Somali governments have entered two wars with Ethiopia over it, and I hope that one day that region will be a part of Somalia.”²⁶

Thousands of ENDF troops remain in Somalia, bolstering Ethiopian involvement in Somali affairs. Despite Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn’s statement in April 2013 that Ethiopia’s “main issue now is to accelerate our complete withdrawal towards our border”,²⁷ the ENDF formally joined AMISOM on 22 January 2014, contributing 4,395 personnel.²⁸ While it remains unclear why Ethiopia performed a U-turn to maintain its presence in Somalia, it has been suggested by the *Daily Maverick’s* Simon Allison that this may have been “a form of gentle diplomatic blackmail” aimed

²⁴ International Crisis Group (2002), ‘Somalia: Countering Terrorism in a Failed State’, May, p 10.

²⁵ Tomlinson C (2006), ‘Ethiopian Premier: Qaeda-Linked Somali Terrorists a Threat’, *Associated Press*, 2 November.

²⁶ *Newsweek* (2006), ‘Heroes, Terrorists and Osama: An Interview With Somalia’s Sheikh Aweys’, 15 September.

²⁷ Allison S (2014), ‘Ethiopia changes its tune in Somalia’, *Daily Maverick*, 23 January.

²⁸ AMISOM, *Ethiopia – ENDF*, (<http://amisom-au.org/ethiopia-endf/>).

at ensuring international community funding for its deployment in Somalia. The ongoing threat posed by al-Shabaab has also been highlighted.²⁹

Kenya

Kenya has a number of interests in Somalia, including a stable Kenya-Somalia border region, and the prevention of instability in Somalia spilling into Kenya. Kenya's concerns about instability along its border with Somalia are linked to the Dadaab refugee complex in north east Kenya, which is home to over 300,000 Somali refugees.³⁰ Kenyan officials have repeatedly alleged that the camps are home to a network of al-Shabaab operatives, and the camps and nearby areas have been the sites of significant insecurity in recent years.

Kenya has been targeted by al-Shabaab on multiple occasions, with over 300 people killed in high-profile attacks, including on the Westgate shopping mall, Gikomba market and Garissa University. As with Ethiopia, Kenyan influence in Somalia has been visible through its involvement in – and leadership of – several initiatives aimed at resolving the Somali conflict. The most notable of these was the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, which Kenya convened alongside IGAD from 2002 until 2004. Aside from hosting conferences, Kenya has not directly engaged with the FGS to the same extent as other international actors. Indeed, due to its focus on securing its borders, Kenya has built much stronger relations with the Interim Juba Administration (IJA).

The exact reasons for the KDF's intervention in late 2011 were varied and included the idea of creating a 'buffer zone' in southern Somalia, to allow for the return of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers to Somalia (notwithstanding Kenya's obligations under international refugee law) and also potentially contribute to increased stability in north east Kenya, near to the planned US\$30 billion deep-water port in Lamu.³¹

Al-Shabaab has attempted to frame Kenya's intervention in the country as a war between Kenya and Somalia, with an al-Shabaab spokesperson declaring the two countries were at war following the Garissa University attack in early 2015.³² In return, Kenya has been eager to frame their intervention solely around the threat that al-Shabaab poses domestically:

"This campaign is not time bound... When the Kenyan government and the people of the country feel that they are safe enough from the Al-Shabaab menace, we shall pull back. Key success factors or indicators will be in the form of a highly degraded Al-Shabaab capacity."

Chief of the KDF, Julius Karangi³³

While the KDF has been a key contributor to efforts to reduce al-Shabaab's territorial control in Somalia, a November 2015 *Journalists for Justice* report documented how the KDF's involvement in the conflict has resulted in considerable financial advantages, including its alleged involvement in charcoal exports from Kismayo, and the sugar trade.³⁴ Notwithstanding the KDF's alleged involvement in certain sectors of the Somali economy, its participation in the Somali conflict has mirrored a period in which there has been a significant increase in Kenya's national defence expenditure – it rose from \$587 million prior to the intervention to \$821 million by 2012–13.³⁵ As part

²⁹ *Op cit* Allison.

³⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Refugees in the Horn of Africa: Somali Displacement Crisis', (<http://data.unhcr.org/horn-of-africa/region.php?id=3&country=110>).

³¹ This rationale was advanced shortly after the intervention by the Permanent Secretary of Kenya's Internal Security Ministry, Francis Kimemia, who stated that, "there are safe places inside Somalia following the operation by Kenyan troops; these refugees will be moved anytime". See International Crisis Group (2012), 'The Kenyan military intervention in Somalia', February, p 2.

³² *Agence France-Presse* (2015), 'Al Shabaab massacres 147 Kenyan students', 2 April.

³³ Anderson D M, McKnight J (2014), 'Kenya at war: al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa', *African Affairs*, December, p 6.

³⁴ *Op cit* Journalists for Justice (2015), pp 15–24.

³⁵ *Op cit* Anderson D M, McKnight J (2014), p 27. This figure does not include the \$156 million that has been spent by the National Security Intelligence Service in the same period.

of AMISOM, Kenya continues to exert influence in southern Somalia and has publicly clashed with the FGS on occasion. For example, the Somali Parliament called for the withdrawal of the KDF from Somalia in November 2015.³⁶

1.2 United States

US engagement in Somalia was limited for many years after the withdrawal of US forces in response to the killing of 18 US Army Rangers in Mogadishu in October 1993. However, following the 9/11 attacks Somalia came under intense scrutiny, with then Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declaring, “Somalia has been a place that has harboured al-Qaeda and, to my knowledge, still is.”³⁷

Since then, the principal aim of US engagement in Somalia has been to prevent the use of the country as a haven for international terrorists. This has been a consistent US priority throughout the Bush and Obama administrations as reflected in previous US National Security Strategy (NSS) documents, including the 2010 US NSS which explicitly referenced Somalia under the heading of ‘Deny Safe Havens and Strengthen At-Risk States.’³⁸

More recently, in a speech on ‘US Foreign Policy in Somalia’ in June 2014, the US State Department’s Under Secretary for Political Affairs emphasised that the US believed that “danger remains” in Somalia because of the presence of groups such as al-Shabaab that “have embraced the same destructive agenda” as al-Qaeda, undermining Somalia’s stability, and posing a significant threat elsewhere.³⁹

Somalia is becoming increasingly important to the US. In February 2015, President Obama nominated the first US Ambassador to the country since 1991.⁴⁰ In May 2015, John Kerry became the first ever US Secretary of State to visit Mogadishu. He commented, “We all have a stake in what happens here in Somalia. The world cannot afford to have places on the map that are essentially ungoverned.”⁴¹ In September 2015, the US Mission to Somalia was formally launched, though it is currently based in Nairobi, Kenya.⁴²

In order to avoid a perception of direct US involvement in the Somali conflict that could increase the threat of attacks on the US, the Obama administration has sought to avoid large-scale regional deployments of the US military. In his 2013 State of the Union address, President Obama underlined that, “to meet this threat [posed by terrorism], we don’t need to send tens of thousands of sons and daughters abroad or occupy other nations. Instead, we’ll need to help countries like Yemen, and Libya, and Somalia provide for their own security, and help allies who take the fight to terrorists.”⁴³

“*[The US] has no desire to Americanize the conflict in Somalia.*”

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson, March 2010⁴⁴

Despite avoiding a large military footprint, the US has remained heavily committed to carrying out counter-terrorism operations throughout the Bush and Obama administrations. However, officials from the Obama administration have sought to distance the administration’s current approach from that of its predecessor. In 2010, then

36 *allAfrica* (2015), ‘Somalia: Parliament Passes Motion Compels KDF to Withdraw from Somalia’, 16 November.

37 Astill J (2001), ‘Wrong Target’, *The Guardian*, 4 December.

38 The White House (2010), *National Security Strategy*, May. (https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf). Earlier iterations of the US NSS (while not explicitly mentioning Somalia) alluded to similar strategic imperatives; for example, the 2002 NSS emphasised that US priorities in Africa were focused on “combating global terror”; while the 2006 NSS stated US “security depends upon...[bringing] ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies”.

39 U.S. Department of State (2014), ‘U.S. Foreign Policy in Somalia’, 3 June (www.state.gov/p/us/rm/2014/227079.htm).

40 The nominee, Katherine Dhanani, later withdrew, citing personal reasons. See Al Jazeera (2015), ‘US withdraws nomination of ambassador to Somalia’, 12 May.

41 Behn S (2015), ‘US to Reopen Embassy in Somalia’, *Voice of America*, 5 May.

42 Koran L (2015), ‘U.S. re-opens diplomatic mission to Somalia in Kenya’, *CNN*, 8 September.

43 The White House (2013), ‘Remarks by the President in the State of the Union Address’, 12 February (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/remarks-president-state-union-address>).

44 U.S. Department of State (2010), ‘U.S. Policy in Somalia’, 12 March (www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2010/138314.htm).

Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan (later appointed Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)) described the Obama strategy as akin to using “a scalpel and not a hammer”.⁴⁵

Direct military action

While the US reportedly considered the possibility of a military intervention in Somalia in the period immediately after 9/11, it decided against doing so after investigations found insufficient evidence of an al-Qaeda presence in Somalia – with some suggestions that the US Department of Defense (DoD) had relied uncritically on Ethiopian intelligence.⁴⁶ Instead, US military engagement has been limited to supporting regional and national military forces to combat terrorism (underpinned in part by a sentiment among the US public that the country “should mind its own business internationally”⁴⁷) accompanied by the limited use of special forces and drone strikes to target specific individuals.

After 9/11, the CIA, working in conjunction with the DoD’s Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), sought to kill or capture members of al-Qaeda’s East African network and later al-Shabaab. In the early post-9/11 years, these operations were executed in collaboration with – in the words of one intelligence operative speaking anonymously to *Army Times* in 2011 – “just about all” Somali warlords,⁴⁸ whose loyalty was ensured through payments and sometimes the threat of US air strikes.⁴⁹

A US policy of ‘containment’ evolved significantly in the lead-up to Ethiopia’s invasion of Somalia in December 2006, which targeted the ICU. The US, which suspected the ICU’s armed wing of being associated with al-Qaeda, strongly encouraged the Ethiopian operation,⁵⁰ and is believed by some analysts to have provided arms, fuel and other logistical support.⁵¹ Perceptions that the US was directly involved in the conflict were heightened when it attacked a convoy transporting suspected al-Qaeda operatives on 7 January 2007.⁵² While up to a dozen suspected al-Qaeda members were reportedly killed, allegations that civilians were also struck led the then US Ambassador to Kenya to state “categorically that no civilians were killed or injured as result of that action [on 7 January]”.⁵³

Further US airstrikes occurred two days later on 9 January⁵⁴ and over a fortnight later on January 23 when Ahmed Madobe – then the deputy of ICU leader Hassan Turki – was targeted.⁵⁵ However, the US came under pressure to discontinue its airstrikes in Somalia when Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, fearful of African reaction at a forthcoming AU Summit, asked the US to move its AC-130 gunship out of the base in eastern

45 The White House (2010), ‘Remarks by the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism John Brennan at CSIS’, 26 May (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-assistant-president-homeland-security-and-counterterrorism-john-brennan-csi>).

46 Marchal R (2007), ‘Somalia: A New Front Against Terrorism’, Social Science Research Council, February, pp 12–13; Menkhaus K (2004), *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, (Routledge, March), pp 66–67.

47 In December 2013, 52 per cent of those polled by Pew agreed that the US “should mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own”, with just 38 per cent disagreeing with the statement – a finding that that was the “most lopsided balance in favour of the U.S. “minding its own business” in the nearly 50-year history of the measure. See Pew Research Center (2013), ‘Public Sees U.S. Power Declining as Support for Global Engagement Slips’, (3 December).

48 Naylor S D (2011), ‘Clandestine Somalia missions yield AQ targets’, *Army Times*, 14 November.

49 *Op cit* Marchal R, pp 12–13.

50 A senior UN official who met with the then US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer concluded, “Any Ethiopian action in Somalia would have Washington’s blessing”. See Wikileaks (2006), ‘Meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs’, 26 June, (<https://file.wikileaks.org/file/frazer-somalia-memo-2006.pdf>).

51 *Op cit* Marchal R, pp 12–13; Goldenberg S, Rice X (2007), ‘How US forged an alliance with Ethiopia over invasion’, *The Guardian*, 13 January; Naylor S D (2011), ‘The Secret War: Tense ties plagued Africa ops’, *Army Times*, 28 November. Further evidence of US-Ethiopian ties during the Ethiopian military intervention were offered by a Wikileaks cable reporting a meeting with the US Ambassador to Ethiopia in late January 2007 with the then Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, in which the latter “made it clear that there would be no/no suspension of either activities (that is, targeting and intelligence-sharing) by our fusion cell or any other intelligence-sharing operations, and that the GOE and USG must continue cooperation”. For more details, see Wikileaks (2007), ‘Somalia: Prime Minister Meles urges diplomacy to take center stage’, 25 January, (https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07ADDISABABA234_a.html).

52 Gettleman J (2009), ‘More Than 50 Die in U.S. Strikes in Somalia’, *The New York Times*, January 2007.

53 *BBC* (2007), ‘Somali raids miss terror suspects’, 11 January.

54 *Op cit* Naylor S D; *Reuters* (2007), ‘U.S. air strike kills more than 20 in Somalia: elder’, 9 January.

55 International Crisis Group (2007), ‘Somalia: The Tough Part Is Ahead’, January, p 1; Burns R (2007), ‘U.S. Launches New Airstrike in Somalia’, *Associated Press*, 24 January.

Ethiopia from which it had been operating (despite Meles describing US actions as “terrific” in the same *Wikileaks* cable).⁵⁶ There was only one more reported attack in 2007, when the USS Chafee fired more than a dozen rounds on militants in Bargal, Puntland.⁵⁷ In 2008, there were two reported US airstrikes, including one that killed Aden Hashi Ayro,⁵⁸ the then leader of al-Shabaab.⁵⁹ The next confirmed US military action in Somalia occurred over a year later, in September 2009, when US Special Forces launched a helicopter raid that killed al-Qaeda operative Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan.⁶⁰

That same month heralded a critical – but largely unnoticed – moment in US counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia and the wider region, when the US reached an agreement with the Seychelles government to base drones on its territory (although the agreement stipulated they “will not conduct direct attacks”).⁶¹ This was followed by a confirmation in late 2011 that the US Government had opened a new drone base at Arba Minch in Ethiopia.⁶²

Other known locations for US drone operations in East Africa include an air base at Manda Bay in Kenya and Camp Lemmonier in Djibouti.⁶³ More recently, it was reported that the US was operating drones from two additional bases in Somalia itself – located at Kismayo and Baledogle in the Lower Shabelle region.⁶⁴ While earlier airstrikes had been carried out by manned aircraft, with the US military steadily increasing its capabilities to conduct counter-terrorism operations with drones in the East African region, it was not long before Somalia also saw the use of drones to conduct lethal strikes.

The first reported lethal drone strike in Somalia took place on 23 June 2011 when a Predator drone struck a militant training camp south of Kismayo.⁶⁵ A second lethal drone strike was reported over three months later.⁶⁶ In 2012, there were at least two known drone strikes including one on 24 February 2012 – one day after then US Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, speaking at the London Conference on Somalia, declared that air strikes in areas of Somalia controlled by al-Shabaab would “not be good idea.”⁶⁷

Under widespread pressure over the US military’s use of drone strikes, President Obama made the first high-level official acknowledgement of US direct military action in Somalia on 15 June 2012:

*“In Somalia, the U.S. military has worked to counter the terrorist threat posed by al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda-associated elements of al-Shabaab. In a limited number of cases, the U.S. military has taken direct action in Somalia against members of al-Qaeda, including those who are also members of al-Shabaab, who are engaged in efforts to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and our interests.”*⁶⁸

Despite intense public scrutiny, the US has continued to use drone strikes in Somalia. In 2013, there were two reported attacks including one drone strike that killed a senior

⁵⁶ *Op cit* Wikileaks (2007).

⁵⁷ Gettleman J (2007), ‘U.S. Strikes Inside Somalia, Bombing Suspected Militant Hide-Out’, *The New York Times*, 2 June.

⁵⁸ Gettleman J, Schmidt E (2008), ‘Qaeda Leader Reported Killed in Somalia’, *The New York Times*, 2 May.

⁵⁹ The second strike in 2008 had targeted Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan. See Gettleman J, Schmidt E (2008), ‘U.S. Forces Fire Missile Into Somalia at a Kenyan’, *The New York Times*, 4 March.

⁶⁰ *The Guardian* (2009), ‘US troops raid Somali town controlled by fighters’, 14 September; James F (2011), ‘Report: Obama Wanted Bin Laden Dead, Not Alive’, *NPR*, 14 May.

⁶¹ Barnes J E (2011), ‘U.S. Expands Drone Flights to Take Aim at East Africa’, *The Wall Street Journal*, 21 September; Zenko M, Welch E (2012), ‘Where the Drones Are’, *Foreign Policy*, 29 May.

⁶² Whitlock C (2011), ‘U.S. drone base in Ethiopia is operational’, 27 October. Although a DoD spokesperson again stated the purpose of the base was “only for surveillance and not conducting strike missions”. See Al Jazeera (2011), ‘US launches drones from Ethiopia’, 29 October. In early January 2016 it was announced that this base would be closed. For more details see Hudson J, O’Grady S (2016), ‘As New Threats Emerge, U.S. Closes Drone Base in Ethiopia’, *Foreign Policy*, 4 January.

⁶³ *The Washington Post* (2013), ‘Drones and spy planes over Africa and Arabian Peninsula’, 29 January.

⁶⁴ McCormick T (2015), ‘Exclusive: U.S. Operates Drones from Secret Bases in Somalia’, 2 July.

⁶⁵ Mazzetti M, Schmitt E (2011), ‘U.S. Expands Drone War Into Somalia’, *The New York Times*, 1 July.

⁶⁶ *BBC* (2011), ‘Somali militants in key port ‘attacked by US drones’, 25 September.

⁶⁷ Cobain I (2012), ‘British ‘Al-Qaida member’ killed in US drone attacks in Somalia’, *The Guardian*, 22 January; Sheikh A (2012), ‘Four foreign militants killed in Somalia missile strike’, *Reuters*, 24 February.

⁶⁸ The White House (2012), ‘Presidential Letter – 2012 War Powers Resolution 6-Month Report’, 15 June (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/06/15/presidential-letter-2012-war-powers-resolution-6-month-report>).

member of al-Shabaab, and a US Special Forces raid targeting another member of al-Shabaab's leadership;⁶⁹ in 2014 there were three confirmed lethal drone strikes, including one notable strike that killed al-Shabaab's leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, on 5 October 2014.⁷⁰ At the time of writing, the non-profit Bureau of Investigative Journalism has reported that there were at least 11 drone strikes in 2015,⁷¹ one of which killed al-Shabaab's head of external operations on 31 January (who was suspected of involvement in the Westgate attack in Kenya.)⁷²

One question regarding US drone strikes relates to the exact legal authority that has enabled the US to conduct such strikes. The Obama administration has never publicly claimed that al-Shabaab is an 'associated force' of al-Qaeda, as the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) allows for – and which would provide a legal basis for such strikes.⁷³ Instead the administration has targeted individuals such as Ahmed Abdi Godane on the basis of their membership of al-Qaeda rather than focusing on their role within al-Shabaab. Speaking on the executive branch's interpretation of the 2001 AUMF on 21 May 2014, the DoD's General Counsel Stephen Preston elaborated the US's legal justification for operations in Somalia:

“The U.S. military has also conducted capture or lethal operations under the AUMF outside of Afghanistan against individuals who are part of al-Qa’ida and targeted as such. For example, in Somalia, the U.S. military has conducted direct action against a limited number of targets who, based on information about their current and historical activities, have been determined to be part of al-Qa’ida. (Some of these individuals are also part of al-Shabaab, a group that is openly affiliated with al-Qa’ida.)”⁷⁴

Overall, the US views its counter-terrorism efforts in Somalia as intrinsically connected to the realisation of other US aims such as the promotion of political and economic stability, alleviating humanitarian crises, enabling the return of an estimated two million refugees and internally displaced persons, undermining piracy and freeing up African peacekeeping resources for other crises.⁷⁵

Security-related support

The US has provided over \$1.4 billion in security-related support to African forces that have been fighting al-Shabaab since 2007, which comprises the largest share of total US security assistance to Africa during this period.⁷⁶ Of the more than \$1.4 billion provided to date, \$1.2 billion has supported AMISOM and \$220 million has supported the SNA.⁷⁷ These funds have largely been provided by the State Department, which has given roughly \$440 million in voluntary support to AMISOM and a further \$500 million in assessed contributions to the UN logistics support mission for AMISOM (UNSOA), while the DoD has provided almost \$300 million to AMISOM.⁷⁸ Due to the

69 BBC (2013), 'Somalia's al-Shabaab commanders 'killed' in strike', 29 October; Kirkpatrick D D, Kulish N, Schmitt E (2013), 'U.S. raids in Libya and Somalia Strike Terror Targets', *The New York Times*, 5 October.

70 First drone strike: Reuters (2014), 'U.S. air strike in Somalia targeting militant suspect', 27 January; second drone strike, which killed Godane: U.S. Department of Defense (2014), 'Pentagon Confirms Death of al-Shabab co-founder', 5 September (www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=123096); third drone strike: Crawford J, Ford D (2015), 'U.S. strike in Somalia targets Al-Shabaab', CNN, 4 January.

71 The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (2015), 'Get the data: Drone wars' (<https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/drones-graphs/>).

72 Whitlock C (2015), 'Drone strike kills senior al-Shabab official in Somalia', *The Washington Post*, 3 February.

73 Goodman R (2014), 'Targeting Al-Shabaab's Godane is not the same as targeting Al-Shabaab', *Just Security*, 2 September; Daskal J, Vladeck S (2013), 'Westgate, al Shabaab, and the AUMF', 23 September. See also Boon K E, Lovelace Jr D C (eds.) (2014), *The drone wars of the 21st century: costs and benefits*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p 136. While the 'dual-hatted' justification provides legal authority for drone strikes on al-Shabaab members, Boon and Lovelace question the expansion of the AUMF beyond its original application to those involved in the planning of 9/11: "As drone strikes expand beyond Al Qaeda targets (to go after, for instance, suspected members of Somalia's al Shabaab), it grows increasingly difficult to justify such strikes under the AUMF. Do we believe al Shabaab was in any way culpable for the 9/11 attacks? Do we believe al Shabaab, an organization with primarily local and regional ambitions, has the desire or capability to engage in acts of international terrorism against the United States?"

74 Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate (2014), 'Prepared Statement of Stephen W. Preston General Counsel Department of Defense on The Framework Under U.S. Law for Current Military Operations', 21 May (www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Preston_Testimony.pdf).

75 U.S. Department of State (2015), 'U.S. Relations with Somalia', 15 June (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm).

76 Congressional Research Service (2015), 'Statement of Lauren Ploch Blanchard Specialist in African Affairs, Congressional Research Service', 4 June (www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/060415_Blanchard_Testimony.pdf), p 2.

77 *Ibid.*

78 *Op cit* Congressional Research Service, p 2.

regional threat posed by al-Shabaab, the DoD has also used the legal authority granted to it by the US Congress to build the counter-terrorism capacities of Somalia's neighbours – Kenya, Djibouti and to a lesser extent, Ethiopia – spending \$40–60 million annually over the last five years.⁷⁹ Part, but not all, of these funds have supported AMISOM deployments by these countries.⁸⁰

US security assistance to Somalia could further increase with the establishment of the Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund (CTPF). Launching this on 28 May 2014, President Obama stated that the \$5 billion fund will “train, build capacity, and facilitate partner countries on the front lines” and specifically mentioned supporting “a multinational force to keep the peace in Somalia.”⁸¹ Notably, the DoD will administer the CTPF funds, potentially diminishing the State Department's influence and further increasing the focus on military-led and -defined counter-terrorism efforts within the US's overall approach to Somalia.

Aside from providing support for peacekeeping operations, US security-related support has been focused on improving the capabilities of Somalia's security forces through mentoring, training and the provision of equipment and logistical support, as well as broader security sector reform programmes.⁸² In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, US support to the Somali security sector focused on reinforcing its own counter-terrorism operations through the establishment of sub-regional intelligence services. For example, the Puntland Intelligence Service (PIS) was formed with a remit to investigate and arrest suspected terrorists in 2001. In mid-2003, Somaliland's National Intelligence Service (NIS) also began to collaborate closely with the US.⁸³

In more recent years, the US has also played a critical role in training elite units within the SNA such as the Somali advanced infantry company known as the ‘Danab’ (‘Lightning Force’)⁸⁴ and the ‘Gaashaan’ (‘Shield’), a rapid reaction force that was dispatched when an al-Shabaab fighter stormed the Somali Parliament in May 2014, as well as ‘Alpha group’ and ‘Bravo group’.⁸⁵ These efforts have been sustained by the presence of US military personnel in Somalia over the last several years, with reports in June 2013 stating there were now a total of 120 US troops present in Somalia.⁸⁶

US security-related support to Somalia received a significant boost in April 2013, when President Obama – in response to the UN's amendment of the arms embargo on Somalia – issued a memo stating that Somalia would now be eligible for ‘defense articles and defense services’ under US arms export and foreign aid laws.⁸⁷

Development assistance

Alongside its security-related support, the US has also offered significant development assistance to Somalia. In 2013–14, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided just over \$365 million to Somalia. The US is also the leading contributor of humanitarian aid to Somalia, having provided \$260 million between 2009 and 2011.⁸⁸ USAID's programmes have been heavily focused on stabilisation with the stated objective of increasing “Somalia's stability through targeted interventions that foster good governance, support economic recovery, and reduce the appeal of

⁷⁹ This assistance has been provided under ‘Section 1206’, the Global Train-and-Equip Program (10 U.S.C 2282) and related regional ‘train-and-equip’ programmes. See *op cit* Congressional Research Service, p.2.

⁸⁰ *Op cit* Congressional Research Service, p.2.

⁸¹ The White House (2014), ‘Remarks by the President at United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony’, 28 May (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/05/28/remarks-president-united-states-military-academy-commencement-ceremony>). For fiscal year 2016, the CTPF will receive \$750 million. For more details see Goodman C, Schulz L (2015), ‘Defense Bill Breakdown’, *Security Assistance Monitor*, 30 November.

⁸² U.S. Department of State, ‘U.S. Assistance in Somalia’, 7 May (www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/05/209062.htm).

⁸³ *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2002), p.9.

⁸⁴ *Op cit* U.S. Department of State (2014).

⁸⁵ Joseph D, Maruf H (2014), ‘US-Trained Somali Commandos Fight Al-Shabab’, *Voice of America*, 31 July.

⁸⁶ Stewart P (2014), ‘Exclusive: U.S. discloses secret Somalia military presence, up to 120 troops’, *Reuters*, 2 July.

⁸⁷ *Reuters* (2013), ‘Obama approves sending U.S. military aid to Somalia’, 8 April.

⁸⁸ Global Humanitarian Assistance (2012), ‘Somalia: International financing investments’, 21 February, p.7.

extremism”.⁸⁹ While development assistance has always operated within a broader context of political, diplomatic and foreign policy objectives, there has been a concerted attempt to ensure that US development assistance in Somalia supports the US’s wider counter-terrorism efforts. Speaking on the topic of a ‘Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism’ on 9 September 2011, then Secretary of State, Hilary Clinton, declared:

*“[...] just as counterterrorism cannot be the sole focus of our foreign policy, it does not make sense to view counterterrorism in a vacuum. It must be integrated into our broader diplomatic and development agendas. And we should appreciate that while working to resolve conflicts, reduce poverty, and improve governance, those are valuable ends in themselves, but they also advance the cause of counterterrorism and national security. That is why I have more fully integrated the State Department and USAID into the fight.”*⁹⁰

This emphasis on the link between development assistance and ‘the cause of counter-terrorism and national security’ was publicly articulated in USAID’s September 2011 policy paper entitled ‘The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency’, which then USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah said gave USAID a “clear mandate” to formulate a developmental response to violent extremism.⁹¹ This approach, described by *Amnesty International’s* Lama Fakhri as “development-as-counter-terrorism” has contributed to a securitisation of US development assistance, with the lines between peacebuilding, development, counter-terrorism and military strategy becoming increasingly blurred.⁹² For example, USAID officials acknowledge that while certain programmes such as those that focus on CVE might be classified by USAID as aiming to foster peace and stability, rather than as counter-terrorism per se, “the goals are ultimately linked”.⁹³

Within Somalia, USAID has supported community-level development activities such as building fishing industry support structures in some coastal communities, providing seed and fertiliser to displaced persons, and working with the Mayor of Mogadishu to install solar-powered streetlights. However, the bulk of its development assistance (as indicated by funding) is now focused on peace and security programming.⁹⁴ Major programmes that USAID is funding in this area include the ‘Transition Initiatives for Stabilization’ (\$115 million), which aims to promote peace and stability, and ‘Strengthening Somali Governance’ (\$22.8 million), which supports political processes, parliament and government formation.⁹⁵ This emphasis on investing in activities relating to governance, peace and security in Somalia mirror broader trends in official development assistance (ODA)-eligible security sector funding, which increased five-fold from \$10.8 million in 2005 to \$56 million (18.5 per cent of total US ODA) in 2010 (although it is important to note that most security sector support – including the examples above – fall outside the current definition of what constitutes ODA, and therefore is difficult to track).⁹⁶

The US has been actively involved in supporting the implementation of the New Deal framework. It pledged \$69 million at the Brussels Conference⁹⁷ that endorsed the Somali Compact in 2013 and has been engaged across the Working Groups facilitating the implementation of programmes under each of the Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs), including PSG 2 on security (though much of Somalia’s security-related

⁸⁹ U.S. Agency for International Development (2014), ‘Somalia’, November (www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1860/Fact%20Sheet%20-%20Somalia%20At-a-Glance%20%2820%20Nov%202014%29.pdf).

⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State (2011), ‘Smart Power Approaches to Counterterrorism’, 9 September (www.state.gov/secretary/20092013clinton/rm/2011/09/172034.htm).

⁹¹ U.S. Agency for International Development (2011), ‘The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice’, September, p. ii.

⁹² Lama Fakhri in Huckerby J, Satterthwaite M L (eds.) (2012), *Gender, National Security, and Counter-Terrorism: Human rights perspectives*, (Routledge), 21 December, p. 196.

⁹³ Ploch L (2010), ‘Countering Terrorism in East Africa: The U.S. Response’, (Congressional Research Service, 3 November), p. 17.

⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State (2013), ‘United States Development and Humanitarian Assistance in Somalia’, 28 February (<http://fpc.state.gov/205477.htm>).

⁹⁵ *Op cit* U.S. Agency for International Development (2014), ‘Somalia’, November.

⁹⁶ *Op cit* Global Humanitarian Assistance (2012), p. 10.

⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State (2013), ‘U.S. Pledges \$69 Million in Support of Somalia’s New Deal Compact’, 19 September (www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/09/214449.htm).

cooperation continues to exist outside of the New Deal framework) and acting as donor co-chair on the Working Group on PSG 4 on economic foundations. Much of the US's development assistance however (as with many other donors) continues to be disbursed outside of the specific multi-partner trust funds established as part of the New Deal's architecture.

Political engagement

In terms of political engagement, the US formally recognised the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in January 2013 – the first time the US had recognised a Somali government since 1991. Prior to this, US political engagement with the various Somali governance structures had oscillated between moments of heightened – frequently reactive – engagement and relative disengagement. After withdrawing from Somalia in 1994, for example, US political engagement in Somalia was largely non-existent, with former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Walter Kansteiner, describing the US's policy as one of “total benign neglect”.⁹⁸ Following 9/11, this changed significantly but the US's overriding focus on counter-terrorism led many to observe that it had essentially, even if left unsaid, de-prioritised the political aspects of its engagement with Somali governance structures.⁹⁹

In October 2010, the Obama administration attempted to present a step-change in the US's political engagement in Somalia with the inception of a new ‘dual-track’ policy, which in essence would enable the US to deal with the formal and sub-state actors simultaneously in order to foster peace and stability in Somalia.¹⁰⁰ Describing the rationale for the dual-track approach, a State Department spokesperson framed it as “important to reach out to all of these sub-regional groupings in order to strengthen their capacity to govern... and to remain a bulwark against the encroachment of al-Shabaab and extremist elements”.¹⁰¹

The dual-track approach was criticised by *Al Jazeera's* Afyare Abdi Elmi as “a new label for the old Bush administration's approach”, due to its in-built propensity to foster continued divisions and encourage the formation of independent administrations.¹⁰² However, while the US recognised the FGS in 2013, it emphasised that it would continue to engage with regional administrations.¹⁰³ The US along with the UN and other donors has closely monitored sub-national state formation processes, issuing a number of coordinated and individual statements on key political processes, including the election of officials, and raising concerns about relations between interim administrations and the FGS.¹⁰⁴

Economic support

On the economic front, a recent report by Somalia expert Dominik Balthasar highlighted that there is a perception that the US's recent re-engagement in Somalia has been “partially driven” by a desire to gain access to Somalia's oil resources on the basis that one of the six conditions the US put in place prior to recognising the FGS was that it recognised the rights of US oil companies that had declared *force majeure* when Siad Barre's government collapsed in 1991.¹⁰⁵ However, the public commentary on Somalia's

⁹⁸ *Op cit* Astill (2001).

⁹⁹ Leonard E, Ramsey G (eds.) (2013), ‘Globalizing Somalia: Multilateral, International and Transnational Repercussions of Conflict’, (Bloomsbury), July, p 143.

¹⁰⁰ Center for Strategic & International Studies (2010), ‘State Department: A Dual-Track Approach to Somalia’, 20 October.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Department of State (2012), ‘Senior State Department Official Previewing Conference on Somalia’, 22 February (www.state.gov/tr/pa/prs/ps/2012/02/184480.htm).

¹⁰² Elmi A A (2011), ‘Dual track policy in Somalia misses the point’, *Al Jazeera*, 9 June.

¹⁰³ U.S. Department of State (2013), ‘Security and Governance in Somalia: Consolidating Gains, Confronting Challenges, and Charting the Path Forward’, 8 October.

¹⁰⁴ See for example: United State Mission to Somalia (2015), ‘The United States Welcomes Interim Juba Administration Commitment to Political Inclusion’, 12 September; United States Mission to Somalia (2015), ‘International partners encourage Interim Juba Administration and Federal Government to resolve issues through dialogue and consultations’, 9 June.

¹⁰⁵ Balthasar D (2014), ‘Oil in Somalia: Adding Fuel to the Fire?’, (Heritage Institute), June, p 8.

resources has been described as ‘hyped up’, with one analyst underlining that the desire to access oil resources in Somalia has been a minor aspect of the US’s overall strategy for engagement in Somalia.¹⁰⁶

Of greater significance, the US has made strenuous efforts since 9/11 to prevent terrorist groups from financing their operations. In October 2001, the US moved to designate the Somali group al-Itihaad al-Islamiya (AIAI) as a Foreign Terrorist Organisation (FTO) under Executive Order 13224, making it unlawful for a person in the US or subject to the jurisdiction of the US to provide ‘material support or resources’ to AIAI. While AIAI was linked to multiple attacks in the 1990s, there were debates about the extent to which it was active – one US official later described how in his view AIAI “had been transformed from a ‘noun’ into an ‘adjective’ – in other words, from an organisation into an idea”.¹⁰⁷

Al-Shabaab was designated as an FTO in February 2008.¹⁰⁸ The scope of financial sanctions was extended significantly in April 2010 when President Obama declared a national emergency to address the deteriorating security situation in Somalia with Executive Order 13536, which imposed additional financial sanctions on those identified as “contributing to the conflict in Somalia” (other countries such as the UK followed the US’s lead).¹⁰⁹ Notably, in 2009, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) within the US Department of the Treasury suspended \$50 million of the US’s humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

1.3 United Kingdom

The implications of continued instability in Somalia, and in particular the rise of al-Shabaab, on the UK’s national security has ensured that Somalia has long been prominent on the UK’s foreign policy agenda. Concerns about the terrorist threat emanating from Somalia were heightened by the discovery of plans to attack the London Olympics in 2012 as well as other targets, on the laptop of a senior al-Qaeda commander, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, who was killed at a TFG checkpoint in June 2011.¹¹⁰ Speaking soon after the discovery, UK Prime Minister David Cameron characterised Somalia as “a failed state that directly threatens British interests”.¹¹¹ Accordingly, the principal aim of the UK’s engagement in Somalia in recent years has been to reduce the potential for terrorist attacks against the UK.

Somalia is one of the three countries classified as posing a ‘high risk’ to the UK in its official counter-terrorism strategy, and is also a priority country for the UK National Security Council.¹¹² The UK’s sense of vulnerability to ongoing instability in Somalia is linked to the presence of a sizeable UK Somali community (estimates range from 108,000 to 200,000) – the largest in Europe – an extremely small minority of whom have travelled to Somalia to join al-Shabaab in recent years.¹¹³ The UK Prime Minister expressed his concern about the radicalisation of British Somalis ahead of the February 2012 London Conference on Somalia, stating, “there is a very real danger of young British Somalis having their minds poisoned by this organization”.¹¹⁴ Speaking in September 2010, the former head of M15, Jonathan Evans, warned, “it is only a matter

¹⁰⁶ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 11 November 2014.

¹⁰⁷ International Crisis Group (2005), ‘Somalia’s Islamists’, 12 December, p 10.

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, ‘Individuals and Entities Designated by the State Department Under E.O. 13224’, (www.state.gov/ct/rls/other/des/143210.htm).

¹⁰⁹ Federal Register (2010), ‘Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in Somalia A Presidential Document by the Executive Office of the President on 04/15/2010’, 15 April (<https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2010/04/15/2010-8878/blocking-property-of-certain-persons-contributing-to-the-conflict-in-somalia>).

¹¹⁰ Shephard M (2012), ‘Star Exclusive: Documents found on body of Al Qaeda’s African leader detail chilling plans for kidnapping, attacks’, *The Star*, 11 July.

¹¹¹ Hopkins N, Norton-Taylor R (2012), ‘Al-Shabaab: the Somali militant group recruiting young Britons to its ranks’, *The Guardian*, 21 February.

¹¹² HM Government (2011), ‘CONTEST: The United Kingdom’s Strategy for Countering Terrorism’, July, p 110.

¹¹³ International Organization for Migration (2013), ‘Mapping of the Somali Diaspora in England and Wales’, p 8; *Op cit* Hopkins N, Norton-Taylor R (2012).

¹¹⁴ *Agence France-Presse* (2012), ‘British PM says Somalia should be enjoying its own Arab Spring’, 22 February.

of time before we see terrorism on our streets inspired by those who are today fighting alongside al-Shabaab”.¹¹⁵

These fears were in part realised on 22 May 2013, when Michael Adebowale and Michael Adebolajo murdered an off-duty soldier, Lee Rigby, in Woolwich in Southeast London. Subsequently, it was reported that Kenyan counter-terrorism police had previously detained Adebowale when he attempted to enter Somalia to join al-Shabaab in November 2010.¹¹⁶ In the aftermath of the attack, al-Shabaab also released a video entitled “Woolwich: An Eye for an Eye”, which served to underscore the UK’s apprehensions.¹¹⁷

Other UK objectives in Somalia have been to reduce the threat posed by Somali piracy, which was estimated to have cost the international community \$7–12 billion in 2010 alone – although this threat has declined in recent years due to the deployment of naval forces from numerous countries.¹¹⁸

“Wherever there are broken or fractured countries this poison bubbles to the surface and on occasion can take real power in a country... we see this in Somalia.”

UK Prime Minister David Cameron, 20 July 2015¹¹⁹

In support of these objectives, and to foster wider regional stability, the UK has sought to support the establishment of a functional Somali state as envisaged by the Somali New Deal Compact.¹²⁰ Accordingly, the UK’s approach to Somalia has focused heavily on strengthening the role, effectiveness and legitimacy of the FGS and interim administrations like the IJA.

This state-centric focus reflects wider thinking among UK policymakers that the breakdown in state authority provides opportunities for armed groups such as al-Shabaab to further destabilise the state and the wider region in which they operate, and ultimately to become a global terror threat. In practical terms, this has meant that the UK is currently focused on supporting efforts to hold an election in 2016 and on the state formation process, which seeks to establish a federal structure with the FGS at the centre.¹²¹ These statebuilding efforts (which fall under PSG 1 of the New Deal) are heavily dependent upon the UK’s stabilisation activities, which are aimed at creating the stability necessary for the formation of interim administrations and reinforcing their legitimacy once established.

A 2012 review of the Somalia Stability Fund administered by the UK’s Stabilisation Unit underlines the importance of south central Somalia to “the notion of Somalia,” before going on to state “without a coherent SC, Mogadishu is diminished to being a city state set amongst a sea of competing interest groups”.¹²²

Direct military action

The UK has not engaged in direct military action in Somalia, although it reportedly considered the possibility of conducting air strikes against logistical hubs and training camps belonging to al-Shabaab, as well as Somali pirates who were disrupting shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean, in early 2012.¹²³ However, despite reports that the Somali Prime Minister was open to UK air strikes provided civilians were not harmed, the

¹¹⁵ *The Telegraph* (2010), ‘Jonathan Evan’s Terrorism Speech’, 17 September.

¹¹⁶ *BBC* (2013), ‘Woolwich murder suspect: Michael Adebolajo held in Kenya in 2010’, 26 May.

¹¹⁷ Graham G (2013), ‘British muslims targeted in Al-Shabaab terror video are offered police protection’, *The Telegraph*, 18 October.

¹¹⁸ Ferguson J (2014), ‘The World’s Most Dangerous Place’, (Black Swan), p 254.

¹¹⁹ ITV (2015), ‘David Cameron sets out five-year plan to combat extremism’, 20 July (from 1:21:02: www.itv.com/news/update/2015-07-20/watch-david-camersons-speech-on-tackling-extremism/).

¹²⁰ Department for International Development (2014), ‘Operational Plan 2011–2016: DFID Somalia’, December, p 6.

¹²¹ *Op cit* Department for International Development (2014), p 6.

¹²² Stabilisation Unit (2012), ‘Somalia Stability Programme: Pilot Evaluation’, November, (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207124/Evaluation-Somalia-stability-programme-pilot.pdf), p 14.

¹²³ Hopkins N, Norton-Taylor R (2012), ‘Somalia: UK weighs up air strikes against rebels’, *The Guardian*, 21 February.

UK's Prime Minister, David Cameron, made it clear that there were no UK plans to undertake airstrikes.¹²⁴

Security-related support

In terms of security-related support, the UK has sought to work through the UN and the EU, providing limited direct support to the SNA. In May 2013, the UK announced it would provide military experts to advise the FGS on the development of its armed forces and would also provide over £10 million to help extend the reach of Somali armed forces beyond Mogadishu – explicitly conditional on progress in tackling human rights and financial management concerns.¹²⁵ Previously, in July 2012, the UK had publicly acknowledged that 10 UK military advisers were based at the AU's headquarters in Mogadishu providing military expertise to AMISOM. A Ministry of Defence spokesperson stated that the UK's advisers “do not have a combat role”.¹²⁶

The UK has also played a key role in political developments related to the security sector. For example, as it holds the pen on Somalia at the UNSC, ahead of the February 2012 London Conference on Somalia, the UK proposed UNSC Resolution 2036. This doubled AMISOM's budget to \$550 million, increased its troop strength to just under 18,000 personnel and authorised AMISOM to pursue al-Shabaab and other armed groups outside of Mogadishu to “reduce the threat posed... [and] to establish conditions for effective and legitimate governance across Somalia”.¹²⁷ The latter was described by the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Somalia as a move that partly transitioned AMISOM from a peacekeeping to a “peace enforcement” role.¹²⁸ More recently, the UK hosted international talks on the future of the SNA, in September 2014.¹²⁹

In September 2015, the UK also announced the deployment of UK troops to Somalia as part of the UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA) to provide medical, logistics and engineering support.¹³⁰ While characterised as “peacekeeping” support in the UK's announcement, it should be emphasised that AMISOM remains a peace enforcement rather than peacekeeping operation. As such, the terms of the deployment of UK troops remains unclear.

Development assistance

Alongside its support to the security sector, the UK provides substantial development assistance to Somalia. As noted earlier, the UK has promoted and endorsed the Somali New Deal Compact, providing around £339.7 million in support of it to date (in comparison, the EU has pledged £542 million).¹³¹ The UK's development assistance programmes broadly focus on four specific areas: governance and peacebuilding; economic development; human development; and the provision of humanitarian assistance.¹³²

Through its development assistance programmes, the UK is playing a leading role in efforts to reform the security and justice sectors in Somalia. Notably, at the May 2013 London Conference on Somalia, the UK announced plans to provide £14.5 million to help improve public safety, tackle serious crime and human rights abuses, provide assistance to justice officials to travel to areas without permanent courts and remote

¹²⁴ House of Commons Library (2012), ‘Somalia: recent political, security and humanitarian developments’, 28 February, p 14.

¹²⁵ Department for International Development (2013), ‘UK commits to help Somalia improve security and prevent famine’, 7 May.

¹²⁶ BBC (2012), ‘UK troops in Somalia ‘aiding Africa Union force’’, 26 July.

¹²⁷ United Nations Security Council (2012), ‘Resolution 2036’, 22 February (www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Somalia%20S%20RES%202036.pdf).

¹²⁸ Chonghaile C N (2012), ‘Al-Shabaab pushed back in Somalia by African peace enforcers’, *The Guardian*, 12 June.

¹²⁹ Foreign & Commonwealth Office (2014), ‘UK and Somalia host international talks on the future of the Somali National Army’, 18 September.

¹³⁰ Prime Minister's Office (2015), ‘PM pledges UK troops to support stability in Somalia and South Sudan’, 28 September.

¹³¹ Department for International Development (2013), ‘Support to the Economic Recovery of Somalia’, (http://iati.dfid.gov.uk/iati_documents/4581997.odt).

¹³² *Op cit* Department for International Development (2014), p 6.

districts outside of Mogadishu, enable the Somali government to double the number of police officers from 6,000 to 12,000 and finally, to bring Mogadishu's Central Prison up to international standards.¹³³

The UK has also supported development activities linked to stabilisation objectives through the Somalia Stability Fund, to which it has provided \$47.25 million.¹³⁴ Such funds have been used in a limited number of locations (that is, Kismayo and Baidoa) to invest in small infrastructure projects as a mechanism to foster dialogue and build the FGS's capacity for select duties including security and ensuring freedom of movement of the Somali people. One UK official underlined that the importance of stabilisation-linked development activities is that they can be used as a "lever" for the FGS to "become party to the provision of services".¹³⁵ More recently, the UK announced that £1.5 million from the new Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) would be used to work on stabilisation in recovered areas in order to "expand the reach of legitimate government authority".¹³⁶

Political engagement

Through its political engagement the UK has played a critical role in galvanising the international community to engage in Somalia. In February 2012, the UK hosted the first London Conference on Somalia, which focused on supporting the TFG and facilitating a permanent federal government. The conference, described as "the most important conference on Somalia in recent times", convened some 50 states and organisations, as well as Somali stakeholders including key factions such as Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma (ASWJ).¹³⁷ The second London Conference on Somalia, in May 2013, sought to build international backing for the FGS's priorities on security, justice, political reconciliation and public financial management and lay the foundations for the Somali New Deal Compact. In addition to the London Conferences, the UK used its presidency of the G8 in 2013 and its presidency of the UNSC in May 2013 to deepen the international community's engagement in Somalia.¹³⁸

Economic support

On the economic front, the UK has again sought to coordinate the efforts of the international community by hosting the Somalia Trade and Investment Conference in May 2013. Speaking at the opening of the conference, UK Development Secretary Justine Greening declared, "increased business in countries like Somalia can, if done in a conflict-sensitive way, promote stability."¹³⁹ More recently, the UK announced it would provide a further £37 million to the Somalia Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF) until 2016 "to support economic development in Somalia" (although an initial £6 million of the funds was used to pay the salaries of the FGS's civil servants).¹⁴⁰

The UK has also acted to place financial sanctions on al-Shabaab (listed on 28 April 2010) and a number of individuals associated with the organisation including its current leader, Ahmed Diriye (listed on 23 October 2014).¹⁴¹ As in the US, the issue of remittances to Somalia has also been an issue in the UK, with banks such as Barclays taking action to close the accounts of Somali money transfer operators in order to mitigate concerns about money laundering.¹⁴² Since the UK Serious Organised Crime

¹³³ *Op cit* Department for International Development (2013).

¹³⁴ Somalia Stability Fund (2014), 'Donors', (www.stabilityfund.so/donors).

¹³⁵ Saferworld interview, London, 18 November 2014.

¹³⁶ The CSSF brings together existing resources from across government totalling £683 million and includes another £100 million of new funding. See 'Annex F: The UK Conflict Pool and Conflict Security and Stability Fund' for more details: <http://um.dk/en/~media/UM/Danish-site/Documents/Danida/Resultater/Eval/201404AnnexF.pdf>.

¹³⁷ *Op cit* Leonard E, Ramsey G (eds.) (2013), p 223.

¹³⁸ Foreign & Commonwealth Office (2013), 'G8 Support for Somalia', 12 April.

¹³⁹ Department for International Development (2013), 'Justine Greening keynote at Somalia Trade and Investment event', 8 May.

¹⁴⁰ British Embassy Mogadishu (2014), 'UK to help revitalise and expand the Somali economy', 24 October.

¹⁴¹ HM Government (2015), 'Consolidated List of Financial Sanctions Targets in the UK', 19 November (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/409007/somalia.PDF)

¹⁴² Lane E (2013), 'Somali remittances granted reprieve', *BBC*, 5 November.

Agency identified money transfer operating businesses as a potential money laundering risk, many UK banks have sought to move out of this area. Many were alarmed by the \$1.9 billion fine imposed on HSBC for failing to prevent money laundering.¹⁴³ Responding to widespread concerns about the potential effects on remittance flows from the UK to Somalia (estimated at £500 million annually),¹⁴⁴ a multi-agency UK Action Group on Cross Border Remittances was established in 2014.¹⁴⁵ One initiative arising from the Action Group has been Department for International Development's (DFID) 'Safer Corridor Initiative' to "create a more transparent and safer system" for Somalis in the UK to send money back home.¹⁴⁶

1.4 European Union

Speaking in October 2013, then EU High Representative Catherine Ashton stated that the principal aim of the EU's engagement in Somalia was to support Somalia's "transition, from a fragile country to stability, to peace and to reconstruction".¹⁴⁷ In Somalia, in contrast to other contexts where the EU is active, member states have allowed EU institutions to take a lead in developing and implementing a comprehensive policy, which includes security-related support to the fight against terrorism and training of Somali armed forces.¹⁴⁸ Overall, the EU's approach to Somalia comprises multiple strands that it packages as a "comprehensive approach", encompassing security-related support, political engagement, development assistance and humanitarian aid.

Like the UK, the EU has invested heavily in stabilising Somalia, arguing that it is "a pre-requisite for state-building and development".¹⁴⁹ As part of these efforts, the EU has strongly backed the FGS (and the various central government structures that have existed over the course of the last decade) arguing that the collapse of the state is at the root of most, if not all, of Somalia's challenges but affirming nonetheless that it bears responsibility for establishing a safe and secure environment. As such, the EU has relied to a great extent on political engagement to back the FGS and its various predecessors. Most notably, the EU hosted the Brussels Conference on 'A New Deal for Somalia' in September 2013 at which over €1.8 billion (€650 million from the European Commission) was pledged to support Somalia's path towards peace, stability and prosperity after what it considered to be the successful completion of a transition period.¹⁵⁰ The EU also appointed an EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa whose main priority is to enhance the coherence, impact and visibility of the EU's engagement in Somalia.¹⁵¹

The EU, which considers Somalia's instability to be one of the major destabilising factors in the Horn of Africa,¹⁵² has placed Somalia at the centre of its counter-terrorism efforts in the region.¹⁵³ Underpinning this approach is a belief that 'containment' cannot be seen as an option in Somalia. This is an implicit criticism of other international actors such as the US who have at times been perceived as overly focused on containing the threat posed by Somalia.¹⁵⁴ Notably, the EU has emphasised that Somalia's challenges

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Moore E (2013), 'UK plans safe corridor for Somalia payments', *Financial Times*, 13 October.

¹⁴⁵ Joint Agency Briefing Note (2015), 'Hanging by a Thread: The ongoing threat to Somalia's remittance lifeline', 19 February, p 6.

¹⁴⁶ HM Government (2015), 'Safer Corridor Pilot for UK-Somali Remittances: Stakeholder Engagement Summary', March (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418688/15-03-20_SCP_Stakeholder_Engagement_Summary.pdf).

¹⁴⁷ European Union (2013), 'Remarks by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton following the conference: A New Deal for Somalia', 16 September (http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/130916_03_en.pdf), p 1.

¹⁴⁸ Keukeleire S, Delreux R (2014), 'The foreign policy of the European Union', (Palgrave Macmillan), 6 February, p 323.

¹⁴⁹ Council of the European Union (2014), 'Council conclusions on Somalia: Foreign Affairs Council meeting', 20 October (www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/145191.pdf).

¹⁵⁰ EurActiv (2013), 'EU: New Deal for Somalia is not 'business as usual'', 17 September.

¹⁵¹ Official Journal of the European Union, 'Council Decision 2011/819/CFSP of 8 December 2011 appointing the European Union Special Representative for the Horn of Africa', 9 December.

¹⁵² Directorate General for External Policies (2012), 'The EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa – a critical assessment of impact and opportunities', 3 October, p 40.

¹⁵³ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2012), 'Joint communication to the Council: EU counter-terrorism Action Plan for the Horn of Africa and Yemen', 31 August, p 9.

¹⁵⁴ Commission of the European Communities (2006), 'Strategy for Africa: An EU regional political partnership for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa', 20 October, p 5.

can only be overcome through a consideration of neighbouring countries' 'concerns'. The EU has argued that "these countries should play a positive and stabilising role in the Somali peace process".¹⁵⁵ This is reflective of the EU's wider regional strategy to tackle instability in the Horn of Africa, which is fuelled by factors including irregular migration and forced displacement, radicalisation and terrorism, piracy and trafficking of illegal goods.¹⁵⁶

The EU's engagement in Somalia has steadily increased over the years and it is now the largest donor in Somalia, having provided over €1.2 billion since 2008, principally in support of security, stabilisation and statebuilding. In addition to using political and diplomatic channels, it has also launched Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions, supported statebuilding and peacebuilding processes, and has provided development assistance and humanitarian aid.

Security-related support

As part of its Strategy for the Horn of Africa, the EU has three CSDP Missions ongoing in the Somali regions: EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) ATALANTA, EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia, and the European Union's Capacity Building Effort in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean (EUCAP Nestor).

In 2008, concerned with the negative effects of piracy off the coast of Somalia, in particular on humanitarian efforts and maritime traffic, the EU launched EUNAVFOR ATALANTA. 2012 saw the launch of EUCAP Nestor, a capacity-building mission specifically targeting Djibouti, Somalia, the Seychelles and Tanzania. EUCAP Nestor is a civilian mission augmented with military expertise designed to support regional maritime capacity building, including that of coastal police and the judiciary in the field of counter-piracy.¹⁵⁷

However, conscious of criticism that the instability and insecurity emanating from Somalia could not be addressed without bolstering the capacities of the Somali security forces, in 2010 the EU launched a military training mission (EUTM Somalia) to strengthen the Somali national authorities by providing military advice and training to the security forces. Since it was established, the EUTM trained approximately 4000 recruits and will instruct another 1200 during the remainder of its mandate, which ends in December 2016.¹⁵⁸

Alongside its own missions, the EU has been a critical supporter of AMISOM, both financially and in terms of capacity building. In 2004, it created an extra-budgetary fund, the African Peace Facility (APF), to support peace and security in Africa. Through the facility (which is financed by the European Development Fund), the EU provided €800 million to AMISOM since it was launched in 2007.¹⁵⁹ In October 2015, the EU announced that it would provide a further €165 million to support AMISOM's fight against al-Shabaab.¹⁶⁰ According to the EU, through the EUTM and its support to AMISOM, it is supporting the reconstruction of a viable state and the reestablishment of a secure environment in Somalia.¹⁶¹

In addition, the EU has made use of other financing instruments to support its security-related interventions in Somalia. Notably, through the Instrument contributing to Security and Peace (IcSP), the EU has also funded projects to create conditions for the access to and economic recovery of areas recovered from al-Shabaab, by

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Council of the EU (2015), 'Council Conclusions on the EU Horn of Africa Action Plan 2015-2020', 26 October.

¹⁵⁷ European External Action Service (2015), 'European Union Training Mission – Somalia', September (www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eutm-somalia/docs/factsheet_eutm_somalia_en.pdf).

¹⁵⁸ *IHS Jane's 360* (2015), 'EU training mission to provide Somali army only with basic equipment', 1 July.

¹⁵⁹ European Commission (2015), 'Capacity building in support of security and development – Enabling partners to prevent and manage crises', 28 April, p 5.

¹⁶⁰ *Mail & Guardian Africa* (2015), 'Lifeline for AMISOM as Europe says will give cash for Somalia anti-terror battle', 19 October.

¹⁶¹ European Commission and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (2015), 'Addressing the refugee crisis in Europe: the role of the EU external action', 9 September, p 8.

supporting FGS stabilisation efforts in the newly recovered areas, and law enforcement institutions.¹⁶²

Development assistance

The EU has also made use of the geographic and thematic financing instruments supporting external cooperation and external aid to achieve its statebuilding and peacebuilding objectives in Somalia.

The EU channelled the majority of its development aid to Somalia since the early 2000s through the European Development Fund (EDF). Under the Strategy for the Implementation of Special Aid to Somalia covering the period 2008–2013 (total budget €425million), good governance and statebuilding (€128 million) was prioritised along with education (€85million) and economic development and food security (€155 million).¹⁶³ In the EU indicative programme for Somalia for the period 2014–2020 (total budget €286 million) – in which the European Commission’s objectives have been aligned with the PSGs as outlined in the Somali New Deal Compact – state-building and peacebuilding (€100 million) are again prioritised, along with food security and building resilience (€86 million), and education (€60 million).¹⁶⁴ Under the statebuilding and peacebuilding objective, the EU’s aims are to reinforce the rule of law and security, provide institutional support at the federal, regional and local levels, and support democratisation and reconciliation processes. The EU noted that all three components include engagement with non-state actors to support dialogue between civil society, the private sector and government administrations in reconstruction and reconciliation processes.¹⁶⁵

The EU has become increasingly concerned by radicalisation in the Horn of Africa.¹⁶⁶ In 2014, the EU launched a regional programme focusing on Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia under the Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism (STRIVE) initiative. Funded by the IcSP (for €2 million), the programme aims to increase understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, to develop best practices around CVE programming, and to provide recommendations allowing for increased impact and more focused interventions.¹⁶⁷

Another cornerstone of the EU’s engagement in Somalia has been the provision of humanitarian aid in order to provide basic life-saving services in the protection, shelter, health, nutrition, food and water sectors; enhance self-reliance; and support emergency preparedness measures to cope with potential influx of new arrivals. To support these efforts, the EU Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection directorate (ECHO) has disbursed €279.2 million since 2011.¹⁶⁸

1.5 Summary

As can be seen, the rationale for the US, UK and EU engaging in Somalia has been heavily focused on reducing the threat of terrorism emanating from Somalia. Since 2007, this has meant they have provided significant funds to AMISOM and regional actors as they have sought to challenge al-Shabaab’s control over parts of Somalia. These resources have been provided despite questions about the objectives of regional

¹⁶² Council of the European Union (2013), ‘Joint Staff Working Document on an ‘Integrated EU approach to Security and Rule of Law in Somalia’’, 13 July, p 17.

¹⁶³ European Commission (2008), ‘Somalia Joint Strategy Paper for the period 2008–2013’, (https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/csp-somalia-2008-2013_en.pdf), pp 3-5.

¹⁶⁴ European Commission (2014), ‘National Indicative Programme for the Republic of Somalia 2014–2020’, June (https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/nip-somalia-20140619_en.pdf), p 4.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp 10–11.

¹⁶⁶ Council of the European Union (2015), ‘Council Conclusions on the EU Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan 2015–2020’, 26 October, p 8.

¹⁶⁷ European Commission (2015), ‘STRIVE for Development – Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism’, pp 18–21.

¹⁶⁸ European Commission (2015), ‘Somalia ECHO factsheet’, October (http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/somalia_en.pdf).

actors and clear evidence that their actions have undermined efforts to build peace in Somalia – whether through their direct military interventions, alleged involvement in Somalia’s war economy or support to sub-national actors as a counterweight to the influence of the FGS. Looking beyond regional actors, the US has been the most militarily active in Somalia, carrying out military operations and strikes to kill or capture suspected al-Qaeda operatives and al-Shabaab’s leadership. For their part, the EU and the UK have focused their military efforts on anti-piracy operations, which have threatened shipping lanes off the Horn of Africa that are vital to the world economy. Notably, the US, UK and EU have been prominent backers of the stabilisation and statebuilding agendas in Somalia – the latter of which is enshrined in the Somali Compact – and have been particularly active in the political processes to form interim regional administrations and the creation of a federal system. With the mandate of the FGS coming to an end in 2016, the US, UK and EU have the opportunity to reflect upon the lessons of over twenty years of involvement and adjust their policies in the country.

The next section seeks to inform these discussions, analysing the approaches of the US, UK and EU in greater depth, setting out their impacts on peace and conflict dynamics in Somalia.

2

Policy and impacts analysis

THIS SECTION OFFERS AN ANALYSIS of the approaches of international actors (as described in section one) and their impacts on Somalia and its conflict drivers, as set out in Annex Three, which are as follows:

- Poor governance.
- Corruption.
- Impunity.
- Clan identity.
- Militarised society and the multiplicity of armed actors.
- Economic drivers of conflict (i.e. charcoal, extractive industry, humanitarian aid, remittances and the economic vulnerability of young people).
- Religious ideology.
- External factors.

While it notes positive impacts where they have been identified, it suggests significant negative impacts on the context in Somalia. Analysis of the impacts of international actors has been grouped around six key themes:

- The failures of militarised approaches.
- The global counter-terror agenda's reinforcement of counterproductive strategies and behaviours by national, regional and international actors.
- Ignoring and exacerbating key drivers of conflict.
- Pressure to complete political processes resulting in tensions and conflict.
- The lack of public buy-in to international strategies.
- The reinforcement of corruption and fuelling of the war economy.

Overall, the impacts presented in this section have at times served to increase instability in Somalia and the threat posed by militants opposed to international actors based there.

2.1 The failures of militarised approaches

“I don’t believe there is a military solution to the problem of Al-Shabaab – it has been repeatedly defeated.”

International NGO representative, 4 November 2014¹⁶⁹

What is the objective?

One of the main challenges posed by militarised approaches in Somalia is that there is lack of unity over what international actors are seeking to accomplish. Many international actors have a range of competing security-related objectives that frequently work at cross-purposes, undermining efforts to build long-term sustainable peace in Somalia. As detailed in the previous section, in support of their own national security interests both Kenya and Ethiopia have sought to back sub-national actors that are more loyal to them than to the FGS. In contrast, the US, UK and EU have backed sub-national actors that are more closely tied to the FGS, but have struggled to coordinate their military efforts.¹⁷⁰ Looking further afield, Turkey and Arab actors have tried to gain influence with the FGS by providing military assistance and training, but again coordination with other actors has been lacking.¹⁷¹ The lack of alignment among the overt objectives of international actors is exacerbated by a lack of transparency and clarity over other objectives. As one Somali civil society representative observed:

“The International community’s ultimate objectives are their undeclared interests. And there is no lack of those.”

Somali civil society representative, 9 November 2014.¹⁷²

While there is a lack of unity and clarity over many of the security-related objectives of international actors, there is a broad consensus among international actors on the need to defeat al-Shabaab militarily. Indeed, the US, UK and EU’s respective strategies in Somalia are heavily focused on this. Speaking in June 2014, for example, the US State Department’s Under Secretary for Political Affairs spoke about “the job of degrading and defeating al-Shabaab”.¹⁷³ Similarly, in a UK parliamentary debate on Somalia held in February 2012, the then UK Foreign Secretary, William Hague, called for the “defeat of terrorism” in response to a question about al-Shabaab.¹⁷⁴

Such an objective has proved to be unhelpful, as it has locked international actors into a militarised approach to resolving the various drivers of the Somali conflict – which according to one INGO representative has prevented the development of “a more comprehensive peacebuilding strategy”,¹⁷⁵ leaving no avenues through which Somali and international actors can engage with al-Shabaab in an effort to de-escalate the conflict. Another problem with reducing the Somali conflict to one where al-Shabaab simply needs to be defeated is that it ignores the fact that:

“Al-Shabaab is a symptom rather than a cause of fragility, and while it may be the most immediate and obvious challenge to peace and security in Somalia, it is by no means the most important one.”

Dominik Balthasar in ‘Thinking Beyond Roadmaps in Somalia: Expanding Policy Options for State Building’¹⁷⁶

The wider consequence of this confusion about what international actors are seeking to accomplish through the use of militarised approaches in Somalia and the overwhelming focus on defeating al-Shabaab is that strategy has often been formulated

¹⁶⁹ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 4 November 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Saferworld interviews, Nairobi, 4 November 2014; Mogadishu, 9 November 2014; Mogadishu 10 November 2014.

¹⁷¹ Saferworld interviews, Nairobi, 5 November 2014; Mogadishu, 9 November 2014; Mogadishu 10 November 2014. For an overview of Turkey’s approach to Somalia, see Wheeler T, Sazak O, Achilles K, Woods A (2015) *Turkish aid agencies in Somalia: Risks and opportunities for building peace*, (Saferworld and the Istanbul Policy Centre), March.

¹⁷² Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 9 November 2014.

¹⁷³ *Op cit* U.S. Department of State (2014).

¹⁷⁴ Daily Hansard (2012), ‘Debate’, 9 February (www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201212/cmhansrd/cm120209/debtext/120209-0002.htm#12020952000002).

¹⁷⁵ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 12 November 2014.

¹⁷⁶ Balthasar D (2014), ‘Thinking Beyond Roadmaps in Somalia: Expanding Policy Options for State Building’, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, November), p 17.

without proper consideration of the actual long-term security needs of the Somali people. For example, the prioritisation of Western security needs over those of Somalis is clearly reflected in testimony offered in 2010 by the then Chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on African Affairs, who voiced concern that, "we [the US] still do not have an overarching strategy for Somalia that ties our programs and policies together. As a result, we appear to be grasping at straws to 'do something' while *our national security* increasingly hangs in the balance [emphasis added]".¹⁷⁷

Specific evidence of how the security needs of the Somali people are marginalised by external national security interests is offered by the response to the Somali remittances crisis earlier this year. In February 2015, the US-based Merchants Bank, which handles 80 per cent of money remitted from the US to Somalia, announced that it was withdrawing its services. This occurred as part of a wider trend,¹⁷⁸ whereby US banks have come under pressure to withdraw their services due to the imposition of financial sanctions by the US government, which holds them responsible if the funds they manage reach proscribed groups. The decision by Merchants Bank led to a concerted campaign among the US-Somali community – for example, tweeting #IFundFoodNot Terror at key US officials¹⁷⁹ – as well as a letter from several US Senators that warned how the action "could significantly strengthen the appeal of terrorism" and threaten the US's national security.¹⁸⁰ While the letter broached the potential humanitarian implications, it was largely framed in terms of seeking a reversal of the decision on the basis of the need to "protect our [US] national security".¹⁸¹

The remittances crisis is the latest example of how counter-terrorism policies focused on addressing terrorist financing have, in the words of one commentator, actually helped to "mobilise the anger and grievance on which terrorist organisations thrive."¹⁸² Only a month after 9/11, the US froze the assets of Somali *hawala* company al-Barakaat – the largest Somali employer – on the grounds that it was a conduit for al-Qaeda's financial transactions. The action destabilised the already fragile Somali economy and exacerbated long-standing humanitarian challenges.¹⁸³

Short-term objectives, long-term failure?

As detailed in section one, the US, as well as Kenya and Ethiopia, have repeatedly carried out operations, some involving airstrikes and drone strikes, to target individuals suspected of belonging to a terrorist organisation. While any attempt to assess the efficacy of such operations is complicated by the general lack of transparency and accountability surrounding them, it is possible to observe that military action focused on achieving short-term counter-terrorism objectives has frequently had negative longer-term impacts on the Somali conflict.

This can be elaborated by examining al-Shabaab in the aftermath of notable counter-terrorism operations. The high-profile killings of al-Shabaab leaders Aden Hashi Ayro and Ahmed Abdi Godane, for example, were celebrated as decisive blows against al-Shabaab.¹⁸⁴ However, despite predictions that their deaths heralded al-Shabaab's decline, in both instances, the group has retained its abilities to conduct high-profile

¹⁷⁷ *Op cit* Ploch L (2010), p 3.

¹⁷⁸ These actions have been copied by regional actors such as Kenya, which has banned at least 86 entities and individuals it accuses of financing and supporting terror activities in the country. This has negatively impacted on the local economy of Somalis in Kenya, with an estimated \$70–100 million transferred a month between Somalis in Kenya. For more details, see Bosh A M (2015), 'Kenya is stopping remittances of \$70 million a month from reaching its Somali community', *Quartz*, 8 April.

¹⁷⁹ Migiro K (2015), 'Somalis panic as cash flow dries up after U.S. remittance lifeline cut', *Reuters*, 19 February.

¹⁸⁰ Congress of the United States (2015), 'Ellison Remittances Letter', 6 February, (www.hiiraan.com/PDF/2015/Feb/Ellison%20Remittances%20Letter_2.06.15.pdf).

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Monbiot G (2015), 'Unremitting Pain', 10 February, (www.monbiot.com/2015/02/10/unremitting-pain/).

¹⁸³ *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2002), p 8.

¹⁸⁴ For example, the US State Department Press Release after killing of Godane described it as "a major symbolic and operational loss" to al-Shabaab. See The White House (2014), 'Statement by the Press Secretary on the Death of Ahmed Godane', 5 September (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/05/statement-press-secretary-death-ahmed-godane>). See also U.S. Department of Defense (2014), 'Statement from Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby on Ahmed Godane', 5 September (www.defense.gov/News/News-Releases/News-Release-View/Article/605172).

attacks both in Somalia and beyond.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, according to Jenna Jordan – who has analysed 298 instances of leadership targeting – “decapitation is not ineffective merely against religious, old, or large groups, it is actually counterproductive... In many cases, targeting a group’s leadership actually lowers its rate of decline”.¹⁸⁶

The counterproductive nature of such strikes is illustrated by looking at the changes in al-Shabaab’s leadership following a strike targeting its leader. After Ayro was killed, Godane affiliated al-Shabaab with al-Qaeda – realising the worst fears of many – and Godane’s successor, Ahmad Omar, has been described as an “an even more determined extremist”.¹⁸⁷ As Alex de Waal concludes, “it is quite possible... killing al Shabaab’s leaders degraded the insurgents’ military capability. But it is certain that it didn’t hasten a political resolution to the conflict”.¹⁸⁸

This mismatch between what is deemed to be a successful military action in the short term and the actual long-term negative impacts is also apparent in relation to the impact of air and drone strikes on the Somali population. For example, it was reported that the airstrike that led to the death of Aden Hashi Ayro in 1 May 2008, resulted in the deaths of at least 15 civilians. This was not the first time the US had targeted Ayro. It had done so in January 2007, when air strikes near Ras Kamboni missed Ayro (and other targets), but allegedly led to the deaths of some 30 civilians and again, in early 2008, when another failed strike on Ayro reportedly resulted in six civilian deaths.¹⁸⁹ As can be seen, the cumulative total of reported civilian deaths for one ‘high-value target’ was over 50. The accompanying civilian deaths beg the question of whether US military actions in these instances made it subsequently easier for al-Shabaab to find willing recruits.

Looking more broadly, this critical perspective on the use of strikes has been endorsed by Lt. General Michael Flynn, the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency and senior intelligence officer in JSOC, who when asked whether strikes create more terrorists than they kill, replied, “I don’t disagree with that”, adding, “I think as an overarching strategy, it is a failed strategy.”¹⁹⁰

“When you drop a bomb from a drone... you are going to cause more damage than you are going to cause good.”

US Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, former head of the Pentagon’s Defence Intelligence Agency¹⁹¹

Supporting use of force by regional actors

While the use of military force by Western actors has almost exclusively been restricted to the US,¹⁹² many international actors have supported the use of force by regional actors in Somalia. This support has been extended to regional actors despite questions about their motives for engaging in the country. The US-backed Ethiopian intervention in Somalia in late 2006, for example, led many Somalis – even those who were not supportive of the ICU – to express their hostility towards Ethiopia:

“From Ethiopia’s perspective it will be a war between Ethiopia and the Islamists. But for we Somalis, it is not so simple. I have to fight side by side with anyone who is fighting Ethiopia... People do not want to join the Islamists [wadaado]... but if it comes to that, how can you refuse a coalition with them. It won’t matter who chews qaad and who doesn’t when the enemy is just over the horizon.”

Somali citizen speaking to International Crisis Group¹⁹³

¹⁸⁵ Bryden M (2015), *The Decline and Fall of Al-Shabaab? Think Again*, (Sahan Pathfinders in Policy and Practice), April.

¹⁸⁶ Jordan J (2009), *When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation*, (Security Studies), p 756.

¹⁸⁷ Alex de Waal (2015), ‘Assassinating Terrorists Does Not Work’, Boston Review, 24 November.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ International Crisis Group (2008), ‘Somalia: To Move Beyond the Failed State’, December, p 26.

¹⁹⁰ *Al Jazeera* (2015), ‘Retired US General: Drones cause more damage than good’, 16 July.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Other international actors such as the EU and UK have been more militarily active in relation to countering the threat of piracy from Somalia.

¹⁹³ International Crisis Group (2005), ‘Counter-Terrorism in Somalia: Losing Hearts and Minds?’, July, p 4.

These sentiments about the ‘enemy’ result from a history of conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia going back several decades – a history that was largely ignored by US policymakers responsible for providing support to Ethiopia’s invasion. When the US Director of National Intelligence, John McConnell, addressed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the Ethiopian invasion, for example, he “did not address allegations that the Ethiopian military intervention could strengthen Islamist insurgents”, and instead argued that Ethiopia was keeping al-Qaeda “tamped down or on the run” in Somalia.¹⁹⁴ However, the Ethiopian intervention undoubtedly exacerbated instability in Somalia. Prior to Ethiopia’s invasion, the use of warlords by the US and Ethiopia to capture individuals suspected to have links with al-Qaeda had already led to the ICU’s transformation from a loose federation into a more homogeneous body with clear command structures.¹⁹⁵ Following Ethiopian and US military action, the ICU disintegrated with the exception of al-Shabaab (previously one faction within the ICU), which was the most significant opposition to the Ethiopian forces and the TFG.¹⁹⁶ Ahmed Madobe, a member of the ICU and now President of Jubaland State, has argued that:

“If Ethiopia did not invade, and the US did not carry out airstrikes, which were viewed as a continuation of the warlords’ and Ethiopia’s ruthlessness, al Shabaab would not have survived.”¹⁹⁷

International actors have also supported the use of force by regional actors by allowing Kenya and Ethiopia to join AMISOM, and tolerating the presence of ENDF forces in Somalia outside the AMISOM framework as well as Kenyan airstrikes – despite the 2008 Djibouti Peace Agreement’s explicit call for the deployment of an “international stabilization force from countries that are friends of Somalia excluding neighbouring states”.¹⁹⁸

The involvement of Kenya and Ethiopia and other regional actors such as Uganda has led to questions about AMISOM’s eventual exit strategy, particularly in light of the many advantages these actors gain from participation in AMISOM, which may encourage them to prolong the mission. First, while regional actors have suffered high casualties in Somalia, they have received substantial revenue in return for their participation. Second, they have been able to leverage their involvement in AMISOM as a means of securing more domestic revenue for their militaries. Finally, while Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda all have troops operating outside AMISOM sectors, their participation in AMISOM has provided a useful cover for the pursuit of their own national security objectives. In the specific case of Burundi, involvement in AMISOM has enabled the government to maintain the size of its post-conflict army despite mandatory demobilisation orders, which until recently “undoubtedly helped to ease tensions in the army”.¹⁹⁹

This legitimisation of the role of regional actors in the Somali conflict by the US, UK and EU, as well acceptance of the likelihood that they will remain militarily active for the foreseeable future, has occurred despite widespread evidence highlighting how the use of military force by regional actors has caused harm to the Somali population and continued unabated in the absence of meaningful accountability mechanisms for any wrongdoing. Human Rights Watch reports on Somalia covering the period from 2009 through to 2015 all documented numerous examples of how AMISOM, regional forces

¹⁹⁴ *Op cit* Congressional Research Service (2015), p 12.

¹⁹⁵ Harper M (2012), *Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State*, (Zed Books), p 80.

¹⁹⁶ Moller B (2009), *The Somali Conflict: The Role of External Actors*, (Danish Institute for International Studies), p 20.

¹⁹⁷ Scahill J (2012), ‘Dirty Wars: The World is a Battlefield’, (Avalon), September, p 224.

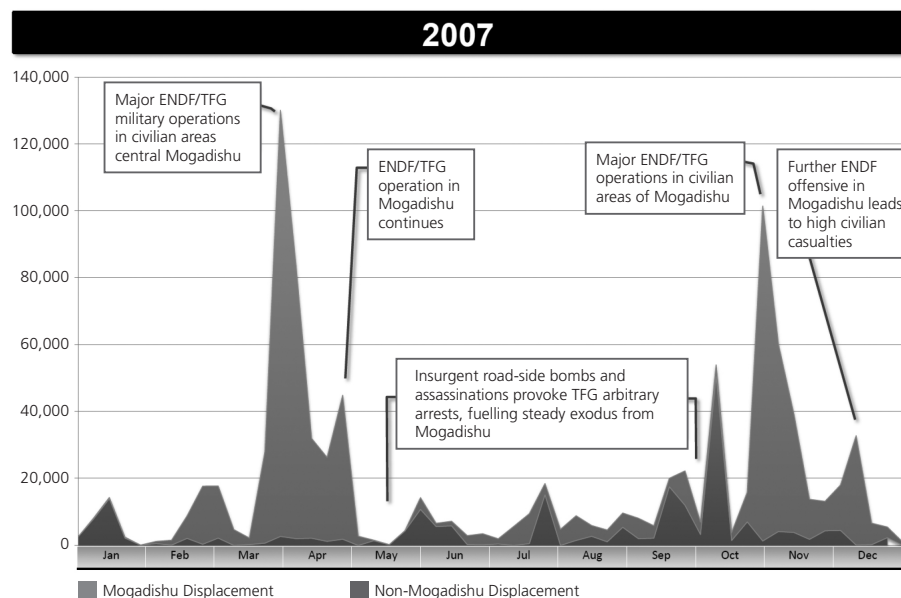
¹⁹⁸ Djibouti Agreement (2008), (<http://unpos.unmissions.org/Portals/UNPOS/Repository%20UNPOS/080818%20-%20Djibouti%20Agreement.pdf>).

¹⁹⁹ Wilen N, Birantamije G, Ambrosetti D (2015), ‘Is Burundi still a credible peacekeeper?’, *The Washington Post*, 23 May.

and their proxy forces have been responsible for indiscriminate attacks and serious abuses against Somali civilians.²⁰⁰

Prior to this period, throughout 2007, the ENDF was responsible for some of the worst fighting in Somalia since the collapse of the Somali state. In March 2007, for example, the ENDF's bombardment of Mogadishu over the course of several days caused over one-third of the population to flee, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Displacement of Somali population following kinetic operations (Source: UNHCR)²⁰¹



According to the International Crisis Group, the ENDF's heavy-handed approach could be linked to senior figures in the Ethiopian government as “few actions are taken by field commanders without clearance from high up”.²⁰² A Human Rights Watch report examining the impact of the Ethiopian invasion observed that, “Ethiopian forces also appeared to conduct deliberate attacks on civilians, particularly attacks on hospitals. They committed pillaging and looting of civilian property, including of medical equipment from hospitals”.²⁰³

More recently, a Journalists for Justice report entitled “Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia”, documented a range of abuses committed by the KDF in Somalia including airstrikes, highlighting that the “consistent pattern that emerged was of air strikes targeting crowds of people and animals.”²⁰⁴ Ugandan forces have also been implicated in civilian deaths, with the head of the AU in Somalia admitting that Ugandan soldiers were responsible for killing seven civilians who were at a wedding party in July 2015.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2009’: “Ethiopian bombardments regularly fall on civilian homes and public spaces, sometimes killing entire families” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2009/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2010’: “all parties are implicated in war crimes or other serious human rights abuses.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2010/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2011’: “Throughout 2010, with all parties conducting indiscriminate attacks causing high civilian casualties.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2011/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2012’: “Indiscriminate attacks were committed by all parties to the conflict during a series of military offensives led by the TFG, with the support of AMISOM and ASWJ, in late 2010 and between February and May 2011.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2012/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2013’: “the forces arrayed against it – a combination of Somali government security forces, troops with the AMISOM, Ethiopian government forces, and allied militias – committed abuses, including indiscriminate attacks harming civilians and arbitrary arrests and detentions.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2013/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2014’: “African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ethiopian government troops, and allied militias – have also committed abuses.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/somalia>; Human Rights Watch ‘World Report 2015’: “Somali government security forces, African Union (AU) troops, and allied militias were responsible for indiscriminate attacks, sexual violence, and arbitrary arrests and detention.” <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/somalia>.

²⁰¹ UNHCR Presentation provided to Saferworld researcher in March 2011.

²⁰² *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2008), p 16.

²⁰³ Human Rights Watch (2007), ‘Shell-Shocked: Civilians Under Siege in Mogadishu’, August, p 5.

²⁰⁴ *Op cit* Journalists for Justice (2015), p 7.

²⁰⁵ *BBC* (2015), ‘Uganda AU soldiers charged over Somali wedding attack’, 21 August.

Violence committed by regional forces against the Somali population over the years has had the effect of reinforcing al-Shabaab's narrative of victimisation and grievance, which has frequently been invoked as justification for its attacks. For example, in the aftermath of the Garissa University attacks, al-Shabaab's spokesperson, Mohamud Rage, highlighted the Kenyan presence in Somalia, stating, "Kenya is at war with Somalia."²⁰⁶

Fighting without a political strategy?

The gains from AMISOM and SNA-led military efforts are diluted by the FGS's failure to articulate a long-term coherent political vision for newly recovered areas.²⁰⁷ While there have been some efforts to push for a recalibration of AMISOM, the SNA and associated forces' military strategy with the FGS's political strategy, all parties to these discussions, including international actors, continue to back AMISOM offensives despite evidence that they are exacerbating governance deficits in several newly recovered areas.²⁰⁸ As Emma Skeppstrom and Per Nordlund have argued:

*"[T]he [AMISOM] offensive clearly constitutes a counterinsurgency or counterterrorism operation and the offensive has been planned from a military perspective. This creates problems from a peacebuilding and statebuilding perspective if there is nothing to fill the void when AMISOM eventually leaves the so-called newly liberated areas."*²⁰⁹

Typically following the 'liberation' of an area, a temporary administration has been dispatched from Mogadishu, often bypassing any discussion of its lack of legitimacy among the local populace. The sustainability of these temporary administrations has been further undermined by their total dependence on AMISOM for security. Newly recovered areas are extremely vulnerable to being retaken by al-Shabaab if AMISOM withdraws, as occurred in the town of Buqda, which al-Shabaab retook in early September 2015. Local elder Nur Ibrahim remarked that "the problem is that the government cannot keep control of the town and it does not want al-Shabaab to rule it."²¹⁰

A further challenge in many newly recovered areas has resulted from al-Shabaab's preference – until relatively recently²¹¹ – to avoid direct military confrontations with AMISOM, instead choosing to withdraw and surround the area in question. This was the case in Bulo Burde, a strategic town linking the Hiiraan and Middle Shabelle regions, which al-Shabaab ceded control of in March 2014.²¹² An AMISOM official acknowledged that in Bulo Burde, as in other newly recovered areas, AMISOM forces have become a "marooned island... cut off from the population by al-Shabaab", and their presence has had negative effects such as increasing prices, which in turn has caused further displacements of the local population.²¹³ The resurgence of clan conflicts previously "suppressed by al-Shabaab's high-handed approach" has also been noticeable in many newly recovered areas.²¹⁴

Arguably such difficulties are likely to occur more frequently given the recent change in AMISOM's military tactics, which in 2015 grew increasingly focused on maintaining an offensive tempo of operations, aimed at rapidly seizing territory from al-Shabaab across southern and central Somalia.

²⁰⁶ *Op cit* Agence France-Presse (2015).

²⁰⁷ Carter P, Guard R (2015), 'Upcoming Inflection Point: Tracing and Optimizing the AMISOM Trajectory in Somalia', (PRISM), January, p 56.

²⁰⁸ Saferworld interviews, Mogadishu, 9 November 2014; Mogadishu, 10 November 2014; Mogadishu, 11 November 2014.

²⁰⁹ Skeppstrom E, Nordlund P (2014), 'Security, Stabilisation and State Formation in Somalia: Challenges for Implementing the Somali Compact (FOI)', June, p 32.

²¹⁰ Sheikh A, Omar F (2015), 'Al Shabaab militants retake Somali town from African Union', *Reuters*, 6 September.

²¹¹ One analyst has predicted recent high-profile attacks by al-Shabaab are likely to continue, with al-Shabaab's loss of territory to AMISOM relieving it of the responsibility of providing the same scale of social services, which have enabled it to spend more on attacks. For more details, see Somalia Newsroom (2015), 'Al-Shabaab Continues Mass Raid Tactics Against AMISOM', 2 September (<http://somalianewsroom.com/2015/09/02/al-shabaab-continues-mass-raid-tactics-against-amisom/>).

²¹² Mohamud O (2014), 'Somalia: Bulo Burde Residents Return Years After Fleeing Al-Shabaab's Brutal Rule', *AllAfrica*, 26 March.

²¹³ Saferworld interview, London, 18 November 2014.

²¹⁴ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 8 November 2014.

In the absence of a coherent long-term political strategy, both AMISOM and the FGS, with the support of international actors, are likely to continue to exacerbate the perception that the FGS is unable to provide security or govern effectively in newly recovered areas – a perception that al-Shabaab can exploit. For example, in September 2015, after the town of Janale (90km south of Mogadishu) was recaptured by al-Shabaab, the acting governor of Lower Shabelle remarked, “it will be difficult for the residents to trust the Somali government and the AU troops”²¹⁵ Such developments are particularly acute in newly recovered areas where for many residents it is their first contact with the FGS.

“Why don’t they talk to each other?” Lack of coordination between regional and Western actors

This has been compounded by the lack of coordination among AMISOM member countries, which is largely a consequence of AMISOM’s organisational structure. AMISOM is active in five geographic sectors, each of which is mostly operated by one of the six AMISOM troop-contributing countries (TCCs), with military operations also decided for the most part on a sector-by-sector basis. To assist with planning, each TCC has its own commander who in theory reports to the head of AMISOM; however, in practice this has not always been the case. On 16 August 2015, for example, Ethiopian troops unilaterally withdrew from several towns in the Hiiraan region without the consent of the Djiboutian contingent that oversees operations in the area. The action reportedly prompted the commander of Djibouti’s forces to accuse Ethiopian troops of taking orders from Addis Ababa rather than AMISOM’s high command.²¹⁶

This lack of coordination is significant for two reasons. First, it potentially enables TCCs to pursue their own independent objectives, some of which stand in direct opposition to AMISOM’s mandate.²¹⁷ An illustration of this is Kenya’s alleged involvement in Somalia’s charcoal and sugar trade, which recently led the NGO *Journalists for Justice* to conclude that Kenya’s political and military elite has a “personal interest in the war economy that exists in Somalia”²¹⁸ Second, it has provided al-Shabaab with opportunities to conduct successful military operations, which have further undermined the security of the Somali people. In June 2015, for example, al-Shabaab successfully overran 120 Burundian soldiers based in the town of Leego. Despite Ugandan and Ethiopian forces being stationed nearby (30km and 70km respectively), it took two days for troop reinforcements to arrive. While several factors were identified as causing the delay, one AMISOM commander complained about the sense of “incoordination” among the heads of the various TCCs and stated that, “some commanders are not taking orders directly from AMISOM commanders. Instead they are seeking direction from their countries”²¹⁹ This analysis has been verified by other reports, including one assessment that concluded that AMISOM commanders “maintain highly personalized and sometimes outright subversive agendas”²²⁰

The lack of coordination within AMISOM is also mirrored in the use of drone strikes, with evidence suggesting that any potential advantages arising from the use of drone strikes are not being capitalised upon due to a lack of coordination among Western and regional actors. This was apparent in the aftermath of the drone strike that killed al-Shabaab’s former leader, Ahmed Abdi Godane, on 5 October 2014. Speaking shortly afterwards, one analyst elaborated:

²¹⁵ Sheikh A, Omar F (2015), ‘Islamist rebels attack Somali army bases, retake town’, *Reuters*, 18 September.

²¹⁶ *Hiiraan Online* (2015), ‘Djiboutian commander lambasts Ethiopian troops for vacating key towns’, 17 August.

²¹⁷ AMISOM, ‘AMISOM Mandate’, (<http://amisom-au.org/amisom-mandate/>).

²¹⁸ *Op cit* Journalists for Justice (2015), p 7.

²¹⁹ Maruf H (2015), ‘Al-Shabab Attacks Expose AMISOM Weaknesses’, *Voice of America*, 1 July.

²²⁰ Felbab-Brown V (2015), ‘Saving Somalia (Again): How Reconstruction Stalled – And What to do About It’, *Foreign Affairs*, 23 June.

“What was the plan? There wasn’t one. So killing him then makes absolutely no difference. They have articulated a victory and they have the momentum because of the AMISOM offensive, but there is a window of six months before the new leader settles in. The military has to be coordinated because otherwise we end up scrambling... The EU admitted there was no plan after the Godane killing. There’s not even any more funding so we’re not seeing more defections. There’s not even a framework for this in place.”²²¹

Enabling the spread of arms

As detailed in the previous section, international actors have provided extensive security sector related support to the FGS and other Somali actors. While much of this assistance is provided under the terms of the arms embargo, several states have been reported by the UN SEMG as either breaching the arms embargo or, more often, acting in violation of technical reporting requirements – which has made the tracking of legal weapons transfers more difficult, further exacerbating the issue of access to weapons by all parties to the conflict in the country.

In 2012, for example, the UN SEMG reported that compliance with reporting arrangements had “become a growing problem in Somalia over the past year”, stating that over the course of their mandate, Ethiopia, France, Sudan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the UN and the US had provided support to security sectors in the country without providing prior notice or obtaining advance notification from the Sanctions Committee. The UN SEMG stated that “Such actions potentially violate the arms embargo...and contravene the procedures stipulated [for providing support to the security sector in Somalia]”²²² While the UN SEMG reported that compliance had improved in 2013, it went on to report that “a large part of the assistance provided to the Somali security forces involved in counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism operations at the federal and regional levels has not been reported. According to multiple diplomatic and military sources, the US and UK are increasingly involved in directly supporting intelligence services in ‘Somaliland’, ‘Puntland’ and Mogadishu, at times in violation of resolutions 733 (1992) and 1425 (2002)”²²³ Following the easing of the arms embargo, the UN SEMG reported non-compliance by the FGS in 2014, including “the diversion of weapons to arms networks connected to the Federal Government”²²⁴

Poor control systems inside Somalia have compounded this problem, with regular reports of the diversion of government and AMISOM weapons onto arms markets in Somalia and into the hands of armed opposition groups and clan militias inside the country. While the 2015 UN SEMG report indicated improved compliance, weapons tracking remains a major challenge for the FGS and its international partners. The UK, for example, has been criticised for not ensuring greater scrutiny of military assistance to the Somali government particularly as it relates to human rights abuses.²²⁵ These concerns about how external support to the Somali security sector could be fuelling violence and associated grievances have been echoed by the US Congress, which has “expressed concern that the US government may not be adequately assessing long-term risks associated with providing training and military equipment for counter-terrorism purposes to countries with poor records of human rights, rule of law, and accountability”²²⁶

²²¹ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 6 November 2014.

²²² United Nations (2012), ‘Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council resolution 2002 (2011)’, 27 June (www.somaliareport.com/downloads/UN_REPORT_2012.pdf), p 21.

²²³ United Nations Security Council (2013), ‘Letter dated 12 July 2013 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council’, 12 July, p 29.

²²⁴ *Op cit* United Nations (2014), p 10.

²²⁵ Amnesty International UK (2010), ‘Somalia: Controls on military assistance must be tightened’, 21 January.

²²⁶ *Op cit* Ploch L (2010), p 4.

2.2 The global counter-terror agenda's reinforcement of counter-productive strategies and behaviours by national, regional and international actors

"Being an Islamist in Somalia is not a guilty thing, we are all Muslims."

Somali civil society representative²²⁷

The name game: marginalising opposition, maintaining support

Since 9/11, various actors in the Somali conflict have instrumentalised the counter-terrorism agenda of Western actors in order to advance their own objectives. Specifically, the label of 'terrorist' or 'extremist' has become a "vital currency of power in Somali politics", and has been routinely applied to delegitimise political and armed actors in Somalia.²²⁸ An early example of this phenomenon is offered by the case of AIAI, which was designated as an FTO by the US in October 2001. Both before and after AIAI's designation, certain Somali actors – most notably, the SSRC – sought to link AIAI as well as other groups like Takfir wa'l-Hijra publicly to a range of Somali political groups and Islamist organisations in an effort to ensure their international condemnation.²²⁹ More recently, one Somali civil society representative warned against the continuing willingness of the FGS and international actors to marginalise various Somali actors in this way, warning that, "You are making spoilers, but they are not spoilers. What is the benefit of alienating [these] groups?"²³⁰

The 'terrorist' or 'extremist' label has also been used to create and sustain international support for particular parties to the Somali conflict. Arguably the most successful example of this phenomenon in action can be observed in the FGS's treatment of al-Shabaab. By framing al-Shabaab almost exclusively as a terrorist threat, the FGS has been able to secure considerable military and security resources, and in doing so international actors have found it easier to justify their assistance than they might otherwise have done.²³¹ More damagingly, one interviewee asserted that the counter-terrorism priorities of the international community have not only been used by the FGS to maintain external support, but have also served to obscure the fact that al-Shabaab has enjoyed relative popular support at certain points in its history and has been able to leverage clan and other disputes in recruiting fighters, contributing to a perpetuation of the conflict:

*"While they're [al-Shabaab] on the [FTO] lists, the [Somali] federal government benefits because they have a huge wildcard that they can play at will. No one recognises that al-Shabaab represent genuine concerns of people."*²³²

With the push to create interim administrations this use of the threat of al-Shabaab to secure resources has been devolved across Somalia. For example, speaking in August 2015, Ahmed Madobe, now President of the Interim Juba Administration, said, "We need particular assistance to eliminate al Shabaab – more funds, more military equipment, development projects and salaries for the forces."²³³ However, it should be noted that such demands are not entirely self-serving, with interim administrations facing numerous security threats and also providing troops to the SNA to fight al-Shabaab.

It has not only been the FGS and its predecessors that have manipulated the counter-terrorism priorities of international actors for their own purposes. In the period after 9/11, when the US collaborated with Somali warlords and Ethiopia to kill or capture suspected al-Qaeda members in Somalia, there were widespread allegations that Ethiopia was using the US to target its own opponents in Somalia. The policy was criticised by, for example, Ahmed Nur Jim'aale, founder of the Somali *hawala* company, al-Barakaat, who stated, "This is giving the wrong impression, using the killers, the

²²⁷ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 10 November 2014.

²²⁸ *Op cit* Elliot A, Holzer G (2009), p 218.

²²⁹ *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2002), p 17.

²³⁰ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 10 November 2014.

²³¹ Bryden M (2013), *Somalia Redux? Assessing the new Somali Federal Government*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies), January, p 15.

²³² Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 7 November 2014.

²³³ Hassan A (2015), 'Somali regional leader wants states, not elders, to choose parliament', *Reuters*, 20 August.

gangsters. You should bring the Peace Corps, not spend your money on snatching and killing.”²³⁴

A similar dynamic was to emerge again in relation to the ICU, which the Ethiopian government sought to link to al-Qaeda in an effort to secure US backing for military action. The US was reportedly alarmed and accepted these claims, a perspective that “in the eyes of many Somalis and most external observers, [was] based less on facts and more on the parochial self-interest of Ethiopia and the TFG.”²³⁵

Despite such accusations, international actors have been reluctant to acknowledge publicly how regional actors are contributing to the Somali conflict due to their perceived indispensability to the overarching counter-terror strategy in Somalia.

Leveraging Somalia’s security?

“The problem is that the international community legitimises actors who have other competing agendas that are problematic.”

Somali civil society representative, 9 November 2014²³⁶

This dependence on regional actors has placed Western actors in an uncomfortable position, particularly as regional actors have sought to leverage their central role in the execution of counter-terror and stabilisation objectives in Somalia for other strategic objectives. An instructive example of this phenomenon is offered by Uganda, whose involvement in AMISOM has been described as “part of President Museveni’s broader image management strategy of maintaining positive relationships with Uganda’s principal donors.”²³⁷

Uganda’s central role in AMISOM has undoubtedly proved useful. In 2012, for example, Uganda’s Prime Minister threatened to withdraw Uganda from “all regional peace efforts” including AMISOM in response to a leaked UNSC report that accused the Ugandan government of providing support to armed rebel groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).²³⁸ Subsequently, the President of the UNSC issued a statement clarifying that the leaked report did not necessarily reflect the views of the UN and praised Uganda’s “significant role in the maintenance of peace and security in several countries, particularly in Somalia.”²³⁹ Uganda’s involvement in AMISOM also proved useful in ending punitive restrictions on military aid to Uganda that were imposed after Uganda’s intervention in the war in the DRC, with US bilateral assistance to Uganda rising from \$390 million in 2007 to \$528 million in 2012.²⁴⁰

More recently, in an ongoing dispute over its maritime border with Somalia, Kenya’s Attorney General argued that Somalia should honour a previous contested agreement because, “Kenya has made exceptional sacrifices for Somalia. Its soldiers have fought Al-Shabaab.”²⁴¹ The case has potentially significant economic implications for both countries, with one Kenyan official confirming that they had already granted concessions to foreign companies to explore oil and gas in the area.²⁴² With the KDF already heavily implicated in charcoal and sugar smuggling,²⁴³ Kenya’s attempt to invoke its military efforts could serve to reinforce widespread perceptions that Kenya’s involvement in Somalia is motivated by a desire to exploit Somalia’s resources.²⁴⁴

²³⁴ *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2005), p 16.

²³⁵ *Op cit* Hoehne M V (2010), p 19.

²³⁶ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 9 November 2014.

²³⁷ Bruton B E, Williams P D (2014), *Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007–2013*, (Joint Special Operations University), September, p 40.

²³⁸ *Op cit* Pflanz M (2012).

²³⁹ *Op cit* Imaka I (2012).

²⁴⁰ *Op cit* Bruton B E, Williams P D (2014), p 79.

²⁴¹ Office of the Attorney General Kenya (2015), ‘Kenya objects to validity of Somalia’s maritime boundary case before the International Court of Justice’, 8 October.

²⁴² BBC (2015), ‘Somalia takes Kenya to ICJ over sea border’, 13 July.

²⁴³ *Op cit* Journalists for Justice (2015); *op cit* Anderson D M, McKnight J (2014), p 10.

²⁴⁴ *Somalia Newsroom* (2015), ‘Kenya Files Argument in Court Over Maritime Border Dispute with Somalia’, 8 October (<http://somalianewsroom.com/2015/10/08/kenya-files-argument-in-court-over-maritime-border-dispute-with-somalia-2/>).

Counterproductive regional adoption of the Western counter-terror agenda

Another significant impact of the counter-terror agenda of international actors in Somalia is that over time regional actors, in particular Kenya, have adopted this agenda in counterproductive ways. While regional counter-terror efforts have to some extent emerged organically in response to attacks by al-Shabaab (and other armed groups), international actors have encouraged these efforts, and had a role in shaping their nature. As explored in the previous section, this has been a result of the fact that “almost every government and polity in the eastern Horn of Africa has benefited from counter-terrorism-driven institution building” financed by international actors.²⁴⁵

The counter-terror agenda is now increasingly tied to domestic politics, with pressure on regional leaders to protect their citizens against further attacks. In the wake of al-Shabaab’s attack on Garissa University in April 2015, for example, the Kenyan Deputy President, William Ruto, said “the way America changed after 9/11 is the way Kenya will change after Garissa” and declared that “we must secure this country at whatever cost”.²⁴⁶ This pressure to ‘secure’ Kenya has repeatedly manifested itself in heavy-handed militarised responses such as Operation Usalama Watch. Launched on 2 April 2014, Operation Usalama Watch saw the deployment of 6,000 Kenyan security personnel to the predominantly Somali Nairobi neighbourhood of Eastleigh, where 650 residents were arrested. In the aftermath, there were accusations that the Kenyan police carried out acts of looting and received bribes.²⁴⁷

These are not one-off incidents. In September 2015, in a report entitled “The Error of Fighting Terror with Terror”, Kenya’s National Commission on Human Rights detailed how Kenyan security agencies have continued “to conduct abusive operations against individuals and groups suspected to be associated with terror attacks in various parts of the country”, documenting “over one hundred and twenty cases of egregious human rights violations that include twenty-five extrajudicial killings and eighty-one enforced disappearances”.²⁴⁸

Such actions have been described as a ‘decisive’ factor in pushing Kenyans to join organisations like (or linked to) al-Shabaab, and in turn al-Shabaab is increasingly able to pursue an agenda that transcends the Somali conflict.²⁴⁹ According to Anderson and McKnight, al-Shabaab has been successfully “reinventing itself to exploit the wider sense of economic and social grievance among Kenya’s disadvantaged Muslim populations.”²⁵⁰ This is reflected in a recent survey of recruits into extremist groups in Kenya where 65 per cent of those surveyed claimed that they joined radical Islamist groups as a result of experiencing injustice at the hands of Kenyan security forces.²⁵¹ More generally, there are also widely shared concerns about the increasing militarisation of the police forces, with one Kenyan civil society representative observing that “everything is getting militarized all in the name of fighting terrorism”.²⁵²

Picking a side: eroding humanitarian neutrality

One of the broader impacts of militarised approaches is that humanitarian efforts are no longer viewed as ‘neutral’, with one NGO representative arguing that “it’s too late to point to a distinction between humanitarianism and stabilisation” because the same international actors who are providing aid for humanitarian response are also financing the stabilisation and statebuilding agendas in Somalia: “they’re no longer talking about apolitical humanitarian aid”.²⁵³

²⁴⁵ Menkhaus K (2014), ‘State Failure, State-Building, and Prospects for a “Functional Failed State” in Somalia’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 656 (1), p 158.

²⁴⁶ *Op cit* Institute of Security Studies (2015).

²⁴⁷ For more detail see *op cit* Anderson D M, McKnight J (2014), p 21.

²⁴⁸ *Op cit* KNCHR (2015), p 6.

²⁴⁹ International Crisis Group (2014), ‘Kenya: Al-Shabaab – Closer to Home’, September, p 12.

²⁵⁰ *Op cit* Anderson D M, McKnight J (2014), p 2.

²⁵¹ Botha A (2014), ‘Radicalisation in Kenya: Recruitment to Al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council’, September, p 20.

²⁵² Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 11 November 2014.

²⁵³ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 4 November 2014.

These concerns have become more acute ever since the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) was established in May 2013, integrating hitherto separate humanitarian structures into the UN's political and military components. According to one NGO this blurring of lines between humanitarian, military and political objectives has impacted on the ability of humanitarian actors to negotiate access to areas controlled by al-Shabaab.²⁵⁴ With three million Somalis estimated to be in areas controlled by al-Shabaab and having no access to aid, this has almost certainly had a negative impact.

The broader use of humanitarian assistance as a political tool has had devastating consequences for Somalis. 258,000 Somali people – including 133,000 children – died during the 2011 famine.²⁵⁵ Writing on the famine, Maxwell et al. noted that while al-Shabaab behaviour played a role in exacerbating the famine, “counter-terrorism restrictions introduced by major Western donors limited the pool of humanitarian funds available during the crisis and discouraged organizations from operating in the area” adding that “both the inadequate funding and counter-terror policies were strategic manoeuvres to ‘undermine’ Al-Shabaab.”²⁵⁶ A 2015 report went on to argue that the inadequacy of preventive measures ahead of the famine was “at least in part because a proscribed group controlled much of the affected area, and counter-terrorism legal restrictions outweighed humanitarian concerns in external policy consideration.”²⁵⁷

More recently, NGOs have come under increased pressure to implement aid programmes in newly recovered areas. For example, UNSC Resolution 2158 “stresses the importance it attaches to UNSOM working with the Federal Government of Somalia in supporting the government’s stabilization efforts and coordinating international assistance, in particular in areas recovered from al-Shabaab.”²⁵⁸ While some interviewees acknowledged that AMISOM’s military offensives have enabled humanitarian access to areas previously off-limits, they felt that NGOs had little choice but to follow the decisions made by international actors on the basis that “it gets us back in.”²⁵⁹ Additionally, interviewees described how pressure to deliver into newly recovered areas had reduced their ability to distribute resources on the basis of need – further undermining the humanitarian principle of impartiality.²⁶⁰ The risk of blowback remains high and there is evidence that al-Shabaab has sought to block the delivery of aid in newly recovered areas, as it did in Hudur, south central Somalia, in early March 2014, resulting in a sharp increase in malnutrition rates in the area.²⁶¹

2.3 Ignoring and exacerbating key drivers of conflict

“Most actors just want a government in Somalia that can fight terrorism without caring about the root causes of conflict.”

UN official, 11 November 2014²⁶²

“From 2007 to 2012, AMISOM’s de facto mission was to install an unelected government that controlled no territory, delivered no services, provided no security to the public, and was broadly perceived by its own citizens as illegitimate.”

Bronwyn E. Bruton and Paul D. Williams in *Counterinsurgency in Somalia: Lessons Learned from the African Union Mission in Somalia, 2007–2013*²⁶³

²⁵⁴ ACF (2015), ‘Consequences of the structurally integrated UN Mission in Somalia on principled humanitarian action and access to population in need’, August, p 2.

²⁵⁵ *Op cit* Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia (2013).

²⁵⁶ Maxwell D, Majid N, Stobaugh K, Kim J J, Lauer P E (2014), *Lessons Learned from the Somalia Famine and the Greater Horn of Africa Crisis 2011–2012: Desk Review of Literature*, (Tufts University), July, p 44.

²⁵⁷ Maxwell D, Majid N, Adan G, Abdirahman K, Kim, J J (2015), *Facing Famine: Somali experiences if the Famine in 2011*, (Tufts University), October, p 4.

²⁵⁸ United Nations (2014), ‘Security Council, Adopting Resolution 2158 (2014), Extends Assistance Mission in Somalia for One Year under Broader Mandate’, 29 May.

²⁵⁹ Saferworld interviews, Nairobi, 4 November 2014; Nairobi 5 November 2014; Mogadishu, 9 November 2014; Mogadishu, 10 November 2014; Mogadishu, 11 November 2014.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ *Op cit* ACF (2015), p 4.

²⁶² Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 11 November 2014.

²⁶³ *Op cit* Bruton B E, Williams P D (2014), p 87.

While the authority of the Federal Government has evolved significantly since Bruton and Williams wrote the above in 2014, the international community has clearly ‘picked a side’ by supporting the FGS and framing its engagement in opposition to al-Shabaab.²⁶⁴ In doing so, international actors have wilfully ignored many of the actual drivers and root causes of the Somali conflict, as set out in Annex Three. One donor, for example, described the need to address the root causes of conflict as “irrelevant...development flannel” arguing that while it was imperative to know what the root causes were, these should be addressed by the state once it is able to.²⁶⁵ Contending that current approaches have led to a problematic emphasis on short-term engagements and solutions, one analyst commented that it is “easy to put these superficial discourses forward because there’s not much information”.²⁶⁶ Others have gone further, arguing that “the system is averse to picking up the biggest issues of conflict”.²⁶⁷

This failure to ensure that engagement is sensitive to and helps address the drivers of conflict is underpinned by the tendency of international actors to follow the US lead and view the Somali conflict through the lens of the ‘Global War on Terrorism’. In doing so, the local dynamics of the Somali conflict were often downplayed or ignored. The local aspirations, grievances or operations that characterise al-Shabaab have largely been ignored in favour of analysis that highlights the movement’s transnational links to al-Qaeda and the threat it poses to international actors.

However, as the Institute for Security Studies’ Jolyon Ford observes:

*“There is risk that when counterterrorist strategies project a transnational agenda and capacity onto organisations that primarily have only a limited and local one, it results in a form of self-fulfilling prophecy.”*²⁶⁸

Lack of conflict sensitivity

More broadly, by supporting the FGS and endorsing its framing of the Somali conflict, international actors have also committed themselves to a security-first approach that has largely disregarded the concerns of many Somalis, who are “both sceptical and fearful of the state”.²⁶⁹ Jeremy Brickhill argues such fears have been exacerbated “by attempts to re-establish the state monopoly on force without negotiation or consensus”.²⁷⁰ While national security institutions will need to emerge, particularly to reduce reliance on AMISOM, international efforts to reinforce the security capabilities of the FGS have not taken into sufficient account widely voiced concerns about the lack of functioning, legitimate oversight structures, which matters especially in the Somali context where clan loyalty is stronger than loyalty to institutions.

“Without civilian governance structures to support them, the training of security forces could, at worst, prove destabilizing to the Federal Government and, at best, be a waste of donor funds.”

Ambassador Philip Carter, Deputy to the Commander of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) for Civil-Military Engagement and Lt. Commander Ryan Guard, Deputy Executive Officer for AFRICOM Deputy Commander for Civil-Military Engagements²⁷¹

As the above analysis highlights, without civilian oversight, there is a high risk that efforts to strengthen the security capabilities of the FGS and integrate militias into the SNA could provide a ready stream of recruits for other militias. Between 2004 and 2008, for example, more than 14,000 soldiers trained by Ethiopia defected or deserted with their weapons and uniforms.²⁷² Such occurrences enable violence and instability,

²⁶⁴ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 4 November 2014.

²⁶⁵ Saferworld interview, London, 18 November 2014.

²⁶⁶ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 12 November 2014.

²⁶⁷ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 11 November 2014.

²⁶⁸ Institute for Security Studies (2013), ‘Counter-terrorism, human rights and the rule of law in Africa’, November, p 9.

²⁶⁹ Brickhill J, ‘Security and Stabilization in Somalia’ in Bradbury M, Healy S. (eds.), *Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peace-making*, (ACCORD 21), p 29.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p 29.

²⁷¹ *Op cit* Carter P, Guard R (2015), p 58.

²⁷² *Op cit* Bryden M (2013), p 10.

and undermine the political base needed to establish institutions that could guarantee human security. As Jeremy Brickhill contends:

*“by leaping from a preliminary ceasefire straight to direct assistance to re-establish state security capacities, the international community removes from the Somali parties the vital consensus and confidence building stage of joint responsibility and management for security, which lie at the heart of Somali approaches to peacebuilding”.*²⁷³

Estimates of the number of defections from the SNA have varied considerably, with unofficial sources stating that about 80 per cent of the SNA soldiers trained by AMISOM have gone missing, while AMISOM sources put the defection rate at 10 per cent.²⁷⁴ Concerns about defections have heightened, following reports that the FGS is struggling to pay the salaries of the Somali SNA, with the UN SEMG alleging that only one payment was disbursed in 2015. This inability to pay SNA salaries has been linked to financial mismanagement, with the UN SEMG noting that: “few cases illustrate the threat posed by financial mismanagement and misappropriation to peace, security and stability in Somalia more than the corruption within the Federal Government security institutions”.²⁷⁵ In response to the allegations, one senior Ugandan officer observed that these problems “open up an infiltration opportunity for al Shabaab”.²⁷⁶ Another concern regarding external support to the Somali security sector relates to the question of to whom exactly support is being provided. For example, it has been alleged by Emma Skeppstrom and Per Nordlund that the EUTM was only providing training to soldiers from one clan, heightening fears of the capture of state resources by one group.²⁷⁷

2.4 Pressure to complete political processes resulting in tensions and conflict

All international actors have been heavily involved in the political processes aimed at forming interim administrations, as set out in Vision 2016 and the New Deal. As one DFID document outlines, “Somalia’s peace and stability depends not just on a military victory, but on the outcome of a delicate political process to enable a federal Somalia to take shape based on an inclusive settlement over the division of wealth and authority among regions.”²⁷⁸ However, externally driven approaches predicated on the reinforcement of the FGS have ignored the reality that it has often been the process of re-establishing the national government’s authority that has worsened instability and armed conflict, rather than the lack of a central government *per se*.²⁷⁹ Since 2012, this narrative has also been replicated at the sub-national level with outbreaks of localised conflict and tensions linked to the formation of interim administrations. This has been described as a “fast-track approach to managing diversity of elite interests”.²⁸⁰ Indeed, the *de facto* legitimisation of the political power of narrow sections of the Somali elite at the sub-national level has become a dangerous side-effect of international efforts to expedite the formation of interim administrations, causing many Somali actors to complain of being ‘left behind’.²⁸¹

International demands to complete these processes in order to meet Vision 2016 deadlines are thus exacerbating local divisions. This has supported or encouraged rushed federalisation processes on a number of occasions, which have proceeded – deliberately in some instances – without engaging the full range of actors. Such processes have been subsequently endorsed by international actors, even where these statements of

²⁷³ *Op cit* Bradbury M, Healy S (eds.) (2010), p 29.

²⁷⁴ *Op cit* Skeppstrom E, Nordlund P (2014), p 43.

²⁷⁵ United Nations Security Council (2015), ‘Letter dated 9 October 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council’, 19 October, p 24.

²⁷⁶ Jorgic D (2015), ‘Failure to pay soldiers threatens Somalia’s war on Islamists’, *Reuters*, 8 October.

²⁷⁷ *Op cit* Skeppstrom E, Nordlund P (2014), p 34.

²⁷⁸ *Op cit* Department for International Development (2013).

²⁷⁹ *Op cit* Menkhaus K (2004), p 18.

²⁸⁰ Mosley J (2015), ‘Somalia’s Federal Future: Layered Agendas, Risks and Opportunities’, (Chatham House), September, p 14.

²⁸¹ *Op cit* Bryden M (2013), p 6.

endorsement note the very fact that they were not inclusive of all groups or actors.²⁸² This means that the international community has accepted and promoted exclusion and marginalisation – seemingly preferring the meeting of a deadline – despite the significant tensions that have resulted.²⁸³

An example of the results were provided by the clashes involving Ahmed Madobe, Barre Hirale, the FGS and al-Shabaab over the formation of the IJA in 2013. Further examples include the clashes involving AMISOM in Baidoa ahead of the formation of the Interim South West Administration (ISWA), and clashes in areas of Mudug and Galgaadud throughout much of 2015 over the formation of the IGA, followed by clashes between the IGA and Puntland over control of Galkayo in late 2015. While various actors will inevitably compete for political power, these clashes have been damaging to stabilisation and statebuilding efforts, significantly undermining the legitimacy of institutions emerging from these processes. In the case of ISWA, for example, the task of bringing in excluded clans was left to the administration, whereas the excluded clans in question deny the legitimacy of the administration to govern – and ultimately are seeking a rebalancing of power.²⁸⁴ While Somali actors have led these processes, international involvement has served to accept rather than question processes in which “Somali elites do not want or seek reconciliation”.²⁸⁵

Regional actors are also deeply involved in the process of interim administration formation for their own purposes. Many Somalis (and external observers), for example, view the IJA, as “an attempt to reward certain groups that supported Kenya and Ethiopia in their operations against al-Shabaab, rather than being representative of the wishes of the population”.²⁸⁶ For example, the Addis Agreement, which provided for the establishment of the IJA in July 2013, was pushed forward with little FGS involvement through IGAD, with Ethiopia highlighting “the limits of the federal government’s practical influence in areas ‘liberated’ from al-Shabaab”.²⁸⁷ In the ISWA, Ethiopia’s influence has also been visible. After their preferred candidate for president, Ahmed Adbisalan Adan, was defeated,²⁸⁸ they provided substantial resources to ASWJ to act as a counterpoint to the Galmudug administration headed by Abdikarim Hussein Guled.²⁸⁹

Political reconciliation vs. social reconciliation

Agreements creating interim administrations have also been problematic because too much emphasis has been placed on political reconciliation, at the expense of broader social reconciliation. This has exacerbated the politicisation of clan identity as the key means of accessing power. One civil society representative called for international actors to focus less on ‘hardware’ and more on ‘software’ – that is, more on relations between communities and less on forming administrations through questionable deals with political elites and security actors.²⁹⁰ Another civil society representative elaborated how, for example, the UK’s pressure on the FGS and local elites to form interim administrations had undermined ongoing reconciliation efforts that were

²⁸² See for example, the joint press statement from the UN, IGAD, EU, AMISOM and US on the election of the President of the Interim Galmudug Administration; “There is a need to expeditiously address key issues that have emerged from the process, in particular, to pursue negotiations to address the concerns and claims of other parties that need to be included in the process. We urge the new administration to be inclusive, embrace reconciliation and negotiate in good faith with all concerned parties”: <http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/joint-press-statement-international-community-congratulates-galmudug-regional>; the statement from the UN, IGAD, EU and AMISOM on the formation of ISWA; “At the same time we underline the importance of dialogue and inclusivity and urge the new leader to reach out to all constituents of the ISWA”: <http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/joint-statement-international-community-welcomes-newly-elected-president-somalias>.

²⁸³ See for example: Somalia Newsroom (2014), ‘Analysis: Flawed Baidoa Deal Will Have Worrying Ripple Effect in Somalia’, 30 June (<http://somalianewsroom.com/2014/06/30/analysis-flawed-baidoa-deal-will-have-worrying-ripple-effect-in-somalia/>).

²⁸⁴ Bryden M, Thomas T (2015), *Somalia’s Troubled Transition: Vision 2016 Revisited*, (Sahan Pathfinders in Policy and Practice), May, p x.

²⁸⁵ *Op cit* Somalia Newsroom (2014).

²⁸⁶ *Op cit* Skeppstrom E, Nordlund P (2014), p 18.

²⁸⁷ *Op cit* Mosley J (2015), p 10.

²⁸⁸ *Garowe Online* (2015), ‘Somalia: Front-runners in Galmudug presidential election’, 30 June.

²⁸⁹ *Hiiiraan Online* (2015), ‘Moderate Islamist faction spurns power sharing deal with Galmudug state’, 29 August.

²⁹⁰ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 8 November 2014.

tackling local conflict drivers and offered a credible, legitimate and long-term basis upon which Somali institutions could be established.²⁹¹

The absence of social reconciliation processes has contributed to a lack of trust among Somalis in the nature of the statebuilding project as a whole. One poll showed that 98 per cent of respondents felt the FGS only protected its own interests, while 55 per cent believed that “they were not able to register a political party that represented their ideas.”²⁹² The exacerbation of clan divisions through federalism processes has reinforced opposition to the state and has also played into the hands of al-Shabaab, which has been able to maintain “residual influence” due to its “skill in appropriating and exploiting legitimate local grievance for its own purposes.”²⁹³

2.5 Lack of public buy-in to international strategies

Working with a narrow section of the Somali elite

The Somali people continue to lack ownership of the various strategies that have been employed by international actors to address Somalia’s problems. This was a recurring theme in interviews, with one INGO representative observing that, “reconciliation doesn’t happen in Somalia – it happens in Arta, Cairo, London.”²⁹⁴ Likewise, until fairly recently international actors were heavily focused on the capital: “everything is all about Mogadishu, Mogadishu, Mogadishu.”²⁹⁵ Another NGO representative described the biggest mistake of international actors as “trying to manage Somalia from outside Somalia.”²⁹⁶ This lack of ownership has deeply affected the form of externally driven efforts to reinforce the FGS. As one Somali civil society representative said, “the investor will always have an influence.”²⁹⁷

Internationally mediated peace processes have repeatedly been prioritised over Somali-led processes. The Rift Valley Institute’s Mark Bradbury argues that Somali-led processes “typically take the time needed to reach a resolution, and benefit from community pressure to conclude an agreement”. Such pressures are often lacking in externally driven peace processes that focus on narrow elites and are typically bound by challenging deadlines.²⁹⁸

Some interviewees suggested that international actors often have to embrace elites for the sake of counter-terror and stabilisation objectives, even though this means sanctioning behaviour that works against peace in Somalia. For some, there are “no other options”: “sometimes the greater good will depend” on engagement with such individuals.²⁹⁹ An example of this is the US’s relationship with Abdi Qeybid’s Galmudug administration, even though the Somali police force had previously been implicated in serious human rights abuses under his leadership.³⁰⁰

This focus on narrow elites of Somali society has also been problematic, as it has encouraged spoilers to the various political processes. Although Somali actors do have ownership over political, peace and other processes, a small section of Somali elites retains considerable control, negotiating agreements and presenting arrangements to other Somali actors and donors. Notwithstanding the influence of Ethiopia and Kenya, the first effort to establish the state of ‘Jubaland’ following the capture of Kismayo from al-Shabaab is one such example. Some have argued that the delays to the implementation of Vision 2016 – specifically around the constitutional review and preparations for

291 Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 5 November 2014.

292 Botha A, Abdile M, *Radicalisation and al-Shabaab recruitment in Somalia*, (Institute for Security Studies, September 2014), p 9.

293 *Op cit* Bryden M (2013), p 13.

294 Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 8 November 2014.

295 Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 8 November 2014.

296 Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 5 November 2014.

297 Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 9 November 2014.

298 The Search for Peace (2009), ‘A Synthesis Report of the Peace Mapping Study’, June, p 27.

299 Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 12 November 2014.

300 Human Rights Watch (2009), ‘Events of 2009’, (<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2010/country-chapters/somalia>).

elections, represent further examples of arrangements between some Somali actors to implement delaying tactics, with the presumable aim of having their mandates extended. As ownership is transferred away from international and regional actors towards Somalis, the question of how broad this ownership is and to what extent it will foster sufficient legitimacy to prevent backlash against statebuilding processes will continue to loom large.

Fostering an imbalance in state-society relations

One of the broader consequences of the absence of the Somali state is that donors have sought to implement policy initiatives and programmes through civil society, including INGOs and national NGOs, and focused their efforts on supporting capacity building among civil society and non-state actors to ensure Somali voices are heard in the in decision-making processes. Such actors do need international support, and this was particularly necessary when the Somali state was virtually non-existent amid a humanitarian crisis that has lasted two decades and continues today. However, in recent years the FGS has pushed back against civil society for receiving funds that should be going to the state, especially after the New Deal raised expectations of funds increasingly passing through the state. For their part, many civil society actors are wary of engaging with the state, especially as a perceived connection to the FGS can prove dangerous at local level both to individuals and organisations.³⁰¹

As a consequence, the relationship between the FGS and civil society actors has become increasingly polarised. There are efforts underway to foster a more positive relationship between the two (i.e. civil society actors recognise the need to cede more of their responsibilities to the state and the FGS recognises the positive role of civil society). While international donors have been supportive of the involvement of civil society actors, more needs to be done to reinforce and validate their role in the political settlement in Somalia. For example, international donors accepted that only three civil society representatives would be invited to attend the High Level Partnership Forum meeting in Copenhagen in November 2014 – and that they would be picked by the government.³⁰² Such behaviour has done little to reinforce a positive relationship between civil society and the state.

2.6 Reinforcement of corruption and fuelling of the war economy

Repeated external interventions have entrenched the existence of a war economy in Somalia, creating a situation whereby a range of actors have strong incentives to remain involved in the conflict – and arguably to ensure its continuation – due to the considerable economic opportunities on offer. Between 2007 and 2012 AMISOM was estimated to have received approximately \$1.5 billion, an average of \$800,000 per day, mostly from the US, UN and EU.³⁰³ This amounts to a significant financial incentive for several countries to join AMISOM. The KDF, for example, repeatedly delayed negotiations aimed at incorporating their forces into AMISOM in order to secure a higher rate of pay per soldier, with the EU eventually agreeing to pay 4,402 troops at a rate of \$1,208 per month.³⁰⁴

Regional actors like Kenya have also sought to exploit Somalia's resources – most notably, charcoal – and in doing so have reportedly provided al-Shabaab with much-needed financial resources to continue fighting. This is apparent in relation to Kenyan actions in Kismayo in the aftermath of their intervention in 2011. After taking control of Kismayo, the KDF was put under considerable pressure to reopen the port due to a

³⁰¹ Saferworld interviews, Nairobi, 4 November 2014; Mogadishu, 9 November 2014; Mogadishu 10 November 2014.

³⁰² Saferworld (2014), 'Strengthening the New Deal from the Bottom Up: Perspectives on the Somali Compact and Somaliland Special Arrangement', November, p 10.

³⁰³ *Op cit* Bruton B E, Williams P D (2014), p 58.

³⁰⁴ Mutai E (2014), 'Defence PS clarifies payment for AMISOM soldiers', *Business Daily*, 16 January.

stockpile of charcoal estimated at \$60 million. Soon after, the UN SEMG reported that the KDF, in collaboration with the Ras Kamboni militia, had been exporting charcoal from Kismayo, with an estimated one and half million sacks of charcoal worth \$24 million leaving the port in the last two months of 2012, despite the UN imposing an export ban on charcoal.³⁰⁵ Al-Shabaab's involvement in the charcoal trade despite the KDF's control of Kismayo was well known, with many of the actual traders described as "long-standing associates of Al-Shabaab".³⁰⁶ Furthermore, al-Shabaab's control of routes around Kismayo provided it with further opportunities to profit from the resumption of the charcoal trade – for example, it was estimated that the Buula Xaaji checkpoint was taking \$650,000 per month at its peak in 2013.³⁰⁷

More recently, a *Journalists for Justice* report entitled "Black and White: Kenya's Criminal Racket in Somalia" reported that the KDF, along with the IJA and al-Shabaab, were profiting from facilitating and taxing a sugar trade that is worth "between \$200 million and \$400 million" annually – leading the authors to conclude that Kenya's political and military leadership has "a personal interest in the war economy that exists in Somalia".³⁰⁸ According to the same report, despite Western diplomats having protested to the Kenyan government, they have been unable to make progress "because the US and European forces need KDF's cooperation for access to bases in Kismayo and the use of Kenyan facilities for other military training", underlining how international actors have had to make counterproductive trade-offs between their own security priorities and the tolerance of a war economy in Somalia.³⁰⁹

It is not only regional actors that have profited from the Somali conflict. In March 2010, a leaked UN SEMG report alleged that up to half of Somali food aid was being diverted to a handful of Somali contractors who had in effect formed a "cartel", with some of their profits from reselling the food being channelled "directly to armed opposition groups".³¹⁰ The World Food Program also faced heavy criticism for awarding 80 per cent of its transportation contracts for Somalia, worth about \$200 million, to three Somali businessmen, who were suspected of having connections to al-Shabaab.³¹¹ As the above example illustrates, the risks of aid being diverted and fuelling conflict are very real, presenting a difficult dilemma for international actors and INGOs engaging in Somalia.

The human costs of corruption continue to be pronounced. During the 2011 famine, for example, Reuters reported that members of the SNA looted humanitarian aid deliveries and robbed civilians, after not having been paid for several months.³¹² Despite such occurrences international actors have been accused of failing to address or respond to allegations of corruption adequately. By late 2004, Ken Menkhaus argues, principles of aid conditionality had been dropped by donors who were "surprisingly detached from questions of accountability and performance" including on issues of "systematic corruption and diversion of foreign aid and customs revenues".³¹³ However, at other times, concerns about corruption have led international actors, in particular the US, to implement heavy-handed policies that have had a major impact on all Somalis. For example, in September 2009, the US announced the suspension of food aid deliveries to aid agencies pending a review to determine whether food was being diverted to areas controlled by al-Shabaab. Menkhaus notes that because an estimated 60 per cent of the 3.5 million Somalis in need were in al-Shabaab controlled areas,

305 *Op cit* Anderson D M, McKnight J (2014), p 10.

306 *Ibid.*

307 *Ibid.*

308 *Op cit* Journalists for Justice (2015), p 2.

309 *Ibid.*, p 3.

310 *Op cit* Gettleman J, MacFarquhar N (2010).

311 *Ibid.*

312 Sheikh A (2011), 'One dead as Somali troops, residents loot famine aid', *Reuters Africa*, 5 August.

313 Menkhaus K 'International policies and politics in the humanitarian crisis in Somalia' in Humanitarian Practice Network (2008), 'Humanitarian Exchange', September, p 10.

“the suspension had the potential to be catastrophic and produced disarray in the humanitarian community”³¹⁴

More recently, while there have been more intensive international efforts to reform public financial management, the UN SEMG has accused the FGS of diverting funds, reporting in 2014 that they had “consistently found patterns of misappropriation, with diversion rates of between 70 and 80%” and concluded that the funds were being used to advance “partisan agendas that constitute threats to peace and security.”³¹⁵ As the above quote unequivocally illustrates, corruption in Somalia represents not just a waste of resources, but actually serves to undermine the long-term prospects for establishing a sustainable peace in the country.

314 Menkhaus K (2010), ‘Stabilisation and humanitarian access in a collapsed state: the Somali case’, *Overseas Development Institute*, p 337.

315 *Op cit* United Nations (2014), p 9.

3

Alternative approaches

AS BBC WORLD SERVICE AFRICA EDITOR MARY HARPER POINTS OUT, “it is much easier to say what does not work for Somalia than what does”³¹⁶ Twenty years of external engagement in Somalia’s conflicts directed by “external ideational shifts over what matters about Somalia’s statelessness”³¹⁷ have largely left a legacy of failure and frustration. However, things have begun to change. The FGS marks the first time since the fall of Siad Barre’s government that Somalia has had a national-level government controlling more than a small patch of the capital city. Despite significant challenges, the emergence of interim administrations is beginning to form the basis of a future federal governance framework.

As a result, in many ways, both the Somali authorities and their international partners are charting new waters. Many of the positive developments in Somalia’s recent history remain fragile, and reinforcement is necessary if these developments are to have the longevity needed to support the country’s transformation into a coherent, peaceful and stable state. International actors have a key role in this. Reinforcing these gains requires careful consideration of the lessons that can be learnt from past international engagement to end Somalia’s conflicts and move away from fragility.

This has not been, and will not be, an easy process. It may involve even more fundamental shifts away from ‘business as usual’ than have been seen over the past four years. This section sets out potential alternative approaches available to international actors. They will require constructive engagement with a range of Somali partners, including the FGS, sub-national administrations and civil society. They include:

- Ensuring peace is the overall objective of engagement.
- Ensuring that military force is used sparingly – reinforcing people’s security first, with accountability for its use.
- Developing a coherent understanding of the drivers of conflict and ensuring that external engagement does not exacerbate these.
- Looking beyond externally imposed templates and timelines to find inclusive Somali owned and led solutions.
- Promoting inclusivity in processes, as well as public accountability and participation.

As long as military strategies remain the highest priority, without adherence to a wider objective of establishing long-term peace, the space for genuinely transformative processes will remain limited.

³¹⁶ *Op cit* Harper M (2012), p 168.

³¹⁷ *Op cit* Elliot A, Holzer G (2009), p 217.

3.1 Ensure that peace is the overall objective of engagement

- **Rather than focusing on establishing a monopoly of violence, support efforts to resolve conflict through dialogue with as many actors as possible.**

“Most of the national reconciliation conferences convened on Somalia since 1991 have privileged the brokering of a power-sharing agreement for a transitional central government over actual conflict resolution.”

Interpeace report: “The Search for Peace: A History of Mediation in Somalia since 1988”³¹⁸

Efforts to facilitate an end to Somalia’s conflicts have heavily emphasised the reconstruction of the state, linking “peace-as-order to state-centric notions of institution-building and economic development.”³¹⁹ They thus assume that supporting the state to impose a monopoly on violence will end current conflict and prevent future outbreaks. Yet no government has been able to achieve this. While the FGS has made more progress than its predecessors, it continues to rely on alliances with armed groups and sub-national administrations of varied strength and durability. Relations between these actors and the centre remain fragile and they have the potential to turn into conflict if not carefully managed.

Rather than focus on establishing a monopoly of violence, international actors should do more to promote conflict resolution through inclusive dialogue. This means more engagement with actors within armed opposition groups, including through negotiation, disarmament and rehabilitation and a nuancing of the amnesties currently offered by the FGS.

Where possible, talks should be attempted with certain elements of al-Shabaab. A more radical, Islamic State-aligned faction is starting to emerge, which may provide openings for dialogue with certain elements within al-Shabaab opposed to such developments. While it is uncertain how events will unfold, international actors need to be alert to such opportunities and must not rule them out on the basis that the group has been deemed a ‘spoiler’. If it is possible to address grievances constructively among those who may sympathise or temporarily align with actors like al-Shabaab, it may be possible to achieve a wider political agreement from a critical mass of actors to renounce violent methods and cooperate for the benefit of the Somali people.

Efforts to resolve conflict should also include a specific focus on supporting reconciliation between different groups. This is not a new recommendation – the need to address community divides to support a long-term transition towards peace and stability has been repeatedly emphasised throughout Somalia’s conflicts.³²⁰ As a result, there is also some good practice existing and emerging, and also some opportunities to leverage.

Many international actors recognise the need for such processes to take place. The Somali New Deal Compact recognises a role for reconciliation, with PSG 1 setting out that “A peaceful and stable Somalia requires simultaneous progress in establishing inclusive political processes at different levels of society and *promoting national and local level reconciliation* [emphasis added]”.³²¹ In addition, statements welcoming the formation of interim administrations have often been accompanied by calls for greater efforts towards reconciliation and inclusion. However, in reality, external efforts to promote or support broader reconciliation outside of political processes should be increased to ensure that communities trust and accept the emerging political structures.

There are two immediate opportunities to support social reconciliation processes that reach beyond clan elders. First, the Federal Ministry of Interior’s plans for social reconciliation. International actors should support these, ensuring that the Ministry

³¹⁸ *Op cit* The Search for Peace (2009) p 21.

³¹⁹ *Op cit* Elliot A, Holzer G (2009), p 217.

³²⁰ See for example, Bradbury M, Healy S (2010), *How Does it End? Towards a vision of a Somali state*, in Bradbury M, Healy S (eds.), *Whose peace is it anyway? Connecting Somali and international peace-making*, (ACCORD 21), p 107. One national civil society actor said “the problem is that this approach of stabilisation is not focusing on ... historical grievances but only on the politicians (Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 8 November 2014).

³²¹ *Op cit* The Federal Republic of Somalia, September 2013, p 5.

has every encouragement to develop, consult on and implement them in coordination with other actors. Second, UNSOM's mandate, as renewed by the UNSC in July 2015, now underlines "the importance of UNSOM consolidating its presence across Somalia in order to help facilitate political dialogue between the centre and the regions *and to support local peace and reconciliation processes* [emphasis added]."³²² This is an opportunity for the UN to coordinate external action in support of these processes independently from, but coordinated with, political processes.

■ **Adopt domestic policies that reinforce peace, not conflict.**

The impacts on Somalia of the domestic policies of states engaged in the country need to be more clearly understood and addressed. Domestic policies must also be evaluated for their ability to facilitate rather than restrict constructive support for people in contexts like Somalia. For many, this should include greater efforts to ensure that anti-terror, money-laundering or anti-corruption legislation does not choke legitimate remittance flows into Somalia or drive them underground. Rather, the emphasis should be on the facilitation of legal and transparent channels and work-arounds for banks and money transfer operatives (MTOs) to ensure such flows continue without driving conflict.

The UK's Safer Corridors Initiative was an important start, but it has been unable to find a short-term solution. However, work has begun – through the World Bank – to support longer-term reform of the Somali banking sector to facilitate increasing access. Yet, recent analysis from the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit showed that in many areas of Somalia it surveyed, the total remittances received by households had declined, with respondents citing a relative decrease in the amount of money transferred. While service availability was not the primary reason, their analysis suggested a reduction in amounts could be "linked to potential increase in the transaction cost associated with finding an alternative but potentially more costly money transfer mechanism."³²³ In the absence of immediate short-term solutions from the Safer Corridors Initiative, the UK and other states – particularly the US – should continue to support urgent efforts to find alternative, safe solutions.

■ **Improve communication amongst the international community on Somalia.**

As in many other contexts that have served as battlegrounds of the 'Global War on Terror', a key lesson from Somalia is that simplified narratives about the country and what international actors should do in it have reinforced policies that take insufficient account of what the context requires and the lessons of past engagement. In particular, harmful approaches towards Somalia are a consequence of the misleading and simplistic portrayal of Somalia as a place in which international actors are simply involved in a 'fight' against al-Shabaab. A more honest portrayal to the public of the complex and challenging operating environment could pave the way for less belligerent, more nuanced and longer-term engagement – and is therefore crucial to achieving the results that best serve both international and Somali interests. International actors need to move beyond the narrative of a failed Somalia, where al-Shabaab and other armed groups can stop through military intervention and security assistance to the FGS.

³²² United Nations (2015), 'Adopting Resolution 2232 (2015), Security Council Authorizes Ongoing African Union Deployment in Somalia, Extends Mandate for United Nations Assistance Mission', 28 July.

³²³ Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (2015), 'Assessment of External Remittances in Selected Urban Areas and Among Displaced Populations Across Somalia – September 2015', 30 September, pp 4–5.

3.2 Ensure that military force is used sparingly – reinforcing people’s security first, with accountability for its use

■ Cease engagement outside of the AU/UN authorisation – and ensure that when force is used, people’s security is prioritised.

Military operations in Somalia have made gains in pushing al-Shabaab out of territory, but have come at a very high cost for civilians in these areas, as well as for AMISOM and SNA personnel, and have not necessarily led to concrete improvements in people’s lives. In much of Somalia, military operations have not been followed by the installation of accepted, legitimate and credible local administrations. Furthermore, military forces have not been able to prevent continued al-Shabaab attacks across Somalia, including in newly recovered areas and Mogadishu. Additionally, AMISOM in particular does not have a clear mandate from the UNSC to protect or provide immediate security to civilians in areas it takes from al-Shabaab. This is exacerbated by a strategy of continuing to push forward rather than holding territory. Resulting governance gaps from military operations have often enabled local conflicts – both old and new – to emerge.

An important first step is to ensure a greater focus on the protection of civilians by international actors. This could be done by including an explicit emphasis on the protection of civilians in the UNSC resolution authorising AMISOM’s presence in Somalia. Second, international actors should ensure the cessation of all other military engagement outside the UNSC resolution, including drone and air strikes and the use of ground forces inside the country, which at best is ineffective and at worst harmful to the restoration of peace and stability. Third, the inability of security forces to prevent al-Shabaab attacks or reprisals on civilians because they are unable or unwilling to hold territory and provide security in recovered areas needs to be addressed as a priority. Efforts to build a more coherent response, including interim security arrangements, governance structures and access to justice for local communities, should continue and should be strengthened by promoting improved planning for SNA and AMISOM operations, engaging local communities in establishing responses and coordinating with humanitarian actors through the Civil-Military Working Group to ensure needs-based humanitarian responses where necessary. Should AMISOM and the SNA continue to conduct offensive military operations and remove al-Shabaab but be unable to provide short-term security for people in these areas, the potential for violence and instability will remain high.

Conversations about security provision for Somali civilians, however, should not only focus on the capacity of military actors. Civilian oversight arrangements and complaint mechanisms to regulate the behaviour of other domestic security forces should be made a strong priority.

■ Acknowledge and investigate wrongdoing on the part of international actors.

Many external interventions have been accompanied by allegations of harm towards civilians – including violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and standards, and potential war crimes. This also includes operations by the US, Ethiopia and Kenya that have fallen outside of the AMISOM framework. In most cases, these have been neither acknowledged nor investigated.

The Civilian Casualty Tracking Analysis and Response Cell (CCTARC) could provide an important means for AMISOM to investigate and hold itself accountable, and this is already starting to show some potential. In August 2015 an internal investigation led to an admission by AMISOM that seven civilians had been killed during an AMISOM operation in Merka, and three AMISOM personnel were to be arraigned before a “military judicial process”.³²⁴ The work of CCTARC and other efforts by AMISOM to improve its accountability in the face of allegations of harm should be strongly

³²⁴ AMISOM (2015), ‘Statement by the African Union Special Representative for Somalia and Head of AMISOM addressing the 31st July 2015 Incident in Marka, Lower Shabelle Region of Somalia’, 21 August.

supported by donors and other international actors in line with the requirements of UNSC resolution, which requires information on its operations to be shared with relevant actors.³²⁵

However, additional allegations of harm by other actors must also be investigated in a transparent manner, and where there is clear evidence, should be subject to appropriate judicial procedures to demonstrate accountability to victims, their families and communities and the Somali people.

3.3 Develop a coherent understanding of the drivers of conflict and ensure that external engagement does not exacerbate these

“The pressure to do something comes at the cost of understanding the context.”

International NGO, 7 November 2014³²⁶

“The international community has to close their eyes because there is so much risk in terms of conflict.”

UN official, 11 November 2014³²⁷

The current emphasis on al-Shabaab and other groups opposed to the state as the pre-eminent driver of conflict in the country obscures the complexity and history behind Somalia’s protracted fragility, and does little to promote effective solutions to Somalia’s problems. This has been a recurring problem in external efforts to support peace and stability. Differences in international actors’ assessments of the drivers of conflict has fed into incoherence between their respective strategies to address the causes and consequences of Somalia’s conflicts.

Many problems with external engagements in Somalia stem from their failure to appropriately reflect the context. They have been beholden to external interests, leading to incoherence between approaches taken by different international actors.

■ Support collective efforts to discuss, understand and address the drivers of conflicts.

International actors should support Somali state and non-state actors to discuss, understand and address the drivers of their conflicts. This is the best basis for developing plans for engagement. Having neglected the opportunity to complete the fragility assessment under the New Deal process, the launch of the National Development Plan and the commitment by the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation to a “participatory consultation process and a plan that is underpinned by inclusivity” may represent an opportunity for progress.³²⁸ Many stabilisation funds and other initiatives have started to conduct localised analyses, but this is not yet a standard requirement among all donors.³²⁹ This requirement could help minimise harm and strengthen longer-term impact.

In particular, analysis-based strategies should unpack the causes and drivers of membership of armed opposition groups and be a step towards reducing the scope of the ‘terrorist’ label to remain a “vital currency of power.”³³⁰ Better analysis should help all actors to understand the nature of grievances that drive membership in armed opposition groups and which will need to be addressed to achieve peace in Somalia. This can enable a more strategic focus on contextually relevant solutions and a shift away from overreliance on militaristic approaches.³³¹ Better analysis will also make it

³²⁵ United Nations Security Council (2015), ‘Resolution 2232 (2015) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7491st meeting, on 28 July 2015’ 28 July, p 5.

³²⁶ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 7 November 2014.

³²⁷ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 11 November 2014.

³²⁸ Federal Republic of Somalia (2015), ‘Federal Government of Somalia launches National Development Plan’, 17 October.

³²⁹ Saferworld interviews, Nairobi, 11 November 2014; Nairobi, 13 November 2015.

³³⁰ *Op cit* Elliot A, Holzer G. (2009), p 218.

³³¹ Life and Peace Institute (2014), ‘Alternatives for Conflict Transformation in Somalia’, p 7.

easier to recognise and address international actors' own shortcomings and those of other actors more even-handedly – encouraging greater self-knowledge and a shift away for harmful practices.

Finally, as part of these efforts, international actors should retire the narrative of a single conflict in Somalia between the FGS and al-Shabaab. This narrative belies the complexity of conflicts in the country and limits the space for approaches that contribute to long-term peace.

■ **Support efforts to document people's experiences of conflict.**

International actors should better recognise the role that impunity plays in driving conflict. The full range of abuse across the history of Somalia's conflicts has not been documented and therefore most of the harm suffered by civilians remains unknown. This has not been a focus of any significant external or internal effort. A better understanding of the conflict would not only be valuable in itself, but would also support efforts to address the legacy of impunity in the country, which should begin with the documentation of harm. This could potentially be done alongside reconciliation processes to ensure that it does not result in further tensions or conflict.

■ **Acknowledge and respond to the role that clan conflict plays in recruitment by armed opposition groups.**

This is particularly important since, as noted by one analyst, “no other group [aside from al-Shabaab] cuts across clan and would therefore be capable of depriving al-Shabaab of social resources and a protective economy”.³³² Reconciliation and the inclusion of traditionally marginalised groups – particularly minority clans – would go far in addressing an important draw of armed opposition groups like al-Shabaab: that they can provide these groups with relative power and influence, making affiliation politically expedient. Reconciliation activities would serve to build trust and confidence, supporting minority groups to engage without resorting to the use or threat of force in order to be heard.

3.4 Look beyond externally imposed templates and timelines to find inclusive Somali owned and led solutions

“Too many people have ignored the fact that the years without effective authority, peace and stability have led to some fascinating and successful home-grown experiments in how to live without a state.”

Mary Harper, BBC World Service³³³

■ **Avoid initiatives that rely on procedural, top-down statebuilding and instead support experimentation and creativity by Somali actors to find paths towards stability.**

Somalia's history is littered with failed efforts to impose templates and short-term timeframes for peacebuilding and statebuilding processes. These initiatives to create or reform institutions have often failed to take adequate account of the context, often becoming a “tick-box exercise... of top level, procedural statebuilding”.³³⁴ The Somali Compact is a prime example of this. It provided an (arguably over-) ambitious list of procedural tasks with an unrealistic deadline of just three years to reconstruct the state. As the fragility assessment process was not completed prior to the drafting of the Compact text, it took little account of the complexity of the tasks given the specific

³³² Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 5 November 2014.

³³³ *Op cit* Harper M (2012), p 69.

³³⁴ Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 5 November 2014.

history and challenges of statebuilding in the context. Nor did it demonstrate any effort to ensure conflict sensitivity. An example of this has been the intense pressure to form interim administrations under PSG 1. Rushed state formation processes have caused tensions and led to the exclusion of key actors. While formation of these administrations is a laudable achievement, more context sensitivity regarding timing, inclusiveness and legitimacy could serve to reduce the inherent risks of such processes considerably.

While frameworks will always be required to facilitate external engagement with the state, these should provide room for experimentation and creativity on the part of Somali actors and prioritise local solutions to Somalia's challenges. This will mean supporting the setting of realistic priorities, accepting that there is a risk of failure, and finding ways to support and facilitate progress and a pathway to peace and stability, rather than assuming that the answer lies exclusively with institution building. It will require efforts to ensure that the widest array of Somali actors are involved; at an absolute minimum, this should include not just government authorities but also civil society drawn from across the country.

It need not be too late for the New Deal to take this approach – indeed, consultations about the form that the election will take in 2016 may provide some impetus for unorthodox solutions to critical challenges. This will require a reassessment by international actors of what can be achieved with external funding, and the timescales for these achievements.

■ **Adopt longer-term strategies for engagement in Somalia.**

A sustainably peaceful Somali state will take years to establish. International actors should accept this and focus on longer-term strategies for their engagement. Truncated, incomplete or deliberately short processes can risk exacerbating conflicts by raising and then failing to resolve contentious issues. One INGO representative involved in local clan mediation emphasised the need for “donor patience”, pointing out that “genuinely tangible results do and will take time to achieve”.³³⁵ Longer-term strategies will also require longer-term funding from donors and the political commitment to stay the course – a difficult thing to ask of donors given that domestic electoral cycles tend to lock in short-term strategic thinking and an impatience for quick wins. As part of this, it will be important for international actors to communicate with domestic audiences about the need for longer-term engagement in Somalia.

3.5 Promote inclusivity in processes, as well as public accountability and participation

Negotiating an end to Somalia's conflicts and reconstituting the country's governance framework will require substantive efforts to rebuild state-society relations. Building political constituencies, developing social capital and supporting authorities' accountability to the populations they ultimately serve should be key priorities for international actors.

■ **Emphasise consensus-building processes as much as outcomes.**

While far from perfect, Somaliland and Puntland both provide evidence that allowing time for consensus-building and negotiation processes to unfold organically has led to greater statebuilding and peacebuilding gains than have been seen in other Somali areas. They act as important reminders of the importance of a home-grown consensus to the search for sustainable peace. Somaliland and Puntland “were only stitched together by slow and painstaking local peace and reconciliation conferences that built

335 Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 5 November 2014.

on each other to form larger and economically viable regions in which political power, revenue and resources are shared relatively fairly between sub-clans and clans.”³³⁶

Ongoing consultations as to the form of the 2016 elections represent an opportunity to support good practice by the FGS. The FGS has committed to holding consultations across the country, and has already done so in Mogadishu, Kismayo, Adaado, Baidoa and Garowe.³³⁷ This is an important step forward in building public engagement and dialogue. International actors must do their utmost to support the widest possible genuine consultation, so that any resulting agreement regarding the transfer of power is seen as legitimate and provides a useful precedent for subsequent processes.

■ **Facilitate service delivery and promote accountability and transparency of state institutions.**

Stabilisation activities are being used to reinforce the legitimacy of the FGS and interim regional administrations. However, there have been fewer efforts to support direct service provision. Authorities, particularly interim regional administrations, have emphasised resource allocation and distribution, rather than what services are actually required.

This is in part due to significant capacity gaps on the part of interim administrations. But the broader issue is the devolution of powers and responsibilities to the sub-national level. This is a central problem to be discussed during the constitutional review process, but international actors should ensure that negotiations between authorities and political actors are augmented with public dialogue about the type of services they want to see provided at different levels of government.

As this discussion progresses, international actors can also support authorities to be more transparent in terms of budget, priorities and decision-making processes. This should include ensuring that information about regional, national and international policies are available in the Somali language and not just in English, helping authorities make use of the media and other communications channels, including to collect public feedback, and requiring that infrastructure provided to administrations under stabilisation programmes is used to host or facilitate public participation and discussions.

There have been significant and very welcome efforts both by external and Somali actors to increase financial transparency and reduce corruption. These efforts could be complemented with transparency on budgeting processes and information about how authorities intend to spend both the external assistance they receive and the internal income they raise. In turn, international actors should also be more transparent with the Somali public about the funding that they provide to actors in Somalia.

■ **Support civil society to engage constructively with government authorities and international actors.**

Supporting civil society to engage with authorities is also critical to accountability. Civil society across Somalia has an important role to play in communicating public priorities, interests and concerns to local, regional and national authorities and to external actors to ensure that their decision-making processes respond to people’s perspectives. Over recent years, the ability of civil society to engage meaningfully has been undermined both by the state and international actors themselves. This should be addressed in tandem with support to authorities, so that civil society’s gain is not the state’s loss. It is also important to reach civil society outside of administrative capitals, including in rural areas.

³³⁶ International Crisis Group (2014), ‘Somalia: Al-Shabaab – It Will Be a Long War’, 26 June, p 15.

³³⁷ European External Action Service (2015), ‘International partners look forward to further political progress following the High-Level Partnership’, 3 August.

■ **Support efforts to build political constituencies which are not based on clan.**

The politicisation of clan identity is a further challenge to accountability. Clan is the primary political identity in Somalia; parliamentary seats at the national and sub-national level are divided according to perceived clan strength, while political parties remain nascent and weak. There is no clear line of responsibility from legislators to their constituents, and individuals have very little recourse to influence their ‘representatives.’ Legislators, generally speaking, are tasked by clan elders with promoting broader clan interests. For government to become accountable and legitimate, it will require authorities to be responsive to the needs of individuals and communities regardless of their clan backgrounds. International actors should find ways to support dialogue and negotiation to find alternatives to clan-based political systems.

ANNEX 1: Methodology and definitions

Methodology

This report is based on research conducted in 2014 and 2015. It draws on a desk review of relevant literature.³³⁸ While this report makes use of publicly available information about donor or external engagement in Somalia, it should be assumed that this is not the full picture about the assistance going towards and used in the country, particularly with regard to external support to the security sector and in the realm of counter-terrorism. The research team conducted a total of 32 key informant interviews in November and December 2014 and September and October 2015 in Mogadishu and Nairobi, as well as in London and Brussels. Interviews were held with Somali officials, non-government organisation (NGO) staff, researchers and members of civil society, while interviews in Nairobi were carried out with diplomats, donor officials and NGO staff.

Definitions

Saferworld's paper *Dilemmas of counter-terrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding* sets out a definition of a 'mainstream' approach towards addressing security threats consisting of combinations of counter-terrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding approaches depending on each particular context. It should be emphasised that the lines between counter-terrorism, stabilisation and statebuilding are blurred, and that the three concepts can and do shift over time.³³⁹ In Somalia, the blurring of these lines has appeared particularly acute. Many international officials claim that they find it 'hard to separate out' the three or that these approaches are 'merged'.³⁴⁰ At the same time, many claim to explicitly frame their engagement in the country around one approach, with most identifying stabilisation as their main approach.

Counter-terrorism

In the *Dilemmas* paper, the authors define counter-terrorism as consisting of "military efforts to defeat particular actors who have been defined as 'terrorists' or 'spoilers', and/or their sponsors." It may also include law enforcement approaches, as well as efforts to tackle 'selected' root causes of the problem, often described as "countering violent extremism" (CVE).³⁴¹

Counter-terrorism approaches, including the deployment of armed forces, airstrikes and drone attacks have been used at various points during Somalia's conflicts directed at groups, organisations or perceived groups and organisations that have been designated as terrorist or spoiler entities. Certain armed opposition groups in Somalia, including al-Shabaab, are defined as posing 'terrorist threats' both in the country and globally in UNSC resolutions, arguably meaning that AMISOM is framed as a counter-terrorist mission because of its specific mandate to "reduce the threat posed by al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups".³⁴²

Stabilisation

Stabilisation is a wide field, which can involve the deployment of a number of approaches and tools, according to different contextual needs centred on protecting

³³⁸ The full bibliography for the report is available online.

³³⁹ *Op cit* Keen, Attree p 2.

³⁴⁰ Saferworld interviews, Mogadishu, 10 November 2014; London, 18 November 2014.

³⁴¹ *Op cit* Keen, Attree p 1.

³⁴² See for example UN Security Council resolutions 1910 (2010), 2036 (2012), 2073 (2012), 2093 (2013); on AMISOM's mandate see UN Security Council resolution 2073 (2012), 2093 (2013) and 2184 (2014).

and promoting legitimate political authority.³⁴³ As a result, the definition of stabilisation varies widely across actors, with significant differences in how it is understood and subsequently implemented in Somalia.

As an approach, various actors have defined stabilisation efforts in Somalia as both a relatively narrow and broader set of processes. In some ways, stabilisation can be said to cover almost any activity in the context that may provide a ‘peace dividend’. From a narrow perspective, stabilisation is fundamentally about furthering processes towards a political settlement,³⁴⁴ by which political and security efforts to recover territory from al-Shabaab are coordinated and linked;³⁴⁵ and/or meeting the immediate humanitarian, security and political needs of communities in territories recovered from al-Shabaab, most often through quick-impact projects.³⁴⁶ Broader conceptions of stabilisation have an emphasis on conflict resolution and the creation of authorities in order to address the root causes of local instability.³⁴⁷ The common point of these varying definitions is that stabilisation in Somalia is fundamentally a process of *establishing* forms of political authority in areas recovered from al-Shabaab during military operations, and creating and sustaining links between nascent political administrations in these areas and the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS).

Some actors remain sceptical of the usefulness of the term ‘stabilisation’, preferring to view these processes as the initial stages of the longer-term statebuilding project, and citing concerns about the ‘questionable connotations’ of stabilisation, arguing that it has been undermined due to its inherent short-termism. There is some agreement among external actors that stabilisation is becoming ‘an almost unhelpful term’ because it is used to cover such a huge array of activities in the country, and thus risks becoming meaningless; others, however, praise the term ‘stabilisation’ for precisely this reason, describing its broad application as beneficial for ‘operational flexibility’.³⁴⁸

Statebuilding

Similarly, statebuilding is a fairly fluid concept, often defined by its links to peacebuilding and improving state-society relations. Statebuilding in Somalia has taken a number of different forms; from a ‘building blocks’ approach intended to ‘reward’ areas of relative peace with peace dividends in the form of aid and assistance; a ‘dual-track’ approach balancing support for more localised peace with efforts to support the formation of a ‘central’ government; to the current approach, which emphasises the creation of a federal structure for governance in Somalia supported through a New Deal Compact which sets out support under five areas: political inclusion, security, justice, economic foundations, and revenues and services.³⁴⁹

While statebuilding is often linked to a reconceptualisation of state-society relations, it can often have a tendency to reinforce the state, rather than seeking to transform it.³⁵⁰ This is arguably true of Somalia where, broadly speaking, the emphasis of statebuilding has been the medium-long-term reconstitution of state and governance functions, with emphasis on institutions and the accountability of those institutions to donors, rather than seeking a broader transformation of how governance institutions interact with the Somali public. For one donor, statebuilding is about focusing on building the Federal Government’s legitimacy and the creation of “the narrative that there is something out there”.³⁵¹

343 *Op cit* Keen, Attree p 1.

344 Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 10 November 2014.

345 Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 9 November 2014.

346 Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 8 November 2014.

347 Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 12 November 2014.

348 Saferworld interviews, Nairobi, 4 November 2014; Nairobi, 5 November 2014; Mogadishu, 11 November 2014; London, 18 November 2014.

349 The Federal Republic of Somalia (2013), *The Somali Compact*, September.

350 *Op cit* Keen, Attree p 2.

351 Saferworld interview, Nairobi, 12 November 2014.

ANNEX 2: Context analysis

1991–1995: The collapse of the Somali state

In 1991, the Somali government led by Siad Barre collapsed following years of civil war. United only in their opposition to the government, armed opposition groups failed to establish a new government and fighting intensified as they vied to amass enough territory to form the basis for a future national government. In north western Somalia, the new Republic of Somaliland, comprising the area of the former British Somaliland protectorate, formally declared itself an independent country following a series of local peace conferences.³⁵² Regional efforts to broker peace in Somalia failed, and the international community, its attention diverted by the Gulf War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, largely ignored the conflict at first, except for the imposition of an arms embargo on the country. However, a severe famine in 1992 led to UN efforts to broker a ceasefire and the deployment of the first UN peacekeeping mission in the country, the United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I), in April 1992 to monitor the ceasefire and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Unable to stop the fighting, the mission was joined by the UN Unified Task Force (UNITAF), led by the US. In March 1993, an agreement between 15 armed groups led to the deployment of another mission, UNOSOM 2, with an expanded mandate including longer-term political reconciliation.³⁵³ However, the March 1993 agreement was gradually undermined – no group was willing to disarm and one leader, General Mohamed Farrah Aidede denounced the agreements and engaged in direct fighting with UNOSOM troops. UNOSOM operations continued specifically targeting Aidede and were supported by the deployment of US Army Rangers into Mogadishu. In October 1993, operations against Aidede resulted in the ‘Black Hawk Down’ incident. In response, the US withdrew from Somalia, followed by many other states. Subsequent peace talks failed to broker an agreement, and in March 1995, UNOSOM 2 also withdrew.

1995–1998: Localised, shorter conflict and some peacebuilding efforts

Conflict continued after the withdrawal of the international community, but became shorter, less intense and increasingly localised.³⁵⁴ While regionally led efforts stalled, a 1998 agreement between clans in areas covering parts of northern and central Somalia led to the formation of a new regional authority, Puntland. Unlike Somaliland, Puntland was established as an autonomous region of Somalia, not an independent state. However, 1998 also witnessed conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea which ultimately led to the intensification of regional engagement in the Somali conflict as each supported proxy groups in Somalia.³⁵⁵

2000: The Arta Agreement and the formation of the Transitional National Government

By 2000, there was finally a breakthrough in peace negotiations with the Arta Agreement, which established the Transitional National Government (TNG) – the first Somali government to fill the country’s seat at the UN since 1991. Despite early hopes, the TNG failed to win the backing of key regional and international actors, was criticised for being dominated by the Hawiye clan and controlled little of the country outside

352 Somaliland’s formation can also be attributed to the authoritarian leadership of President Egal. For more details, see: Balthasar D, *Somaliland’s best kept secret: shrewd politics and war projects as means of state-making*, (Journal of East African Studies), 2013.

353 There were criticisms of UNOSOM 2 on the basis that it was increasingly becoming a party to the conflict and consequently its humanitarian and political dimensions were being “counter-productively skewed towards the military”. See Hammond L, Vaughan-Lee H, *Humanitarian Space in Somalia: A Scarce Commodity*, (Overseas Development Institute, April 2012), pp 5–6.

354 This has been attributed by some to the withdrawal of the international community, which weakened Somali warlords by depriving them of funding and political legitimacy – the latter derived from participation in peace and reconciliation efforts.

355 *Op cit* Moller B (2009), pp 21–22; *op cit* Bradbury M, Healy S (2010), p 12.

parts of Mogadishu.³⁵⁶ Notably, Ethiopia began to support an opposition group, the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC).

2001: Al-Qaeda in Somalia?

Following the events of 9/11, Somalia again became the focus of international attention, due to concerns that it provided an operations base for al-Qaeda. By November 2001, the US DoD was said to have ‘compelling’ evidence of an al-Qaeda presence in the country.³⁵⁷ Meanwhile, divisions between the TNG and the SRRC intensified. By late 2002, Mogadishu was experiencing its heaviest fighting since the 1990s and other areas in southern and central Somalia, such as Bay, Bakool, Juba and Shabelle also witnessed serious violence.³⁵⁸ However, international interest in Somalia subsided, and it was left to the IGAD, a regional body made up of East and Horn of Africa states, to address the crisis.

2002–2004: The formation of the Transitional Federal Government

From October 2002 to late 2004, IGAD attempted to reconcile opposing factions by convening the Somali National Reconciliation Conference. After the longest peace conference in Somalia’s history – two years – the delegates agreed the formation of a new Transitional Federal Government (TFG). It was expected to complete a range of tasks, notably continuing national reconciliation, drafting a new constitution and providing security services.³⁵⁹ However, the TFG lacked widespread support both internally and from the international community. It governed from Baidoa rather than Mogadishu, citing security concerns.

2006: The rise of the Union of Islamic Courts and Ethiopian intervention

By 2006, dissatisfaction and outright opposition to the TFG was at its height and a group known as the ICU – an umbrella organisation of largely Hawiye *shari’a* courts – emerged, taking control of Mogadishu and large areas of southern and central Somalia.³⁶⁰ The ICU began to carry out some of the key functions of government and, notably, brought relative peace and security to Mogadishu for the first time since 1991.³⁶¹ The ICU’s emergence was cause for concern for the US as some of its members were believed to have links to al-Qaeda. In late 2006, in response to these concerns and threats by the ICU to attack Baidoa, the temporary seat of the TFG, Ethiopian troops intervened in Somalia to push the ICU out, shortly followed by US airstrikes in January 2007. The group quickly collapsed and many of its senior leaders departed the country. Ethiopia’s entry marked the start of a new phase of conflict in the country, characterised by widespread allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law by all parties, and a renewed humanitarian crisis. The collapse of the ICU and the flight of many of its leaders also left a leadership vacuum inside the country that was soon filled by one of its former factions, al-Shabaab, which quickly emerged as a significant opponent of Ethiopia.

2008: Djibouti Peace Agreement

In March 2007, the AMISOM was deployed with a mandate to protect the TFG and key facilities in Mogadishu, including the airport and sea port. However, the mission

³⁵⁶ *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2002), p 1.

³⁵⁷ Menkhaus K, *Somalia: State Collapse and the Threat of Terrorism*, (Routledge, March 2004), pp 66–67.

³⁵⁸ International Crisis Group (2002), ‘Salvaging Somalia’s Chance for Peace’, December, p 2.

³⁵⁹ *Op cit* The Search for Peace (2009), p 20.

³⁶⁰ *Op cit* Hoehne M V (2010), p 6.

³⁶¹ *Op cit* Harper M (2012), p 81; International Crisis Group (2007), ‘Somalia: The Tough Part Is Ahead’, January, pp 4–5.

was drawn into conflict with al-Shabaab, and its mandate and membership have gradually expanded.³⁶²

In 2008, Djibouti agreed to host another round of peace talks between the TFG and the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS), which had emerged from remnants of the ICU. Crucially, infighting within the ARS presented an opportunity to break the political deadlock. The ARS had splintered into two wings, one led by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys and the other by Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. Negotiations between the TFG, Ethiopia and Sheikh Sharif's ARS culminated in agreement in January 2009. Sheikh Sharif was selected as president, while the TFG itself was granted an additional two-year mandate to 2011. As part of the agreement, Ethiopian troops withdrew from Somalia. The new TFG initially enjoyed widespread popular support and thousands of Somalis returned to Mogadishu.³⁶³

2009: Al-Shabaab expands across Somalia

Hopes that the TFG would end decades of conflict in Somalia were short-lived. Al-Shabaab continued to thrive under leader Ahmed Abdi Godane (who would go on to formally affiliate the group with al-Qaeda in February 2012)³⁶⁴. In May 2009, it launched a massive military offensive in Mogadishu, which nearly succeeded in dislodging the TFG entirely. It was only prevented from doing so by AMISOM troops who maintained control of some key sites, including the presidential palace and the airport. Mogadishu became a site of severe conflict and widespread allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Al-Shabaab rapidly expanded its territorial control across southern and central Somalia, leaving the TFG in control of only a few districts of Mogadishu.

2011: The humanitarian crisis intensifies across Somalia and al-Shabaab withdraws from Mogadishu

The TFG continued to enjoy nominal donor support, but much like its predecessors, the Sheikh Sharif administration failed to make progress on key transitional tasks, including constitutional reform, reconciliation and the provision of security, and it faced widespread allegations of substantial corruption. In June 2011, the TFG's mandate was extended by one year and a roadmap was created for the transition to a new government.

At the same time, an already poor humanitarian situation dramatically deteriorated, with the UN declaring a famine in two areas of Somalia. By September 2011, this was extended to four other areas including Mogadishu. The crisis and famine cut across al-Shabaab- and government-controlled areas, killing an estimated 258,000 people between October 2010 and April 2012.³⁶⁵ Security restrictions and bans on some humanitarian actors from operating in some al-Shabaab-controlled areas limited the ability of actors to respond to the crisis, and there was significant population displacement both inside the country and to Somalia's neighbours, particularly Ethiopia and Kenya.

Al-Shabaab abruptly withdrew from most of Mogadishu in August 2011, leaving the TFG in control of the city for the first time. The withdrawal can in hindsight be viewed as the beginning of a shift in tactics by al-Shabaab and was accompanied by a rise in asymmetric tactics, which included the use of explosives, grenade attacks and the targeting of government officials.

³⁶² AMISOM is now made up of troops from Uganda, Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya. Sierra Leone previously provided troops but these were withdrawn following the Ebola crisis in the country that started in 2014.

³⁶³ UNHCR (2009), 'Some 60,000 return to Mogadishu this year amid relative lull in fighting', 14 April (www.unhcr.org/49e49d5d2.html).

³⁶⁴ BBC (2012), 'Somalia's al-Shabab join al-Qaeda', 10 February (www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16979440).

³⁶⁵ *Op cit* Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit – Somalia (2013).

2011: Kenya intervenes in Somalia

In October, two months after al-Shabaab's withdrawal from Mogadishu, Kenya deployed its troops into Somalia, with the stated aim of creating a 'buffer zone' along its border.³⁶⁶ The incursion was ostensibly linked to attacks in Kenya close to the Somali border, including the abductions and killings of aid workers and tourists in areas close to the border. However, Kenya had reportedly been preparing to enter for a number of years and had been supporting various militias inside the country. The Kenyan government's chief spokesperson admitted that, "an operation of this magnitude is not planned in a week. It's been in the pipeline for a while."³⁶⁷ Despite early advances, the operation quickly ran into problems because troops entered Somalia in the middle of the rainy season, significantly hampering their movement. In July 2012, Kenyan troops were re-hatted under the AMISOM mission, and ultimately captured Kismayo in collaboration with the Ras Kamboni brigade, led by Ahmed Madobe, in September 2012.

In December 2011, the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) also opened up another front against al-Shabaab when it again entered Somalia and captured the town of Beledweyne, followed by Baidoa in February 2012. The ENDF also later joined AMISOM, while also continuing independent military and paramilitary operations.

2012: The end of the transition

In August 2012, the mandate of the TFG came to an end with the passing of a Provisional Constitution by a National Constituent Assembly, made up of representatives selected by clan elders using the '4,5 formula' of clan balance. Clan elders also selected a new Federal Parliament of Somalia, which in turn selected a president, Hassan Sheikh Mohammed. The new FGS inherited a number of tasks including the need to agree on final version of the constitution, election preparation and the responsibility to guide the process to establish federal states – to be completed by 2016. These tasks, along with a number of other ambitious tasks to reform the security, justice and public financial management sectors and provide services, were endorsed as part of the Somali New Deal Compact.

2013– : Infighting but some progress

Like its predecessors, the FGS has not been immune to political infighting and tensions. In December 2013, barely one year into the government's mandate, the Prime Minister, Abdi Farah Shirdon, was voted out of office by Parliament following a public falling out with President Hassan. His successor, Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed was himself removed following a similar dispute with the president in December 2014 and replaced by Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke.

Outside of these political contestations, the erosion of al-Shabaab control over territory provided space for progress in establishing interim regional administrations as a key step towards the implementation of a federal model of governance. This has not been without its challenges – or conflicts.

In March 2013, the UNSC eased its arms embargo on Somalia, allowing for "deliveries of weapons or military equipment or the provision of advice, assistance or training, intended solely for the development of the Security Forces of the Federal Government of Somalia, and to provide security for the Somali people", subject to reporting requirements, though the resolution exempted certain categories of weapons, including for example, surface to air missiles.³⁶⁸ The FGS initially requested an unrestricted lifting

³⁶⁶ *Op cit* Bruton B E, Williams P D (2014), pp 61-62.

³⁶⁷ *The New York Times* (2011), 'Kenyan Motives in Somalia Predate Recent Abductions', 26 October (www.nytimes.com/2011/10/27/world/africa/kenya-planned-somalia-incursion-far-in-advance.html?_r=1&ref=world).

³⁶⁸ UN Security Council (2013), 'Resolution 2093 (2013) Adopted by the Security Council at its 6929th meeting, on 6 March 2013', 6 March.

of the arms embargo for assistance to the government, supported by the AU and the US.³⁶⁹

Speaking after the resolution passed, the UK's then ambassador to the UN said, "What we have tried to do is draw a balance between those who wanted an unrestricted lifting of the arms embargo and those who felt it was premature ... It is a good and strong compromise."³⁷⁰ The partial lifting was limited to a one-year period. Following the easing, the UN SEMG raised concerns about "current management of weapons and ammunition stockpiles by the FGS, which point to high-level and systematic abuses in weapons and ammunition management and distribution" and recommended "an option of reversal of the modifications made to the arms embargo on Somalia in resolutions 2093 (2013) and 2111 (2013)".³⁷¹ Nevertheless, the modification was extended for an additional year in 2014.

The Interim Juba Administration Following the recovery of Kismayo from al-Shabaab, negotiations began among local leaders to form a regional administration covering Lower Juba, Middle Juba and Gedo regions (notwithstanding the fact that al-Shabaab continued to control much of this territory). The negotiations were strongly opposed by the FGS, which claimed the sole right to lead formation processes for sub-national federal administrations. A 'Jubaland conference' in May 2013 led to the announcement of the Jubaland State of Somalia, led by Ahmed Madobe. While the conference had been supported by IGAD, there were widespread concerns about the exclusion of some clans, and several groups quickly announced the appointment of alternative presidents. The most notable of these was Barre Hirale, of the Marehan clan. Hirale was supported by the FGS as a counterpoint to Madobe. By July 2013, tensions in and around Kismayo increased, and Hirale announced his forces were conducting joint operations with al-Shabaab – a development that meant the FGS "appeared to be dangerously close to finding itself in a tacit 'understanding' with Al-Shabaab as they confronted a common adversary".³⁷² Fighting ultimately broke out and Hirale and his supporters were expelled from Kismayo. The conflicting parties were brought to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to negotiate an end to the conflict. In August 2013, they reached an agreement to establish the IJA for a period of two years, led by Ahmed Madobe, create a regional assembly and integrate IJA militias into the SNA.

By 2015, the formation of a regional assembly had led to concerns about the participation of all regional clans, and reconciliation conferences were held to address these concerns. Madobe was also subsequently elected President of the IJA for a further four years.

Interim South West Administration Following the creation of the IJA, two regional groupings began negotiations to establish a South West State. One group intended to form a state comprising three regions – Bay, Bakol and Lower Shabelle – while the other sought to form a state comprising six regions – Bay, Bakol and Lower Shabelle plus the three regions that fall under the IJA. The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Somalia came out publicly in support of the three-state process as protests and violence between the two camps broke out in Baidoa.³⁷³ During these developments AMISOM's 'neutral' role in Somalia came under increasing scrutiny, with Ethiopian and Burundian forces temporarily blockading the 'South West Six' camp's conference halls in Baidoa in January 2014.

³⁶⁹ African Union Peace and Security (2013), 'The Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted a decision on the Strategic Review of the AU Mission in Somalia', 27 February (www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-peace-and-security-council-of-the-african-union-au-at-its-356th-meeting-on-the-strategic-review-of-the-au-mission-in-somalia-amisom); Reuters (2013), 'U.S. urges lifting of U.N. arms embargo on Somalia: envoys', 5 February (www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/06/us-somalia-arms-un-idUSBRE91501H20130206).

³⁷⁰ *Ibid* Reuters.

³⁷¹ Somalia Newsroom (2014), 'Full Text: UN Somalia/Eritrea Monitoring Group Memo on Arms Diversion', 19 February (<http://somalianewsroom.com/2014/02/19/full-text-un-somaliaeritrea-monitoring-group-memo-on-arms-diversion/>).

³⁷² Bryden M, *Assessing the New Somali Federal Government*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2013), p 22.

³⁷³ In a speech to the AU Peace and Security Council in March 2014, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia said the UN "will continue to work closely with key partners, principally the African Union, IGAD and the European Union, to support a Federal Government-led process with respect to its commitment for the formation of a three-region state." See: UNSOM (2014), 'Statement to the 425th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council by SRS Nicholas Kay', 24 March (<http://unsom.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=6262&ctl=Details&mid=9770&itemID=26595&language=en-US>).

Eventually, the FGS intervened to negotiate an agreement between the two parties in June 2014, which culminated in an agreement to establish the ISWA made up of Bay, Bakol and Lower Shabelle – an agreement that was widely praised by Somalia’s international partners despite criticisms it lacked legitimacy and excluded certain clans.³⁷⁴

Interim Galmudug Administration In 2015, negotiations began on the formation of the Interim Galmudug Administration in central Somalia. Galmudug previously comprised the Galgaduud region and southern areas of the Mudug region. Northern Mudug is claimed – and governed – by Puntland. This led to controversy as to whether an IGA with those borders could constitute a future federal state under the FGS constitution, which does not allow for the alteration of regional boundaries in state formation, or whether IGA would seek to claim the entirety of Mudug.³⁷⁵ The controversy led to tensions between the FGS and the Puntland authorities, but they signed agreements in October 2014 and April 2015 that Mudug would continue to be shared between Puntland and the IGA.

Another source of tension was the role of the militia group ASWJ, an erstwhile ally of the FGS in the fight against al-Shabaab, that has considerable military and political power in central Somalia. ASWJ sought to attend negotiations on the formation of sub-national federal administrations as a distinct party to them. Fighting broke out between ASWJ forces and the SNA in December 2014 and February 2015, and ASWJ took control of a number of towns from the FGS.³⁷⁶

In June 2015, a conference agreed upon the establishment of a new Interim Galmudug Administration (IGA), with a new president, constitution and regional assembly – an outcome that was once again praised by Somalia’s international partners.³⁷⁷ However, the Puntland authorities immediately rejected the agreement and suspended its relationship with the FGS on the basis that they believed the agreement contravened the provisional constitution. Puntland declared that the FGS had engaged “in an illegitimate process that is detrimental to the on-going peace and state-building efforts in Somalia.”³⁷⁸

It is important to note that none of these three new interim administrations can yet claim to control all of the territory nominally falling within their administration. In addition, the removal of al-Shabaab from some areas has provided space for other forms of conflict to emerge, including political conflicts linked to clan control of these administrations and smaller areas of territory.

Puntland’s president and parliament (along with the IJA) also rejected the creation of – and nomination of members to – the crucial Federal Boundaries and Federation Commission, citing a lack of consultation and describing the process as unconstitutional.³⁷⁹ The Commission has a vital role to play in the state formation process, with a mandate to recommend where the boundaries of federal member states should lie to the Somali Parliament, which will then demarcate them, creating space for future political tensions.

³⁷⁴ See for example joint statement by the UN, AMISOM, IGAD and the EU: Relief Web (2014), ‘Joint Statement: International community welcome newly-elected President of Somalia’s Interim South West Administration’, 19 November (<http://reliefweb.int/report/somalia/joint-statement-international-community-welcomes-newly-elected-president-somalias>).

³⁷⁵ Article 49 of the provisional constitution says two or more regions may join to form a federal state.

³⁷⁶ Bader L (2015), ‘Dispatches: Overlooking the Cost to Somalia’s Civilians’, Human Rights Watch, 19 February (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/02/19/dispatches-overlooking-cost-somalias-civilians>).

³⁷⁷ *Op cit* Relief Web (2014).

³⁷⁸ Puntlandi (2015), ‘Puntland categorically rejects the outcome and process purporting to create a federal state for central’, 6 July (<http://puntlandi.com/press-release-the-government-of-puntland-categorically-rejects-the-outcome-and-process-purporting-to-create-a-federal-state-for-central-regions-in-a-manner-that-contravenes-the-federal-constitution/>).

³⁷⁹ Article 111 of the provisional constitution requires that federal member states are consulted in the appointment of commissioners.

2015: Al-Shabaab continues to fight

While excluded from various statebuilding and political processes, al-Shabaab continues to exert influence across Somalia. Moving into areas from which AMISOM or other forces have withdrawn, al-Shabaab has extracted taxes, earned a substantial income from the charcoal trade, and collected tolls on roads leading to ports.³⁸⁰ However, ongoing offensives by Somali forces, AMISOM and other troops have caused al-Shabaab to control significantly less territory than it did in 2009 and 2010.³⁸¹ Al-Shabaab continues to broadly apply asymmetric tactics, and it has increased direct attacks on AMISOM bases. Additionally, it has executed attacks in neighbouring countries, including Uganda and in Kenya. Following the death of Godane in a US airstrike in September 2014, some predicted a collapse of the organisation, but Godane was quickly replaced by Ahmed Omar Abu Ubeid, a relative unknown, under whose leadership al-Shabaab has carried out its first ever attack in Garowe, the capital of Puntland, which killed seven people. Al-Shabaab was also behind an attack on Garissa University in northern Kenya which killed at least 147 people. Various forces, including the US, Ethiopia and Kenya, have expanded airstrikes and drone attacks against al-Shabaab targets in more recent months.

In some respects, Somalia under the leadership of the FGS has come a long way since 2012. Government structures have been created and the government is at least nominally in control of significant areas of the country. Yet it remains extremely fragile. A series of key tasks, including the finalisation of the Constitution, have been seriously delayed. Others, such as holding one-person-one-vote elections, have been postponed indefinitely. While there has been significant progress on the formation of interim regional administrations and the creation of a federal system, these processes have been marred by political tensions and open conflict. The response of international actors to these setbacks and their continued engagement with statebuilding processes will be instrumental to Somalia's stabilisation and progress towards accountable governance.

³⁸⁰ Keatinge T (2014), *The Role of Finance in Defeating Al-Shabaab*, (Royal United Services Institute), December, pp 12–21 (<https://rusi.org/publication/whitehall-reports/role-finance-defeating-al-shabaab>).

³⁸¹ Bryden M (2014), *The Reinvention of Al-Shabaab: A Strategy of Choice or Necessity?*, (Center for Strategic and International Studies), February, p 1.

ANNEX 3: Key drivers of conflict in Somalia

1. Poor governance

The legacy of Siad Barre's predatory and extractive central state has loomed large throughout the past 25 years of efforts to build an effective central government in Somalia. By the late 1980s, "the weight of nearly 20 years of rampant corruption, repression and state control had reduced Somali welfare to horrifically low levels". State resources, including access to land and water, were used to reward clients and patronage networks. Successive authorities installed by international peace processes since 1991 have largely failed to provide crucial services to citizens.

While the establishment of a federal system of governance in 2012 promised to ensure an equitable balance of power among Somalia's competing interests, and more broadly, an antidote to scepticism about the legitimacy of any Somali state, this has proven elusive. As *Chatham House's* Jason Mosley and NGO *Marqaati's* Mohamed Mubarak have highlighted, Somali actors do not have a consistent definition for 'federalism'.³⁸² Consequently, the process of 'federalising' Somalia has been the source of tension and outright conflict as clans have fought to lay claim to certain regions, as a means of accessing political power. This has led to further concerns that the predatory state may be devolved to sub-national level, amid allegations of exclusion and the use of resources to reinforce local patronage networks in newly formed interim regional administrations.

Poor governance also played a part in al-Shabaab's rise. The group initially enjoyed popular support, partly because of its opposition to Ethiopia, but also because, as a 2011 Human Rights Watch report highlighted, "in many areas, al-Shabaab rule has brought relative peace and order".³⁸³ However, the same report noted that, "even where this holds true, security has come at a steep price – especially for women".³⁸⁴ Indeed, al-Shabaab's style of governance was marked by the application of an extreme interpretation of *shari'a* law, which included harsh punishments for perceived breaches of the rules, including amputations, flogging and execution by stoning and other means, which had the effect of alienating much of the populace.

Overall, governance of the Somali state remains a fraught endeavour, and clashes continue over resources, control and participation in political processes between interim regional administrations and the FGS.³⁸⁵

2. Corruption

Allegations of corruption have marred successive efforts to build a credible central state in Somalia, affecting development assistance, humanitarian aid and direct funding to Somali authorities. Entrenched patronage networks have led to repeated allegations of embezzlement on a grand scale. Corruption has undermined the legitimacy and credibility of successive governments in the eyes of the public and has created further incentives for the capture of the state. One report from the TFG Prime Minister's office in May 2011 stated, "in 2009–2010 over \$72 million in donor assistance was stolen and nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in revenues was unaccounted for."³⁸⁶ This pattern has continued under the FGS, with the UN SEMG reporting in 2013 that:

382 Mosley J, Mubarak M (2014), 'On federalism and constitutionality in Somali: difficulties of 'post-transitional' institutional building remain', African Arguments, 12 February (<http://africanarguments.org/2014/02/12/on-federalism-and-constitutionality-in-somalia-difficulties-of-post-transitional-institution-building-remain-by-mohamed-mubarak-and-jason-mosley/>).

383 Human Rights Watch (2010), 'Harsh War, Harsh Peace: Abuses by al-Shabaab, the Transitional Federal Government, and AMISOM in Somalia', 19 April (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/04/19/harsh-war-harsh-peace/abuses-al-shabaab-transitional-federal-government-and-amisom>).

384 *Ibid.*

385 *Op cit* Bryden M, Thomas T (2015), p 7.

386 Audit account cited in Bryden M (2011), *Somalia's Famine is Not Just a Catastrophe, It's a Crime*, (Enough Project), October, p 2.

“The system inherited by the new Government is in many ways beyond its control, while at times political decisions and appointments have exacerbated conditions of corruption. Ferocious competition for control of Government at the end of the transition process in the summer of 2012 entailed approaches to campaign financing that took the management of finances outside the public system or contributed to mismanagement through it.”³⁸⁷

While donors have exerted considerable pressure on the FGS to reform its public financial management and reduce the scope for potential corruption, allegations continue. In November 2013, the governor of the central bank resigned and fled the country after only seven weeks in the post, citing pressure to permit corrupt financial activity.³⁸⁸ While the national authorities remain unwilling or unable to deal with such widespread allegations of corruption and the misappropriation of funds, their legitimacy will remain weak. In 2015, the UN SEMG alleged that senior SNA commanders were inflating troop numbers and embezzling funds meant for salary payments, potentially undermining any progress made in terms of rebuilding and reforming the SNA, and jeopardising the long-term peace prospects of Somalia.³⁸⁹

By contrast, analysis of al-Shabaab’s “highly effective tax, fundraising and payment systems”, has emphasised how its systems of financial control have enabled the group to both sustain itself and provide welfare to its members, all of which has resulted in a perception that al-Shabaab is “financially competent and less corrupt than the central and local authorities it opposes” and may be contributing to its survival.³⁹⁰

3. Impunity

Compounding weak governance structures across Somalia is a context of almost total impunity for wrongdoing, including human rights abuses and criminal activities such as corruption, both for Somali actors and international actors. There are multiple systems of law in operation in the country, including the statutory, or formal, system, *shari’a* and customary law, known as the *xeer*. These frequently overlap and contradict each other. Formal or statutory courts remain few and far between, and have been perceived by some as subject to abuse for the promotion of clan or individual interests.³⁹¹ Meanwhile, the *xeer* customary dispute resolution system, operational between and within clans, has generally focused on collective responsibility for harm caused, which has had the effect of undermining individual rights (particularly in relation to sexual and gender-based violence) and has also worked against smaller clans. The *xeer* system has also been weak with regard to the protection of and provision of justice to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in locations outside their traditional clan areas.

There is some pressure to ensure that most al-Shabaab-related cases enter the justice system through the formal courts system. However, in the absence of a legal framework for the prosecution of terrorism-related offences, these have been tried in the military courts.³⁹² These courts have handed down numerous death sentences, including reportedly for membership offences.³⁹³ Such actions have been criticised on the basis that they have had the effect of dissuading people – particularly mid-level operatives – from defecting despite the amnesties offered to defectors by the FGS.

³⁸⁷ *Op cit* United Nations Security Council (2013), p 23.

³⁸⁸ Manson K (2013), ‘Somalia central bank governor resigns after seven weeks’, *Financial Times*, 3 November.

³⁸⁹ United Nations Security Council (2015), ‘Letter dated 9 October 2015 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992) and 1907 (2009) concerning Somalia and Eritrea addressed to the President of the Security Council’, 19 October, p 24.; *Op cit* Jorgic D (2015).

³⁹⁰ *Op cit* International Crisis Group (2014).

³⁹¹ See Le Sage A (2005), *Stateless Justice in Somalia: Formal and Informal Rule of Law Initiatives*, (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue), July.

³⁹² Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 10 November 2014.

³⁹³ Saferworld interview, Mogadishu, 10 November 2014.

4. Clan identity

The collapse of the Siad Barre regime brought the issue of clan identity into stark relief. Ostensibly, the regime had attempted to downplay issues of clan and tribalism, but had in fact ensured that minority clans in the country dominated government. As a result, clan- or regionally based armed groups emerged in response to state marginalisation. Post-1991 attempts to rebuild the state have further fuelled the rise of clan identity as a means to capture political power and control over resources, with traditional elders arguing that linking state and clan has “albeit inadvertently, raised the stakes; exacerbating competition between clan groups for control of state resources and contributing to the proliferation of ‘elders’”.³⁹⁴

Indeed, the role that the clan has played in statebuilding and the construction of the Somali state has been formalised through the use of the ‘4.5 formula’ in power-sharing arrangements, including the formation of the TFG and the FGS.³⁹⁵ This has been created and embedded in statebuilding processes links between the state and the clan, providing clans with political power and control of patronage networks, as well as economic and military resources. Looking beyond the central government, local administrations have been used as ‘tools of domination’ by larger and more powerful clans against smaller clans and sub-clans, meaning that clan identity has become both a foundation and spoiler of peace and statebuilding efforts.³⁹⁶

The marginalisation or exclusion – perceived or real – of groups from local and national power and resource sharing arrangements has also pushed them towards supporting groups opposed to the Federal Government or local authorities, including al-Shabaab. Barre Hirale’s actions during the formation of the IJA provide an example, whereby the perception of Marehan marginalisation from the process led to his announcement that while he was affiliated to the FGS, he was also conducting joint military planning with al-Shabaab in order to capture Kismayo from Ahmed Madobe’s Ras Kamboni group. Block clan affiliation with, or elder support for, al-Shabaab is not static, as Barre Hirale demonstrated. However, it is in some instances a reflection of political disputes and a means of persuading others to share resources and power.

Beyond political control, parts of the country have also witnessed resource-based disputes between clans – including, as the Somalia Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) indicated, between clans referred to as “settlers” and those described as “original inhabitants” of areas.³⁹⁷ Local hostilities emerging from such disputes have longer-term consequences for power-sharing arrangements, limiting trust and cooperation between groups and contributing to an imperative to capture local and, ultimately, national political control in order to redistribute resources. This has been exacerbated by the breakdown or waning of *xeer*, which (while far from perfect) has limited the ability of Somali actors to utilise such mechanisms to address and resolve conflict at local level, despite the current political primacy of clan in organising peacebuilding and statebuilding processes.

5. Militarised society and the multiplicity of armed actors

With state collapse came the collapse of state provided security. While there have been a number of efforts to reconstitute the Somali police force and SNA, much of the security provision for people in the southern and central areas of the country (outside of areas under al-Shabaab control) remains in the hands of militias, which are often

³⁹⁴ Rift Valley Institute (2015), ‘The Impact of War on Somali Men: An Inception Study’, May, p 25.

³⁹⁵ The negotiators who established the TFG tried to give fair representation to each of Somalia’s clans through the so-called ‘4.5 formula’. The four major clans – Darood, Hawiye, Dir, and Digil-Mirifle – all received 61 parliament seats, while the remaining groups together received 31 seats.

³⁹⁶ Menkhaus K (2007), ‘Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building, and the Politics of Coping’, *International Security* 31 (3), p 84.

³⁹⁷ Somalia CEWARU (2013), ‘From the bottom up: Southern Regions – perspectives through conflict analysis and key political actors’ mapping of Gedo, Middle Juba, Lower Juba and Lower Shabelle’, December, pp 10-12. The Somalia CEWARN describes widespread resource-based conflict in southern Somalia, in Gedo, Lower Juba, Middle Juba and Lower Shabelle, which are largely unresolved and based on a perception of difference, with ‘settler’ communities having migrated south and taken control of resources such as farmlands, disregarding local variations of *xeer*, antagonising local clan relations.

based on clan. These are in some cases affiliated – often very loosely – with national authorities, but their primary loyalty is more often towards a local commander. While earlier peace negotiations centred around negotiating ceasefires and disarmament, more recently, efforts have focused on either disarming or integrating militias into national structures. The 2013 agreement for the establishment of the IJA, for example, contained specific provisions for the integration of the Ras Kamboni militia group into the SNA, and there are similar negotiations taking place in relation to the armed forces of Puntland. However, in the context of a state that continues to be regarded as potentially predatory, and the emphasis on distribution of power and resources between clans, such negotiations remain challenging. Many actors are unwilling to relinquish military power in case it means relinquishing potential or actual political power. 2015 saw conflict between the FGS and elements of the ASWJ group associated with efforts to establish an interim administration in Galmudug in central Somalia.

AMISOM remains a key source of security although it lacks a mandate to protect civilians because it remains a peace-enforcement rather than a peacekeeping operation. AMISOM troops have been accused of committing violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including sexual violence and the killing of civilians. While some recent cases have been investigated, AMISOM is not always popular in its areas of operation, though many civil society actors interviewed for this report generally saw the force as a necessity for the provision of some level of security. AMISOM's role is particularly complicated due to the political interests of certain states that provide its troops and because of its specific mandate to support the FGS.

The context of multiple security providers is exacerbated by the wide availability of weapons in the country, despite an arms embargo still being in force. The UN SEMG has regularly reported the availability of weapons in Somalia's arms markets as well as cases where imported military assistance has been diverted to armed groups.³⁹⁸ The accessibility of ostensibly prohibited or restricted weaponry and ammunition has been exacerbated by periods of non-compliance with reporting requirements by states providing support to the Somali security sector, which has reduced the transparency of such transfers and therefore the ability to track that such assistance is not diverted.

Weapon ownership is also still widely perceived as one of the most important means of safeguarding families and communities in the absence of an effective national – and de-politicised – police force in areas under the control of the FGS or sub-national administrations.

6. Economic drivers of conflict

Protracted violence, poverty and humanitarian crisis have left Somalia one of the world's poorest countries, with significant levels of unemployment, under-employment, minimal education and significant humanitarian needs.

- More than 70 per cent of the population is under the age of thirty, with the unemployment rate for young people aged 14–29 estimated at 67 per cent.³⁹⁹
- Over a million people are estimated to be displaced within the country and around 2.8 million are estimated to require either urgent, life-saving assistance or livelihood support to ensure that their situation does not further deteriorate.⁴⁰⁰

Despite persistent conflict, Somalia's economy, particularly its private sector, has demonstrated remarkable adaptive capacity and resilience. The relative strength of a number of sectors, including livestock and telecommunications, has led some commentators to describe the country as an "economy without a state".⁴⁰¹ Yet the private

³⁹⁸ *Op cit* United Nations (2014), pp 205–256.

³⁹⁹ United Nations Development Programme (2012), 'Somalia Human Development Report 2012: Empowering youth for peace and development', 28 September.

⁴⁰⁰ UNHCR (2015), '2015 UNHCR country operations profile – Somalia, (www.unhcr.org/pages/49e483ad6.html).

⁴⁰¹ Little P (2003), *Somalia: Economy Without State*, (Indiana University Press).

sector has also been central in driving and reinforcing a war economy, bankrolling and paying taxes to various actors, including warlords and armed groups.

Economic resources including air and sea ports have also witnessed regular competition and fights for control. In the 1990s, warlords competing for control of Mogadishu fought to take over major economic assets including markets and air and seaports in an effort to secure rents from those installations. These remain the subject of competition between emerging administrations today; Article Two of the Addis Agreement, which established the IJA in July 2013, includes detailed provisions for the management and distribution of income from the Kismayo air and seaports and other revenues and resources between the FGS and IJA.⁴⁰²

Charcoal Charcoal is another economic resource that has been a factor in ongoing conflict in Somalia. It also contributes to environmental degradation, further threatening livelihoods across the country. Speaking at the launch event for the Somalia Programme for Sustainable Charcoal Production and Alternative Livelihoods (PROSCAL) in April 2013, the UN Resident Coordinator said that the “charcoal trade is directly linked with instability and is a major impediment to the peace process. The charcoal industry affects livelihood security, it exacerbates community conflicts and increases vulnerability to drought. The industry is a source of tension and a major source of funding for militias”.⁴⁰³

Somali’s charcoal exports, a key source of funding for al-Shabaab, are estimated to have been worth at least \$250 million in 2013 and 2014 – despite being the subject of an UNSC embargo since February 2012.⁴⁰⁴ The trade has enabled the group to generate income outside its areas of operation, independent of the success of its armed campaigns, “enabling them to regroup and resurface again and again after apparent military defeat”.⁴⁰⁵

Extractive industry Estimates suggest that Somalia may contain hydrocarbon reserves equivalent to Kuwait’s, which presents an attractive opportunity for international oil companies, despite ongoing insecurity.⁴⁰⁶ Oil also presents a potential revenue stream and development resource for Somalia’s authorities. However, in a context of protracted resource-based conflict, inadequate or non-existent legal frameworks, limited transparency and allegations of widespread corruption, exploitation of Somalia’s extractive resources could exacerbate existing tensions.⁴⁰⁷ It also risks exacerbating tensions with Somalia’s neighbours; ongoing exploration activity in areas of water disputed by Somalia and Kenya has led to a pending legal challenge by Somalia at the International Court of Justice.

Humanitarian aid Somalia has undergone a 25-year humanitarian crisis, including two famines in 1992 and 2011. Although this has galvanised humanitarian support, levels of assistance have often been tied to donor interest in political processes oriented towards reconstructing the Somali state.⁴⁰⁸

In 1992, humanitarian assistance was \$410.6 million according to Somalia experts Laura Hammond and Hannah Vaughan-Lee, dropping to an average of \$50–60 million between 1995 and 2003 before scaling up in 2004, as the TFG was formed, to \$108.5

⁴⁰² *Hiraan Online* (2013), ‘Agreement between the Federal Government of Somalia and Juba Delegation’, (www.hiraan.com/news4/2013/Aug/40895/agreement_between_the_federal_government_of_somalia_and_jubba_delegation.aspx).

⁴⁰³ UNDP (2013), ‘UN Resident Coordinator Speech for the Launch Event of Somalia Programme for Sustainable Charcoal Production and Alternative Livelihoods’, 17 April (www.so.undp.org/content/somalia/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2013/04/17/un-resident-coordinator-speech-for-the-launch-event-of-somalia-programme-for-sustainable-charcoal-production-and-alternative-livelihoods-proscal-.html).

⁴⁰⁴ Charonneau L, Nichols M (2014), ‘Exclusive: Illegal Somali charcoal exports fuel Islamist rebels, warlords’, Reuters, 10 October.

⁴⁰⁵ Nellemann C, Henriksen R, Raxter, P, Ash N, Mrema E (eds.) (2014), *The Environmental Crime Crisis: Threats to Sustainable Development from Illegal Exploitation and Trade in Wildlife and Forest Resources*. (United Nations Environment Programme), p 81.

⁴⁰⁶ Saferworld, International Alert, DDG, Forthcoming paper on extractives.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁸ Hammond L, Vaughan-Lee H, *Humanitarian space in Somalia: a scarce commodity*, (Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy Group, April 2012), pp 5–6.

million, spiking in 2009 at \$663.9 million, before dropping in 2010 to \$496.5 million and rising again in 2011 to \$787 million.⁴⁰⁹

Aid resources have been a key political and economic factor in Somalia's conflict. In the 1990s, humanitarian aid was a key resource for capture by warlords, used to improve their military strength and purchase access to political processes. Bradbury argues that the "huge intervention in the south [in the 1990s] entrenched the predatory warlord structures, spawned a new class of entrepreneurs and perpetuated Mogadishu as a locus of conflict."⁴¹⁰ Since the 1990s, the diversion of material assistance has continued unabated, with the TFG and al-Shabaab accused in 2011 of "diverting aid resources in order to lure people to areas under their control or to prevent people from seeking assistance in areas outside of their control."⁴¹¹

Maxwell *et al.* have argued "given the impact of the attacks of September 11, 2011, and a shift towards a 'security' imperative (away from a humanitarian one), it was inevitable that aid in Somalia would be used increasingly for political ends."⁴¹² Tied to this, humanitarian assistance has been increasingly restricted by international actors citing concerns about its diversion, particularly to al-Shabaab – as was the case for £480,000-worth of the UK's DFID humanitarian assistance between 2011 and 2012.⁴¹³

Significantly, in March 2010, a UN SEMG report claimed widespread diversion of food aid, and made specific allegations that three contractors were diverting over half of all food aid in the country.⁴¹⁴ Amid ongoing investigations, famine was declared across large parts of Somalia, both in government- and al-Shabaab-held territory. Counter-terrorism legislation implemented in response to concerns about diversion of aid has at times dramatically curtailed assistance available to vulnerable communities, particularly those living in al-Shabaab-controlled areas, which was particularly obvious during the 2011 famine, with few organisations willing (or able) to operate in these areas.

Remittances Somalia is heavily dependent on remittances, receiving an estimated \$1.3 billion every year. This accounts for between 25 and 45 per cent of its economy and exceeds the amount the country receives in humanitarian assistance, development aid and direct foreign investment combined.⁴¹⁵ However, for external actors, Somali remittances have been described as a "mysterious and somewhat baffling alternative international financial infrastructure, which seems opaque to external supervision and vulnerable to exploitation for money laundering and financing terrorism."⁴¹⁶ As a result, many Somali MTOs – institutions responsible for the flow of remittances into Somalia – are viewed as high-risk customers for banks and have found it increasingly difficult to access banking services, particularly in the US, UK and Australia.⁴¹⁷

This risks strengthening al-Shabaab's recruitment capabilities on the basis that restricted flows reduce opportunity and could "mobilise the anger and grievance on which terrorist organisations thrive."⁴¹⁸ For as long as al-Shabaab – and other groups – are able to pay their members more regularly than state institutions; this will remain a potential driver of individuals into their ranks.⁴¹⁹ Additionally, such restrictions could drive the flow of remittances underground, making them less transparent and

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p 5.

⁴¹⁰ Bradbury M (2008), *Becoming Somaliland* (Suffolk: James Curry), p 92.

⁴¹¹ *Op cit* Hammond L, Vaughan-Lee, H (2012), p 7.

⁴¹² *Op cit* Maxwell D, Majid N, Stobaugh K, Kim J J, Lauer, P E (2014), p 3.

⁴¹³ Tran M (2013), 'Justine Greening under fire over theft of British aid supplies to Somalia', *The Guardian*, 12 August.

⁴¹⁴ Pantuliano S, Metcalfe V (2011), 'Neutrality undermined: the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on humanitarian action in Somalia' Humanitarian Policy Group, March (<http://odihpn.org/magazine/neutrality-undermined-the-impact-of-counter-terrorism-legislation-on-humanitarian-action-in-somalia/>).

⁴¹⁵ *Op cit*, Joint Agency Briefing Note (2015).

⁴¹⁶ Cockayne J, Shetret L, *Capitalizing on Trust: Harnessing Somali Remittances for Counterterrorism Human Rights and State Building*, (Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 2012), p 2.

⁴¹⁷ *Op cit* Joint Agency Briefing Note (2014), p 2.

⁴¹⁸ *Op cit* Monbiot G (2015).

⁴¹⁹ *Op cit* Botha A, Abdile M. (2014), p 8.

accountable and increasing the potential for their misuse or diversion into the very groups that regulatory frameworks in the West are seeking to avoid.

The economic vulnerability of young people The economic precariousness of young people is a major potential cause of conflict in Somalia. While recent research by Mercy Corps found no relationship between job status and support or willingness to participate in political violence,⁴²⁰ a recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Somalia Development Report notes that:

*“...youth are major actors in the conflict, constituting the bulk of participants in militias and criminal gangs including al Shabaab. Lost opportunities, unclear identity and a growing sense of marginalization among a youth in an environment of state collapse, violent conflict and economic decline provide fertile ground for youth radicalization. The same reasons that have pushed young Somalis to join al Shabaab have also drawn them to join street gangs”.*⁴²¹

Further research by the Institute for Security Studies and Finnish Church Aid has highlighted how economic incentives have been pivotal in driving al-Shabaab recruitment.⁴²²

7. Religious ideology

One of the primary concerns of all international actors engaged in Somalia has been the containment of radical Islamism. This has centred around ensuring that no ‘safe haven’ for international terrorism exists due to a weak state as well as concerns about extreme Islamist groups within Somalia itself. Concerns about the role of extremist ideologies began to emerge in the 1990s both because of the activities of al-Qaeda in East Africa and the rise of a Somali group, AIAI. These fears became particularly acute following 9/11 and again following the emergence of the ICU. They were largely realised after the collapse of the ICU and the emergence of new groups including al-Shabaab. Many of AIAI’s leaders and members became active in these successive groups.

Many of these groups have espoused extremist interpretations of *shari’ah* and attempted to establish Islamist states in their areas of operation. Al-Shabaab is, of course, the most high-profile of these groups, in large part due to its success in capturing and administering territory across southern and central Somalia. It has been estimated at various points to have controlled almost 80 per cent of the country.

However, its ideology has been neither static, nor homogenous. It began as a largely nationalist-Islamist entity, leveraging public opposition to Ethiopia’s military intervention in 2006. However, the group became increasingly transnational in focus, attacking civilians in Uganda watching the football World Cup in July 2010, formally affiliating itself with al-Qaeda in 2012, and building a considerable foreign membership. 2013 saw a process of internal purging in which Godane killed – or ordered the killing – of a number of senior leaders, reducing a “once relatively heterogeneous” leadership into “the more extremist fringe: an Al-Qaeda franchise in Somalia, imbued with the ‘*takfiri*’ ethos that legitimizes the killing of other Muslims and a recommitment to the cause of international jihad and the restoration of an Islamic caliphate.”⁴²³ Botha and Abdie’s research into recruitment indicated strong perceptions of victimisation, with 98 per cent of their respondents believing that Islam was under threat.

It is this vision of al-Shabaab as driven by a violent interpretation of Islam that has come to dominate, reinforced by tactics such as suicide bombings inside Somalia against Muslims, including civilians. Outside the country, attacks in Kenya have often

⁴²⁰ Mercy Corps (2015), ‘Youth & Consequences: Unemployment, Injustice and Violence’, April, p 16.

⁴²¹ Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2012), ‘Vulnerable, Volatile Youth May Threaten Somalia’s Fragile Stability; Radicalization Felt Across Africa’, 24 October, (<http://africacenter.org/2012/10/vulnerable-volatile-youth-may-threaten-somalia%E2%80%99s-fragile-stability/>).

⁴²² *Op cit* Botha, Abdile (2014).

⁴²³ *Op cit* Bryden (2014), pp 1–2.

attempted to polarise communities on the basis of their religion. In several attacks, those responsible were said to have divided their victims depending on their religion, allowing Muslim people to go free while killing non-Muslims.

However, at the same time al-Shabaab's membership or affiliation is in many other cases extremely fluid and can often be invoked as an expression of opposition to existing or emerging political dynamics, particularly at the local level, or as a response to economic incentives. While religious motives are important in recruitment, the *Institute for Security Studies* Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile emphasised that:

“It is clear that only a small percentage of interviewees were completely integrated into the organisation or truly believed in al-Shabaab and what it represents (23%) or regarded al-Shabaab as being the solution to Somalia’s problems (17%). Instead, the majority of interviewees were drawn to al-Shabaab because it is feared and respected (99%) and the fact that when they as individuals are armed they are respected (94%). To place this in perspective, it is important to remember that the overwhelming majority of interviewees were foot soldiers, not commanders, who joined because of the economic opportunities al-Shabaab potentially provided.”⁴²⁴

8. External factors

External actors, including regional actors, have played a significant role in shaping Somalia's conflicts and the resulting peacebuilding and governance efforts. The conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia led to a proxy war in Somalia between the two, and resulted in sanctions on Eritrea for its alleged involvement with opposition groups in Somalia. Links between actors in Somalia and Yemen – particularly around the arms trade – have had significant implications for both countries. The thousands of refugees and asylum-seekers who have entered Somalia since the beginning of the Yemeni civil war in early 2015 also have the potential to influence and drive conflict, particularly at the community or local level.

Actors including Turkey,⁴²⁵ Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are also increasingly active, particularly around the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and have encountered many of the risks that such activities entail. They are introducing new political dynamics, potentially undermining the traditional dominance of Western actors in the country and influencing local political competition.⁴²⁶ These actors have their own agendas and ambitions for engagement in the country. Their interests are not static, but fluctuate continually.

⁴²⁴ *Op cit* Botha, Abdile (2014), p 11.

⁴²⁵ *Op cit* Wheeler T, Sazak O, Achilles K, Woods A (2015).

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*

Saferworld is an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives. We work with local people affected by conflict to improve their safety and sense of security, and conduct wider research and analysis. We use this evidence and learning to improve local, national and international policies and practices that can help build lasting peace. Our priority is people – we believe that everyone should be able to lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from insecurity and violent conflict.

In recent years Western actors including the US, UK, and the EU have put responses to terrorism, violent extremism and instability among their foremost priorities. Yet, despite the investment of huge resources – primarily military, but also financial, human and political – by Western actors, the results of this action have been mixed at best.

There has not been sufficiently full and frank public debate about the lessons of past engagement in countries where a global terror threat has been identified, nor about how future engagement could be improved in the interests of building lasting peace founded on the fulfilment of human rights. However, failure to recognise and pursue effective peacebuilding alternatives to these approaches could condemn Western actors and their partners to a vicious circle that they can ill afford: multiplying instability wherever they attempt to reduce it, and in response becoming ever more belligerent in the face of renewed threats, while compromising their commitments to democracy, justice and human rights. In the discussion paper *Dilemmas of counter-terror, stabilisation and statebuilding*, Saferworld provided a review of global evidence on the impacts of existing approaches, and suggested a number of constructive directions for improved policy.

This report on Somalia is accompanied by two other reports on Afghanistan and Yemen. Together, they explore the issues identified in the initial discussion paper through detailed examination of specific country contexts from a peacebuilding perspective – in order to stimulate further debate on the lessons learnt.

COVER PHOTO: African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops prepare for a joint ground advance with the Somali National Army (SNA) to an area southwest of Mogadishu occupied by al-Shabaab. © UN PHOTO/STUART PRICE



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