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CHAPTER 1: GEOGRAPHY

Introduction

Somalia lies in eastern Africa to the south of the Gulf of Aden. This region is known as the Horn of Africa.¹ Somalia is slightly smaller than Texas, with semiarid plains and cooler plateaus where highland elevations provide relief from the equatorial heat. Two permanent rivers run through the southern part of Somalia and support the country’s major agricultural area, the largest city, Mogadishu, and roughly 40% of the total Somali population (estimated to be about 10 million in 2012).² Light rainfall makes much of the country suitable only for nomadic herding; about 60% of the population are combination herders and farmers.³, ⁴

Physical Terrain and Topographic Features

Somalia has an area of 637,657 sq km (246,201 sq mi). Stretching around the Horn of Africa, its coastline of 3,025 km (1,880 mi) is the longest on the African continent.⁵ Somalia’s maritime claims extend 200 nautical miles into the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.⁶ To the west, the northern border with Djibouti is 58 km (36 mi) long. The southern border with Kenya is 682 km (424 mi) long. The border with Ethiopia extends for 1,600 km (994 mi). Because of the territorial dispute with Ethiopia over the Ogaden highlands, part of the border between the two countries is shown on some maps as provisional.⁷, ⁸

The Guban

The semiarid coastal plain called the Guban (scrub land) runs parallel to the Gulf of Aden in the north for about 240 km (149 mi) between the port cities of Zeila (also spelled Saylac) in the west and Berbera in the east.⁹ The northwestern part of the Guban consists of barren lava fields that originate in Djibouti. The lava fields end in a series of hills and merge into a plain.

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The plain narrows as it extends eastward, but widens again near Berbera. The Guban ranges in width (north to south) from 56 km (35 mi) in the west near Zeila to 6 km (4 mi) in the east. This lowland area is hot, humid, and arid. When rain does fall, scrub vegetation grows quickly, thus providing food for herd animals.

**The Karkaar Mountains**

The Karkaar Mountains span the northern part of Somalia from Ethiopia to the tip of the Horn of Africa. The mountains rise sharply from sea level to 1,800 m (5,905 ft) in the west and up to 2,100 m (6,890 ft) in the east. The highest point of the Karkaar Mountains is Shimber Berris, which reaches 2,407 m (7,896 ft), near the town of Erigavo (in the north central area). The country’s lowest temperatures occur here, dropping to below freezing in December. Somalia’s northern mountain regions have open woodland (acacia trees), juniper, and shrub evergreen vegetation. Frankincense and myrrh trees are native to the mountain slopes.

**The Ogo Plateau**

Southward, the mountains flatten to form the Ogo Plateau, an area of shallow valleys and dry riverbeds that are an extension of the Ogaden highlands of Ethiopia. To the east, this vast plateau contains the Nugaal Valley and the Mudug Plain. Without perennial rivers, the area’s watersheds are dry for much of the year. To the west, the Ogo Plateau descends into the Haud area. The Haud provides grazing grounds for animal herds during the rainy seasons. Permanent wells make farming possible. Natural depressions in the region become lakes and ponds during the rains.

**Southern Somali Plateau and Coastal Plain**

The basins of Somalia’s two constantly flowing rivers, the Shabelle and the Juba, are south of the Mudug Plain. The area surrounding these rivers is the most fertile in the country. The Somali

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Plateau descends into a coastal plain along the Indian Ocean and is, on average, 180 m (590 ft) above sea level.\textsuperscript{21} The coastal plain, where the nation’s capital is located, is the largest geographic region in Somalia. Beaches can be short and steep, with unstable sand dunes. Short grasses prevail in the northern part of the plain; typical savannah vegetation predominates in the south.\textsuperscript{22}

Climate

Somalia’s climatic conditions include seasonal monsoons, irregular rainfall, and recurring droughts and floods. The year is broken up into four seasons. \textit{Gu}, the main rainy season, occurs from April to June. This is followed by \textit{xagaa}, a dry season lasting from June to September. \textit{Dayr}, the second rainy season, lasts from October to December and is followed by the main dry season known as \textit{jilaal}.\textsuperscript{23} The \textit{tangambili} (periods between rainy seasons) are hot and humid in coastal areas, but dry inland.\textsuperscript{24}

Somalia’s average annual rainfall is 282 mm (11 in), but the amount of rainfall varies greatly from north to south. Average rainfall along the northern coast is 5 cm (2 in); the northern highlands receive 50 cm (20 in). The drier interior receives 15 cm (6 in). Rainfall in the southwest ranges from 35 cm (14 in) to 50 cm (20 in), making the region suitable for agriculture. Because of scarce rainfall in some parts of the country, moderate droughts occur every 3 to 4 years, and severe droughts occur approximately every 9 years.\textsuperscript{25}

Somalia’s average year-round temperatures range from 30ºC to 40ºC (86ºF to 104ºF), with cooler temperatures at higher elevations and in the southern coastal regions. The greatest temperature extremes occur in the north. Winter months bring below-freezing temperatures to the highlands. During the summer, temperatures in the Gulf of Aden coastal region rise to more than 45ºC (113ºF). Relative humidity in the north ranges from 40% in the afternoon to 85% at night. In the south, temperatures range from 20ºC (68ºF) to 40ºC (104ºF), with the hottest part of the year occurring February through April. In the coastal region along the Indian Ocean, relative humidity remains about 70% during both the wet and dry seasons.\textsuperscript{26}


\textsuperscript{24} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011, \texttt{http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm}.


Major Cities

Somalia has not had an official census since 1975. Because much of Somalia’s population is nomadic and people have been displaced by war, famine, and floods, it is difficult to determine city populations. The figures listed below vary by source, estimation method, and year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mogadishu</td>
<td>1,353,000 (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hargeysa</td>
<td>650,000–900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kismaayo</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berbera</td>
<td>30,000–70,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merca</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mogadishu

Located in the south on the Indian Ocean, Mogadishu is Somalia’s capital and largest city. Originally an Arab and Persian trading settlement important in the gold trade, Mogadishu became the capital of Italian Somaliland at the turn of the 20th century, and of independent Somali Republic in 1960. It remains a major deepwater port and center of commerce and transportation. However, continuing violence between the transitional government and militants during decades of civil war has destroyed many parts of the city. In December 2011, the United Nations reported 184,000 internally displaced persons in Mogadishu. Humanitarian workers

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have described the road from the city as “probably the largest concentration of displaced people on the planet.”

Hargeysa

Hargeysa is situated 1,334 meters (4,377 ft) above sea level in the Ogo Highlands of Somalia’s northwest interior. Hargeysa has a mild climate, and the area surrounding the city is the only Somali region that supports farming other than the Juba and Shabelle river valleys in the south. Hargeysa began as a religious community in the 19th century and later became the capital of the former British Somaliland. Currently it is the de facto capital of the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland. In 1988, during the civil war, the city was destroyed by an air attack. Hargeysa has since been rebuilt and has an international airport, a university, and the only traffic lights in the country. The city is a center for livestock trade. Its population fluctuates seasonally with nomadic herders.

Berbera

Situated in the northwest on the Gulf of Aden, the city of Berbera is the main port of self-proclaimed Somaliland. A Muslim settlement since medieval times, Berbera was claimed by the Portuguese, the Ottoman Turks, and the Egyptians. It was the capital of British Somaliland until 1941. In the 1980s the United States military operated from Berbera’s Soviet-built port facilities. During the subsequent decades of conflict, the port was damaged but remained commercially operational, and today exports include livestock, ghee, frankincense, myrrh, and gum arabic. As do other Somali cities, Berbera’s population varies seasonally, increasing when herders bring cattle to market, and decreasing when hot weather sends people to higher, cooler areas.

39 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Mogadishu: Fact Sheet,” 11 December 2011,
http://ochaonline.un.org/OchaLinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docId=1299176
42 Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011,
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm
44 Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011,
http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm
Kismaayo

Kismaayo (also spelled Chisimayu) is Somalia’s southernmost port and the regional capital of Jubbada Hoose. Kismaayo lies on the Indian Ocean, near the mouth of the Juba River. Long a fishing settlement and port of trade, the city was founded in the 1800s by the Sultan of Zanzibar. The British later ceded the area to Italian colonists. The United States built a port for Kismaayo in the 1960s, and renovated it 30 years later. The deepwater port supports Somalia’s export of bananas. Political violence and clashes between rival warlords have taken their toll on the city and piracy has become a problem in the area in recent years. Since 2010, forces of the insurgent group al-Shabaab have controlled Kismaayo.

Merca

Merca (written as “Marka” in Somali) is a port city on the Indian Ocean 90 km (56 mi) southwest of Mogadishu. Merca is the capital of the Shabeellaha Hoose region. Merca has been an international trading port since the 10th century. Somalis began to settle the area in the 13th century. Because of offshore coral reefs, shipping is somewhat limited. Goods are transported between docked ships and the actual port by lighters (barges). The coral reefs limit expansion of the port. Insurgent groups currently control the city.

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Major Rivers

Somalia’s two permanent rivers, the Juba and the Shabelle, originate in Ethiopia and run through the southwest of the country into the Indian Ocean. The fertile areas formed by these river basins are the center of Somalia’s agricultural activity. The Juba River enters Somalia near the town of Doolow and flows south for 875 km (544 mi) to Kismaayo. It is the only river in Somalia that is navigable throughout the year. The Shabelle enters Somalia north of Beledweyne and flows south toward the ocean. At Balcad, about 32 km (20 mi) north of the Mogadishu shore, the river turns southwest and runs parallel to the coast. About 85 km (53 mi) downstream of Mogadishu, it becomes a swamp that then dissipates in the sands near the Juba River. Rarely is there sufficient rainfall for the Shabelle to connect with the Juba. Damaging floods periodically strike the basin.

Environmental Concerns

Deforestation for timber, fuel, and farming, as well as overgrazing, adds to soil erosion and desertification. Somalia has lost close to a fifth of its forests in the past 20 years, largely to the production of firewood and charcoal. Population shifts caused by natural and manmade disasters strain freshwater supplies, and water contamination caused by lack of infrastructure, spreads disease. Marine waters are endangered. Mostly foreign fleets clean their tanks and

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overfish along Somali shores. In addition, Somalis fear the international toxic waste that has been dumped along the coast since the 1980s. Following the tsunami of December 2004, the UN reported that many people living within reach of tsunami winds suffered from unusual health problems, some of which were consistent with radiation sickness.

Natural Hazards

Drought, floods, and dust storms persistently threaten Somalis. These perils often yield disastrous results because the loss of livestock, crops, and farmland leads to widespread famine and epidemics. A 5-year drought that ended by flash floods in the autumn of 2009 has been followed by a worse drought in 2011. The United States Department of State estimates that some 4 million Somalis are currently in need of food assistance, and 750,000 people are in danger of dying.

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Chapter 1 Assessment

1. Somalia is located on the Horn of Africa.
   **TRUE**
   Somalia is located on the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, in an area known as the Horn of Africa, the easternmost point of the African continent.

2. Droughts are a regular part of life in Somalia and often yield disastrous results.
   **TRUE**
   Somali’s climatic conditions include recurring droughts that threaten livestock, crops, and farmland, leading to widespread famine and epidemics.

3. The greatest temperature extremes occur in the south of Somalia.
   **FALSE**
   The greatest temperature extremes occur in the north, when winter months bring below-freezing temperatures to the highlands. Summer temperatures in the Gulf of Aden’s coastal region rise to more than 45°C (113°F).

4. Mogadishu is the de facto capital of Somaliland.
   **FALSE**
   Mogadishu became the capital of Italian Somaliland at the turn of the 20th century and of the independent Somali Republic in 1960. Today Mogadishu is Somalia’s largest city. Hargeysa is the de facto capital of Somaliland in the north.

5. Kismaayo is Somalia’s southernmost port and the regional capital of Jabbada Hoose.
   **TRUE**
   The United States built the port in Kismaayo in the 1960s and renovated the facility 30 years later. The deepwater port, which supports Somalia’s export of bananas, has been controlled by al-Shabaab since 2010.
CHAPTER 2: HISTORY

Introduction

Somali peoples have populated the Horn of Africa for thousands of years. At the crossroads of the Middle East, western Asia, sub-Saharan and north Africa, Somali territories were claimed (and sometimes controlled) by various bands, clans, tribes, kingdoms, sultanates, and colonizing empires. In 1960, the Somali Republic became independent from Britain and Italy. In 1969, Major General Mohamed Siad Barre took power in a military coup and ruled until he was overthrown in 1991. Since then, Somalia has been without a functioning central government. Efforts to transition to a national or federal state are supported by international organizations such as the UN and the African Union, but are opposed by insurgent groups, including al-Shabaab. Violence extends into refugee camps and terrorist acts abroad. “Ministates” within the country continue to multiply.

Ancient History

The Horn of Africa has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Somalia was known to the ancient Egyptians as the Land of Punt (“God’s Land”) and was the destination of Cushite peoples who migrated toward the coast from the Ethiopian and Kenyan highlands of eastern Africa’s Great Rift Valley.

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85 UN High Commissioner for Refugees, “Refugee Camps in the Horn of Africa at Risk (Briefing Notes),” 13 January 2012, http://www.unhcr.org/4f1031359.html
early occupants of modern-day Somalia were tribal Bantu and foraging Wa-Boni (Boni) peoples.93, 94 Somalia’s long coastline has drawn seafarers from regions beyond Africa.95 Well before the first century C.E., Arab and Asian merchant ships reached Somali shores.96, 97

Coastal Trade and the Emergence of Islam

As trade along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean increased, coastal towns and ports developed. By the 7th century C.E., Arabs and Persians established trading posts where Somalis could export goods such as ghee (clarified butter), ostrich feathers, and plant gums. Port cities such as Zeila and Merca were also transit points for slaves, a trade that continued into the 19th century.98, 99, 100 About the same time, early followers of the Prophet Muhammad, fleeing persecution in Arabia, arrived in the Horn of Africa and received protection from the Ethiopian king.101 Yemeni Qurayshi immigrants settled at the port of Zeila, and by the 10th century Islam had taken root in coastal cities as far south as Merca and Baraawe.102, 103, 104

The 11th to 13th centuries saw the emergence of Muslim patriarchs who formed the Somali clans Daarood and Isaaq.105, 106 Islam spread as these and other groups of immigrant Arabs and

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103 Richard K. P. Pankhurst, History of Ethiopian Towns (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1982), 5457A.
indigenous Cushites intermarried, multiplied, and migrated throughout Somalia. For the next several centuries Somalis fought in religious wars for regional Muslim kingdoms against Christian Abyssinia (now Ethiopia).

**External Interests, Internal Divisions**

Between 1498 and 1499, Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama sailed along Somalia’s coast on his way to and from India. He reportedly fired cannons at Mogadishu, one of the many clan-based kingdoms and locally autonomous states of the time. The Portuguese later traded in coastal towns, as did Turkish merchants. Both the Portuguese and the Turks became involved in the 16th-century struggle between Ahmad Gran (“the Left-Handed”), leader of the Islamic state of Adal, and Ethiopia. Despite Turkish assistance, Gran was finally defeated by Ethiopia with the help of Portuguese-supplied cannons. However, in later centuries the Ottoman Turks ultimately claimed authority over the Horn from the north. The Sultanate of Zanzibar, to the south, also claimed parts of Somalia.

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Partition and Colonization

Europeans began to explore Somalia in the 19th century. To support trade with East Asia, the British established a refueling port at Aden (on the Yemeni coast) in 1839. Their garrison relied on meat imported from Somalia. With the coming of the Suez Canal, France and Italy established refueling stations in the region, on the African coast of the Bab el Mandeb strait (connecting the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden). An Italian company later sublet the southern Somali coast from the British East Africa Company, which had leased the territory from the Sultan of Zanzibar. Egypt and Ethiopia also participated in the imperialist “Scramble for Africa” that characterized much of the nineteenth century. Reviving Ottoman claims, Egypt occupied the seaports of Berbera and Bulhar. Egypt later gave control of its Somali territories over to Britain in exchange for aid against a revolt in Sudan. When Egypt left Harer, Ethiopia’s Emperor Menelik II seized the Muslim city in the Ogaden highlands and, with Italian assistance, kept it from the Somalis. Menelik resisted European colonization, and later gained control (though not ownership) of interior Somali clan lands from the Europeans. Italy would regain much of the Ogaden by the 1930s.

Somalis resisted African and European outsiders. Indigenous religious leader Mohamed Abdullah Hassan led his followers (called dervishes) in a 20-year Somali rebellion against British, Italian, and Ethiopian colonizers that ended with the 1920 bombing of the dervish base at Taleex in the north. A member of the Saalixiya Sufi order, Abdullah Hassan was known

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125 French Somaliland eventually became Djibouti, which has a large Somali population.
as a sayidd (descendant of the Prophet Muhammad) to Somalis. The British called him the “Mad Mullah.” He was an early advocate of Somali nationalism. His movement combined Islam and anti-imperialism and sought to overcome clan differences. He wanted Somalis to understand that they shared a common language, religion, way of life, and destiny. For many Somalis, Abdullah Hassan continues to represent a national identity.\textsuperscript{136, 137, 138, 139, 140}

**World War II**

The tensions between the Allies and Axis powers that led to World War II had an impact on the Horn of Africa. Under Mussolini, Italy annexed Eritrea, Ethiopia, and southern Somalia, surrounding the British (and French) Somaliland colonies.\textsuperscript{141} Italy declared war on the United Kingdom and seized British Somaliland by force in 1940.\textsuperscript{142} In 1941, the British recaptured British Somaliland as well as Italian Abyssinia (Ethiopia/Eritrea), gaining much of Italian Somaliland in the process.

After the war, the British military administered Somali territories with an eye toward self-government. In 1948, Britain handed over the Ogaden region and neighboring Somali territories to Ethiopia. In 1947, Italy formally renounced its claim to territorial possession in Somalia. In 1949, the United Nations directed Italy to administer a 10-year international trusteeship toward independence by 1960. In British Somaliland, 1960 elections established a legislative assembly that requested independence, in order to prepare for unification with Italian Somaliland.\textsuperscript{143}


\textsuperscript{137} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011, [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm)


\textsuperscript{142} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011, [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm)

\textsuperscript{143} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011, [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm)
Independence

The long-standing Somali resistance to outside control culminated in 1960, with independence for British Somaliland on 26 June and for Italian Somaliland on 1 July. The two former colonies joined to form the Somali Republic. An earlier constitutional conference in April had established Mogadishu as the capital city, which led to a southern-dominated central government. A year later, the people of Somalia adopted their first constitution, which was based on European models. Pan-Somalism, the idea of unifying all Somali communities in Somalia, French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti), northern Kenya, and eastern Ethiopia, dominated the government’s first years of foreign policy. When Kenya, in 1963, did not grant self-determination to Somali communities within Kenyan borders, the affected Somalis waged guerrilla warfare, which lasted for years. Similar unrest plagued the border with Ethiopia.

In 1967, the prime minister encouraged the government to renounce claims on Somali communities outside the country, which strengthened relations with its neighbors. Many Somalis objected to the reconciliation between Somalia and its longtime adversary, Ethiopia. This discontent, combined with accusations of election fraud and the president’s assassination in 1969, resulted in a bloodless coup on 21 October. The army, supported by the police, arrested top government officials and formed a new governing body, the Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC). Major General Mohamed Siad Barre became president of the SRC, and the Council dissolved the legislature, suspended the constitution, banned political parties, and renamed the country the Somali Democratic Republic.

The Government of General Siad Barre

The Supreme Revolutionary Council (SRC) first worked to consolidate internal power by decreasing clan influence on local government. Government-appointed “peacekeepers” replaced local tribal heads, and communities replaced lineages as political and social centers.

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President Siad Barre’s Marxist official ideology, called “scientific socialism,” incorporated Islam, socialism based on Marxist principles, and the idea of community development through self-reliance. Large-scale projects to transform society included the nationalization of industries and firms, health development, and the standardization of written Somali (based on the Roman alphabet), followed by a nationwide literacy campaign.153, 154

Under Barre, Somalia became a client of the Soviet Union.155 The Soviets were interested in an increased naval and military presence in the strategically important Horn of Africa, and Somalia was interested in economic and military aid. However, the Soviet Union began in 1974 to provide support for Somalia’s rival, Ethiopia. When Somalis took over the border region of Ogaden in 1977–78, Moscow supplied Cuban troops and Soviet advisors to Ethiopia, which resulted in Somalia’s eventual defeat.156 This Soviet reversal led the Somali government to abandon its socialist ideology and turn to the West. USAID reopened its mission in Somalia in 1978. In 1980, U.S. forces gained access to the port of Berbera.157

At the end of the Ogaden conflict, an influx of some 80,000 refugees from Ethiopia created a regional ethnic imbalance in northern Somalia.158 Central government attempts to quell unrest caused greater regional turmoil, which lead to civil war by the mid-1980s. After a failed coup, some army officers fled to Ethiopia and formed the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) in 1979.159 Rejecting centralized government, exiled Isaaq clan members formed the Somali National Movement (SNM) in the United Kingdom in 1981, and Hawiye clan members from central Somalia formed the United Somali Congress (USC) in 1989, with outside bases in

Armed conflicts between the Barre government and these groups further divided Somalis along clan lines and worsened the economic crisis, forcing hundreds of thousands of Somalis to flee to Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti.162

In 1990, Siad Barre’s government proposed some last-minute reforms, including an end to single-party rule, a new constitution, and new elections. Nevertheless, combined SNM and USC forces pushed Barre from power on 27 January 1991.163 As Barre went into exile, the central government in Mogadishu collapsed. The SNM took control over the former British Somaliland and in May 1991 declared it an independent nation, the “Republic of Somaliland.”164 Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia remained under the control of the USC.165

Instability

Fighting continued after the collapse of the central government. While the SNM remained united in its defense of Somaliland, the USC split into two groups, one led by Ali Mahdi Muhammad and the other by Muhammad Farrah Aideed. As various groups sought control over territory, the southern portion of the country fell into anarchy. The deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians from violence, disease, and famine prompted a U.S.-led intervention in 1992–93. The intervention involved more than 35,000 U.S. troops sent to help restore order and end starvation.166 This mission and its accomplishments were short-lived, when the unexpected deaths of 18 U.S. servicemen in October 1993 forced the United States and European nations to reevaluate their deployments in the region.167 These events are recounted in the book and the movie Black Hawk Down. U.S. troops withdrew in 1994, and U.N. troops left in March 1995.168

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164 The Republic of Somaliland now claims the Awdal, Woqooyi Galbeed, Togdheer, Sanaag, and Sool regions.
Several reconciliation attempts in the 1990s, hosted by the UN, Ethiopia, and other regional states, failed to overcome regionalism and forge a consensus for national unity. In 1996, Muhammad Aideed’s death prompted a ceasefire from the group’s rivals, but fighting continued as his son, Hussein Muhammad Aideed, vowed revenge. In 1998, Puntland declared its autonomy, promising to remain autonomous until Somalia reunites as a federation. The country eventually broke into four main entities: Somaliland in the northwest; Puntland in the northeast; regional forces south of Mogadishu under Ali Mahdi (the Somali National Alliance); and forces south of the capital under Hussein Muhammad Aideed (the Group of Twelve).

Transitional Governments

Attempts to resolve conflict and spark reunification continued. A major regional conference in 2000, held in Djibouti, resulted in plans for a transitional national government that would create a permanent government uniting all of Somalia. Somali peace talks, held in 2002 in neighboring Kenya, continued with another transitional government. Two years later Somali leaders agreed on a charter that would establish a transitional parliament with 275 members.

In October 2004, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, backed by Ethiopia, was elected president of the new Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Foreign countries aided the reconciliation effort, but also sided with certain groups and persons in the process: Djibouti, Eritrea, Yemen, Libya, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Ethiopia invaded Somalia in December 2006 in order to defend the transitional government from the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). Ethiopia was eventually defeated and withdrew in January 2009. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed resigned in December 2008. Moderate Islamist Sheikh Sharif Sheik Ahmed was elected president on January 2009; the transitional parliament was extended for another 2 years. The United Nations Political Office

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for Somalia hosted a constitutional conference in December 2011, which produced the “Garowe Principles on the Finalization and Adoption of the Constitution and the End of the Transition,” now scheduled for 2012.  

The self-declared northwestern Republic of Somaliland and the semiautonomous northeastern region of Puntland are two of Somalia’s regional administrations. After the death of Somaliland’s clan-appointed president in 2002, Dahir Riyale Kahin became the president in free and fair elections in May 2003. A relatively peaceful region, it was rocked by coordinated attacks in Hargeysa in October 2009, which Somaliland blames on al-Shabaab.

Puntland has been governed by Abdirahman Mohammad Farole since his election by parliament in January 2009. Puntland’s relations with Somaliland have been strained recently because of border disputes about the Sool and Saang regions.

Islamic Insurgency

In June 2006 the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) overthrew several Mogadishu warlords. The ICU saw Islamic law as more important than clan allegiance, and was tied to al-Qaeda. Leaders included chairman Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (president of Somalia’s transitional government since 2009) and Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys. The ICU overpowered much of southern Somalia. As the ICU grew in power, it sought to overthrow the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Joint Ethiopian–TFG forces drove out the ICU in December.

Following the defeat of the ICU, the TFG moved to Mogadishu with the support of Ethiopian forces. International organizations, the United Nations and the African Union, sent peacekeeping troops (AMISOM) to Somalia in 2007. Ethiopian troops withdrew from Somalia in January 2009, as part of a peace deal brokered by the United Nations and the Alliance for the

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Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS), of which current President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed was a member.\textsuperscript{187, 188}

Al-Shabaab is the main opposition group currently challenging the TFG. Once the “special forces” of the ICU, and later allied with the ARS, al-Shabaab branded Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed a traitor for his moderate presidential stance.\textsuperscript{189} In April 2009, the government agreed to adopt Islamic law (shari’a), possibly to attract some Islamists, but the measure has not appeased them.\textsuperscript{190} Al-Shabaab currently controls much of southern and central Somalia. In January 2010 it pursued an international jihad called by al-Qaeda.\textsuperscript{191} In July of that year, it extended its international reach, claiming responsibility for a bombing in Uganda as retaliation against Ugandan troop contributions to AMISOM.\textsuperscript{192}

Recent Events

Both TFG and African Union forces face constant rebel attacks in their fight to maintain control over Mogadishu, which is still unsafe and has seen massive displacement over the years. Piracy continues to occur along Somalia’s coast. Southern and central Somali regions in particular suffer from a complex humanitarian emergency situation brought on by 20 years of political instability, endemic poverty, recurrent drought, and floods.\textsuperscript{193}

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}
Chapter 2 Assessment

1. Followers of the Prophet Muhammad arrived in East Africa as early as the 7th century C.E.
   **TRUE**
   By the 7th century C.E., early followers of the Prophet Muhammad, fleeing persecution in Arabia, arrived in the Horn of Africa. They initially settled at the port of Zeila. By the 10th century, Islam had taken root in coastal cities as far south as Merca and Baraawe.

2. Sayidd Mohamed Abdullah Hassan became the British-appointed governor of Somaliland in the 1900s.
   **FALSE**
   Indigenous religious leader Abdullah Hassan was known by the British as “the Mad Mullah.” He was an early advocate of Somali nationalism and battled the British and other foreign imperialists until his base at Taleex was bombed in 1920.

3. European colonial divisions left many Somalis outside the borders of their newly formed country.
   **TRUE**
   European colonial divisions left many Somalis in French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti), northern Kenya, and eastern Ethiopia. Resulting social unrest in these areas led many Somalis to wage years of guerilla warfare against Ethiopia and Kenya.

4. During the rule of Mohamed Siad Barre, Somalia received aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union.
   **TRUE**
   Under Barre’s program of “scientific socialism,” Somalia became a client of the Soviet Union in the early 1970s. However, after the Soviets sided with rival Ethiopia later in the decade, Somalia abandoned its socialist ideology and turned to the West.

5. Exiled Hawive clan members formed the United Somali Congress (USC) and declared Somaliland an independent nation.
   **FALSE**
   The Somali National Movement, formed by exiled Isaaq clan members, took control over the former British Somaliland and declared it an independent nation in 1991. Hawive clan members from central Somalia formed the USC, which kept control of Somalia.
CHAPTER 3: ECONOMY

Introduction

Somalia has never fully achieved a stable, self-sufficient state economy. Both before and after statehood, Somalia’s traditional, informal economy rested on nomadic herding and combined farming and herding, supplemented by exported labor and returned remittances.\(^{194, 195, 196}\) During the years following independence, growth in livestock exports and sugar production and improvements in irrigation and road construction were undermined by the destruction of rangelands and increased dependence on grain imports.\(^ {197}\) In the early 1970s, Barre’s “scientific socialism” led to nationalized banking and industry, agricultural cooperatives, and social welfare projects benefiting children and women.\(^ {198, 199, 200}\) Later in that decade, severe drought and the Ogaden War stalled economic development and increased international debt.\(^ {201, 202}\) In the 1980s, Saudi Arabia’s ban on Somali livestock, Somalia’s biggest export, caused a national budget deficit that eventually spun out of control. Somalia lacked the infrastructure in transportation, communications, and finance with which to expand exports of livestock or other products abroad. With no means to generate revenue, the government’s debt increased. International pressures to open the nation’s economy to free markets and private investment


intensified. In the 1990s, the combination of civil war and natural disaster destroyed the country’s economy.

Somalia’s economy today operates without centralized regulation or management and without formal monetary or economic policies. Trade in livestock remains vital, culturally and economically. Remittances from migrant workers and a growing diaspora are funding considerable private sector economic activity that includes ventures in commerce, small-scale manufacturing, and the communications industry. Millions of Somalis, however, still depend on international aid for survival.

Agriculture and Food Production

The majority of Somalia’s population are employed in agricultural activities. Herding and farming make agriculture the largest sector of Somalia’s economy. Agriculture accounts for almost two-thirds of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). Nomadic pastoralists raise camels, cattle, sheep, and goats. Owning camels prestigious, but other livestock are more profitable in international trade. agro-pastoralists and subsistence farmers grow rain-fed crops in the northwest and south. They also tend irrigated fields along the rivers. Crops include grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruits. During the colonial period, commercial plantations developed on the lower Juba and the Shabelle rivers, where farmers today grow bananas, sugarcane, rice, cotton, vegetables, grapefruit, mangoes, and papayas. Fishing (tuna, mackerel, shark, shellfish) and forestry (frankincense, myrrh, timber, charcoal) make up a small part of overall domestic agricultural production.

Rough estimates from past decades

suggest that livestock and animal products—milk, meat, hides—form the largest single segment of Somalia’s GDP.\textsuperscript{212, 213, 214}

Somalia’s agricultural sector faces setbacks and problems. Saudi Arabia and other major trade partners banned livestock exports from Somalia for most of the 2000s, claiming the animals were diseased.\textsuperscript{215, 216} Severe drought in 2011 killed herds, fodder, and crops. Much of the arable land has been leased to China, India, and Saudi Arabia, thus leading to the export of food that would otherwise feed Somalis.\textsuperscript{217, 218, 219} Somalia’s fishing industry is affected by poaching, piracy, toxic (including nuclear) waste dumping, and climate change.\textsuperscript{220, 221, 222, 223} Increased foreign demand for charcoal has led to deforestation.\textsuperscript{224}

Industry

Commercial manufacturing has been part of Somalia’s economy at least since the development of the textile trade in the 14th century.\textsuperscript{225} By 1957, a single sugar factory, established by colonial Italy, was fully meeting Somalia’s domestic demand for sugar.\textsuperscript{226} Mogadishu became the independent nation’s industrial center, with factories that produced boats, matches, spaghetti, and cigarettes. Additionally, bottling plants and a petroleum refinery were in operation. Workers

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{213} Donald A. Ranard, ed., “Somalis: Their History and Culture (Refugee Fact Sheet No. 9): History,” Cultural Orientation Resource Center, Center for Applied Linguistics, 18 February 2004, http://www.cal.org/co/somali/sec0.html
  \item \textsuperscript{217} International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, “Programme Update: Somalia,” 26 August 2009, www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual09/MAASO00109pu1.pdf
  \item \textsuperscript{222} Horand Knaup, “The Poor Fishermen of Somalia,” Spiegel Online International, 4 December 2008, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,594457,00.html
  \item \textsuperscript{224} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 26 September 2011, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm
\end{itemize}
assembled tractors and produced construction materials. Processing plants in the south canned meat and fish and tanned leather. Operations were often slow, however, and productivity low. With the fall of the Barre government in 1991, buildings were looted and equipment sold as scrap metal.\textsuperscript{227}

In recent years, wireless communications businesses have been established and have joined textile production and sugar refining as a light industry.\textsuperscript{228} Private investment in construction (hotels), transportation (airlines), and small-scale manufacturing (fishery equipment, food processing) is evident, even if not yet measurable in conventional economic terms. These efforts are financed by remittances from overseas Somalis and producing for trade with neighboring and Asian countries.\textsuperscript{229}

**Energy**

Apart from imported petroleum, Somalia’s primary energy sources are wood and wood charcoal.\textsuperscript{230} Government regulation of charcoal production and trade has relaxed since 1991. Large amounts of charcoal are exported to Saudi Arabia, which leaves Somalia increasingly deforested and Somalis increasingly energy-poor.\textsuperscript{231, 232} (A 2007 study found that more than 2.5 million trees are felled each year in Somaliland and burned for charcoal.)\textsuperscript{233}

Colonial-era geologists recognized Somalia’s oil and gas potential. This potential was confirmed in a 1991 study sponsored by the World Bank/UN Development Programme (UNDP).\textsuperscript{234, 235} Somalia reportedly has 5.66 billion cubic m (0.2 trillion cubic ft) of proven natural gas

\textsuperscript{234} Maria Kielmas, “Hopes and Hype on the New Frontier (Oil Exploration in Somalia) (MEED Special Report: Oil and Gas),” Middle East Economic Digest, 2 April 1993, 20–21.
reserves. War caused the closure of Somalia’s oil refinery in 1991 and disrupted industry and infrastructure development for 20 years. However, negotiations for mineral rights leases continued with regional authorities. China appears to be pursuing concessions in the Mudug area. In 2012, Canadian and Australian companies began drilling in Puntland. Somalia’s few power stations run on imported diesel fuel and oil. They are located in Mogadishu, Hargeysa, and Kismaya. Their electricity production is sometimes sporadic. Wind is a potential alternative energy source for Somalia. In the late 1980s, wind turbines produced electricity for Mogadishu.

Natural Resources

Historically, the pasturelands that support herds of domestic (and wild) animals have been Somalia’s most important natural resource. These lands have, however, been damaged by overgrazing, drought, and floods. Resources such as acacia wood and frankincense have been overexploited and are in danger of disappearing. Marine resources, including fish and salt, are underexploited domestically, even though international enterprises may be overfishing (and polluting) Somalia’s

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coastal waters. Gemstones and sepiolite (meerschaum) are mined on a small-scale, artisanal basis. Other mineral resources, including reserves of iron ore, tin, gypsum, and uranium, remain untouched.

Trade

Somali peoples have engaged in regional and global trade for over a thousand years. Somalia has a long history of exporting livestock and other agricultural products. Given the recent decades of natural disasters and political struggles, food has become the largest import, followed by petroleum products, transportation vehicles and equipment, and other manufactured goods. Somalia’s current major trading partners are nearby Arab and African countries. Trade with European and Asian countries has declined since 1991. Nevertheless, Somalia continues to receive aid from these regions.

National economic statistics often fail to capture the vitality of Somalia’s informal economy, which has continued to function through statehood and collapse. Just as nomadic herders may farm an occasional crop and city-dwelling office workers may keep a cow, part-time entrepreneurs trade everything from livestock to currency. This trade sustains many families.

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252 Agent Presse France, “UN Envoy Decrees Illegal Fishing, Waste Dumping Off Somalia,” 25 July 2008, [http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gVV_gQDsp1m8v7nPcunmVc5MeYV-Q](http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5gVV_gQDsp1m8v7nPcunmVc5MeYV-Q)
when livestock die, crops fail, or jobs disappear. Unregulated trade also includes the export of large amounts of charcoal, the import of the drug khat, and illegal arms activity.

War has slowed the growth and modernization of a nationwide transportation system. Because of the lack of construction materials and machinery, many of Somalia’s roads and runways are unpaved. The reliable maintenance and repair of imported vehicles is dependent on the supply of parts and the adequate training of mechanics. Camels and donkey carts are common forms of transportation. Small charter planes make up the majority of operating aircraft. Coral reefs in Somalia’s deepwater harbors at Berbera, Mogadishu, and Kismaayo make access to ships difficult. Piracy has made transport by sea unreliable and dangerous. Despite these challenges, Mogadishu’s port (closed from 1995 to 2006) is reemerging as a trade center, safeguarded by AMISOM troops, and Berbera’s port now generates more than 50% of Somaliland’s government revenues.

Banking and Finance

Colonial-era Italian, British, and Indian banks were joined by the new nation’s central bank in 1961. Egypt also operated a commercial bank in Mogadishu during the first decade of the Somali Republic. In 1968 the Somalia Development Bank opened, primarily as an instrument of international aid loans. In 1970, Siad Barre’s government nationalized foreign commercial banks, and soon thereafter established a national savings, a credit bank, and a commercial bank. After these

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banks failed in 1990–91, regional institutions appeared in Somaliland (1994) and in Puntland (1999). The Central Bank is hoping to regain authority from Mogadishu. However, no nationwide, governmental monetary authority currently exists. Attempts to introduce a new commercial bank were stalled by kidnapping.

Two aspects of Somalia’s informal financial system have attracted the attention of analysts: the Somali shilling and the *hawala* system. The Somali shilling (SOS) is the local currency, and it continues to function in the absence of any official standard or guarantee. A number of rival groups have printed banknotes (which are, in effect, counterfeit when they circulate beyond the regional authority of the printing group). Competing versions of the shilling have led to hyperinflation. In the absence of government control of monetary policy, foreign currencies such as the U.S. dollar serve as substitute currencies. In February 2012, 1 USD was equal to 1,628 SOS.

**Hawala**

*Hawala* means “transfer” in Arabic and is called *xawaalad* in Somali. *Hawala* is a long-established remittance system through which money can be transferred from one party to another. Somali workers abroad use *hawala* to transfer funds back to their families in Somalia. Somali *hawala* has its roots in another local practice, *abaan*, in which members of enemy clans

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permit each other’s trade goods to pass safely through their territories. The hawala system runs on commission fees of 3% to 7% that customers pay for the service, and it relies on trust among the global network of agents, or hawaladars, who move money from one location to another without a transfer of actual currency. In the absence of formal banks, hawala services have become big business, transferring millions of dollars every month. Remittances of USD 1 billion each year from the Gulf States, Europe, and North America make up a sizable share of Somalia’s per capita GDP.

Although international development organizations recognize the positive effects of hawala for Somalia’s people and the economy, law enforcement agencies view hawala as susceptible to criminal activity. Somali pirates reportedly transfer ransom money to Kenya via hawala. In November 2001, a major Somali hawala operation, al-Barakaat, was shut down because of U.S. accusations of terrorist links. The accusations were not proved, and the business was removed from the UN al-Qaeda Sanctions List in 2011. Continued action against other Somali money transfer operations threatens the well-being of people who depend on remittances for living expenses, schooling, and healthcare.

Standard of Living

In 2001, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) suggested that—had there been enough data available for reliable calculations—Somalia’s rank in the international Human Development Index would have been 161 out of 163 countries, which would have represented a decline. In 2009, the average life expectancy was 47 years; 80% of the population lived in poverty; and the primary school enrollment of 22% was the lowest in the world. In 2012, the UN requested USD 1.5 billion in its consolidated appeal for humanitarian aid for Somalia. According to international calculations, half the population needs help with food, healthcare, and safety; 250,000 Somalis are starving.

Aging rural populations are somewhat worse off than city dwellers, and women lag behind men in access to education and healthcare services. However, the greatest current differences in living standards are geographical. The less war-ridden north is safer than the violent south. In the southern part of the country, al-Shabaab claims that international aid organizations are misrepresenting the needs of their territories. Al-Shabaab recently banned the International Red Cross because it distributed spoiled food.

Employment

Somalia has an estimated labor force of 3.4 million. Of this total, 71% work in agriculture and 29% work in services. These numbers do not reflect the hierarchy of status that exists within the categories of herder, farmer, artisan, and slave; these numbers also mask the fact that most people make a living in multiple ways. Many people have been forced—by government decree, by natural disaster, and by conflict—to abandon or supplement their preferred occupations.

295 The Human Development Index is a composite measure of life expectancy, education, and standard of living. It provides a measure of human progress and the relationship between well-being and income.
Unemployment rates are not available.\textsuperscript{304} Unemployment is, however, a growing problem, particularly in urban areas where large numbers of young men come to look for work.\textsuperscript{305} Unemployment of Somalis abroad also affects Somalia’s economy because remittances decrease. During the global recession of 2008, increased unemployment among Somalis living abroad led to a 25\% decline in remittances in the first half of 2009.\textsuperscript{306}

\section*{Public vs. Private Sector}

By the end of the republic, Somalia’s public institutions had clearly failed. Corrupt leaders, who had overspent government income (largely aid from foreign sources), left the failed state billions of dollars in debt to commercial and development creditors, including OECD and OPEC countries, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the African Development Bank.\textsuperscript{307, 308} Since the collapse of the republic, national debts have gone unpaid, and financing of the deficit (interest payments) has resulted from printing currency.\textsuperscript{309, 310, 311}

The post-republic private sector includes many different businesses: airlines, telecommunications companies, hospitals, power providers, importers, and, in recent years, even global concerns such as Coca-Cola. Private sector enterprises are sustained by the continued influx of remittances. The private sector functions in an essentially free market economy that is not subject to government taxation or regulation. Nevertheless, given the current violence and instability, businesses in Somalia pay high costs for security.\textsuperscript{312, 313}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{305} Encyclopedia Britannica Online, “Somalia,” 2012, \url{http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/553877/Somalia}
\bibitem{311} Central Bank of Somalia website, “Currency,” n.d., \url{http://somalibanca.org/currency.html}
Outlook

Somalia’s traditional and informal economies of herding, farming, and trading have helped its peoples survive the rise and fall of governments. While millions of needy Somalis continue to be underserved throughout the region, some analysts note that stateless Somalia is no worse off than many other nations nearby and across Africa. Factors such as the high cost of security for doing business in this unregulated environment may prompt the creation of a regulated peace. When Somalis can look beyond day-to-day survival to the longer term, damaging economic activities from charcoal overproduction to piracy may decline, and reconstruction efforts may increase.


Chapter 3 Assessment

1. Somalia has one of the lowest standards of living in the world.
   TRUE
   In 2009, the average life expectancy was 47 years, 80% of the population lived in poverty, and the primary school enrollment of 22% was the lowest in the world. Although lacking current data, the UN has ranked Somalia at the bottom of its Human Development Index.

2. Remittances from Somali’s living abroad have continued to finance private-sector investment in Somalia since the collapse of the state.
   TRUE
   In the post-republic private sector, Somalis working abroad are financing numerous businesses back home, including airlines, telecommunications companies, hospitals, power providers, importers, and global corporations such as Coca-Cola.

3. Historically, oil has been Somalia’s most profitable natural resource.
   FALSE
   Although pasturelands, livestock, and marine animals historically have been Somalia’s most important natural resources, Somalia has reserves of iron ore, tin, gypsum, uranium, and natural gas. Oil exploration is currently underway.

4. Violence in Somalia has increased the cost of doing business in the war-torn African state.
   TRUE
   Given current levels of violence and instability, businesses in Somalia pay high costs for security. The less war-ridden north is safer than the violent south.

5. Law enforcement agencies suspect that hawala, the money transfer system used by Somali migrant workers for their remittances, also is used by criminals.
   TRUE
   Somali workers abroad use hawala to transfer funds back to their families in Somalia. However, because the funds are difficult to trace, law enforcement agencies suspect that the system is used by criminals, including pirates who transfer ransom money to Kenya.
CHAPTER 4: SOCIETY

Introduction

Somali society is homogenous yet divided. Somali people share a language, religion, many cultural traditions, and a founding ancestor, but they are separated into competing clans or ostracized for lack of clan membership. Most (perhaps 90%) of the country’s population of 10 million belong to one of 6 major Somali clans; the remaining 10% are unaffiliated urban dwellers or belong to other marginal groups. Clan membership traditionally determines occupation (herder, farmer, artisan), dialect, religious sect, marriage partners, and social obligations, which include warfare against other clan groups. The hierarchy of status places herders and farmers over lower-status artisans (leather and metal workers, barbers, circumcisers), who in turn are elevated above ethnic foreigners and ex-slaves. The majority tend livestock and cultivate crops, but a growing minority have moved to urban areas.

Post-independence attempts at social engineering brought some improvements in literacy, education, and women’s status. But Siad Barre’s socialist regime failed to dislodge the power of the clan system. When the government threatened to become part of Barre’s clan family, opposing clans objected violently, and centralized rule ceased in 1991. Today, some groups are trying to make Islam a stronger unifying force than the clan system.

Ethnic Groups

The Somali are one of the Eastern Cushitic peoples of the Horn of Africa, related to the Oromo in Ethiopia, the Afar in Djibouti, the Beja in Sudan, and the Reendille and Boni in Kenya.

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318 The CIA 2010 figures are that 37% of the population are urban and that the urbanization rate is 4% per year; the State Department 2012 estimate is that 15% of the population are urban.
Somalis are often described as a linguistically, culturally, and religiously homogenous people who trace their origin to a shared founding father. But the emphasis on lineage and clan membership as the organizing principle of social life also reveals differences among Somalis—in dialects, traditions, and interpretations of Islam. These differences often override ethnic solidarity. Most Somalis divide themselves into two groups: herders and farmers. The nomadic, herding Samaale dominate in the north but are found throughout the country. The more settled, farming Sab are concentrated in the river regions of the south. The Samaale belong to the major nomadic clans: Dir, Daarood, Isaaq, Hawiye. These clans make up roughly three-fourths of the population. The Sab belong to either of the two agriculturalist clans, the Digil and the Rahanwiin, and constitute approximately one-fifth of the population. Some sources report that sab as a common noun connotes “an ignoble person,” and that Rahanwiin and Digil clan members consider the name Sab derogatory. A few ethnic Somalis (less than 1%) are excluded from clan membership because of their lower-status occupations (leather and metal workers, hunters, barbers, and circumcisers).
Somalis also tend to look down on other ethnic groups in Somalia, even when these groups predate Somali occupation of the territory. Such groups include the Eyle and the Boni, hunting and foraging peoples, and different Bantu peoples, some of whose ancestors may have arrived as slaves. Nonindigenous peoples in Somalia have included Arabs, Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, Britons, and Italians. Some Somalis trace their lineage to Arab ancestors, which also highlights their Muslim religious identity. Many Europeans left the Somali Republic shortly after independence, and most Arabs and Italians have reportedly since departed. Estimates of the non-Somali population in the country have risen from to 2% to 15%, possibly because of the influx of displaced persons across the Horn of Africa.

Languages

Somali

Somali is spoken by more than 13 million people around the world and has long contributed to a shared identity among the residents of “Greater Somalia.” Somali is part of the Afro-Asiatic linguistic family that includes Afar (spoken in Djibouti), Oromo (spoken in Ethiopia), and Arabic. The Somali language has many dialects that fall into three regional groupings:

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common (or northern) Somali, coastal (or Banaadir) Somali, and central Somali (which includes the Maay and Digil dialects). These dialect groups are also associated with the clan families that occupy the regions. For example, the Maay dialect is associated with the Rahanwiin clan of central Somalia. Common Somali is also called Standard Somali and is the most commonly spoken dialect. It is used in local and international broadcasting and for written communication. Other dialects such as Maay and Garre, which are spoken in central Somalia, are so different that some linguists consider them distinct languages.

Although religious scholars occasionally wrote the Somali language in Arabic script, Somalis preferred spoken poetry and memorized recitation well into the 20th century. When the young Somali Republic was trying to choose a writing system, officials determined that Arabic script was not suitable for depicting Somali vowels, and an indigenous script, Osmania, was too closely associated with the clan (Majeerteen-Daarood) of its inventor. Despite its colonial associations, a modified form of the Latin alphabet became the official script for written Somali (and Somali became the sole official language) in 1972. Subsequent literacy campaigns claimed a tenfold

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363 Mohamed Diriyeh Abdullahi, Culture and Customs of Somalia (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 73.

\textit{Other Languages: Arabic, English, Italian, and Swahili}


\textit{Religion}

Like Jews and Christians, Somali Muslims are “people of the book,” believed to be descended from Samaal, the biblical Ham, son of Noah. Muslims believe that Allah’s final revelations to Muhammad, the last Prophet, were set down in the Qur’an. Islam probably reached Somalia in the seventh century, via persecuted Qurayshis from Yemen, or via Arab and Persian seafarers. But widespread conversion of Somalis came about with Muslim clan founders and patriarchs
between the 11th and 13th centuries.376, 377 Today, Somali Muslims belong predominantly to the Shafi’i sect of Sunni Islam.378, 379 The importance of religion to Somali identity is evident in the view of a Somali elder that a non-Somali “would not be a good Muslim.”380 Mosques are located in major cities and rural villages, and nomadic Somalis rely on traveling teachers or wadaddo, Somali local religious specialists, to lead prayers, perform marriages, bless livestock, and resolve disputes.381, 382

Sufism, an Islamic mystic philosophy based on elevating the soul by following the correct path (tariqa in Arabic; dariqa in Somali), spread through the Somali population in the 15th century.383, 384, 385 Religious brotherhoods of Sufi dervishes, known as tariqas, built jamaat (religious communities of work, learning, and worship) throughout central and southern Somalia.386, 387 Membership in tariqa brotherhoods (as well as in other religious groups) is often determined by clan membership. Conversely, the brotherhood becomes a new family for a convert, in a practical as well as a spiritual sense.388 Somalis believe that leaders of these brotherhoods (indeed, all legitimate leaders) have baraka, a power to grant divine blessings or bring harm to others.389 Jamaat functioned as safe havens for freed slaves in the 1920s and for ethnic Somalis fleeing

381 Bernhard Helander, “Chapter 1: Somalia,” in Islam Outside the Arab World, eds. David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 44.
Ethiopian persecution in the 1970s. *Jamaat* may also have inspired the more recent camps of militant Islamic fundamentalists.\(^{390}\)

Indigenous Somali beliefs color contemporary religious practices. *Waaq*, the pre-Islamic, Cushitic sky god, is now a synonym for Allah. Spiritual power resides in not only the *baraka* of leaders and saints, but also in the blessings (*duco*) and curses (*inkaar*) of elders.\(^{391, 392}\) Spirit possession occurs in all social classes and among diverse ethnic groups and is most closely associated with women.\(^{393, 394, 395}\) The daily household ritual of lighting incense at dawn and dusk sends prayers to Allah and wards off jinns and other spirits.\(^{396}\)

**Gender Issues**

Somali society is male dominated. Men control the public sphere in the traditional, mutually exclusive roles of warrior (*waranleh*, “spear bearer”) or *wadad* (religious specialist).\(^{397, 398}\) Boys learn to use knives and guns to protect themselves against camel rustlers or competing herders and, more recently, as child soldiers.\(^{399, 400, 401}\) One’s father determines one’s clan-based group, and this *diya*-paying group is collectively responsible for the actions of each member. Men bound together in *diya*-paying groups must make restitution for the harmful act of any group

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member, and they must take revenge when a group member is harmed. The traditional *diya* for murder is revenge killing.402, 403, 404, 405

Arabs may have introduced patrilineal descent and male authority to an earlier Somali society that was matrilineal or matrifocal—some descent through the mother’s line occurs.406, 407, 408, 409 Somali women traditionally establish a certain amount of power as wives and mothers in the private realm of the home. Some men, however, practice polygamy and frequently divorce, which often compels a woman to return to her father’s family, especially her paternal male cousins, for help.410, 411 In recent decades, war and famine have forced many women outside their traditional sphere. Many women are the primary breadwinners for their households; some have become entrepreneurs.412, 413, 414

Rape in Somalia is increasing. Rape is doubly destructive for Somali women who have undergone infibulation. Infibulation is a type of female circumcision in which a young girl’s

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vaginal opening is stitched almost completely closed. The rapist must first cut open his victim. Infibulation is the most common form of female genital mutilation (FGM) practiced in Somalia. Somalia has the world’s highest rates of these practices. A Somali government adviser recently rated her country as the worst in the world for women.

Traditional Dress

Somali dress has changed throughout history, reflecting the cultural influence of its invaders. Today’s traditional dress resulted from the 19th-century substitution of merikani (cotton cloth imported from the United States) for the leather clothing worn earlier. Somalis now wear Western clothes outside the home, but prefer traditional dress when relaxing or living away from cities. Men wear lengths of white cotton, one draped from the waist and another over the shoulder or as a hood. The colorful macaawii (Indonesian sarong) is also popular. It is wound around the lower half of the body and worn with a Western shirt. Some men wear a benadiry kufia, a snug-fitting Somali cap. Women wear brightly colored, full-length dresses such as the guntiino (similar to an Indian sari), wrapped around the body and tied over one shoulder. Married women wear head scarves, but rarely veil themselves. Jewelry made of silver, considered a “pure” metal blessed by the Prophet Muhammad, is a sign of wealth. Ornamental beads made of wood, stone, or glass are worn by both men and women on special occasions. Recent observers have noted a conservative turn of dress—heavier fabrics, more voluminous scarves and shawls—in refugee camps and communities occupied by Islamic insurgent groups.

Cuisine

Although Somali cuisine varies by region, Islamic dietary restrictions and the two predominant ways of life—herding and farming—have shaped eating habits throughout the country. The nomadic diet is high in protein and includes camel or goat milk, ghee (clarified butter), meat, and wild berries and fruits. Farmers provide grains, legumes, vegetables, and cash crops such as coffee, bananas, and citrus fruits. For many Somali women, the daily preparation of staple cereals into bread or porridge is a lengthy, labor-intensive process that begins with grinding corn or wheat.\(^\text{427,428}\)

Islam forbids the consumption of alcohol and pork, and meat must be xalaal, prepared in accordance with Islamic food purity standards.\(^\text{429}\)

Fishing is looked down on by traditional nomads. Fish consumption is most common in coastal towns.\(^\text{430,431,432}\)

The many different spices used in Somali food reflect the country’s multicultural history: cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, ginger, black pepper, chilies, and cumin. Italian influence is evident in the popular dish baasto (pasta) and marinara sauce, as well as in vegetable soups (manistroni) made without meat.\(^\text{433,434,435}\) Tea and coffee drinks are also available in traditional and international styles. Home-roasted coffee may be prepared with ghee. Tea, the national drink, is served sweet and milky, infused with fruit and spices, or plain and strong.\(^\text{436}\) Somalis believe that hot, sugary tea quenches thirst better than cool water.\(^\text{437}\)

Arts

Literature

Somalia’s best-known literary tradition is its oral poetry.\(^\text{438}\) Somali poets compose verses incorporating metaphors, proverbs, and other elements to communicate news, highlight current events, inspire social action, and ultimately preserve history. Sayyid Mohamed Abdullah Hassan, who fought for Somali self-determination in the early 1900s, owes much of his fame to his poetic and oratorical skills.\(^\text{439}\) With the advent of electronic recording and broadcast technologies, oral

poetry became a tool of widespread political dissent, often through the Somali language service of the BBC. When Britain considered ending the Somali language service for financial reasons, Somali leaders said they would rather lose the British Embassy than the BBC broadcast.

War and population displacement currently threaten the tradition of community poetry performance.

Somalis wrote Islamic poetry and prose in Arabic from the 1100s. Somali written literature surged after the 1973 introduction of a standardized Somali alphabet. Well-known authors include the poet Hadraawi (Mohamed Ibrahim Warsame) and the novelist Nuruddin Farah. Hadraawi was imprisoned and Farah exiled for writings critical of the Siad Barre regime.

Music and Dance

Traditional Somali music begins with poetic song. There are songs for children, work tasks, religious rituals (including spirit possession), community gatherings, and family celebrations. Hand clapping, foot stamping, drumming, and dancing often accompany singing, especially among young people at weddings, which may last for 3 days. Besides drums, traditional Somali instruments include the reed flute, the kaban (a four-string guitar), and in Mogadishu and the Banaadir region, the shareero (lyre). After Europeans introduced Western-style instrumental music (and the loan word muusiqo), two centers of early modern Somali music developed. In the northern city of Hargeysa, Abdullahi Qarseh and others created music inspired by pastoralist melodies and poetry. In Mogadishu, Banaadiri Bantu traditions combined with American jazz and Indian Bollywood to produce a new sound. From the 1960s, these styles influenced one another, yielding global forms such as Somali funk.
Folk Arts

Somalia’s nomadic peoples create works of art by making beautiful functional objects: baskets, pottery, stoneware, leatherwork, woodcarvings, weapons. Jewelry made of silver, gemstones, and gold functions as portable wealth. By the 14th century, southern, settled peoples who worked as textile artisans were exporting cloth (known as futa benadiiri, after the geographical region) to Egypt, Arabia, and India. When cheap, imported merikani material replaced the handwoven futa spun from the white cotton of the river regions, local weavers introduced colors and patterns into their fabrics, creating a new style of traditional dress.

Sports and Recreation

Somalis enjoy leisurely conversations with friends. Men gather in tea or coffee shops; women meet with their friends in the home. In addition to talking, men challenge each other in a strategy game called shah, similar to chess. Although Muslims are forbidden to drink alcohol, many men chew khat, a mild stimulant. Before the conflict of the past few decades, Somalis often attended plays and movies.

Table tennis, football (soccer), and basketball are popular activities. Somalis also enjoy swimming in rivers and at the seashore, despite the presence of sharks and other dangerous fish. Even though the nation lacks training facilities and coaches, Somalia has sent competitive athletes to the Olympic Games since 1972.

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Chapter 4 Assessment

1. Most Somalis belong to one of six major clans.
   **TRUE**
   Approximately 75% of the population belong to one of four major nomadic clans: Dir, Daarood, Isaaq, Hawiye. Approximately 20% of the population belong to one of two agriculturalist clans: the Digil or the Rahanwiin.

2. Somalia is a religiously homogenous society.
   **TRUE**
   Somali society is religiously homogenous. Today, Somali Muslims belong predominantly to the Shafi’I sect of Sunni Islam.

3. Somali has been rated the worst country in the world for women.
   **TRUE**
   A Somali government adviser recently rated her country as the worst in the world for women. Somalia has the world’s highest rates of FGM. Rape there is increasing. Some men practice polygamy and frequently divorce, disrupting the lives of many women.

4. Today the Somali language is officially written with Arabic script.
   **FALSE**
   Although Arabic script was used during colonial times, in 1972 the government chose a modified form of the Latin alphabet as the official script for written Somali. The government determined that Arabic script was not suitable for depicting Somali vowels.

5. With the advent of electronic recording and broadcasting technologies, oral poetry became a tool of widespread political dissent in Somalia.
   **TRUE**
   Somalia’s best-known literary tradition is oral poetry. Somali poets compose verses to preserve history, communicate news, highlight current events, and inspire social action. The Somali language service of the BBC has been instrumental in this poetic endeavor.
CHAPTER 5: SECURITY

Introduction

Somalia has been without a functioning central government since President Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991. Despite the passage of more than two decades and a succession of peace and reconciliation conferences, the country still struggles toward stability as rival insurgent groups compete for power against one another and the Western-backed transitional government. Decades of violence, endemic poverty, floods, and recurrent humanitarian drought have resulted in the world’s worst humanitarian crisis—a million people dead and nearly two million internally displaced or living as refugees in neighboring countries.463, 464

Somalia’s lack of internal security feeds regional insecurity. Local politicians in Somalia cannot guarantee neighboring countries that Somalia’s borders will remain undisturbed. Border conflicts with Kenya and Ethiopia flare periodically. Pirates attack ships along the coastline, extending as far south as Kenya and across the ocean toward Oman, and parts of Somalia controlled by Islamic insurgents have become safe havens for international terrorists and criminals.

U.S.-Somali Relations

The United States provided nonmilitary aid to the Somali Republic in its early years (during the 1960s). But Somalis were suspicious of the military aid that the United States was giving to Ethiopia at the same time.465 Siad Barre’s turn toward “scientific socialism” further strained U.S.-Somali relations. When the Soviets helped Ethiopia’s socialist Derg government defeat Somalia in the Ogaden War (1977–78), the United States stepped in to rebalance Cold War power in the Horn, gaining access to Somali seaports and airfields in exchange for economic and military aid. But human rights violations and unpaid loans caused the United States to stop

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military and financial aid during the final years of the Barre regime. In 1991, as Barre’s government collapsed, the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu closed (and has not yet reopened).\(^{469,470}\) In response to the violence and mass starvation that followed, the United States and other nations sent troops on a humanitarian peacekeeping mission. An attack on U.S. helicopters and the killing of 18 U.S. servicemen in 1993 eventually led to the withdrawal of U.S. and UN personnel in 1995.\(^{471}\)

In an effort to eliminate safe havens for terrorists, the United States reentered Somalia in 2007. Coordinating with Ethiopia and Kenya, the United States launched air strikes against Somalia’s Islamic Courts Union (ICU), a group suspected of harboring al-Qaeda.\(^{472}\) Since then, the United States has provided Somalia large amounts of humanitarian and security aid. President Obama’s fiscal year 2012 aid request for Somalia is USD 82 million, plus USD 91 million for UN support to AMISOM, the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia.\(^{473}\) Recent U.S. actions include the trials (and convictions) of Somalis in U.S. courts for piracy, the withdrawal of U.S. banks from the business of Somali hawala, remittance money transfers, and the U.S. military rescues of kidnap victims from Somali criminals.\(^{474,475,476,477}\) In 2010, the United States adopted a dual-track approach to Somalia’s problems, working with both the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and regional entities, including Somaliland, Puntland, and Galmudug.\(^{478,479}\)


Relations with Neighboring Countries

Kenya

Ethnic Somalis have traditionally occupied parts of northeastern Kenya, and Kenya-Somalia relations are often tense. In the pan-Somali unification movement of the 1960s, shifta (Somali guerrillas) fought Kenyan border forces and police, and Somalia broke diplomatic ties with Britain for a time. (Kenya became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1963.)\(^{480, 481}\) In the 1970s, Kenya sided with Ethiopia during the Ogaden War.\(^{482}\) Kenya-Somalia relations improved in the 1980s when Siad Barre renounced territorial claims on Kenya, and Kenya mediated negotiations between Somalia and Ethiopia.\(^{483}\)

Since 1991, hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees have filled Kenyan refugee camps. The camps, which have had outbreaks of disease and violence, have also provided safe harbor for insurgents.\(^{484, 485}\) In addition, concerns about suicide attacks inside Kenya by Somali extremists caused Kenya to suspend flights to and from Somalia and to close its borders.\(^{486, 487}\) Kenya may be trying to secure a buffer zone in the Juba region that could extend as far as the port of Kismaayo.\(^{488, 489, 490}\) In 2011, Kenyan troops entered Somalia in pursuit of suspected kidnappers.

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\(^{490}\) Derek Henry Flood, Terrorism Monitor 9, no. 17, “The Jubaland Initiative: Is Kenya Creating a Buffer State in Southern Somalia?” Jamestown Foundation, 28 April 2011, http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=37857&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=a0c02b5e2efe620d95398f482b98d4ee
of European tourists. The kidnappings were perceived as evidence of al-Shabaab activity in Kenya.491, 492

Kenya also continues to promote peace in Somalia. The nation hosted the Somali National Reconciliation Conference in 2002, and the resulting TFG operated from Kenya until 2005.493 Kenya participates in international efforts to curb piracy in the region.494, 495

Ethiopia

The border between Ethiopia and Somalia crosses the Ogaden region, a source of conflict between the two countries since colonial days. The Ogaden region is inhabited mostly by Somali nomads. Somalia claims the British (wrongfully) abandoned the region to Ethiopia. In the wave of pan-Somalism following independence in 1960, the Somali Republic sought to create a Greater Somalia made up of areas—including Ethiopia’s Ogaden region—inhabited by Somali peoples. Skirmishes throughout the 1960s and 1970s led to the 1977–78 Ogaden War, during which the Soviet Union transferred its support from Somalia to Ethiopia. The United States later helped Somalia resist Ethiopia’s 1982 invasion. After military attacks ceased, each country continued to help the internal opposition of its enemy.496 The Ogaden National Liberation Front claims to represent Somalis seeking autonomy from Ethiopia.497 The Oromo Liberation Front, considered an ally of al-Shabaab and al-Qaeda, announced an end to hostilities with Ethiopia in January 2012.498

In the aftermath of the 1991 overthrow of Ethiopia’s Mengistu Haile Mariam and Somalia’s Siad Barre, both countries attempted to rebuild themselves. Ethiopia was more successful and for a time sponsored peace efforts for Somalia mandated by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Somalis also found solace from warfare and famine in Ethiopian refugee camps. In recent years, several new camps have opened and, in 2011, housing about 117,000 Somalis (as well as 85,000 refugees from Eritrea, Sudan, and elsewhere).499 The 2006 deployment of Ethiopian troops to Somalia to oust the ICU did not sit well with Somali clans. Fighting between Somali militias and Ethiopian troops

continued until 2009, when Ethiopia withdrew as part of a peace deal brokered by the UN between the TFG and an opposition group.\textsuperscript{500} In 2011, Ethiopian forces returned to Somalia and in December captured the town of Beledweyne, which was held by al-Shabaab.\textsuperscript{501}

\textit{Djibouti}

Before becoming an independent republic in 1977, Djibouti, Somalia’s small northern neighbor, was French Somaliland and later the French Territory of the Afars and Issas. The majority of Djibouti’s population are Somali Issa.\textsuperscript{502} With the fall of the Somali and Ethiopian governments in 1991, Djibouti absorbed 100,000 refugees from its neighbors. Subsequent droughts and conflicts brought continued refugee movement: in 2011, the UN reported 18,000 registered Somali refugees. Djibouti is home to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), a regional organization that administers Somali peace efforts. In recent years, the country hosted several UN-sponsored reconciliation talks.\textsuperscript{503}

Surrounded by regional instability, Djibouti maintains security with its roughly 13,000-member combined national forces as well as significant international assistance.\textsuperscript{504} France garrisons about 3,000 troops in its former colony, including members of its Foreign Legion. Near Djibouti’s capital and major airport, the United States military operates Camp Lemonnier, its only permanent base in Africa. The European Union and Japan support naval facilities to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia.\textsuperscript{505, 506} Djibouti provided military training for Somalia’s TFG troops in 2009 and committed its first troops to AMISOM in 2011.\textsuperscript{507, 508}

\textit{Eritrea}

A former province of Ethiopia, Eritrea won its independence in 1993, although the border between the two countries remains in dispute. Eritrea does not recognize the TFG in Somalia.\textsuperscript{509} In 2007, Eritrea provided a venue for the formation of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS), an opposition group that later took seats in the transitional parliament and

\textsuperscript{501} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Somalia,” 20 January 2012, \url{http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm}
\textsuperscript{503} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Djibouti,” 2 October 2011, \url{http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm#foreign}
\textsuperscript{506} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Djibouti,” 2 October 2011, \url{http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm#foreign}
\textsuperscript{507} Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Djibouti,” 2 October 2011, \url{http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm#foreign}
\textsuperscript{508} Agence France-Presse, “First Djibouti Troops in Somalia to Join AU Force,” ReliefWeb, 20 December 2011, \url{http://www.reliefweb.int/node/466244}
produced the current TFG president, Sheikh Sharif Sheik Ahmed.\(^{510, 511, 512}\) The Eritrean faction of ARS joined the Islamic insurgent coalition Hizbul Islam to fight the TGF.\(^{513}\) Hizbul Islam has since split and possibly dissolved, with some members joining al-Shabaab.\(^{514, 515, 516}\)

In 2009, IGAD encouraged the UN to impose sanctions and an arms embargo against Eritrea to stop illicit arms from reaching insurgents in Somalia.\(^{517}\) The UN renewed and expanded sanctions in 2011.\(^{518, 519}\)

**Yemen**

Somali-Yemeni ties date back to the seventh century, when Yemeni Qurayshis fleeing persecution against Muslims crossed the Gulf of Aden into what is today Somalia. In recent years, tens of thousands of Somalis have made the reverse crossing, sometimes drowning when forced by smugglers to swim the final distance from boat to shore.\(^{520}\) Despite strained resources, Yemen grants automatic refugee status to Somalis.\(^{521}\) The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that more than 200,000 Somalis would need aid in Yemen in 2012 (which exceeds UNHCR capacity by 100%); this number is surpassed by the 310,000 Yemenis internally displaced by violent conflict in their own country.

Trade between Yemen and Somalia historically included slaves, the drug khat, and, at least since colonial times, military supplies.\(^{522, 523, 524}\) Arms and human trafficking are present-day problems,
In 2009, Somali pirates and their Yemeni conspirators caused a loss of approximately USD 150 million in Yemeni fishing revenues. A maritime information center in Sana’a, the capital of Yemen, is cooperating in international efforts against piracy, and Yemen participates in Combined Task Force 151, the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT) antipiracy mission.

**Security: Forces with Arms**

Somali men, who are warriors by tradition, have had Western-type military training since the colonial era. The armed forces of the Somali Republic grew from 5,000 troops in 1960 to 65,000 in 1990. The military lost much of its materiel as well as popular support during the 1977–78 Ogaden War. As commander-in-chief, Siad Barre filled the military hierarchy with members of his Mareeаa subclan, opposition from other clans grew. These clans organized insurgent militias and finally forced Barre to flee in 1991. Following the government collapse, Somalia’s defense and policing forces dissolved, including the national army, police force, border guard, and people’s militia. A coalition of insurgent groups soon broke apart, and arms and ordnance from various sources fell into the hands of tribal and clan leaders. Locally, clan militias now provide most military personnel and law enforcement services to the highest bidder (and turn to banditry or piracy when payment for services is not timely).

Since 2004, international forces and funds have supported the transitional government. In 2010, the TFG reported 8,000 armed forces in Mogadishu and 2,000–4,000 in outlying regions. Other estimates of the total number of armed forces are as low as 2,000; low numbers of forces are attributable to desertions and “ghost soldiers,” whose pay may line officers’ pockets. The African Union’s UN-approved peacekeeping force, AMISOM, entered Somalia in 2007 and is...
the main guarantor of security for the TFG in Mogadishu. About 9,000 troops from Uganda, Burundi, and, most recently, Djibouti are authorized through October 2012. Ethiopian forces entered Somalia to fight TFG enemies between 2006 and 2009. In 2012, both Ethiopia and Kenya had troops in Somalia to counter insurgent and criminal activity spilling across their borders.

Somaliland and Puntland, which operate as separate entities in Somalia, have developed their own armies, coast guards, and police forces from clan militias. In 2010, there were an estimated 15,000 army soldiers in Somaliland and 5,000–10,000 troops in Puntland. In both places, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) supports police forces that operate special protection units for international NGO (Non-governmental Organization) and diplomatic missions. The United Kingdom provides Somaliland security assistance and training for antipiracy and counterterrorism work. In 2002, the United States supported the establishment of Puntland’s intelligence agency and security force.

Issues Affecting Instability

Radical Groups

Many non-state armed groups have taken refuge in Somalia and are operating in the country. In the absence of a viable central government and law enforcement, these groups cross borders without visas, enjoy the protection and support of sympathizers, and may even be welcomed as de facto police and judges. Despite the UN arms embargo, they are able to obtain weapons shipments through airports and seaports under their control. All these groups, as well as the

TFG, support an Islamic state for Somalia, but differ greatly in their interpretations of Islam and in their visions of political authority in a future Somali state.

Recently active groups of local origin are Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa (People of the Sunna and the Society), Muaskar Ras Kamboni (Ras Kamboni Camp, named for the town of Ras Kamboni), and al-Shabaab (The Youth). Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa seeks to unite and protect Somalia’s Sufi religious orders, which has led to armed conflict with the extreme Sunni (Salafist-Wahhabist) Islamists of al-Shabaab and tentative alignment with the TFG. Muaskar Ras Kamboni fought with al-Shabaab against the TFG for the southern port of Kismaayo, but has since fought with pro-TFG militias against al-Shabaab’s control in southern regions. Al-Shabaab, whose members can be identified by their red-and-white scarves, includes foreigners in its ranks. Al-Shabaab enforces an ultraconservative form of Islam (Wahhabism from Saudi Arabia) that, for example, bans music, movies, and colorful women’s clothing. This enforcement is resented by many Somalis who are traditionally moderate and tolerant. Al-Shabaab’s publicly declared alliance with al-Qaeda and subsequent terrorist attacks beyond Somalia’s borders placed it on the United States’ terrorist list and make it a security threat to the United States, which motivates continued military and financial aid to the region.
In addition to focusing on Somalia, the United States is actively combating the international terrorist group al-Qaeda in Yemen and throughout the Horn of Africa. The Somali TFG participates in the U.S.-sponsored Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism (PREACT), established in 2009.

**Piracy**

Piracy off the coast of Somalia is an ongoing and serious problem. Each year, nearly 20,000 ships sail past Somalia as they navigate between the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean. The shipping lanes in this region have become the world’s most dangerous. In recent years, Somali pirates, armed with sophisticated technology, heavy weapons, and fast-moving skiffs, have taken in hundreds of millions of dollars. In January 2012 Somali pirates were holding 9 large vessels and 151 hostages, some of these for nearly 2 years.

Some compare Somalia’s pirates with *shifta*, an African tradition of Robin Hood-style banditry. After the government’s fall in 1991, Somali fishermen began to take armed action against international fleets that were fishing illegally. Piracy networks or “cooperatives” that support local authorities or communities have since developed to the north, along Puntland’s shores, and to the south, from the coastal towns of Hobyo and Haradheere to the port of Kismaayo. The potential for southern pirate groups to ally with al-Shabaab or other radical groups in the region is worrisome.

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572 Ben Macintyre, “The Battle Against Piracy Begins in Mogadishu,” *Times*, 16 April 2009, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/columnists/ben_macintyre/article6101229.ece
The need for an integrated (land and sea, military, and humanitarian) global response to the problem of Somali piracy is recognized but not well implemented.\textsuperscript{579} For example, approximately 30 warships patrol the Gulf of Aden—half the number needed to effectively suppress piracy in the region.\textsuperscript{580, 581} Private firms have been hired by the Somali TFG and the governments of Somaliland and Puntland to provide protection on ships and in ports, but the use of security companies raises concerns about accountability and government oversight of the use of arms.\textsuperscript{582, 583}

\textit{Internally Displaced Persons}

Drought and violent conflict account for the majority of Somalia’s internally displaced persons (IDPs).\textsuperscript{584} People move about to escape starvation and war or, as in the case of Somalis working with the TFG, to escape being targets of armed groups.\textsuperscript{585} IDPs differ from refugees in that they never cross borders and enter into a separate sovereign country. Currently, 1.5 million Somalis are IDPs (and more than 700,000 are refugees in neighboring countries).\textsuperscript{586, 587}

Humanitarian assistance to IDPs is hampered in parts of Somalia for two reasons: some populations in need of aid are extremely isolated, and aid providers have become targets of violence. Al-Shabaab views the UN and humanitarian aid agencies as legitimate targets because

\textsuperscript{579} Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, “Background,” 2011, http://www.thecgpcs.org/about.do?action=background
they train and support TFG forces.\textsuperscript{588} In November 2011, al-Shabaab (again) banned UN agencies and international NGOs from areas under its control.\textsuperscript{589} In December, five international aid workers were shot and killed in two separate incidents.\textsuperscript{590} Rebel-blocked supply routes forced the International Committee of the Red Cross to suspend food distribution in central and southern areas in January 2012.\textsuperscript{591}

**Water Security**

Somalia is a dry land, despite its equatorial location.\textsuperscript{592} Surface water is the main water resource.\textsuperscript{593} Rainfall varies greatly year to year, and drought, which used to occur once every decade, is now more frequent, occurring every two or three years.\textsuperscript{594} The flooding that follows dry seasons often contaminates water and spreads waterborne diseases.\textsuperscript{595} Ethiopia controls nearly half the flow of Somalia’s two major rivers, the Shabelle and the Juba. Other regions rely on shallow wells, springs, surface dams, and boreholes.\textsuperscript{596}

Water ownership traditionally rests with clan territorial claims; water management is localized and fragmented. Water usage is almost entirely for livestock and agricultural irrigation. Drinking water is scarce and often contaminated.\textsuperscript{597} Although the availability of urban water services appears to have improved in the past decade, reaching more than 50\% of city dwellers, rural use of improved water supplies and sanitation facilities has fallen to 10\%.\textsuperscript{598, 599}

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Outlook
Clan conflicts, religious differences, and resentment against Western influences have combined to fuel the anarchy of contemporary Somalia. Some analysts doubt the future possibility of a unified Somali state distinguished by past colonial borders or based on non-African political structures. From an international security perspective, a stable governing institution will be necessary to serve the needs of area residents and to manage relationships with the rest of the world.

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Chapter 5 Assessment

1. Al-Shabaab has blocked humanitarian aid efforts in Somalia.
   **TRUE**
   In late 2011, al-Shabaab (again) banned UN agencies and international NGOs from areas under its control, shooting dead five aid workers in two separate incidents. Rebel-blocked supply routes in 2012 forced the Red Cross to suspend food distribution in some areas.

2. The main source of conflict between Eritrea and Somalia is the Ogaden border region.
   **FALSE**
   The Ogaden War of 1977-1978 was fought between Somalia and Ethiopia, who disputes its southern Ogaden border with Somalia. Ethiopia also disputes its northern border with Eritrea, who may be sending arms to Somalis for use against Ethiopia.

3. Djibouti and Somalia share ethnic and linguistic ties, but the two countries have different colonial histories.
   **TRUE**
   Djibouti, known before 1977 as French Somaliland and the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, is ethnically similar to but colonially different from Somalia, a former colony of Great Britain and Italy.

4. The United States currently refuses to send aid to Somalia because of the killing of 18 US servicemen in 1993.
   **FALSE**
   Although the shooting down of US helicopters in 1993 marked a low point in humanitarian intervention, the United States now provides large amounts of humanitarian and security aid to Somalia.

5. Somali pirates have been tried and convicted in US courts for piracy.
   **TRUE**
   Recently, some Somali’s have been tried and convicted in US courts for piracy.
1. Somalia has one of the shortest coastlines in Africa.  
   TRUE / FALSE

2. Part of the border between Ethiopia and Somalia is shown on some maps as provisional.  
   TRUE / FALSE

3. Somalia’s climatic year includes two rainy seasons.  
   TRUE / FALSE

4. The river basins of the Juba and the Shabelle form Somalia’s agricultural center.  
   TRUE / FALSE

5. The city of Berbera is the main port of Somaliland.  
   TRUE / FALSE

6. Somalia was known to the ancient Egyptians as Cush.  
   TRUE / FALSE

7. The expansion of trade with East Asia in the 1800s brought European colonists to Somalia.  
   TRUE / FALSE

8. British Somaliland and French Somaliland joined together in 1960 to form the Somali Republic.  
   TRUE / FALSE

9. Civil war in the 1980s eventually led to the collapse of the central government in 1991.  
   TRUE / FALSE

    TRUE / FALSE

11. Somalia’s power stations run on wood and wood charcoal.  
    TRUE / FALSE

12. Somali trade with European and Asian countries has declined since 1991.  
    TRUE / FALSE
13. Commercial crops in Somalia’s agricultural sector account for the largest part of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).
   **TRUE / FALSE**

14. Despite decades of civil war, at least three light industries remain active in Somalia.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

15. Somali ports on the Horn of Africa now generate more than 50% of Somaliland’s government revenues.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

16. Members of clans may be required to participate in a revenge killing.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

17. Although Somalia is geographically close to some Arab countries, the Somali language is not related to Arabic.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

18. Religious brotherhoods in Somalia have been suspected of fostering Islamic militants.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

19. Fish is a popular food in Somalia.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

20. Unlike women in many Muslim countries, Somali women do not wear head scarves.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

21. Recently, Ethiopian and Kenyan troops have countered insurgents in Somalia.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

22. Political and business relations between Somalia and Yemen have been suspended since 1991.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

23. Somali fishermen have been involved in piracy off the Somali coast.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

24. The radical group Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa seeks to unite and protect Sufi religious orders in Somalia.
   **TRUE / FALSE**

TRUE / FALSE
FURTHER READING

Books


Journal Articles, Reports, and Papers


