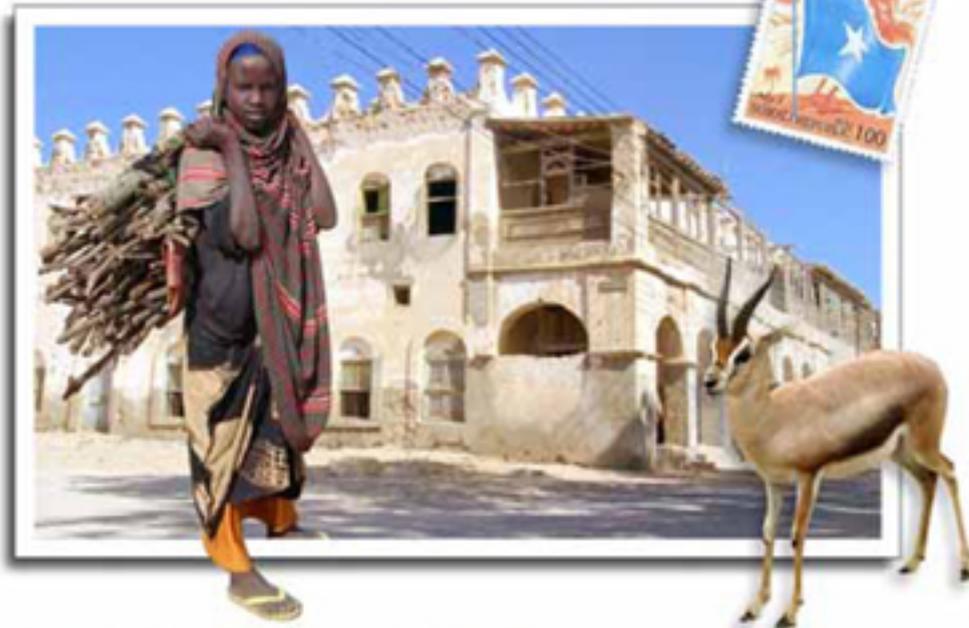


Somalia in Perspective

An Orientation Guide



Technology Integration Division
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DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER

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Chapter 1: Profile

Introduction

Situated on the tip of the Horn of Africa at the gateway to the Red Sea, Somalia has been the focus of several waves of intervention from major foreign powers for nearly forty years. Since its independence in 1960, when the British and Italian colonial territories merged into the present-day nation-state, Somalia has drifted in and out of Soviet and western spheres of influence. Its history and future is as much linked to the Middle East as it is to African developments.

If Somalia were not considered a failed state,¹ it would be a tribal coalition. Most of the population identifies itself with one clan or another. Many clans have ties to ethnic Somali enclaves in bordering countries such as Djibouti, Ethiopian, and Kenya. Border-crossings by nomadic herders have given way to armed crossings, a result of continuing tension. In addition to border tensions, tribal rivalries and deadly territorial disputes have led to years of feuding and an inability to reconstitute this failed state. The unending turmoil has also led to a humanitarian crisis.



Facts and Figures²

Area: slightly smaller than Texas
637,657 sq km (246,200 sq mi)

Population:

total: 9,118,773 (1975 est.)³
population growth rate: 2.832%

Birth rate: 44.6 births/1,000 population

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 48.84 years
male: 47.06 years
female: 50.69 years

Infant mortality rate: 113.08 deaths/1,000 live births

Median age: 17.6 years

1 A “failed state” is a state whose government is so weak it does not truly control the population or territory.

2 Information in the Facts and Figures section is courtesy of the CIA World Factbook, updated 15 November 2007. Figures are 2007 estimates unless otherwise noted. <https://cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

3 Official census 1975 complicated by nomadic and refugee movements due to war and famine.

Age distribution:

0–14 years: 44.4% (male 2,031,682/female 2,019,629)

15–64 years: 53% (male 2,423,602/female 2,410,126)

65 years and over: 2.6% (male 97,932/female 135,802)

Nationality:

noun: Somali(s)

adjective: Somali

Ethnic groups: Somali 85%, Bantu and other non-Somali 15%

Religion: Sunni Muslim

Languages: Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English

Literacy: (definition: age 15 and over can read and write)

total population: 37.8%

male: 49.7%

female: 25.8% (2001 est.)

Major infectious diseases:

degree of risk: very high

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A and B, and typhoid fever

vector borne diseases: malaria and dengue fever are high risks in some locations

water contact disease: schistosomiasis

animal contact disease: rabies



© Charles Hottel
Hargeysa students

Official country name: Somalia

local long form: Jamhuuriyada Demuqraadiga Soomaaliyeed

local short form: Soomaaliya

former names: Somali Republic; Somali Democratic Republic

Government: There is no permanent national government. The formation of the Transitional Federal Government is ongoing.

Capital: Mogadishu

Administrative divisions:

18 regions (called *gobolka*): Awdal, Bakool, Banaadir, Bari, Bay, Galguduud, Gedo, Hiiraan, Jubbada Dhexe, Jubbada Hoose, Mudug, Nugaal, Sanaag, Shabeellaha Dhexe, Shabeellaha Hoose, Sool, Togdheer, Woqooyi Galbeed

Independence: 1 July 1960 (The Somali Republic was formed from a merger of British Somaliland, which became independent from the UK on 26 June 1960, and Italian Somaliland, which became independent from the Italian-administered UN trusteeship on 1 July 1960.)

National holiday: Independence Day, 1 July
note: In Somaliland, it is celebrated on 26 June.

Constitution: 25 August 1979, presidential approval 23 September 1979

Legal system: There is no national system. A mixture of English common law, Italian law, Islamic Shari'a, and Somali customary law are used. Somalia accepts compulsory International Court of Justice (ICJ) jurisdiction with reservations.

Suffrage:
18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: Transitional Federal President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed (since 14 October 2004)

head of government: Prime Minister Nur "Adde" Hassan Hussein (since 24 November 2007); the State requested the addition of "Adde" February 2008.

cabinet: appointed by the prime minister and approved by the Transitional Federal Assembly

note: The transitional governing entity, known as the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), was established in October 2004 with a five-year mandate. The TFI relocated from Kenya to Somalia in June 2004, but its members remain divided over clan and regional interests and the government continues to struggle to establish effective governance in the country.



Legislative branch: Unicameral National Assembly

note: The Unicameral National Assembly of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) is made up of 275 seats; 244 members are appointed by the four major clans (61 per clan) and 31 members are appointed by smaller clans and subclans. The TFP was created in January 2004 to last four years.

Judicial branch:

Following the breakdown of the central government, most regions have reverted to local forms of conflict resolution. These forms are either secular, traditional Somali customary law, or Shari'a (Islamic) law with a provision for appeal of all sentences.

Telephones - main lines in use: 100,000 (2005)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 500,000 (2005)

Internet hosts: 0 (2007)

Internet users: 94,000 (2006 est.)

Airports: 67

paved: 7

unpaved: 60

Military: No national-level armed forces.

International organization participation:

African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP); African Development Bank (AfDB); Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD); Arab Monetary Fund (AMF); African Union (AU); Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU); Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); G-77; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRM); International Development Association (IDA); Islamic Development Bank (IDB); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); International Finance Corporation (IFC); International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS); Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); International Labor Organization (ILO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); International Maritime Organization (IMO); Interpol, International Olympic Committee (IOC); International Organization for Migration (IOM) (observer); Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); International Telecommunications Satellites Organization (ITSO); International Telecommunication Union (ITU); League of Arab States (LAS); Non-Aligned Movement (NAM); Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC); United Nations (UN); UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); UN Human Rights Council (UNHCR); UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); Universal Postal Union (UPU); World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU); World Health Organization (WHO); World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

GDP (gross domestic product): USD 2.483 billion (2006 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 65%

industry: 10%

services: 25% (2000 est.)

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 71%

industry and services: 29% (1975 est.)



Agricultural products: bananas, sorghum, corn, coconuts, rice, sugarcane, mangoes, sesame seeds, beans, cattle, sheep, goats, fish

Industries: few light industries, sugar refining, textiles, wireless communication

Exports- commodities: livestock, bananas, hides, fish, charcoal, scrap metal

Exports - partners: UAE 49.9%, Yemen 21.5%, Oman 6% (2006 est.)

Imports: \$798 million f.o.b. (2006 est.)

Imports - commodities: manufactures, petroleum products, foodstuffs, construction materials, qat

Imports - partners: Djibouti 30.8%, Brazil 8.5%, India 8.2%, Kenya 8.1%, Oman 5.5%, UAE 5.2%, Yemen 5% (2006 est.)



© LM 11 / iStock.com
Camels and sheep at the well

Chapter 2 Geography

Introduction

Somalia is situated on the Horn of Africa and is the easternmost point on the African continent. Lying to the south of the Gulf of Aden, it is slightly smaller than Texas. It is a semi-arid country with plains and plateaus where only highland elevations provide some relief from the equatorial heat. The south of the country has two perennial rivers around which the country's major agricultural area and greatest population can be found.⁴ The sparse rainfall has rendered much of the country suitable only for nomadic pastoralism.



© Charles Stetley
Nomad near Borama

Borders

Somalia has the longest seacoast on the African continent at 3,025 km (1879.6 mi). The northern coast on the Gulf of Aden runs west to east for 1,075 km (668 mi) from Djibouti to the Horn of Africa. The eastern coast on the Indian Ocean is 1,950 km (1,211.6 mi) runs southward from the Horn to Kenya. The border with Djibouti measures 58 km (36 mi). In the southwest, the border with Kenya is 682 km (423.8 mi). Because of the territorial dispute with Ethiopia over the Ogaden highlands, the border with Ethiopia at 1,600 km (994.2 mi) is listed on most maps as provisional.⁵

Climate

Somalia's climate is characterized by seasonal monsoons, irregular rainfall and recurring drought and floods. The year is broken up into four seasons. The main rainy season, *gu*, occurs from April to June. This is followed by *xagaa*, a dry season lasting from June to September. *Dayr*, the second rainy season, lasts from October to December and is followed by the main dry season known as *jilaal*.⁶ The *tangambili* (periods between rainy seasons) are hot and humid in coastal areas, but dry inland.

Somalia's average rainfall is 282 mm (11 in) per year, but the amount varies greatly from north to south. Average rainfall along the northern coast is 50 mm (2 in), while the northern highlands receive 500 mm (19.6 in). The drier interior receives 150 mm (5.9 in). The more humid south, with 350 mm (13.8 in) to 500 (19.6 in), is more favorable to agriculture. Due to low amounts of rainfall in some parts of the country, moderate droughts occur every 3–4 years, while severe droughts happen approximately every nine years.⁷

Average temperatures throughout the country year-round are 30°C to 40°C (85°–105°F) with cooler temperatures in the southern coastal regions and at higher elevations. The greatest

4 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia. Geography." No date. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/33.htm>

5 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 15 November 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

6 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia. Climate." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37716/Somalia>

7 The Encyclopedia of the Earth. Kundell, Jim (ed.). "Water Profile of Somalia." 14 August 2007. http://www.eoearth.org/article/Water_profile_of_Somalia

temperature extremes occur in the North when winter months bring below freezing temperatures to the highlands, and summer heats the Gulf of Aden coast up to more than 45° C (113°F). The North's humidity also experiences greater range than the South, changing from 40% in the afternoon to 85% at night. In the South, temperatures range from 20°C (68°F) to 40°C (105°F), with the hottest part of the year occurring February through April. The Indian Ocean coast's 70% humidity in both wet and dry seasons remains relatively constant.⁸

Geographic Divisions

The Guban

The semi-arid maritime plain called the *Guban* runs along the Gulf of Aden in the North. Ranging in width from 56 km (35 mi) in the west to 6 km (4 mi) in the east, this lowland area is hot, humid, and arid.⁹ When rain does fall, however, scrub vegetation grows quickly and provides food for the herds of nomadic pastoralists.¹⁰

The Karkaar Mountains

The Karkaar Mountain range crosses the north of Somalia from Ethiopia to the tip of the Horn of Africa. They rise sharply from sea level to 1,800 m (5,905 ft) in the west and up to 2,100 m (6,889 ft) in the east. The highest point is 2,407 m (7,896 ft) at Shimber Berris, near Erigavo (north central area).¹¹ It is on the slopes of this mountain where the country's lowest temperatures are recorded.

The Ogo Plateau

Southward, the mountains flatten to form the Ogo plateau, an area of shallow valleys and dry riverbeds that may be seen as an extension of the Ogaden highlands of Ethiopia. This vast plateau, which sits approximately 1,200 m (3,937 ft) above sea level, contains the Mudug Plain and central Somalia's Nugaal Valley. Lacking in perennial rivers, this area's watersheds are dry for much of the year.¹² To the west, the Ogo Plateau descends into the Haud Plains which overflow into Ethiopia's Ogaden region and blur the border. This gentle sloping plateau provides grazing grounds for nomadic herders during the rainy seasons and permanent wells for farming.¹³

Somali Plateau and Coastal Plain

South of the Mudug Plain, Somalia is dominated by the basins of its two perennial rivers, the Shebelle and the Juba. The area surrounding these rivers is the most fertile in the country and is the locus of Somalia's agriculture. The Somali Plateau descends



Courtesy of Wikipedia
Bridge over the Juba River

8 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia. Climate." 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/34.htm>

9 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Guban." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9038347/Guban>

10 United Nations Environmental Programme. "The State of Environment in Somalia. A Desk Study." December 2005. http://www.unep.org/DEPI/programmes/Somalia_Final.pdf

11 Country Studies. Library of Congress. Somalia.

<http://search.live.com/results.aspx?q=Library+Of+Congress+Subject+Headings&go=Search&form=QBRE>

12 *Somalia in Pictures*. Hamilton, Janice. "The Land [p. 9]." Lerner Publishing Group.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=iMRf1RZ9zkAC&pg=PA11&lpg=PA11&dq=the+ogo+somalia&source=web&ots=Y58YS8hwc8&sig=EQVGDIXrHoV8Hyep4ht7GlzXBY#PPA4,M1>

13 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia. Terrain, Vegetation and Drainage." 1992.

<http://countrystudies.us/somalia/35.htm>

quickly into a coastal plain along the Indian Ocean; the region's height averages 180 m (590 ft) above sea level.¹⁴

Major Cities

Mogadishu

Located in the South on the Indian Ocean, Mogadishu is the capital of Somalia. With an estimated population of 1,320,000 (2005), Mogadishu is the largest city, the main port of Somalia and the country's center of commerce.¹⁵ What started out as a historic Arab settlement on the African coast morphed into the capital of Italian Somaliland in the late 19th century. Today, it is home to food and beverage processing industries and textile industries such as cotton ginning.¹⁶ However, continuing violence between the transitional government and militants has marred the city and Somalis continue to flee.¹⁷



Berbera

Situated on the Gulf of Aden and belonging to self-proclaimed Somaliland, Berbera is a sheltered deep-sea port with a history of exporting livestock and grain.¹⁸ Because this town is located in the Guban, its population varies with the season and is estimated at between 50,000 to 150,000 depending on the time of year.¹⁹

Kismaayo

Kismaayo is a port city in Somalia's far South. It is on the Indian Ocean near the mouth of the Juba River. It is the third largest city in Somalia. Kismaayo has been used as a trade center since the 1800s by the Sultan of Zanzibar, Britain and Italy. However, political violence and skirmishes between rival warlords have taken their toll on the city.²⁰

Hargeysa

Hargeysa, the de-facto capital of Somaliland in the North, has an international airport and was a major commercial center. It is also a watering stop for nomadic herders.²¹ The city is located in the Ogo Highlands and has a mild climate due to its elevation of 1,334 meters (4,377 ft) above sea level.

14 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia. Terrain, Vegetation and Drainage." 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/35.htm>

15 City Population. World Urbanization Prospects 2005. "Somalia." 16 June 2007. <http://www.citypopulation.de/Somalia.html>

16 Mogadishu.info. "Mogadishu." No date. <http://mogadishu.info/>

17 BBC News. "Somalis Flee Mogadishu Fighting." 10 November 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7088560.stm>

18 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Berbera." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9078702/Berbera>

19 World Bank. Ali, Ali Farah, and Yusuf Omar Ali, Friedhelm Krupp. "Country Report. Somalia." [http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/essd/RedSeaWorkspace.nsf/e5ced25b939915a58525679a0052bd36/9a308596d22fec83852567d1006f47e3/\\$FILE/somalia.pdf](http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/essd/RedSeaWorkspace.nsf/e5ced25b939915a58525679a0052bd36/9a308596d22fec83852567d1006f47e3/$FILE/somalia.pdf)

20 Kismaayo City. "Welcome to Kismaayo City." December 2007. <http://kismaayocity.com/>

21 Bartleby. The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. "Hargeisa." 2001–2005. <http://www.bartleby.com/65/ha/Hargeisa.html>

Major Rivers

There are two perennial rivers, the Juba and the Shebelle. Both are located in the southwest of the country and both originate in Ethiopia. The fertile areas formed by these river basins form the center of Somalia's agricultural community. The Juba enters Somalia and flows south easterly for 875 km (545 mi) across the country to the Indian Ocean at Kismaayo.²² Its headwaters come from rain-fed streams in the Mendebo Mountains. The Juba is the only river in the region that remains navigable throughout the year.²³

The Shebelle enters Somalia near the city of Beledweyne. Just north of Mogadishu, about 32 km (20 mi), it turns southward and runs parallel to the coast (southwest).²⁴ About 85 km (53 mi) southwest of Mogadishu it becomes a swamp that then dissipates in the sands near the Juba. With sufficient rainfall, it connects with the Juba.²⁵

Environmental Concerns

Drought, floods, and dust storms are recurring natural hazards that pose significant environmental concerns. The severe droughts which occur severely every seven to nine years have damaging economic effects as well. During the most recent four-year-long drought (from 2000 to 2004), 11.5 million people were left in need of food aid as their herds had succumbed to the heat and lack of water.²⁶ This drought was followed by flooding in Central and South Somalia during the winter of 2006. The ground, hard-packed from the drought, was unable to absorb the rainfall, resulting in flash floods. Again, this natural disaster resulted in a loss of livestock and food supplies.²⁷



© Charles Hottelley
Goats crossing river near Borama

Deforestation for timber, fuel, and farming, as well as overgrazing, add to soil erosion and desertification. Somalia lost 13.9% of its forested land from 1990 to 2005, leaving it with forest covering 11.4% of the total land.²⁸ In addition, Somalia faces concerns from toxic waste that was dumped along the coastline during the 1990s. The contents of these containers pose an ongoing health threat. Following the tsunami of December 2005, it was reported by the UN that many people living in coastal towns suffered from diseases consistent with radiation sickness.²⁹

22 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Jubba River." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9044065/Jubba-River>

23 Encyclopedia Britannica Online. "Jubba River." 2007. <http://concise.britannica.com/ebc/article-9368726/Jubba-River>

24 Encyclopedia Britannica Online. "Shebeli River." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9067222>

25 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia. Terrain, Vegetation and Drainage." 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/35.htm>

26 BBC News. "In Pictures: Somali Drought." 14 March 2006. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/4802458.stm

27 UNICEF. McKenzie, David. "Somalia Floods Devastate Communities" 6 December 2006.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/somalia_37396.html

28 Monga Bay. "Statistics: Somalia." c.1994-2006.

<http://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Somalia.htm>

29 Times Online. Clayton, Jonathan. "Somalia's Secret Dumps of Toxic Waste Washed Ashore by Tsunami." 4 March 2005. <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article418665.ece>

Chapter 3 History

Ancient History

Ancestors of present-day Somalis have inhabited the Horn of Africa since prehistoric times. Known to the ancient Egyptians in 3000 B.C.E. as the Land of Punt, northern Somalia was the destination of migrating Cushite peoples after the decline of the Pharaonic dynasties in Egypt and Sudan. The migrations of these nomadic herders led them toward the coast from the interior of the Horn.³⁰ Because Somalia fronts the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean, its history has been tied to cultural and commercial events of seafarers beyond Africa. Long before the arrival of Islam in the 7th century, Arab and Asian merchant ships had visited the coast of Somalia.



Coastal Trade and the Emergence of Islam

As trade along the Red Sea and Indian Ocean increased, coastal towns and ports were established in Somalia. In turn, the Somalis themselves became adept at trading goods such as ghee, ostrich feathers, and gums.³¹ Beginning in the 7th century C.E., Arab and Persian immigrants formed settlements and trading posts along the Gulf of Aden. As the Arab Muslims settled, Islam began to spread among the native Somalis. From the 11th century onward, Arab traders and Muslim patriarchs intermarried with the Somalis, forming large, influential clans. Centers of Islamic learning and culture developed in the settlements of Zelia (Saylac) and the port city of Berbera.³² The introduction of Islam also sparked a southward migration that helped to further spread the religion.³³

Ottoman Turks and the Sultan of Zanzibar

When Turkish merchant ships arrived in the 17th century, they found small independent states, some of which were ruled by Somali elders. In establishing settlements along the coast of northern Somalia, Yemen, and along the Red Sea Coast, they prepared indigenous peoples for annexation by the Ottoman Empire. It was an empire then under the rule of Suleiman the Magnificent. These areas would remain under the yoke of Istanbul for the next three centuries.

The Portuguese, protectors of the sultans of Zanzibar and Oman, also developed several coastal settlements along the southern coast of Somalia in the 15th and 16th centuries. However, they failed to establish autonomy over the area. These towns, as well as the coast, were seized by the

30 *Somalia: A Country Study*. Metz, Helen, Ed. "The Somalis: Their Origins, Migrations, and Settlements." 1992. Library of Congress. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/3.htm>

31 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia. Early Activity on the Coasts." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37743>

32 *Somalia: A Country Study*. Metz, Helen, Ed. "The Somalis: Coastal Towns." 1992. Library of Congress. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/4.htm>

33 *Somalia: A Country Study*. Metz, Helen, Ed. "The Somalis: Their Origins, Migrations, and Settlements." 1992. Library of Congress. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/3.htm>

Sultan of Zanzibar, a cousin of the Al Bu-Said Sultan of Oman.³⁴ Like the north, this portion of Somalia was also governed by native people for the Sultan of Zanzibar.

European Colonization

European colonization marks the beginning of modern history in Somalia. As European powers increased their trade presence in East Asia, ports along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean became important refueling stations. In 1839, the British established a military garrison and coaling station at Aden on the Al-Yemen coast of the Arabian Peninsula. France established its own fueling station at Obock in northern Djibouti in 1862 and later added the port of Djibouti, while in 1869 Italy opened a consulate and trade office in the port of Aseb on the Eritrean coast.³⁵

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, steamships from the British Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O) could make the long journey from England to Indian and Asian ports. Prior to that goods from European ships were offloaded in Port Said on the Mediterranean and carried overland to the Port of Suez. From there they would then be loaded onto short-haul steamers to India. When Egyptian soldiers, vassals of the Ottoman Viceroy, abandoned ports on the Gulf of Aden in order to thwart the revolution in Sudan, British soldiers stepped in to prevent other European powers from taking residence. In the late 1800s, Britain signed protectorate treaties with Somali chiefs and, in 1888, signed an agreement with France regarding the boundaries between both countries' claims.³⁶ As British Somaliland became a protectorate of Britain, vice consuls were sent to maintain order and control trade. The first years saw rebellions led by Mohammed "Mad Mullah" Abdullah that ended with the 1920 bombing of Abdullah's base.³⁷

In addition to earlier possessions along the Red Sea coast gained through the Treaty of Wichale, Italy acquired portions of southern Somalia on lease from Zanzibar. Italian Somaliland extended south to the Juba River and east to Ethiopia. In 1897, Italy and Ethiopia agreed on the eastern border of Italian Somaliland. Italy and Britain, which held the land south of the Juba in British East Africa, reached an agreement on the boundaries of their holdings in 1908.³⁸ Some of this land, east of the Juba River, joined Italian Somalia in 1925. In 1936, the newly appointed governor of Italian Somaliland annexed Abyssinia (Ethiopia), forming Italian East Africa, which surrounded French and British Somaliland.³⁹

34 Encyclopedia of the Nations. "Somalia. History." 2007. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Somalia-HISTORY.html>

35 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia. Competition among European Powers and Ethiopia." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37750/Somalia>

36 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia. Competition among European Powers and Ethiopia." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37750/Somalia>

37 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Somalia." December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

38 Bureau of East African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Somalia." December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

39 History World. "History of Somalia." No date. <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ad20>

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. Italy declared war on the United Kingdom and seized British Somaliland by force in 1940. However, in 1941, the British recaptured British Somaliland as well as Italian Abyssinia (Ethiopia/Eritrea), gaining much of Italian Somaliland in the process. During the time of British control from 1941 to 1948, Somalia was primed toward self-government. Italy formally renounced its claim to territorial possession in Somalia in 1947. In 1949, the whole area of Italian Somaliland came under international trusteeship. The United Nations directed Italy to help the Somalis work toward independence during the ten-year period from 1950 to 1960.⁴⁰

Independence

An independent Somalia came in 1960 with British Somaliland gaining independence on 26 June and Italian Somaliland following suit on 1 July. The two portions of the country joined to form the Somali Republic. A constitutional conference held in April of the same year established that Mogadishu would be the capital city of the newly formed country. However, the placement of the capital in the South increased the number of southern Somalis employed in government positions, leading to a southern-dominated central government.⁴¹ A year later, the people of Somalia adopted the first constitution based on European models.



The idea of a unified Somalia that incorporated all communities of Somalis dominated the government's first years. This feeling of pan-Somalism existed not only in Somalia itself but also in French Somaliland (present-day Djibouti), northern Kenya, and Somali communities in Ethiopia. Pan-Somalism was so strong that when the Somali communities in Kenya were not given self determination in 1963, guerilla warfare raged in the area for the next five years. In 1967, the Prime Minister, Mohamed Ibrahim Egal, encouraged the government to renounce its claims on Somali communities outside of the country, thereby strengthening relations with its neighboring countries. However, many Somalis did not agree with the reconciliation between Somalia and its long-time adversary, Ethiopia.⁴²

A combination of national and municipal elections held in March of 1969 was dominated by the Somalia Youth League (SYL), the country's first political party and an outgrowth of the British movement, Somalia Youth Club, of 1943. It was a predominantly socialist front that united the clans of the country and had extensive ties to Somali groups in Kenya and Ethiopia. Discontent over the outcome of early national elections and allegations of government election fraud is thought to be the main cause of the coup on 21 October, 1969. 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, an early disciple of African socialism, was elected president by the SRC. In addition, the SRC suspended the constitution, banned all

40 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Somalia." December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

41 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Somalia." December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

42 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Somalia." December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

political parties, eradicated the National Assembly, and renamed the country the Somali Democratic Republic.⁴³

The Government of General Siad Barre

The 20 years following the coup d'état have been called “productive years of stability.”⁴⁴ The SRC, headed by General Barre, worked to decrease the influence of clan assemblies on local government and “bring the government closer to the people.”⁴⁵ In addition to condemning tribalism, local tribal heads were replaced with government appointed *nabod doan* (peace keepers). All of this was completed under the socialist banner of national unity, but some saw it as a way to break clan solidarity.

Following Barre's ascent to power, Somalia became a socialist state and a client of the Soviet Union. Moscow was interested in an increased naval and military presence in the strategically important Horn of Africa. The official ideology of the Somali government at that time was deemed “scientific socialism.” According to Barre, this incorporated Islam, socialism based on Marxist principles, and the idea of community development through self reliance. Aligned with the Soviet Union, Somalia depended on them for economic and military aid.⁴⁶ This “friendship” was not exclusive and did not last long, because the Soviet Union in 1974 began to provide support for the Ethiopian dictator Mengistu. When Somalia seemed successful in regaining the border region of Ogaden in 1977–78, the Soviets supplied troops and advisors to Ethiopia, resulting in the defeat of Somalia. This abrupt reversal of Soviet policy and abrogation of Somalia's agreements with Moscow caused the Somali government to drop its socialist ideology. In a reflex action, Somalia sought rapprochement with the U.S. Quick to fill the vacuum left by Soviet withdrawal, the U.S. gained a naval and military base in Berbera and a new partner in the Cold War. Somalia in turn became eligible for military assistance as well as military and economic aid.⁴⁷

An influx of an estimated 80,000 refugees from Ethiopian Ogaden at the end of 1978 led to a regional ethnic imbalance in the North of Somalia. Attempts by the central government in Mogadishu to quell the unrest brought about greater regional turmoil.⁴⁸ Civil unrest led to civil war in the mid 1980s. Numerous opposition groups were formed. Army officers, unhappy with the government, formed the Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF), while the Isaaq clan formed the Somali National Movement (SNM). One additional group that weighed into the fray was the United Somali Congress (USC), made up of people from the Hawiye clan. The fighting

43 Country Studies. Library of Congress. “Somalia. Coup d'Etat.” 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/20.htm>

44 CIA World Factbook “Somalia.” 6 December 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html#Intro>

45 Country Studies. Library of Congress. “Somalia. Supreme Revolutionary Council.” 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/22.htm>

46 Country Studies. Library of Congress. “Said Barre and Scientific Socialism.” 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/24.htm>

47 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Somalia.” December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

48 *Conflict and the Refugee Experience: Flight, Exile and Repatriation in the Horn of Africa*. Bariagaber, Assefaw. “The Structure of Refugee Settlements in Sudan and Somalia [p. 110].” 2006. Burlington, U.S.A. Ashgate Publishing Limited.

between these groups and the Barre government worsened an economic crisis and resulted in the division of Somalis along clan lines.⁴⁹

As Somalia disrupted into greater turmoil, Barre retreated to Mogadishu. Somali opposition consisting of USC and SNM forces, based in neighboring Ethiopia, forced Barre from power on 26 January 1991. As Barre went into exile, the central government in Mogadishu collapsed and the SNM took control of Northern Somalia. Mogadishu and much of southern Somalia remained under control of the USC.⁵⁰

An Unstable State

Fighting continued after the collapse of the central government and the division of the once united country. The North declared itself an independent country, the Republic of Somaliland. As various groups sought control over part or all of the national territory, the southern portion of the country fell into a state of anarchy. The deaths of thousands of civilians prompted a U.S.-led intervention in 1992–93. Operation Restore Hope involved more than 34,000 U.S. troops sent to help restore order and end starvation.⁵¹ This mission and its accomplishments were short-lived, however, when the unexpected deaths of 18 U.S. servicemen in October 1993 forced the U.S. and European nations to reconsider their deployments. Foreign troops were withdrawn by the spring of the following year. The partially fictionalized version of these events is familiar to readers and video game enthusiasts as the narrative of *Black Hawk Down* and *Delta Force*.⁵²



© John Martner Pauliga
American soldier in Mogadishu, 1992

Several rounds of reconciliation attempts in the 1990s, hosted by the UN, Ethiopia, and other regional states, failed to produce a formula to overcome regionalism and forge a consensus for national unity. Mogadishu descended into greater chaos at the turn of the millennium. Fighting between various factions continued. The country disintegrated into four main entities: Somaliland in the Northwest, Puntland in the Northeast, regional forces north of Mogadishu under Ali Mahdi; and forces south of the capital under Hussein Muhammed Aideed.⁵³

The Transitional Government

Over the next five years, several attempts to resolve the conflict and spark reunification were undertaken. Djibouti hosted a major regional conference in 2000. As a result of this, a three-year transitional national government was created.⁵⁴ This government was headed by Abdulqasim

49 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: Somalia.” December 2007.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#history>

50 Global Security. “Somalia Civil War.” 01 July 2007.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia.htm>

51 Nations Encyclopedia. “Somalia. History.” 2007. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Somalia-HISTORY.html>

52 Council on Foreign Relations. “Kaplan, Eben. “Somalia’s Terrorist Infestation.” 6 June 2006.

<http://www.cfr.org/publication/10781/>

53 Nations Encyclopedia. “Somalia. History.” 2007. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Somalia-HISTORY.html>

54 Nations Encyclopedia. “Somalia. History.” 2007. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Somalia-HISTORY.html>

Salad Hassan. Its goal was to create a permanent national government uniting all of Somalia. Somali Peace talks, held in 2002 in neighboring Kenya, attempted to forge a reconciliation between the government and 20 warlords. Two years later an interim reconciliation took place. On 28 January 2004, Somali leaders agreed on a charter that would establish a new, five-year transitional parliament with 275 members.⁵⁵ In October of that same year, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed was elected President of the new Transitional Federal Government.⁵⁶

Despite the creation of a transitional government, Mogadishu was still run by warlords in the first years of this century. However, those warlords were overthrown in June 2006 by the Supreme Council of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). This group, made up of clerics, business leaders and organized militia, overpowered much of southern Somalia. As they grew in power, they sought to overthrow the TFG but were driven from power by joint Ethiopian–TGF forces.⁵⁷ Following the defeat of the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (UIC), the TFG moved to Mogadishu with the support of Ethiopian forces in January 2007.⁵⁸

Material support from its one-time hostile neighbor continued to pour into Mogadishu as Ethiopia deployed troops throughout 2007. These forces, along with African Union (AU) peacekeeping troops, have made progress in combating the rebels seeking to overthrow the provincial Somali government.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, continuous fighting has taken its toll on the TFG and on civilians.⁶⁰ The UN reports that 60% of Mogadishu's residents have fled the city due to the fighting, adding to the estimated 1 million displaced Somalis.⁶¹ According to the director of security at Somalia's National Security Ministry, the TFI controls only 20% of the country, making it easy for the Islamic rebels to regroup and grow.⁶² Presently, the struggle centers on the TFG in its effort to reestablish a permanent central government, with international support, and to create a unified Somalia.

55 Global Security. "Somalia Civil War – Southern Somalia." 15 August 2006.

<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/somalia-south.htm>

56 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 6 December 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

57 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 6 December 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

58 Council on Foreign Relations. Kaplan, Eben. "Somalia's Transitional Government." 23 January 2007. <http://www.cfr.org/publication/12475/#2>

59 Reuters. Sheikh, Abdi. "Ethiopia Reinforces Troops in Somalia – Witnesses." 4 November 2007. <http://www.reuters.com/article/africaCrisis/idUSL04338076>

60 BBC News. "UN Says Somalia Needs More Help." 4 December 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7126070.stm>

61 CNN. "UN: Million Displaced in Somalia." 20 November 2007. <http://edition.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/africa/11/20/somalia/index.html>

62 MSNBC. "Islamists Regroup in Somalia." 13 December 2007. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/22245198/>

Somalia Timeline

600 C.E.: Persian and Arab traders begin to settle along the coast of the Gulf of Aden.

1000–1200: Islam is spread in northern Somalia.

1500s: Northeast Somalia breaks up into small states as the northwest portion comes under control of the Ottoman Empire.

1400–1500s: Portuguese set up towns along the Southern Coast of Somalia that were later taken by the Sultan of Zanzibar.

1862: France sets up a port in Oback (present-day Djibouti).

1875: Egypt establishes towns on Gulf of Aden in Somalia.

1887: Britain establishes protectorate over northern Somalia.

1889: Italy sets up protectorate in central and southern Somalia.

1920: Mohamed Abdullah Hassan, the “Mad Mullah,” killed in bombing, ending 20 years of rebellions in British Somaliland.

1936: Italy takes control of parts of Ethiopia to form Italian East Africa.

1940: Italy occupies British Somaliland.

1941: Britain retakes Somaliland and assumes control over Italian Somaliland.

1947: Italy formally renounces Somaliland, turning it into an international trusteeship. The UN instructs Italian and Somali officials to begin a ten-year process towards independence.

26 June 1960: British Somaliland granted independence.

1 July 1960: Italian Somaliland merges with British Somaliland to form the Somali Republic.

1961: Somalia adopts constitution.

1963: A border dispute with Kenya leads to the end of diplomatic relations between Somalia and Britain.

1964: Ethiopian-Somali border erupts in violence.

1967: Abdi Rashid Ali Shermarke elected president.

March 1969: National elections lead to discontent, which acts as one cause of a coup in October 1969.

21 October 1969: General Muhammed Siad Barre put into power by the Supreme Revolutionary Council following the assassination of President Shermarke.

1974: Somalia is granted membership in the Arab League.

1977: Somalis invade the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, sparking a war between the two countries.

1978: Ethiopia, aided by troops from the Soviet Union, force Somalis out of the Ogaden, officially ending the Ogaden War.

1981: Barre's government faces opposition from groups unhappy with the government.

1988: Somalia signs peace accord with Ethiopia.

January 1991: President Barre forced out of power. Clashes between warlords over control of country ensue.

May 1991: British Somaliland declares independence as the Republic of Somaliland.

December 1992: U.S. Military sent ahead of UN peacekeeping troops to restore order.

October 1993: The deaths of U.S. military personnel, known as the "Black Hawk Down" incident, ignite battle.

March 1994: U.S. mission ends and all U.S. personnel are pulled out.

March 1995: UN Peacekeepers leave amidst violence without restoring peace.

1998: Puntland declares autonomy.

October 2000: Transitional National Government is formed, the first central government since 1991.

April 2001: Somali warlords plan to form a national government in opposition to the Transitional National Government.

August 2001: Beginning of a three-year drought that plunges Gedo Province into a humanitarian crisis.

28 January 2004: Somali leaders sign charter to establish a five-year transitional government.

August 2004: Transitional Parliament inaugurated in Kenya, marking 14th attempt to create a central government since 1991.

December 2004: Hundreds of Somalis killed along the coast in the aftermath of the tsunami in Sumatra.

October 2005: Somali Pirates begin to interfere with shipment of foreign food aid and to prevent ships from docking in Mogadishu.

February 2006: The town of Baidoa is the site of the first meeting of the Transitional Federal Government since its formation in 2004.

March–May 2006: The worst sectarian violence in a decade envelopes Mogadishu, leading to the death or injury of hundreds.

June–July 2006: Mogadishu falls under the control of the Supreme Council of Islamic Courts.

July–August 2006: Air and seaports in Mogadishu, closed since 1995, are reopened.

September 2006: Peace talks held in Khartoum between the Transitional Government and Supreme Council of Islamic Courts.

October 2006: Kenya houses 35,000 Somali refugees who have fled since January 2006.

28 December 2006: Mogadishu is captured by joint Ethiopian-Somali forces.

January 2007: As Islamists abandon Kisimayo, the interim government imposes a three-month long state of emergency. President Yusuf visits Mogadishu for the first time since taking office.

February 2007: Six-month African Peacekeeping mission authorized by a UN Security Council.

April 2007: According to UN, more than 320,000 Somalis have left Mogadishu since February 2007.

October 2007: Prime Minister Ghedi resigns amid the heaviest fighting in Mogadishu since April 2007.

November 2007: UN calls humanitarian crisis in Somalia the worst in Africa.

24 November 2007: Nur Hassan Hussein becomes Prime Minister.

Chapter 4 Economy

Introduction

The long-standing civil war that has led to a divided Somalia has also decimated the country's economy. In addition, droughts and bans on livestock exportation have hampered the largest employment sector, agriculture. The absence of reliable national statistics makes any quantitative assessment of economic progress or failure difficult. What can be seen is that all national debts have remained unpaid since 1990.⁶³ Somalia's debt to the United States stands at an estimated USD 608 million,⁶⁴ while its total external debt is approximately USD 2.6 billion. With no appreciable foreign exports and only the remittances of expatriate Somali workers as incoming foreign capital, Somalia has been listed by the U.N. as being among the poorest countries in the world.⁶⁵



Standard of Living

According to the CIA, statistics regarding Somalia's GDP and other economic indicators should be viewed with skepticism. The lack of a stable government has resulted in an absence of accountability. The country's volatile situation, in addition to the nomadic character of much of the population, creates difficulties in gathering data. Only an estimated 36% of the population lives in urban areas, with the rest living in rural or nomadic settings.⁶⁶ Recent outbreaks of violence in Mogadishu have led to a 60% drop in urban population because numerous city dwellers have fled.⁶⁷

UN officials have called the violence in Mogadishu a humanitarian crisis worse than Darfur. The malnutrition rate in the refugee encampments around the capital is 19%, a number that is 4% over what is considered an emergency. The lawlessness on the ground, as well as in coastal waters, has been an impediment for aid shipments and aid workers entering the country. In addition, the continued fighting and increasing presence of militias on the roads have kept food from reaching the area, increasing prices to a point that many cannot afford.⁶⁸ Moreover, a high percentage of the population (64%) living in rural areas is engaged in some form of subsistence farming, whereas those living in urban areas (36%) remain largely unemployed.⁶⁹

63 Institute for Security Studies. "Somalia. Economy." March 2005.

<http://www.iss.co.za/Af/profiles/Somalia/Economy.html>

64 Office of the Spokesman. U.S. Department of State. "Assistance to Somali Transitional Federal Government." 24 February 2005. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2005/42700.htm>

65 Institute for Security Studies. "Somalia. Economy." March 2005.

<http://www.iss.co.za/Af/profiles/Somalia/Economy.html>

66 World Bank. "Somalia at a Glance." 28 September 2007. http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/som_aag.pdf

67 BBC News. Hassan, Mohamed. "Living in Somalia's Danger Zone." 6 December 2007.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7129562.stm>

68 New York Times. Gettleman, Jeffrey. "As Somalia Crisis Swells, Experts See a Void in Aid." 20 November 2007. http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/20/world/africa/20somalia.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1

69 The World Bank. "Somalia. Socio Economic Survey 2002." 2003.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/SOMALIAEXTN/Resources/chpt2.pdf>

Continued violence and political instability have affected the standard of living in the rest of Somalia as well. With an average life expectancy of 50 years, only 2.6% of the Somali population is over the age of 65.⁷⁰ As a whole, Somalia is lacking in healthcare and access to clean water, among other things. Only 29% of the population is estimated to have access to a clean source of water.⁷¹ However, the relative stability in Puntland and Somaliland has brought about a more comfortable way of life there than can be found in Mogadishu.⁷²

Resources and Energy

Somalia's reserves of iron ore, tin, copper, gypsum, bauxite, uranium, and salt remain unexploited. In addition, lack of exploration has left any possible natural gas or oil reserves untapped.⁷³ Besides unexploited mineral resources, Somalia's pastureland must be counted as a resource. These grazing grounds are affected by the droughts and subsequent floods that have occurred in previous years. Due to a lack of available energy resources, Somalia must import most of its petroleum to meet the entire country's electricity demands. Some domestic energy is produced using charcoal from acacia trees that grow in southern Somalia. Of the charcoal produced, only 20% is reserved for domestic use.⁷⁴ The remainder is exported to the Gulf States.

Industry

Since the fall of the Barre government, the industrial sector, which was based mostly on the processing of agricultural products, has suffered. The buildings have been looted and sold for scrap. However, despite the instability, operations in the private sector continue. Today, sugar refining, along with textile production and wireless communication are the three major, but light, industries in Somalia.⁷⁵ In addition, small workshops in the informal sector produce items needed for daily life. These items are often sold on the black market.⁷⁶

Agriculture

Estimates suggest that the majority (more than 70% in 1975, the last reliable census) of the population are employed in the agricultural sector. The nomadic, or semi-nomadic, Somalis make up a large part of that number. Those who do not herd cattle, sheep, goats, and camels, still work in the agricultural industry, cultivating crops such as bananas, sorghum, and sugarcane.⁷⁷



© Charles Hottelley
Fruit vendor in Hargeysa

70 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 28 February 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html#People>

71 World Bank. "Somalia at a Glance." 28 September 2007. http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/som_aag.pdf

72 The Independent Institute. Powell, Benjamin and Ryan Ford, Alex Nowrasteh. "Somalia after State Collapse: Chaos or Improvement?" 30 November 2006. http://www.independent.org/pdf/working_papers/64_somalia.pdf

73 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia: Resources." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37725/Somalia>

74 American University, Washington D.C. Baxter, Zach. "Somalia's Coal Industry." 9 May 2007. <http://www.american.edu/ted/ice/somalia-coal.htm>

75 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 13 December 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

76 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia. Industry." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37729/Somalia>

77 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 13 December 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

Farming

Located in the southern portion of the country between the Juba and Shebelle rivers, Somalia's commercial farmland is home to banana, sugarcane, rice, and cotton plantations. In addition, subsistence farming exists in two places. Along the river, small farmers cultivate vegetables and fruits. When rainfall permits, farmers in the Northwest grow sorghum.⁷⁸ Throughout the entire country, only 1.6% of the land is arable and only 0.04% has permanent crops.⁷⁹

Livestock

Livestock, including sheep, goat, cattle, and camels, accounts for 40% of Somalia's gross domestic product and makes up the largest portion of total exports at 65%. This livestock is imported mostly by Gulf Arab countries. Local exports have fluctuated, however; for example, Rift Valley Fever concerns prompted Saudi Arabia to ban the importation of Somali livestock. The ban has disrupted the exportation of up to 4 million head of livestock each year since its imposition.⁸⁰ Bans such as these, as well as frequent droughts, make the livelihoods of many Somalis vulnerable.⁸¹ Recent outbreaks of Rift Valley Fever in Kenya have brought about new concerns in regards to the exportation of livestock and meat from Somalia.⁸²

Banking and Investment

The Central Bank of Somalia, the Commercial and Savings Bank of Somalia, and the Somalia Development Bank have all been hampered in their efforts by the lack of a central government and continued civil unrest. Because of this, the Central Bank has not been able to regulate banking or control the money supply since the fall of the government in 1991. Although no new data is available, the inflation rate is thought to be high, perhaps higher than the 331.2% reported in 1995.⁸³ Today, an informal monetary system exists and counterfeit money is prevalent, accounting for an estimated 80% of the currency in circulation. In the absence of a stable currency, hard currencies such as the U.S. dollar, British pound, and easily negotiable currencies from neighboring Gulf countries (riyals and dirhams) serve as substitute currencies.⁸⁴



In addition to money traders in the markets, wire services known locally as *hawalas* fill in for financial institutions. Based on trust, the *hawalas* funnel remittances into Somalia from those working abroad for a commission fee of 4–5%. Dahab Shiil and Dalsan, two large wire transfer

78 Encyclopedia Britannica. "Somalia: Agriculture." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-37726/Somalia>

79 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 13 December 2007. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

80 UN Somalia. "Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)." No Date. http://www.un-somalia.org/Country_Team/fao.asp

81 Food Security Analysts Unit-Somalia. "Livestock." No date. <http://www.fsasomali.org/index.php?id=39.html>

82 Food Security Analysts Unit-Somalia. "Current Month's Analysis. Livestock." No date. http://www.fsasomali.org/main_livestock.php

83 United Nations Development Programme. Programme on Governance in the Arab Region. "Democratic Governance – Financial Transparency – Somalia." No date. <http://www.undp-pogar.org/countries/finances.asp?cid=17>

84 Foreign Policy. "The List: The World's Worst Currencies." June 2007. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3880

services, are estimated to handle USD 7 million in transfers every month.⁸⁵ The largest *hawala*, al Barakat, was shut down by the U.S. because of alleged financial ties to terrorist organizations. Even so, the rest of the *hawalas* combined send approximately USD 700 million annually. The *hawalas* in Somalia call individuals when their money comes in and dole out the money in U.S. dollars, not Somali shillings.⁸⁶

Both Somaliland and Puntland have developed their own banking systems with the Bank of Somaliland and the State Bank of Puntland. These banks function to serve commercial purposes and act as the treasury for the individual governments. Although Puntland uses the Somali shilling, Somaliland has its own currency called the Somaliland Shilling.⁸⁷

Remittance

Somalia is one of the poorest countries in the world, but with remittances pouring in from Somalis working abroad, the private sector has been able to survive the economic turmoil. With remittances making up a sizeable share of the GDP per capita (estimated at 19%), Somalia ranks fourth only behind Jordan, Lesotho, and Togo.⁸⁸ Some counts put the amount of remittance at over USD 1 billion annually. Those who have emigrated, either for work or other reasons, are encouraged to send money home, which is often used for education, healthcare, and food. Recent studies have found, however, that smaller amounts of this money are being put toward investments in the private sector.⁸⁹



Trade

In 2006, Somalia's exports to the United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Oman brought in USD 300 million. However, with imports hovering around USD 798 million, the trade discrepancy is not in Somalia's favor.⁹⁰ Informal trade does bring uncounted cash into the economy. Even with a ban, implemented in 2000 and again in 2004, the charcoal trade continues to bring in money from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Unfortunately, the charcoal trade has decimated the

85 United Nations Development Programme. Programme on Governance in the Arab Region. "Democratic Governance – Financial Transparency – Somalia." No date. <http://www.undp-pogar.org/countries/finances.asp?cid=17>

86 BBC News. Winter, Joseph. "Somalia's Diaspora Offers Financial Lifeline." 24 November 2004. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4038799.stm>

87 Foreign Policy. "The List: The World's Worst Currencies." June 2007. http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=3880

88 World Bank. Shire, Dr. Saad. "Somali Remittance Organisations (sic): Challenges, Threats and Opportunities." November 2005.

[http://wbi018.worldbank.org/html/FinancialSectorWeb.nsf/\(attachmentweb\)/SomaliRemittanceOrganizations/\\$FILE/Somali+Remittance+Organizations.pdf](http://wbi018.worldbank.org/html/FinancialSectorWeb.nsf/(attachmentweb)/SomaliRemittanceOrganizations/$FILE/Somali+Remittance+Organizations.pdf)

89 UNCDF. Social Development Papers. "Remittances and Economic Development in Somalia [p. 6–8]." Maimbo, Samuel, Ed. Paper Number 38. November 2006.

http://www.uncdf.org/english/microfinance/docs/sector_assessments/Somalia%20-%20SA.pdf

90 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 17 January 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

Chapter 5 Society

Ethnic Groups

Almost all, that is 99%, of Somalis are Sunni Muslims. In addition, a majority of the population, 85%, consists of those claiming to be ethnic Somalis. The remaining 15% includes 30,000 Arabs, as well as members of the Bantu tribe.⁹⁸ Somali society is further broken down into clans, which are further divided into sub clans. The four major tribes, which constitute 70% of the population, remain mostly nomadic; these are the Dir, Darood, Isaaq, and the Hawiye. Another 20% of the population is made up of the settled clans of the Digil and Rahanwayn.⁹⁹



© Charles Hottel
Men on a stroll

Languages

The Somali language belongs to the Afro-Asiatic language family and is distantly related to Semitic languages such as Arabic and Hebrew. A written form of Somali using a Latin alphabet was adopted in 1973. In addition, each clan has its own dialect, which can be unintelligible to others. These dialects are grouped together as Common Somali, Coastal Somali, or Central Somalia. As the name implies, Common Somali is the most-used dialect and is also the dialect used in radio broadcasting both in and out of the country. Common and Coastal Somali speakers can learn to converse in a matter of weeks. However, it may take months of practice before speakers of the other dialects can communicate with one another.¹⁰⁰

Arabic is spoken by the majority of the population as a second language, as are English and Italian. These languages are vestiges of Somalia's colonial past.¹⁰¹ Bantu is also spoken along the southern coast, where much of the Bantu population lives.

Religion

Somalia's Sunni population follows the Shafi'i sect. It is the state religion of Somalia, as well as of Somaliland and Puntland. Muslims follow the five pillars of Islam, which include: *shahadah* (profession of faith); *salah* (ritual prayer); *sawm* (fasting during the month of Ramadan); *zakat* (giving of alms); and *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). The Shafi'i sect is one of the four forms of Sunni Islam and is named for its historical founder, the jurist Abu Abdallah Muhammed ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (767–820).

98 CIA World Factbook. "Somalia." 7 February 2008. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html#People>

99 National African Language Resource Center, University of Wisconsin – Madison. "African Language Brochures. "Somalia." 2007. <http://lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/nalrc/resources/press/brochures/somali.pdf>

100 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia: Language." 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/51.htm>

101 EthnoMed. Lewis, Toby, Basra Ahmed and Khadija Hussein. "Voices of the Somali Community." January 2006. <http://ethnomed.org/voices/somali.html>

Mosques can be found in all major cities, although nomadic Somalis rely on traveling religious teachers to lead prayers and offer blessings. In practice, the five pillars require the Muslim to profess his faith at each of the five daily prayers. Likewise, the Muslim is required to fast during daylight hours during the month of Ramadan. Moreover, he is required to give a portion, 2.5%, of his earnings to support the poor and needy members of the community. Finally, he is expected to perform pilgrimage to the holy city, Mecca, once during his lifetime.¹⁰²



© Charles Hothey
Mosque in Hargeysa

In addition to following the specific sect of Islam, some Somalis belong to a Muslim brotherhood, or *tariqa* (sacred path), such as Qadiriyyah, Salihyyah, Ahmadiyyah, or Rifaiyyah.¹⁰³ Membership in these brotherhoods or spiritual societies is often determined by family; a son will join his father's brotherhood. The leaders of these brotherhoods, as well as leaders of the clans, are seen as having *baraka*, the power to grant divine blessings or bring harm unto others. After their death, those with *baraka* may be revered as saints. Their tombs may become places of pilgrimage.

Gender Issues

Somalia is a patriarchal society with the women traditionally submitting to the men. Before the civil war, gender roles were clearly defined: a woman's place was in her home, caring for her family, while the men took care of political and economic issues. Behind the scenes, women played an important role in both farming and herding, but men remained the heads of the household. However, the civil war has brought about change. Women are now increasingly active in economic and political circles.¹⁰⁴ The enduring economic crisis has forced many women to become contributors to the family wealth. Although women have gained more responsibility, their social status has not improved much.¹⁰⁵

Female Genital Mutilation

A major rite of passage women face is that of FGM, or female genital mutilation. Almost all, more than 90%, of Somali girls age four to eleven are subject to one of several types of genital infibulations varying in degrees of severity. The most invasive and harmful, type III or "Pharaonic Circumcision", is carried out in 80% of the cases. Frequently these procedures are carried out with little or no anesthesia in rural areas by elderly females wielding razor blades. Although FGM is viewed as a cultural obligation and a way to preserve family honor by ensuring virginity, international human rights organizations have been trying to eradicate it since the late 1970s. The lack of a central governmental authority to confront the population renders such

102 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia: The Tenets of Islam." 1992.

<http://countrystudies.us/somalia/45.htm>

103 Nations Encyclopedia. "Somalia: Religions." No date. <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Somalia-RELIGIONS.html>

104 Center for Applied Linguistics. "Somalis: Social Structure and Gender Roles." 18 February 2004.

<http://www.cal.org/co/somali/ssoc.html>

105 IRIN News. "Somalia: Somaliland Women Take on New Roles." 03 May 2005.

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=54194>

initiatives ineffective. Today, Puntland has made FGM illegal, but it is not clear whether this law is enforced.¹⁰⁶

Social Customs

Social customs reflect those found in most Islamic populations. Shaking hands with the opposite sex is not appropriate, and the left hand is always considered unclean. Somali men may hug and kiss each others' cheeks in greeting as this is a sign of friendship. Conversations always commence with small talk as this gives Somalis time to make a first impression. The spoken word is highly valued, and Somalis strive to command it well. Reciting poetry or telling jokes is a welcome part of conversation. By using humor, Somalis keep their conversations light in order to avoid causing someone to lose face.

Traditional Dress

Somali dress has changed throughout history, reflecting the influence of various cultures that controlled the region at one time or another. Women traditionally wear a *guntiino*, a white or red cloth similar to a sari. Voile dresses may also be seen. In the late 1970s, Somalis began to adopt a more Islamic style of dress.¹⁰⁷ Women can be seen wearing the *hijab*, a head scarf similar to those worn by Arabic women. Men incorporate Islamic styles, wearing turbans or *koofiyads* (embroidered caps). In addition, men wrap a white or colorful cotton *macaawii* around the lower half of the body, combining it with a shirt or shawl.¹⁰⁸

Sports and Recreation

Somalis can often be seen having leisurely conversations with friends. Storytelling, poetry recital and song are not only entertaining, they also demonstrate of cultural knowledge and eloquence. While men may gather in coffee shops, women meet with their friends in the home. In addition to talking, men challenge each other in a strategy game of skill similar to chess called *shah*. Men may be seen chewing qat leaves, particularly after lunch and preceding the afternoon siesta. Qat is a mild stimulant and intoxicant similar to coca leaves that has become an addiction for many. Children play active games, such as hide-and-seek, hopscotch, or impromptu games of basketball and football (soccer).¹⁰⁹



Festivals

Aside from the Islamic holidays, such as *Id al-Adha* (the Feast of the Sacrifice) following the *hajj* (pilgrimage month) and *Id al-Fitr* (feast marking the end of Ramadan), Somalis celebrate other festivals throughout the year. At the end of July, Somalis celebrate a new year, based on

106 Office of the Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues. U.S. Department of State. "Somalia: Report on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or Female Genital Cutting (FGC)." 01 June 2001.

<http://www.state.gov/g/wi/rls/rep/crfgm/10109.htm>

107 University of Minnesota. Kaleidoscope. "Making Room for Hijab in the Minnesota Work Place." Fall 2004.

<http://www.che.umn.edu/news/publications/kaleidoscope/f04kaleidoscope/akou.html>

108 Center for Applied Linguistics. "Somalis: Food and Dress." 18 February 2004.

<http://www.cal.org/co/somali/sfood.html>

109 Cultural Profiles Project. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). "Sports and Recreation." <http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/somalia/sports.html>

the solar calendar, with *Dab-Shid*. This festival is used to time agricultural practices throughout rural Somalia and is reminiscent of fire and sun worship of ancient cultures. Somalis light large bonfires around which they dance, hence the name Festival of Fire. Likewise, traditional dances are held throughout the rainy season, often being performed by nomadic children. Times of drought call for an event known as the *Roobdoon* ritual. During this mix of traditional rain dances and Islamic rain prayers, religious leaders read Quranic texts and outdoor prayers are held invoking divine intervention to bring rain.¹¹⁰

Cuisine

The two Somali lifestyles, nomad and settled farmer, have shaped eating habits throughout the country. The typical nomadic diet is high in protein found in camel or goat milk, *ghee* (butter), meat, wild berries, and fruit. Meat and poultry, when served, must be slaughtered in a *hilal* manner or in accordance with Islamic food purity standards. Farming communities provide vegetables, sugar, corn, tea, and other cultivated products, which are traded for livestock. Despite proximity to the ocean, fish is not consumed in large quantities. Islam forbids the consumption of alcohol and pork.¹¹¹



Typically, Somali food is flavored with cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, ginger, black pepper, chilies, and cumin. Although these spices are not native to Somalia, their use illustrates the influence that surrounding cultures have had on Somali cuisine. Tea similar to the *chai* tea found in other parts of Northern Africa is a popular drink. Fried dishes, such as *sambuusi*, *bajiya*, and *bur katuunboow* are traditional appetizers. *Sambuusi* are pyramid-shaped wrappers filled with spiced meat. Both *bajiya* and *bur katuunboow* are foods associated with the month of Ramadan and are both batters, made from either black eyed peas or flour, that are fried.¹¹² *Muufo baraawe*, a Somali bread, is also a staple of the diet.

Arts

Literature

Oral poetry is the most well-known of Somalia's literary traditions. It uses metaphoric verses to preserve history, communicate, and discuss current events. This oral poetry, which includes folktales and proverbs, is passed on through the generations. British explorer Richard Burton wrote about Somalia's "gifted verbalists" in his 19th century book, *First Footsteps in Africa*. In addition, the late Somalia president Shermarke called oral poetry a national treasure, ranking it second only to the Muslim faith. One article notes that poetry helps to define the relationships

110 The International Rescue Committee. Putman, Diana Briton and Mohamood Cabdi Noor. "The Somalis: Their History and Culture [p. 20]." 1993. http://www.theirc.org/where/united_states_salt_lake_city_ut/the-somalis-a-cultural-profile.pdf

111 The International Rescue Committee. Putman, Diana Briton and Mohamood Cabdi Noor. "The Somalis: Their History and Culture [p. 19]." 1993. http://www.theirc.org/where/united_states_salt_lake_city_ut/the-somalis-a-cultural-profile.pdf

112 *Somali Cuisine*. Ali, Barlin. "Appetizers and Salads." 2007. AuthorHouse.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=QBZZGdM4-](http://books.google.com/books?id=QBZZGdM4-PkC&pg=PP11&lpg=PP11&dq=somali+foods&source=web&ots=dIk71jcZs&sig=at305UZikst7CwuqT4I2L_k1e68#PPA4,M1)

[PkC&pg=PP11&lpg=PP11&dq=somali+foods&source=web&ots=dIk71jcZs&sig=at305UZikst7CwuqT4I2L_k1e68#PPA4,M1](http://books.google.com/books?id=QBZZGdM4-PkC&pg=PP11&lpg=PP11&dq=somali+foods&source=web&ots=dIk71jcZs&sig=at305UZikst7CwuqT4I2L_k1e68#PPA4,M1)

with the world just as faith provides a relationship with God, and that it acts as an articulate method of inquisition.¹¹³ Today, oral poetry can be heard around bonfires and during poetry competitions under the shade of the acacia trees.

Although Somalia did have written religious verses in Arabic, it was not until the end of World War II that written literature became common. This was due to the 1973 introduction of a standardized Somali alphabet.¹¹⁴ One modern-day poet, Mohamed Ibrahim Warsame Hadrawi, has written several volumes of Somali poetry.

Music and Dance

With its blend of Arab and African styles, the traditional music of Somalia reflects the nomadic nature of the people. Much like Somali poetry, song topics range from weather to all aspects of life. Depending on the occasion, songs may even celebrate family history. Some of the popular singers, such as Cumar Dhuule and Fathma Khasim, have built an audience outside of Somalia as well. Musical poets are accompanied by a *kaban*, a four string guitar, and a *durmann*, a cattle-skin drum.¹¹⁵ Traditionally, dance complemented some music, but was used more as a form of courtship and during ceremonies.¹¹⁶

Folk Art

Because many Somalis are nomadic, their art reflects a utilitarian nature rather than decorative form. Textiles, as well as baskets, pottery, stoneware, and woodcarvings all serve a purpose in daily life. Carving is seen as a man's duty while women weave the baskets.¹¹⁷



Textile weaving is called Somalia's "first industry." Historically, textile weaving began on the southern coast. The textiles became known as *benadir* and were being exported as early as 1330. One 19th century geographer noted that one out of every five people in Mogadishu was employed as a weaver. The white cloth that is spun from the cotton that dotted the Juba River region is known as *futa*. However, as western-style clothing was introduced during colonization, the art of weaving, as well as the once-booming industry, all but disappeared. A brief revival came when weavers using colored cloth and new patterns created a new national dress, which in turn created new demand.¹¹⁸ War and civil unrest have affected this art form as many weavers have left the country.

113 Saudi Aramco World. Gould, Lark Ellen. "A Nation of Bards." November/December 1988. <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/198806/a.nation.of.bards.htm>

114 Encyclopedia Britannica. "African Literature: Somalia." 2008. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-57054/African-literature>

115 Minnesota Public Radio. Roberts, Chris. "Somali Music is Here but Hard to Find." 30 August 2006. <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2006/08/21/ethnicmusicsomalian/>

116 Cultural Profiles Project. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). "Arts and Literature." <http://www.cp-pc.ca/english/somalia/index.html>

117 *Somalia in Pictures*. Hamilton, Janice. "Cultural Life [p. 53]." 2007. Lerner Publishing Group. http://books.google.com/books?id=iMRf1RZ9zkAC&pg=PA51&lpg=PA51&dq=mohamed+ibrahim+warsame+hadrawi&source=web&ots=Y6-VO6dugd&sig=_aM9HKs7woTax65D7WK1G1Zf6NI#PPA53,M1

118 Saudi Aramco World. "Gould, Lark Ellen. "The Weaver's Song." September/October 1989. <http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/198905/the.weaver.s.song.htm>

Chapter 6 Security

Somalia's Neighborhood

The most vulnerable part of the Horn of Africa is its Rhinoceros snout: Somalia. The lack of security in its neighboring countries is to a great extent a function of Somalia's own lack of internal security. Following the collapse of the central government in 1991, Somalia became a failed state. Regional and international efforts to reconstitute the original state or reconstruct a new Somali have failed as well due to a lack of political consensus. In the chaos that filled the vacuum after 1991, political entrepreneurs (warlords) have been unable to guarantee Somalia's neighbors any degree of non-interference. Border conflicts with Kenya and Ethiopia have flared periodically, and parts of Somalia have been safe havens for international terrorists like Al Qaeda, in transit from the Arabian Peninsula to other states on the Horn.

Foreign Relations

Kenya

Somalia's claims to large tracts of land in northeast Kenya derive from the historical occupation of those lands by ethnic Somalis. In the wake of the Pan-Somali movement of the 1960s, *shiftas*, or Somali guerillas, have engaged Kenyan border forces and police on several occasions. Somalia's diplomatic ties to Britain were severed as a result of repeated assaults on Kenya, a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.¹¹⁹ A change in the Somali government in 1967 ended the violence, but it was renewed 10 years later when Kenya sided with Ethiopia during the Ogaden War.¹²⁰



Relations between the two countries remained strained throughout the 1980s. Problems were compounded when the Barre government of Somalia granted political asylum to Somali insurgents from Kenya. Kenya reciprocated during the same period, granting asylum to Somalis who wished to be recognized as Kenyans. By 2003 the number of Somali refugees in Kenya had risen to nearly 140,000.¹²¹ In addition to housing Somalis, Kenya has played a large part in the peace process for Somalia, most recently by hosting the 2004 Somali National Reconciliation Conference. This meeting resulted in the formation of nascent Somali institutions including the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which moved to Somalia in 2005.¹²² In 2006, Kenya stopped all flights into Somalia due to safety concerns.¹²³ This was followed by the closing of the

119 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Somalia." March 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm#foreign>

120 African Studies Center, University of Pennsylvania. East Africa Living Encyclopedia. "Kenya -Foreign Relations." No date. <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/kforeignrelation.htm>

121 *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*. Lewis, I.M. "Somalia [p. 989]." Taylor and Francis Group. <http://books.google.com/books?id=jj4J-AXGDaQC&pg=PA556&lpg=PA556&dq=somalia+kenya+relations&source=web&ots=JHldw8tnDz&sig=dhpPX XfIVVYXs1Ofyr5zqc9P4t0&hl=en#PPA557,M1>

122 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Kenya." December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2962.htm#foreign>

123 MSNBC. Associated Press. "Kenya to Ease Somali Flight Ban." 24 July 2007. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/19933163/>

shared border in January 2007. Nonetheless, refugees continued to cross throughout the year.¹²⁴ The border area between Kenya and Somalia remains dangerous and volatile.

Ethiopia

The shared border between Ethiopia and Somalia consists of the Ogaden region, which has been a source of conflict between the two countries since colonial days. Inhabited mostly by Somali nomads, Somalia claims the Ogaden was ceded to Ethiopia during British Colonial rule. In the wave of Pan-Somalism following independence, Somalia sought to create a Greater Somalia, which was to consist of all areas inhabited by Somali peoples, principal of which was the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. A long period of skirmishes in the region throughout the 1960s and 70s finally culminated in 1977 in the Ogaden War. The war resolved little for Somalis or Ethiopians, but did involve some strategic issues for major powers. The former Soviet Union severed its ties with Somalia and increased its support for the revolutionary government of Ethiopia. This left Somalia open for U.S. support in the form of military and economic aid in return for the use of strategic Somali ports.¹²⁵

Although a truce ended the Ogaden War in 1978, both sides continued to support rebel groups long after military attacks ceased. Today, rebel groups such as the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) continue to seek separation from Ethiopia. In the aftermath of the 1991 overthrow of Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam and Somalia's Siad Barre both countries attempted to rebuild themselves while warily observing each other. Ethiopia succeeded, but Somalia spun out of control and fell into a state of civil unrest from which it has never recovered. The deployment of Ethiopian troops does not sit well with Somali clans and fighting between the militias and Ethiopian troops does occur.¹²⁶

Djibouti

The Republic of Djibouti, known before 1977 as French Somaliland and the French Territory of the Afars and Issas, has long been ethnically allied to Somalia. Its independence is also guaranteed by a defense treaty with France. The fall of the Barre government in 1991 led to unrest and security concerns in Somalia's small northern neighbor, whose population consists largely of the Issa tribe and is Somali in origin. At the urging of the United Nations, Djibouti began to house refugees from both Somalia and Ethiopia.¹²⁷ In the years since the fall of the Somali government, Djibouti hosted several regional and international conferences aimed at resolving conflict in Somalia. All failed; most were short-lived.¹²⁸ Djibouti, which increased the size of its armed forces in 2001 with the



© MATEUS 2724825 / flickr.com
National police in Djibouti

124 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. Knight, James. "U.S. Policy in the Horn of Africa." 7 December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/97261.htm>

125 Global Security. "Ogaden Crisis." 27 April 2005. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/ogaden.htm>

126 MSNBC. Associated Press. "Ethiopian Troops Enter Central Somalia." 20 July 2006. <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12035106/>

127 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: Djibouti." January 2008. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5482.htm#foreign>

128 Foreign and Commonwealth Office. "Country Profile: Djibouti." 14 June 2007.

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1022602909836>

aid of the French government, maintains a border force on its southern frontier with Somalia. In addition, it is home to a garrison of 3,000 of France's *Légion Étrangère* (Foreign Legion).

Eritrea

Although Eritrea does not share any borders with Somalia, it does border Somalia's neighbor Ethiopia. Eritrea's relationship with its former adversary, Ethiopia, has long been strained and the wounds torn by the border war have yet to heal. According to accounts by UN observers, the Shebab wing of the largely defunct Islamic Courts Union of Somalia has received weapons, such as surface-to-air missiles and various forms of ordnance, from the Eritrean government as recently as July 2007.¹²⁹ Eritrea has joined nations like Iran and Syria who have supplied arms to the Islamic Courts Union. In addition, Eritrea has provided a venue for meetings of the Alliance for the Liberation of Somalia (ALS), which was formed in September 2007. This opposition group consists of more than 300 men, including members of the discredited Islamic Courts Union, and seeks to oust Ethiopian troops from Somalia either through negotiation or force.¹³⁰ The U.S. State Department Bureau of African Affairs has reported that Eritrea encourages violence in Somalia, as well as in other parts of the region, and supports forces opposed to the establishment of regional security and stability.¹³¹

U.S.–Somali Relations

The Ogaden War can be seen as the turning point in U.S.–Somali relations. By filling the void left by the Soviet Union, the U.S. gained access to Somali ports along the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden. The port at Berbera, although falling into disrepair from lack of use, was instrumental in both Operation Bright Star and as a staging area in the build-up to the Persian Gulf War in 1991. However, human rights violations and unpaid loans caused the U.S. to stop both military and financial aid during Barre's last years. Shortly before the overthrow of his government in 1991, the U.S. closed the embassy in Mogadishu.¹³²

In response to the violence and mass starvation that followed, the U.S. and other nations sent troops on a humanitarian peace keeping mission in the early 1990s. From 1992 to 1994, the U.S. Army maintained a humanitarian presence in Somalia. However, the shooting down of U.S. helicopters in 1993 and the killing of 18 servicemen marked a turning point in attempts to provide humanitarian interventions.¹³³ The attacks on the U.S. on 9 September 2001 prompted a reassessment of developments in Somalia. The U.S. was determined to not let Somalia become a safe haven for terrorists. Today, the U.S. is the largest single donor to Somalia (Somaliland), providing aid for humanitarian



129 World Politics Review. Weitz, Richard. "AU Mission to Somalia Faces Deteriorating Situation with Inadequate Resources." 10 August 2007. <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=1013>

130 BBC News. "New Somali Alliance Threatens War." 12 September 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6990928.stm>

131 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. Knight, James. "U.S. Policy in the Horn of Africa." 7 December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/97261.htm>

132 Country Studies. Library of Congress. "Somalia: Relations with the United States." 1992. <http://countrystudies.us/somalia/80.htm>

133 U.S. Army Center of Military History. "The United States Army in Somalia 1992–1994." No date. <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/Somalia/Somalia.htm>

efforts as well as for a build-up of the government and security forces. In addition to the USD 180 million provided to Somalia during 2006 and 2007, the U.S. has given USD 60 million to support the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).¹³⁴

Relations with Somaliland and Puntland

Although it does not recognize Somaliland as an independent nation, the U.S. government does work with the Somaliland administration to provide economic and developmental assistance, and to promote the democratization process.¹³⁵ Even though U.S. officials recently met with Somaliland government officials, the U.S. official policy regarding Somaliland is that it is up to the African Union to determine the status of Somaliland's independence.¹³⁶ The U.S. does not recognize the legitimacy of Puntland as a national entity, yet it supports the efforts of its former president, Muse, now head of the TFG, to form a national government.

Military

Somalia has no national military. All branches of the military, including the People's Militia, the Border Guard, and the Somalia Police Force were dissolved following the 1991 collapse of the Barre government. At that time, arms and ordnance of mixed vintages, fell into the hands of tribal and clan leaders. The current Transitional Federal Government (TFG) has been unable to reconstitute a national military force. The former defense forces consisted of 12 army divisions, including 1 surface-to-air missile brigade, 1 air defense battalion, 3 field artillery brigades, 4 commando brigades, 4 tank brigades, 30 field battalions, and 45 mechanized and infantry brigades.¹³⁷ Both Somaliland and Puntland, however, have developed armed forces of their own from clan militias.

Militias

In 2007, the TFG began to deploy limited forces backed by the Ethiopian army. In addition, troops deployed by AMISOM, the African Union Mission to Somalia in March 2007, remain in the area.¹³⁸ The AMISOM troops are to be replaced by a UN-led force, but worsening situations in Darfur and the increase in violence within Somalia have stalled deployment of those forces.¹³⁹ Instead, the UN Security Council, acting on behalf of member nations, authorized an extension of AMISOM forces



134 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. Knight, James. "U.S. Policy in the Horn of Africa." 7 December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/97261.htm>

135 Bureau of African Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "United States Policy on Somaliland." 5 December 2007. <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/fs/2007/96359.htm>

136 Voice of America. Gollust, David. "State Department: US Not Moving to Recognize Somaliland." 17 January 2008. <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2008-01/2008-01-17-voa69.cfm?CFID=24334329&CFTOKEN=49074595>

137 Global Security. "Somalia- Militia." 27 April 2005. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/somalia/military.htm>

138 Bureau of Consular Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Travel Warning: Somalia." 13 November 2007. http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_933.html

139 World Politics Review. Weitz, Richard. "AU Mission to Somalia Faces Deteriorating Situation with Inadequate Resources." 10 August 2007. <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=1013>

until August 2008. It also called for financial and political support to aid in the peace process. In an unambiguous note, it emphasized it would strongly oppose any attempt to disrupt efforts by AMISOM forces or the TFG.¹⁴⁰

Individual militias are maintained by each of the clans and by some of the subclans. Fighting between the clans often occurs due to territorial conflicts or to promote interests of the clans and warlords. A UN report found that today there are more arms in the possession of militias than at any other time since 1991.¹⁴¹

Radical Groups

Al Shabaab

Al Shabaab, meaning “the youth,” is a militia made up of members ages 18 to 30. It is said that they separated from the now defunct Islamic Courts Union in 2003, but continue to be backed by Somali businessmen.¹⁴² Founding leader and former military chief of the Islamic courts, Adan Hashi Ayro, fled Mogadishu in December 2006, and the group disbanded following the Islamic defeat in the capitol. However, in mid 2007, they began to regroup.¹⁴³ In addition to roadside bombings and other guerilla attacks, the early February 2008 bombings in Bosasso in Puntland were found to be the work of Al-Shabaab members. As a result, 20 Ethiopians died and a total of 100 people were wounded.¹⁴⁴

Al-Itihaad Al-Islaami and Al-Itihaad Al-Muhaakim Al-Islaami

Formed in 1984, Al-Itihaad Al-Islaami (AIAI) Islamic Unity once sought to create an Islamic state in East Africa. Many of the older members of today’s Islamic Courts Union (ICU) or Al-Itihaad Al-Muhaakim Al-Islaami, which has been accused of having terrorist ties, trace their origins to the AIAI. The leader of the ICU, Sheik Hassan Dahir Aweys, is the one-time leader of the AIAI military wing. The AIAI reached its peak in the 1990s, beginning with a planned overthrow of the Barre government.

Throughout the rest of the 1990s, the AIAI implemented attacks on the Ogaden region in an attempt to gain control of the Somali-inhabited portion of Ethiopia.¹⁴⁵ The fighting in Ethiopia is



© G. A. Hussein
Ethiopian border check point

140 United Nations Security Council. “Security Council Extends Authorization of African Union Mission in Somalia Until 20 August, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1801 (2008).” 20 February 2008.

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9258.doc.htm>

141 BBC News. “Eritrea ‘Arming’ Somali Militias.” 27 July 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6918582.stm>

142 Somaliland Times. “‘Extremist’ Splinter Group of Somalia Islamic Courts Formed.” 12 August 2006.

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143 Voice of America. Ryu, Alisha. “Radical Somali Youth Group Claims Suicide Attack.” 04 June 2007.

[http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-06/2007-06-04-](http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-06/2007-06-04-voa31.cfm?CFID=23117513&CFTOKEN=64487464)

[voa31.cfm?CFID=23117513&CFTOKEN=64487464](http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-06/2007-06-04-voa31.cfm?CFID=23117513&CFTOKEN=64487464)

144 Reuters Alert Net. Yusuf, Aweys. “Somalia Militant Group Claims Bombing of Ethiopians.” 07 February 2008.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L07879013.htm>

145 The Jamestown Foundation. West, Sunguta. Somalia’s ICU and its Roots in al-Ittihad al-Islami.” 27 July 2006.

<http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2370083>

thought to have fractured the AIAI and its members found ideological comfort in the ICU movement.¹⁴⁶

Al Qaeda

There is a fear that war-torn Somalia provides a safe haven for members of Al Qaeda who have fled Afghanistan or are in transit from the Arabian Peninsula. The U.S. government has evidence that the Al Qaeda members who blew up the embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Saleem, as well as those who attacked a hotel in Mombasa, were based in Somalia.¹⁴⁷ Air strikes on select sites in Somalia in January 2007, the first time the U.S. carried out an attack in Somalia since 1993, targeted areas associated with Al Qaeda.¹⁴⁸ Another area in southern Somalia, near the town of Dobley, was targeted in March 2008. Terrorists thought to have ties to Al Qaeda were thought to be hiding in houses near the Kenyan border.¹⁴⁹

146Country Reports on Terrorism. U.S. Department of State. "Chapter 5–Country Reports: Africa Overview." 28 April 2006. <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2005/66236.htm>

147 BBC News. Gardner, Frank. "Somalia – al Qaeda's New Safe Haven?" 16 June 2006. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/5086712.stm>

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